

Josh Edelglass

From: This is a closed discussion group for Ramah directors and assistant [RAMDIR@LISTSERV.JTSA.EDU] on behalf of Rabbi Ami Hersh [ami@CAMPRAMAH.ORG]
Sent: Monday, July 15, 2013 10:12 AM
To: RAMDIR@LISTSERV.JTSA.EDU
Subject: Letter from Rabbi Roth about Drinking Water on Tisha B'Av

Chevra:

We distributed the below letter from Rabbi Roth to staff regarding drinking water during the extreme heat that is expected during Tisha B'Av. I thought that it might be useful for some of you as well.

Thanks,

Ami

Dear campers and members of the staffs of Ramah camps,

It is well known, and correct, that the fast of Tisha B'av is considered a very serious fast, and one that extends from sunset to dark of the next day. One of the prohibitions is against eating and drinking, and it is considered a serious prohibition.

The camp will make every effort to enable people to abide by the restrictions applicable to Tisha B'av. Every effort will be made to limit the need for strenuous physical activity which is likely to lead to dehydration. Additionally, everyone is encouraged to drink significantly prior to the onset of the fast, as this, too, may be helpful in preventing dehydration.

But if the day is very hot, the Shulhan Arukh (Orah Hayyim 554:6, and commentators thereto) is clear that one need not wait until he/she has literally become ill before drinking. One does not need a doctor's order to drink if one is feeling that he/she is becoming weak from thirst and might dehydrate. Even though one is not at this moment in actual physical danger, he/she may drink in order to avoid reaching that point. If it is possible to do so by drinking small amounts - less than a cheek full - and doing so every ten minutes until one feels better, that is preferable. If it is not possible, as indicated by the fact that one does not really feel that he/she has slaked his/her thirst significantly in that way, then one should drink a larger amount at one time, in order to feel better. At that point he/she should resume the fast except if the weak feeling repeats itself again.

I extend my wishes and hope that all Ramah campers and staff who are fasting may complete their Tisha B'av fast without problem, and that they find the day one of deep meaning.

Rabbi Joel Roth

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