# Class # 12- Israel and the Ethiopian experiment

# Senior Fellowship Leadership Program

# Rabbi Pinny Rosenthal - prepared collaboratively with Rabbi Yoni Sacks



Israel Celebrates Ethiopian Jewish Holiday- <https://youtu.be/UHRVTaLZQxM>

1. What is the Sigd holiday?
2. What aspects of Kess attire show African influence? What do you think the Egyptian Jews attire looked like? Why?
3. Why was it important that this holiday be added to the State of Israel official Calendar?
4. What are the religious challenges of integration into Judaism and Israeli society that the Ethiopian immigrants [Beta Israel] face?
5. What are three possible strategies that Beta Israel can employ in their new home within modern Judaism? Which did they choose?
6. In what way was the Judaism of the Jews leaving Egypt like that of the Ethiopian immigrants? In what way was that an obstacle to accepting the Torah at Sinai?

The Bitter Waters

15:22 Moses led the Israelites away from the Red Sea, and they went out into the Shur Desert. They traveled for three days in the desert without finding any water.

15:23 Finally, they came to Marah, but they could not drink any water there. The water was bitter (marah), and that was why the place was called Marah.

15:24 The people complained to Moses. 'What shall we drink?' they demanded.

15:25 When [Moses] cried out to God, He showed him a certain tree. [Moses] threw it into the water, and the water became drinkable.

It was there that [God] taught them a decree and a law [Chok U’mishpat], and there He tested them. 15:26 He said, 'If you obey God your Lord and do what is upright in His eyes, carefully heeding all His commandments and keeping all His decrees, then I will not strike you with any of the sicknesses that I brought on Egypt. I am God who heals you.'

# Rambam, Guide to Perplexed Book 3:32

#  The first commandment after the departure from Egypt was given at Marah, in the following words, "If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in His sight, and wilt give ear to His commandments" (Exod. 15:26)." There he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them" (ibid. ver. 25). According to the true traditional explanation, Sabbath and civil laws were revealed at Marah: "statute" alludes to Sabbath, and "ordinance" to civil laws, which are the means of removing injustice. The chief object of the Law, as has been shown by us, is the teaching of truths; to which the truth of the creation from nothing belongs. It is known that the object of the law of Sabbath is to confirm and to establish this principle, as we have shown in this treatise (Part. II. chap. xxxi.). In addition to the teaching of truths the Law aims at the removal of injustice from mankind.

7) According to Rambam, what happened at Mara? Why did the Jews need to have this intro to Mitzvot before Sinai?

8) Why were Shabbos and laws of Justice chosen as the intro to mitzvot? Name 3 mitzvot you would have expected to be taught at Mara, but were not?

9) How does MJE introduce mitzvot and its lifestyle to new participants? What does the MJE method share in common with Mara? What is different, if anything?

10) What are the pro and cons of this methodology?

11) Jane MJE’er has been observant for three years. She meets Samantha who has come for the first time to a Friday night dinner. Samantha tells Jane that she may have to leave early as she has a party at the Firehouse on Columbus Ave later. Jane feels a little “judgy” inside as she says, “Great!” to Samantha. Why does Jane feel “judgy” at all as she herself would have been doing the exact same thing three years ago?!?