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Halakha

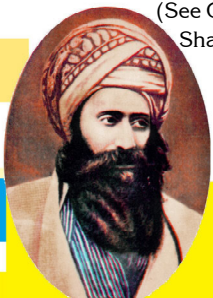
Combatting Desires

It says in Ohr LeShion that there are many types of desires. It is not possible for a person to not have any desire whatsoever. Some have a desire for food, while others desire money, and so on. The fact that someone does not eat very much does not mean that he does not have any desires, but rather it means that he does not have a desire for food but does have desires for something else.

Breaking one's desires requires much effort, and must be done slowly and with wisdom. For example, a person who desires wealth, should increase the amount of charity that he gives, until money no longer has importance in his eyes. Or a person who has a great desire for food should gradually diminish the amount of tasty foods he consumes, till the desire for tasty food diminishes and tasty and bland foods have the same importance in his eyes.

In order to overcome a desire, a person requires patience and reasoning, because combatting desire is like two people of equal strength battling with each other. Neither one is able to overcome the other. That is why it requires patience, because the one who can hold out just a little longer is the one who will win.

(See Ohr LeShion, Hokhma Umussar, Sha'ar Hammiddoth, Maamar 6)



מדרש בן איש חי
Midrash BEN ISH HAI

5779 פרשת ויחי

Parasha

Wayhi: Meriting Torah and Wealth

זְבֻלֹן יָחֹף לְחוּף יָמִים יָשֶׁן Zebulun will dwell on the shores of the seas (Bereshith 49:13). Why does it say 'seas' (Yamim) in the plural?

There are two kinds of seas. One of them is the sea of the Babylonian Talmud, and the other is the sea in the literal sense, the one on which ships carrying the merchandise of businessmen sail. The tribe of Zebulun were wealthy businessmen and supported the tribe of Yissakhar who would sit and study Torah. The one who supports has a portion in the reward of the Torah that the Talmid Hakham (Torah scholar) studies.

Our Rabbis tell us that when a rich person who supports a Talmid Hakham goes to the world to come, he will be told to take the reward of studying certain *Masekhtoth* (Tomes) of the Gemara. The rich man will respond that he never studied them. They will reply that since he supported someone who studied it, he receives reward as if he actually learnt it himself.

That is why the word *Yamim* (seas) is in the plural. The letters of the word *Yamim* in Hebrew (ימים) are actually the word *Yam* twice, (*Yam Yam* [sea sea]). This refers to the two seas that Zebulun merited to receive: the sea of Torah and the sea of material wealth.

(See Addereth Eliyahu, Parashath Wayhi)



For the Refuah Shelemah of
Yeshayahu Ben Regina

Thinking about Business on Shabbath

Maran Yoseph Karo, z"l, states in the Shulḥan 'Arukh that just thinking about one's business on Shabbath is permitted. However, because of 'Onegh Shabbath (the commandment to delight in Shabbath), it is a Miṣwah not to think about one's business at all on Shabbath. In fact, one should consider all of one's work to be already completed.

Ḥakham Yoseph Ḥayyim, 'a"ḥ, mentions in Ben Ish Ḥai that one who thinks on Shabbath about work he intends to do during the week will find that his work will not be blessed. This, he adds, is because he thought about it on Shabbath.

(See Shulḥan 'Arukh 306: 8. Ben Ish Ḥai, 2nd year, Parashath Wayyishlah, Oth 4)



A Kohen Who Does Not Pronounce Letters Correctly

A Kohen who does not know how to articulate the letters correctly, such as saying Alef for 'Ahn or Heh for Ḥeth and vice versa, should not do the Birkath Kohanim (Priestly Blessing). If the whole city mispronounces these letters, however, he can do the Birkath Kohanim.

If a Kohen goes to another place and reads differently to the people of that place, he should not raise up his hands (and do the Priestly Blessing). Even if the people of that place are accustomed to that kind of reading, for instance, many of those whose reading is different come to that place, he should still not do the Birkath Kohanim. He should step out of the Sanctuary before the Ḥazzan reaches *Reṣei*, because we are concerned about the opinion that says that if they are accustomed to him, he can do the Birkath Kohanim.

If there is no Kohen in the Synagogue except for him, however, and they are accustomed to him, he should do the Birkath Kohanim. This is because we do not want them to miss the opportunity to have Birkath Kohanim said.

(See Shulḥan 'Arukh 128:33. Kaf Ḥaḥayyim ibid, Oth 191-192)

Women's Corner - by Rabbanith Ruth Menashe 'a"ḥ

What Else Shall We Pray For?

The Shabbath candles allude to the abundance that women, through their Tefilloth (prayers), can infuse into the world. We mentioned previously that we should pray for our children to be Talmidei Ḥakhamim and for the well-being of our husbands. Being an auspicious time for our prayers to be heard, what else should we pray for?

Ḥakham Mordekhai Eliyahu, 'a"ḥ, writes (Derekh HaTorah 3:10), that in addition to our personal prayers we should include a prayer for the entire Jewish people ('Am Yisrael). Nowadays, the Jewish people find themselves in very difficult straits and require much prayer in order that the Al-mighty may have mercy on us.

We should pray that G-d will spare the Jewish people any kind of suffering or illnesses, G-d forbid, and that we will overcome our enemies. We must fervently pray that all bad decrees will be nullified and that we will merit to see the coming of Mashiyah Sidqenu (the Messiah) and the rebuilding of Ereṣ Yisrael (the Land of Israel).

(To Be Continued)