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By the Hakham, Rabbi Ya'aqob Menashe

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Halakha

Eating a Crumb of Ḥameš (חמץ) on Pesah

One is forbidden to eat even the smallest particle of Ḥameš on Pesah (Passover). Therefore, after one finishes eating Ḥameš in the morning before Pesah, one must clean one's teeth thoroughly and should floss to ensure that all the crevices in one's teeth have been thoroughly cleaned and that no Ḥameš remains, whatsoever.

There is a story about someone who was very meticulous in the keeping of all the laws pertaining to Pesah. On the first night of Pesah, after he went to sleep, he had a dream in which a man came to him and said, "Woe to the man who ate Ḥameš on Pesah". He awoke in fright, and while crying bitter tears fell asleep again. He dreamed again and was told that this was a crumb of the Ḥameš that he ate in the morning before Pesah which had remained between his teeth. While he was chewing the Maṣṣah (מצה) on the night of Pesah, this crumb loosened and attached itself to the Maṣṣah and as a result he was eating Maṣṣah with Ḥameš on the night of Pesah.

This should be a lesson for us all to ensure that we take the matter of cleaning our teeth seriously, to do it thoroughly.

(See Ben Ish Hai, 1st year,
Parashath Šaw, Oth 8)



מדרש בן איש חי
Midrash BEN ISH HAI

5779 פרשת שמני

Parasha

Shemini: Why are the Offerings Mentioned in This Order?

קחו שעיר-עזים לחטאת ועגל וכבש בני-שנה תמימים לעולה Take a he-goat ... and a calf and a sheep (Wayyiqra 9:3). Why are the offerings mentioned in this particular order?

Our Rabbis of blessed memory said that the he-goat (*Se'ir*) came to atone for the sale of Yosef HaŠaddiq (Joseph), 'a"h, because the brothers slaughtered a he-goat and dipped Joseph's coat in its blood. The calf (*Eghel*) comes to atone for the sin of the golden calf.

In the Midrash Rabbah it says that the Jewish people are likened to the people of Cuth who would go to their neighbor's house and only ask for one small onion. When the neighbor brought the onion they would add, "Is it possible to eat an onion without bread?", so the neighbor would bring bread. They would then ask, "Is it possible to eat without drinking?", and they would bring them a drink, and so on.

So too the Jewish people, ask forgiveness for the lesser sin first and then go to the more serious one. They start with the sin against Joseph, because Reuben, Binyamin, Menashe and Ephraim were not involved, and it was a sin of their forefathers – not of their own. After that they ask forgiveness for their own sin, which everyone except the tribe of Lewi participated in.

(See Ben Ish Hai Derashoth, Parashath Shemini)

For the 'Illui Neshamah of
Yeshayahu Ben David & Regina, 'a"h

The Ba'al Habbayith Leads Birkath Hamazon on Pesah

On the night of the Seder, the custom is for the Ba'al Habbayith (the head of the household) to lead the Zimun and Birkath Hamazon, instead of one of the guests, even though at other times he honors one of the guests with this. The Rama explains that it is so because it is written, *Tob 'Ayin (one with a generous eye) will be blessed*".

The Gemara of Sotah (38b) states that we should not read *will be blessed*, but should read *will bless*. And the Ba'al Habbayith is considered to have a generous eye since he said *Kol Dikhfin Yethei Weyekhol* (all those who are hungry shall come and eat).

It should be noted that even though this is the custom that we follow, the Aghudah states that if a guest does lead, one need not be concerned.

(See Rama, 479:1. Kaf Haḥayyim, ibid, Oth 19 & 20. Maamar Mordekhai [Eliyahu], Hilkhoth Ḥaggim, 11:150)

Stealing a Minuscule Amount

One is forbidden from stealing even the smallest amount from anyone, Jew or non Jew. If, however, the amount of the theft was so insignificant, that no one would be concerned, such as taking a small sliver of wood from a bundle of wood or a fence to use as a toothpick, it is permitted. Nevertheless, it is considered to be a pious act to refrain from doing so.

If, however, one enters a friend's house and takes a sliver of wood from an item in the house which will cause the item to depreciate in value, it is forbidden, even though the sliver itself is of no practical value. If it was taken from an old and broken item in the house, that the owner clearly would not be concerned about, it is permitted, but one should avoid even this as an act of piety. One must be particularly careful to avoid doing so in Synagogues, because the property contained in the Synagogue is dedicated for holy purposes.

Even stealing with the intention of returning the item, for the purpose of troubling the other person, or for the purpose of teasing him, is likewise prohibited.

(See Ben Ish Hai, 1st year, Parashath Ki Theṣei, Oth 7 & 8. Q. Sh. 'Arukh [R' Ganzfried] 182:1-3.)

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

The Hidden Power of the Shabbath Candles

Our Rabbis of blessed memory state in the Gemara of Shabbath, that the Shabbath candles are along the same lines as the candles in the Temple. Just as Aharon HaKohen, 'a"ḥ, through his kindling of the Menorah, spread the light of the Torah to the Jewish people, so too the women should pray that their husbands and children will be learned in the Torah. They should ask G-d to enlighten them with the wisdom of the Torah.

Ḥakham Ya'aqob Ḥayyim Sofer, 'a"ḥ, the Kaf Haḥayyim writes that at the actual time of performing the *Miṣwah* (precept) of lighting the Shabbath candles, our Tefilloth (prayers) are more likely to be heard.

Just like the candles are a source of illumination, so too the women will merit to have children who are learned in the Torah, as it says, *Ki Ner Miṣwah WeThorah Ohr* (for the commandment is a candle, and the Torah is light).

(To be continued)