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Pirke Aboth 3: No Reason for Jealousy

דע...לאן אתה הולך...למקום עפר רמה ותולעה
Look at... where you are going to...a place of dust, worms and maggots (Aboth 3:1). When a person considers where his final resting place will be, he can save himself from the very negative trait of jealousy in the areas of wealth and position.

If a person is jealous of another, be it over wealth, be it about the other's position which he also envies, we could understand the jealousy if one's life were eternal. But life is short, and when we leave the world we leave behind everything for others and go to a place where every one is equal in greatness, in as much as wealth and dress are concerned (excluding, of course, greatness in Torah study).

When people are jealous of another, it behooves them to realize that the other person has no more than they do. When he leaves the world, he will leave all his possessions behind for others, just as they will. If so, there is no reason to be jealous.

(See Ḥasdei Aboth 3:1)



מדרש בן איש חי
Midrash BEN ISH HAI

5779 פרשת אמור

Parasha

Emor: The Torah Must Be New

"והקרבתם מנחה חדשה לה'" And you shall offer a new meal offering to G-d" (Wayyiqra 23:16). The reason this offering is called "new", is because it was the first offering that was brought from the new crop of wheat, on Shabu'oth.

The Ḥida, quoting the Keli Ya'qar says that the term "Minḥa Ḥadasha" (new meal offering), is a hint to the Torah, because the Torah should appear to be "new" in our eyes, every day. We should look at each day as if it were the day of the giving of the Torah. Proof of this is the Birkath HaTorah (blessing on the Torah) that we recite every morning. It is all recited in the past tense (chose us from all the nations, and gave us His Torah), because it refers to the revelation and giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai. However, we end in the present tense (Blessed are You ... who gives the Torah), because we must look at each day as if the secrets of the Torah are being revealed to us on that day.

Razal say that a person should contribute to the Torah. When someone writes Ḥiddushim (original thoughts) on the Torah, it is considered as if he brought a sacrifice, as is brought down in Leb Aryeh. We can now understand the verse, "And you shall offer a new meal offering to G-d", to mean that when you make Ḥiddushim in the Torah, it comes as an offering of atonement.

(See Penei Dawid, Parashath Emor)

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

Adding to the Blessings in the 'Amidah

When praying the weekday 'Amidah, if one wishes to make any additions to any of the thirteen middle blessings of Baqqashoth (petitions) of the 'Amidah (from Attah Hōnen till Shomeya' Tefillah), one may do so. It is done in the following manner:

If one wishes to pray for someone who is ill, he should pray for him in the blessing of Refa-enu (heal us). If a person is in need of Parnassah (livelihood), he should add his request during Birkath Hashanim (Barkhenu/Barekh 'Alenu). In the blessing of Shomeya' Tefillah (the One who hears all prayers), however, one can make any request, because the blessing of Shomeya' Tefilla includes all requests.

When adding one's portions, one should start reading the blessing the way it is in the Siddurim and then add one's additional requests, before ending the blessing. One should not, however, mention one's requests first and then start the blessing.

(See Shulhan 'Arukh 119:1 with Rama)

Where to Bury Ribbi Shim'on Bar Yoḥai

In the Adra Zoṭa there is a special description of how Ribbi Shim'on Bar Yoḥai (Rashbi) left the world. There was a holy flame around him and the house was filled with a good scent. The mighty people from the town of Şippori wanted to take Ribbi Shim'on's body to bury him in their town.

The townspeople from Meron who were not as strong and were powerless against them cried loudly that they did not have the merit to bury Ribbi Shim'on Bar Yoḥai in Meron. However, Ribbi Shim'on Bar Yoḥai decided himself where he should be buried. It is described in the Adra that Ribbi Shim'on's bed rose up and went by itself to a cave in Meron.

A voice came from Heaven which said, "Come up and gather for the Hillula of Ribbi Shim'on. Let peace come and they will rest on their beds". Rabbi Mordekhai Eliyahu, 'a"ḥ, explains that this means, "Do not fight and do not argue, but come together people of Şippori and Meron, because this is the will of the Şaddiq (righteous one)".

(See Dibrei Mordekhai, Lagh Ba'Omer)

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

Message for Lagh La'Omer: Fall and Rise

Ribbi Aqiba, the shepherd who could not read the alphabet, yet rose to be a Torah giant, lost 24,000 students in a short space of time. Almost overnight, his outstanding and revered scholars who dedicated themselves to the study of Torah, were gone.

How would we describe Ribbi Aqiba's emotions and inner thoughts, seeing 12,000 pairs of his beloved students perish in the plague? We would imagine that his whole world collapsed. All of a sudden the world in which he lived was desolate.

What did he do? He started all over again. We could easily have "forgiven" Ribbi 'Aqiba, had he given up. We would have totally understood him if he had turned away in despair.

Ribbi 'Aqiba went to the south to teach Torah to five sages: Ribbi Meir, Ribbi Yehudah, Ribbi Yose, Ribbi Shim'on and Ribbi El'azar Ben Shammuwa'. They became luminaries who dispersed the darkness from the world with the fire of the Torah. In fact, the holy Tanna, Ribbi Shim'on Bar Yoḥai, who revealed the holy Zohar, was one of those five sages.

What a profound lesson for all of us. Ribbi 'Aqiba is a living example of one who did not succumb to misfortune, or life's challenges and hardships. He rose from the depths and endured. We too, wherever we are, whatever difficulties and challenges that life may send us, must persevere and emerge with redoubled strength and courage.