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When Is it No Longer Considered to Be Yiḥud?

As we mentioned previously, King David forbade a man to be alone with a Jewish woman, whom he was permitted to marry. Later, Hillel and Shammai prohibited a man to be alone with a non-Jewish woman also.

A woman may not be alone with men, even if they are observant Jews, unless one of their wives is with them. Similarly, two women may not be alone with men, unless one of their wives is with them. However, three Jewish women may be alone with three or more men. All these cases assume the men to be Jewish.

There are those who permit two religious Jewish men to be alone with one Jewish woman during the day in a city. At night, however, or outside the city (in a field) even during the day, three or more religious men are required. Even though there are those who disagree, this is the generally accepted custom. If the men are not particular about religious observance, however, she is prohibited from being alone with them, even if there are ten of them.

These are basic requirements in Halakha. As in all cases, common sense dictates that one should look at every situation separately, to ascertain whether one should be extra cautious, especially in such a sensitive area.

(See 'Od yoseph Hai,
Parashath Shoftim, Oth 4-7)

Huqqath: The Soul Desires the Sparks of Holiness in Food

וּנְפִשְׁנוּ קִצָּה בִלְחֶם הַקֶּלֶקֶל "Our soul is disgusted with this insubstantial (Qeloqel) bread" (Bamidbar 21:5). It says in 'Od Yosef Hai Derashoth, that it is difficult to understand how come the Children of Israel complained again about the Manna, after they complained previously, and were punished for it, in Parashath Beha'alothkha (Bamidbar 11:4-10).

He answers that their intention here, was not to denigrate the Manna, but rather, they were expressing their dissatisfaction over the fact that the Nefesh (soul) got no pleasure from the Manna. The Nefesh gets satisfaction from food which contains sparks of holiness. All the soul desires, since it is purely spiritual, is to separate the sparks of holiness from the food. By eating the food, the person elevates the sparks of holiness and the food (the physical portion), gets ingested in his body as nourishment.

Since the Manna came from Heaven, it was entirely pure with nothing bad. As a result, there were no mixtures that contained sparks of holiness together with the bad. The Nefesh could not get any pleasure from it, since there was nothing to separate. This is akin to wishing to eat a nut, but finding that when one removes the shell, the inside is empty. That is why the word *wlw* "Qeloqel" is used, because it denotes being light, as in lacking in substance.

(See 'Addereth Eliyahu, Parashath Huqqath. 'Od Yosef Hai, Parashath Huqqath)



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Fasting for a Parent on the Eve of Shabbath

The Mishnah Berurah quotes an opinion that one who fasted for the first time on a weekday, on the occasion of the anniversary of the passing of one's parents, or on the eve of Rosh Hodesh or other private fast and, therefore, ended the fast after the emergence of three stars, must also complete the fast until after the emergence of the stars, even when it falls on 'Ereb Shabbath (Friday). He brings a dissenting opinion, however, and rules that one who has difficulty with the fast can eat right after leaving the Synagogue, even though it is still day.

The ruling in Ben Ish Hai, however, is that a private fast that must be on a specific day, such as a fast on a Yahrzeit (anniversary of the passing of a parent), or the fast of the 7th of Adar (for Moshe Rabbeinu, 'a"h), or the eve of Rosh Hodesh, may not be completed until after the emergence of the stars but must be ended early. Since these fasts need to be accepted the previous day at Minḥa, one should stipulate then that they will be ended early. If the private fast can be held on any day, it may not be held on a Friday.

(See Ben Ish Hai, 2nd year, Parashath Lekh Lekha, Oth 23. Mishnah Berurah, 249:22. See also Rama 249:4)

Can a Doctor Treat His Parents?

Honoring one's parents includes not causing them any wound. A doctor or dentist may be involved in deciding the treatment for his parent, but may not do anything himself that causes bleeding of any sort, even giving an injection. This assumes that it is not an emergency.

In an emergency, if there is no one else competent available other than the child, he may perform the necessary treatment for the parent. This assumes that there is no one else available who is able to perform the procedure other than he, and that it cannot be postponed to a later time (because of the danger or because the parent is in great pain), when there will be another suitable doctor available.

If there is someone else or it could be postponed, he may not perform the procedure on a parent.

(See Shemoth 21:15. Sh. 'A. Yoreh De'ah with Rama, 241:1-2)



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

Eating to Live, Part 2

Our Ḥakhamim said, concerning the topic of eating, that our bodies are similar to a burning fire. Just as fire needs wood to burn, so too food is an essential component, without which our body cannot exist.

By the same token, overloading a fire with wood, would interfere with the ability of the fire to burn correctly. So too, overloading our stomachs is detrimental to our health.

The Rambam stressed that illnesses befall a person as a direct result of either eating the wrong foods or by overeating (this even includes foods which are good and healthy). Our eating habits – how, what and why we eat – can be indicative of our spiritual state.

Many righteous people were known to be satisfied with minimal amounts of food, since their primary goal when eating, was to sustain their bodies in order to be able to serve the Creator.

This is perhaps a point to ponder the next time we are tempted to over indulge.