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By the Hakham
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Preparation Can Bring Holiness to Physical Actions

There are different types of Hakhanoth (preparations). One of them is preparing to do a commandment (Mishvah), and that itself is considered to be a Mishvah. It is good practice to train oneself to say, before performing any commandment, that he is preparing for the performance of the commandment.

For example, before eating one should say, "I am going to eat and drink so that my body will be strong and healthy in order to serve G-d". Similarly, before sleeping one should say that one is going to bed in order for one's mind to be clear and order to serve G-d. Before conducting one's business one should say, "I am making the effort to make a profit in business in order to provide for my household, as my Creator commanded me, and so that I may be able to perform the commandment of charity and Gemiluth Hasadim, and all other commandments, correctly. So too, when a person builds a new home or makes (purchases) new clothes, or any action that a person does, he should accustom himself to state that he is preparing for the performance of the commandment.

When a person follows this path, his words bear fruit and bring spirituality and holiness to all these physical matters. In addition, since, as we mentioned, it is also considered to be a Mishvah, he gets reward for these words that he spoke.

(Pele Yo'eş, Hakhanah)



מדרש בן איש חי
Midrash BEN ISH HAI

5779 פרשת פינחס

Pinhas: He Became a New Person to Receive the Priesthood

פִּינָחָס בֶּן-אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן-אֶהֱרֹן הַכֹּהֵן הָשִׁיב אֶת-חַמְתִּי מֵעַל
בְּנִי-יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקִנְאוֹ אֶת-קִנְאָתִי בְּתוֹכָם "Pinhas, the son of
El'azar, the son of Aaron the Priest, turned away My wrath
from the Children of Israel, by being zealous for Me among
them" (Bamidbar 25:11). This, of course, refers to his
zealous action in the matter of Zimri, a Prince of the tribe of
Shim'on, and Cozbi, the daughter of the king of Midian.

The Alshikh says that when a person performs a precept (nved(, it goes without saying that he receives merits for it, but furthermore, his entire being acquires additional holiness, and he becomes like a new person because of the holiness that is infused into him. That is why G-d gave us 248 commandments, which correspond to the 248 limbs in our bodies, so that we can sanctify the physical aspects of our being.

As it pertains to Pinhas, we see that he was willing to risk his life, to be killed doing a Qiddush Hashem (sanctifying G-d's Name). This act was done utilizing his entire body and soul. As a result he was infused with holiness throughout his body, making him like a brand new person who was fit to receive the Priesthood. As we know, Pinhas only received G-d's covenant of Priesthood, on account of his actions in this matter. In the previous Parasha we are told that he took a Romah (spear). Romah (xng(in Gematria is 248.

(See Alshikh, Parashath Pinhas)

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Giving Laundry to a Non Jew

One might think that the prohibition of not doing laundry from Shabbath Hazon (or Rosh Hodesh Ab, for Ashkenazim) till after Tish'ah BeAb (the 9th of Ab), only applies to laundry which is done in order for the items to be used during this period, since one may not wear freshly laundered items. In fact, doing laundry is prohibited, even if one does not intend to wear or use the items till after the 9th of Ab.

One may not give the clothes to a non-Jew to be laundered during this time either, because it distracts us from the mourning. Even giving it to a non Jew with the instruction not to wash them till after Tish'ah BeAb is forbidden.

Similarly, one may not tell a non-Jew to take the clothes him/herself, in order to wash them.

(See Shulhan 'Arukh, with Rama, 551:3. Kaf Hachayyim, 551:50)

A Mezuzah in an Unclean Place

A Mezuzah is not placed on the entrance to a bathroom, bath house or the like. In a place where there is Tinuf (filth) occasionally, such as where there are babies and little children, it is appropriate to cover the Mezuzah.

When we speak about Tinuf in front of a Mezuzah, this assumes that it just happens from time to time. However, doing anything shameful on a regular basis in front of a Mezuzah, while relying on its cover, is forbidden.

In a place which is clean, the Mezuzah should be uncovered. The Taz says that it should be placed in glass so that G-d's Name can still be seen, but at the same time, it will prevent G-d's Name (Shad-dai) from getting erased by the constant touching.

(See also *A Mezuzah Inside a Room Where Husband and Wife Sleep*).

(See Sh. 'A. Yoreh De'ah with Rama 286:4-5. Taz 286:5)

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

Our Mouth, the "Battle Field" Part 2

Hakham Yosef Hayyim 'a"n, explains that just as the power of a worm is in its mouth – a soft worm can easily consume hard wood– so too, the power of the Jewish people lies in their mouth. The study of the Torah is done through the use of the mouth.

The mundane act of eating and drinking, which can be a holy act when done according to the guidelines of the Torah, is done with the use of the mouth as well. Of course, our Tefilloth (prayers) emanate from the mouth too.

Now we can understand why so many of us struggle in the area of eating. Since the mouth has the ability to lift us to incredible levels of Qedusha, holiness, it is the most obvious place for our evil inclination to "get us" and make us stumble.

The mouth may be described as a "battle field". Reciting blessings over the food and keeping in mind that we eat in order to serve our Creator are some of the tools to win the "battle". From one perspective, a fast day is a day when we are detached from the physical, everyday act of eating and drinking. Perhaps, specifically on such a day, when there is a "cease fire" between us and the evil inclination, we should make a conscious effort to remind ourselves of this powerful weapon; our mouths.