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By the Hakham
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5779 פרשת כי-תבוא

Eating Before Hearing the Shofar

One may not eat before hearing the Shofar on Rosh Hashanah. So what should someone who is unwell or weak and cannot wait till he leaves the Synagogue after prayers, or whose condition does not permit him to concentrate on the prayer and hear the Shofar till he eats something, do? He should make Qiddush and eat a Shi'ur (1 oz.) of Kaakat, crackers & the like, and drink a little tea or coffee. However, this must be done in private.

In a case where the Thoqea' (the one who blows the Shofar for the congregation) has to also blow for an individual who is unwell, and unable to wait to eat till the prayers in the Synagogue are over and the Thoqea' comes to him, what are the options? Should the Thoqea' come and blow for him in the morning before going to Synagogue, so that the one who is unwell can hear the Shofar before eating? In such a case we would run into the problem that according to the opinion that precepts do not require intent, he will have fulfilled his obligation of Shofar when blowing for the individual who is unwell.

Since he is the Thoqea' of the Synagogue and must bless and blow the Shofar on behalf of the congregation, he must blow in the Synagogue first. Therefore, the one who is unwell should eat before hearing the Shofar, if he needs to, and he will recite the blessing himself when the Thoqea' comes to blow for him.

(See Kaf HaChayyim 588,
Oth 11 & 585, Oth 25 & 26)



מדרש בן איש חי
Midrash BEN ISH HAI

Ki Thabo: Making the Blessings, Not Admonitions Occur

"Moses וַיֹּצֵן מֹשֶׁה אֶת-הָעָם בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר (commanded) the people on that day" (Debarim 27:11). Rabbenu the Hida, 'a"h, writes that the acronym in Hebrew of the second through the sixth word (Moshe Eth Ha'am Bayyom HaHu) forms the word MeAhaba (out of love). This hints at the fact that if the Jewish people love each other, they will be saved from all the curses mentioned in the Parasha.

The blessings that are mentioned in this Parasha, will only come when the Jewish people love one another. It says in the Zohar Hadash that all the admonitions in the Parasha of Ki Thabo, occurred at the time of the destruction of the second Temple. We know that the Second Temple was destroyed because of the sin of Sinath Hinnam (baseless hatred). The Gematria (numerical value) of the word Hinnam (baseless), is 98, which is the total number of curses mentioned in this Parasha.

The Alshikh HaQadosh, 'a"h, mentions that when we are united, we merit to inherit the Land of Israel. When the opposite is true, however, G-d acts with us measure for measure, and disperses us among the nations (ibid 28:64). We see from this the importance of loving each other, and may we see, as a result, all the blessings we have been promised, as well as the final Geulla (redemption), Amen.

(See Naḥal Qedumim, Parashath Ki Thabo. Alshikh, Ki Thabo)

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How Sins Are Forgiven

The Rambam (Maimonides) in Hilkhoth Teshubah (the laws of repentance), states that when an individual's sins are being weighed on one side of the scale, against his merits on the other side, the sins that he committed once or twice are not added to the side of the sins. However, if the sins that he committed three times or more are found to be more numerous than his merits, then even the sins that he committed once or twice, which were originally omitted, are now added to the others and he is judged on all of them.

If, on the other hand, a person's merits are found to be equal to or more numerous than the sins he committed three or more times, G-d forgives all his sins in the following manner:

Since the sins committed once or twice were not included, the ones committed three times are now considered the *first* and are forgiven. Since they have now been forgiven, a sin committed four times is now considered to be a *first* and is also forgiven. And so it continues till all the sins have been forgiven.

(See Rambam, Hilkhoth Teshubah, 3:5)

Men & Women's Obligation about Speaking after the First Blowing

As mentioned previously, one may speak between the blessing and first blowings of the Shofar, about a matter that is necessary for the blowing of the Shofar, but one may not speak about any other matter, even about the prayer. However, after the first blowings have been completed, one may speak about matters necessary for both the Shofar and the prayer.

Other than that, neither the one who blows the Shofar, nor the congregation who are fulfilling their obligation of Shofar by hearing him blow, may speak about matters unrelated to the Shofar or the prayers from when the blessings are recited till the end of the 100th call of the Shofar. Since Sephardim blow 101 calls, it is appropriate to avoid speaking till after the 101st call also.

This applies to all men and Ashkenazi women who are obligated in the blessing of the Shofar. Since according to Sephardi Halakha, women are exempt from blessing on the Shofar, if a Sephardic woman has a specific reason why she needs to speak, she may do so.

(See Rama, 592:3. Kaf HaChayyim ibid, Oth 24. Mishnah Berurah ibid, 14. Maamar Mordekhai, H"R M. Eliyahu, 39:24)

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

Words that Penetrate

The great Hakham Yoseph Hayyim 'a"h, the holy Ben Ish Hai, in his profound wisdom composed his famous work: *Laws for Women*, which he wrote for the women of his generation. He touched on numerous topics applying specifically to women, with deep affection and sensitivity.

He wrote that during the days of repentance in the months of Elul and Tashri, as well as on the eve of Rosh Hashana women should read the following. I chose to translate selected parts of the Hakham's words and hope they will touch your heart the way they touched mine.

"Oh, my heart, repent for all your deeds and wake up... the day will come and you will regret, saying: 'Why did I reject words of rebuke and not listen to my teacher's advice? Remember your Creator at your youth, before your soul returns to the One who gave it...'

(To be continued)

