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5780 פרשת נח

Why Did Noah Not Pray to Save His Generation?

Rabbenu Bahayye (Bahya), like many Mefarshim, states that the question begging to be asked, is why didn't Noah, who is described by the Torah as being righteous, pray on behalf of the people of his generation to save them. We see that Abraham Abinu 'a'h, prayed repeatedly on behalf of the wicked people of Sedom (Sodom). Indeed, we see that the Prophets and others prayed on behalf of their generations.

The answer is that Noah was not remiss in not praying for the people of his generation. Rather, it was because Noah understood that for the world to exist there must be at least 10 righteous people, as Hazal (our Rabbis of Blessed memory) tell us. Indeed, G-d would not have brought the Mabbul (the great flood) on the earth had there been ten righteous individuals.

Infact, the only people permitted to enter the Ark were Noah and his family, who were a total of only eight. As a matter of fact, Abraham Abinu also stopped praying to G-d when he realized that there were not ten righteous people in Sedom. Not only that, but the people in Noah's time had been given 120 years warning to change their ways (which was the time it took to build the Ark), but paid no heed.

(See Rabbenu Bahayye
on the Torah, 6:14)



מדרש בן איש חי
Midrash BEN ISH HAI

Not Making Qiddush Where the Lights Are Kindled

There is an opinion that Qiddush may only be made where the Shabbath lights were kindled, whereas another opinion states that the two commandments of Qiddush and candles are not connected. According to the second opinion, if one is more comfortable eating in the courtyard one may do so even though the candles in the house can not be seen from there, since the candles were given for us as a delight and not in order to suffer. Maran Yosef Qaro, 'a'h, states that this latter opinion appears logical.

The Mishnah Berurah comments that this only applies if there is substantial suffering if one eats in the house and also quotes an opinion, that it is better to make the Qiddush in the house before completing the meal in the courtyard.

It states in the Kaf Haḥayyim, however, that according to the Zohar and the Ari z"l, Qiddush must be done where the Shabbath lights are lit. As such, if one wishes to eat in the courtyard or on the roof, one must light the candles there, taking care to have them placed inside a glass covering so that they will not go out and one will be able to see them. Hakham Yoseph Ḥayyim, 'a'h, states in Ben Ish Ḥai that, in view of the importance of lighting where the lights are according to the Qabbalah, one should strive to do so a priori. Only if one has no other choice may one rely on the second opinion permitting eating in a place other than where the lights are lit.

(See Shulḥan 'Arukh 273:7. See Ben Ish Ḥai, 2nd yr. Parashath Bereshith, Oth 9. Mishnah Berurah 273:32. Kaf Haḥayyim 273, Oth 47)

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Sitting on a Bench with Holy Books on It

There is a discussion in the Gemara (Menaḥoth 32b) as to whether one is permitted to sit on a bed/couch which has a Sefer Torah on it. The Halakha is that one may not. The question then is whether other holy books, especially ones which are printed and not written on parchment, fall into the same category.

The prevailing opinion is that this rule applies to all religious books, even those which are printed. As such, one must be particular not to sit on a chair, bench or bed (or lie on a bed) which has holy books on it. One should apply this to siddurim (prayer books) also. If something is placed under the books, which makes an interruption between the bench and the books, it is permitted when necessary.

Since there is a minority opinion that printed books do not fall into this category, one should follow the strict opinion, but in a case of extenuating circumstances only, one may be lenient.

(See Sh. 'A. Yoreh De'ah with Rama 282:7. Ṭaz ibid, 4. Shakh ibid, 9. Kaf Haḥayyim 40, Oth 16)

Leaving Peeled Garlic or Onions Overnight

One should not eat garlic or onions if they remained overnight fully peeled. If they were only partially peeled, however, even if only a little of their peel remained, they may be eaten.

If they were fully peeled but mixed with other foods they are permitted to be eaten, even if left overnight. It does not matter if they were cooked or pickled, or if their peels were completely removed, they are still permitted.

When purchasing garlic from a store one must be careful to check that they have all or part of their peel on them and are not sold fully peeled.

(See Niddah 17a. Zibhei Sedeq 116, Oth 61 [H"R Abadallah Somekh, 'a"n], Ben Ish Hai 2nd year, Parashath Pinḥas, Oth 14)



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

The Maker of a Beautiful Me, Part 2

The holy Ben Ish Hai cautions us that, when we see someone not created so perfectly, to remember that, at some point in life, it may be that we will lose this perfect state, Heaven forbid.

To illustrate this, he tells of an old man who walked slowly and heavily. He was encountered by a youthful young man who made an insulting comment to him: "Come closer and I will remove the metal chains which are attached to your feet." The elderly man, in his wisdom, told him: "This is the will of the Creator. No one can remove these from my feet. However, He who put these metal chains on my feet, has prepared them for you as well..."

My dear friends, there are two profound lessons we can learn from this. We should sincerely examine and ask ourselves how we react to children and adults who seem unattractive in our eyes, after all, beauty is in the eyes of the beholder. Only G-d, in His infinite wisdom, knows His reasons for creating us the way we are. If a man of the caliber of Ribbi Shimon ben Elazar slipped and made a degrading comment, how careful must we be with our speech and words.

Secondly, let us remember that our outside appearance is the creation of the Craftsman above. However, what really counts at the end of the day, is not the externals but the beautiful inner "me" which we, ourselves, create.