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By the Hakham

Rabbi Ya'aqob Menashe, 'a"h

A PROJECT OF MIDRASH BEN ISH HAI (MIDRASH.ORG)

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How the Woman Sanctifies the Shabbath Table

In says in Ben Ish Hai, that after the lady of the house has set the table and placed the loaves of bread on the table with a cover below them and a cover above them, she should place both her hands on the table and say (Yehazqel, 41:22), וַיִּדְבֶּר, "And he said to me, 'This is the table before the L-rd' ".

This action sanctifies the table. It is in keeping with the custom mentioned in the Zohar, during a Milah, where we say, "This is the chair of Eliyahu HaNabi (Elijah the Prophet), zl"t", concerning the chair of Elijah the Prophet which is present at a Milah.

Maran Mordekhai Eliyahu, zs"l, explains just as at a Berith Milah, Elijah the Prophet only comes if we say these words, but not if we don't, so too, only if the wife says, "This is the table before the L-rd", does holiness rest on it. If she doesn't say it, the holiness does not rest on it.

(See Ben Ish Hai, 2nd year, Wayera, Oth 17. Derekh HaTorah, Shabbath, 7:7)

5782 פרשת אמר

Emor: G-d is Constantly Giving

בִּיתְבְּאוֹ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי נֹתֵן לָכֶם וּקְצִירְתֶּם "When you enter the Land that I am giving you, and you shall reap its harvest" (Wayyiqra 23:10).

Nothing causes a person to become arrogant and sin more than being blessed with an abundance of everything. This abundance causes people to think that it was their own wisdom and capabilities that brought them their success. This shows a lack of gratitude to the Creator for His blessings which, in turn, causes people to go astray and not follow G-d.

Just like a father wishes to direct his son in the right path, our Father in Heaven, before we have the chance to develop feelings of haughtiness when we see the abundance of blessings (such as an abundant crop of wheat in the field), commands us to bring an offering from the first harvest to the Cohen.

By bringing it the Cohen the person shows that he recognizes that everything he receives is from G-d. That is why it says "the land that *I am giving you*" in the present tense, to show that it is not something that G-d gave once as a permanent gift and you inherited it, but rather that He gives it constantly at all times. In addition to making us realize that He is the source of all blessings, it also shows the importance of following the right path to guarantee that it will always be "given".

(See Alshekh, Parashath Emor, 23: 10)



מדרש בן איש חי
Midrash BEN ISH HAI

For the 'Ilui Neshamah of
Rabbi Ya'aqob Menashe, 'a"h.
יעקב אליהו עבדאללה פרג' חיים בן רחל, ע"ה

When to Count the 'Omer in the Morning

In order to ensure that one does not forget for an entire day to count the 'Omer and, as a result, lose the opportunity to continue counting with a Berakha (blessing), the custom is that everyone counts again in the morning in the Synagogue, without a Berakha, even though they already counted at night with a Berakha.

There are those who count after the Shaḥrith prayer in the Synagogue, whereas others recite the count earlier, before the second Ashrei. It seems to me that since the purpose is to help the congregants continue to count the entire 'Omer without missing a day, it is more logical to recite it before the second Ashrei.

When reciting it at the end of the Shaḥrith prayer, many congregants have already left -- perhaps they had a train to catch, or some other compelling reason. Before the second Ashrei, however, it is very rare that people leave the Synagogue, and reciting the 'Omer then, has the maximum effect.

(See Shulḥan 'Arukh, 489:7,8. Kaf Haḥayyim, ibid., Oth 12,79. Mishnah Berurah, ibid., 34)

A Message Before Cutting Our Hair

(For customs pertaining to Lagh La'Omer, please see A Torah Minute™, vol.,1, *The 33rd or the 34th Day of the 'Omer?*)

Ashkenazim permit hair cutting and shaving on the morning of Lagh La'Omer (the 33rd day of the 'Omer). Some do not shave again after that, till before Shabu'oth, whereas others do. Sephardim permit it from the morning of the 34th day and every day thereafter. According to the Ari, z"l, one should not cut one's hair till Shabu'oth.

We must be very cognizant, however, of the reason why we were not permitted to cut our hair during this time. The reason (according to the Peshat) is that the disciples of Ribbi 'Aqiba died at this time. The reason they died is because there was a lack of love between them.

One must learn a major lesson from this about the obligation of love and connection between the Jewish people. We must be particular, at all times, to ensure that we work on having love and a closeness with each other, especially at a time when it seems that each one is pulling in a different direction. We must lead by example.

(See Oraḥ Ḥayyim Haggadah, Hilkhoth Yemei Ha'Omer)

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

The Power of Speech and the Promises We Make

Speech is a special gift that was given to us by HaQadosh Barukh Hu. We have to realize that first of all, not everybody was given such a gift. There are those who physically cannot speak, and those who struggle greatly to express themselves no matter how hard they try. The majority of us, however, have been blessed with the gift of speech, yet so many of us just take it for granted. Many of us think that because speech is not something tangible, because it is not something that we see or we feel, that it can't be so important. What's the value of a word?

Speech actually comes from just within us, from our Neshama (soul). As we know, the Neshama that we have is the Neshama that was breathed into us by HaQadosh Barukh Hu directly. If HaQadosh Barukh Hu Himself breathed into us our Neshama, it must be something very holy and very, very special. That's the Source where speech, the ability to express ourselves, comes from. And we, of course, are all created Beṣelem Eloqim, in the image of G-d. We are supposed to look at His actions and emulate Him.

What does G-d do? Those of us who pray in the morning, know that in Barukh She'amar we say "ברוך גזור ומקיים," HaQadosh Barukh Hu makes a decision, He makes a decree, He says "this and this is going to happen" and you know what happens? It happens! ברוך גזור ומקיים - He makes a decision, He makes a decree that a certain thing, certain things will take place, and they actually happen!

(To be continued)