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By the Hakham

Rabbi Ya'aqob Menashe, 'a"h

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5782/2022 Parashath Mattoth-Mas'ei

Killing Mosquitos and Snakes on Shabbath

Summer is the season for mosquitos. One must be careful not to kill them on Shabbath. Similarly, ants come out in great number in the summer. If one sees a procession of ants, one must take care not to step on them on Shabbath. It should be noted, however, that one does not need to actually check the ground while walking, to ensure that there are no ants there.

If one sees a poisonous snake or scorpion on Shabbath, one may kill it, even if it is not running after the person and even if it is running away from him. In fact, one may even kill it with an item that is Muqṣeh (not ordinarily permitted to be handled on Shabbath).

Non poisonous snakes may only be killed if they are running after a person. If they are not running after him, they may only be killed in a non obvious manner, such as by stepping on them in such a way that it is not obvious to onlookers that he trod on them on purpose, in order to kill them.

(See Shulḥan 'Arukh, 316, 9, 10.

Derekh HaTorah, 27:1, 2, 4, 5)



מדרש בן איש חי
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5782 פֶּרֶשֶׁת מַטּוֹת-מַסֵּעִי

Maṭṭoth/Mas'ei: Forbidden Words Feed the Siṭra Aḥara

"He shall not desecrate (Yaḥel) his word, whatever comes forth from his mouth shall he do".

If a person guards his tongue from speaking any forbidden speech and is equally careful not to speak idle talk and sanctifies his mouth, he will find that G-d will answer his prayers. The root of the word "Yaḥel" (יָחַל - desecrate) in Hebrew, is the same as the word "Hullin" (חֻלִּין - profane). This verse can then be read that he should sanctify his mouth by not speaking profane matters. As a result, whatever comes forth from his mouth, "He" (G-d) shall do.

It mentions in the writings of Rabbenu Ḥayyim Wiṭṭal, 'a"h, that any type of speech that a person does on earth, has a corresponding effect in Heaven. If he speaks words of Torah and holiness, it awakens the spirituality and holiness above. The opposite is also true. If a person speaks Lashon HaRa' and forbidden words, his words feed the Siṭra Aḥara (the evil side).

We are told that in the merit of watching what we speak, Mashiyaḥ (the Messiah) will come and G-d's throne and Name will be complete.

(See Bamidbar, 30:3. Ḥomath Anakh, Parashath Maṭṭoth)



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Can a Kindergarten Teacher Play Music for the Children?

As we know, listening to music is forbidden during the entire 22 days. Singing together, without musical instruments, is permitted during special Se'uddoth (celebratory meals). Listening to people singing is likewise permitted on Friday afternoon, Shabbath and Mo'ei Shabbath (Saturday night). (See A Torah Minute™, *Listening to Singing Without Instruments and Acapella During the 22 Days (Three Weeks)* for more details).

The question arises about those who run kindergarten and playgroups for little children. Is a kindergarten teacher permitted to play music for the children in order to keep them occupied and control them? The answer is that they may be lenient and play music or musical instruments until Rosh Hodesh Ab.

Maran Mordechai Eliyahu, z"l, adds that it is appropriate to play them songs which are connected to this period or which anticipate the coming redemption.

(See Kaf HaChayim, 551:39. Mishnah Berurah, ibid :16, Sh"t [Tzitz] Eliezer, 15:33, Maamar Mordechai [Eliyahu] 25: 6-7 [and 8 in English version]).

The Importance of Pitum HaQetoreth

The Zohar tells us that whoever reads the portion of the Qetoreth (incense) with devotion every day (including weekdays), will be saved from all kinds of harm, witchcraft, bad decrees and even death. It adds that the Sitra Achara (the other side) has no power over him.

It says further that Ribbi Shim'on stated that if people knew how precious the service of the Qetoreth is to G-d, they would take every word of it and make crowns of the words for their heads, like a crown of gold. One who reads it should carefully ponder how it was carried out, and by reciting it daily, one will merit to receive a portion in this world and in the world to come.

When reading it daily, one reads it three times a day. It is read once in the beginning of Sha'ar Hith, once at the end, and once before Mincha.

(See Zohar, Helek 2, Wayyaqhel, 218b. 'Od Yoseph Hai, Parashath Miqqes, Oth 4, Ben Ish Hai, 1st year, Parashath Ki Thissa, Oth 18)

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