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By the Hakham
Rabbi Ya'aqob Menashe, 'a"h

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

5782 פְּרַשַׁת קְדוּשִׁים

Qedoshim: Do We Rise Before the Elderly or Because of Them?

"Before [the elderly] shall you rise" (Wayyiqra 19:33). The use of the word "Mippenei" (מִפְּנֵי) to mean before or in front of, seems unusual. "Lifnei" means in front of, whereas "Mippenei" usually means on account of.

The Dibrei Mordekhai quotes the Ben Ish Hai as saying that in the matter of the rebellion of Qorah, it says וַיָּקֻמוּ לִפְנֵי מֹשֶׁה "And they rose in front of Moses" (BaMidbar 16:2). Even though they were rebelling against him, it was not possible that they would not stand "on account of" (Mippenei) his honor. So what did they do? When they spied him approaching from a distance, they immediately rose, so that when he approached they would already be standing.

In view of this, the Dibrei Mordekhai says that this explains the Torah commandment of rising "on account of" an elderly person. It comes to tell us that you must rise on account of him, when he is close to you, so that it will be apparent to all that your rising was because of him.

(See Dibrei Mordekhai,
Wayyiqra, Parparaath)



מדרש בן איש חי
Midrash BEN ISH HAI

Does the Hazzan or the Congregation Count First?

In many communities, when the 'Omer is counted in the Synagogue, the Hazzan first recites the blessing and counts the 'Omer and then the congregation do the same after he has finished. In others, however, it is done the opposite way.

The Kenesseth Haggadolah writes that the custom of most people is for the congregation to bless and count first followed by the Hazzan, whereas in a few places it is done in reverse. The Yafeh Laleb (Hakham Yis-haq Falaji, 'a"h) states that in his city of Izmir, there were those who had the custom of the congregation blessing and counting first, followed by the Hazzan, while others did the opposite.

The Ben Ish Hai (Hakham Yosef Hayyim, 'a"h) writes in Oraḥ Hayyim that the custom is for the congregation to first recite the blessing followed by the counting, after which they should say the Haraḥaman. The Hazzan then blesses and counts, and then both he and the congregation repeat the Haraḥaman.

Both opinions have sources to rely on. However, since generally a Hazzan has the intention to pray on behalf of the congregation and the members of the congregation often intend to fulfill their obligation with his prayer, it is generally safer for the congregation to count first. In places where the Hazzan blesses and counts first, the congregation must be particular to have in mind that they are not fulfilling their obligation with his blessing because, otherwise, they would not be able to recite the blessing themselves.

(See Oraḥ Hayim Haggadah, Hilchoth Sefirath Ha'Omer, Oth 6. Kaf Haḥayyim, 489, Oth 14)

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

Walking on Grass on Shabbath

According to the Shulhan 'Arukh, one may walk on grass on Shabbath, whether it is wet or dry. The reasoning behind it is that it's not one's intention to pluck the grass (in which case it would be forbidden), when one is walking on it.

Even if the person is barefoot and, as a result, the blades of grass enter between the joints of his toes and get plucked, we need not be concerned because it is not intentional and the Rabbis did not distinguish between different ways of walking on the grass. However, once blades of grass get plucked and stuck between one's toes, one may not remove them by hand because they are not permitted to be handled on Shabbath on account of Muqseh.

It should be added that if the grass is of the type that one can be certain will be plucked, it is considered a Pesiq Reisha (certainty to occur) and is forbidden.

(See 'Erubin 100b. Shulhan 'Arukh, 336:3. Kaf Hachayyim, ibid, Oth25. Mishnah Berurah, ibid, 24-25.)

Should an Onen Count the 'Omer?

An Onen (one whose immediate relative has died but has not yet been buried), is exempt from all the commandments in the Torah. Therefore, if someone is an Onen at night, he must not count the 'Omer, but should wait to count during the day without a Berakha (blessing), after the burial takes place. He can then continue to count on subsequent nights with a blessing.

If he knows for certain, however, that he will still be an Onen during the entire following day, he should count at night without a blessing. It is appropriate to wait till after the Hebra Qadisha (Jewish burial society) has taken charge of the one who has passed away.

When he counts on subsequent nights, however, he can count with a blessing.

(See MM Hilkhoth Haggim, 20:38)

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

Why Worry? G-d Takes Care of Every Single One of Us (Part 2)

(continued from last week)

The wife, upon listening to her husband's [the Kohen who was struggling financially and was looking to leave the Land of Israel to find livelihood] words said: "Do your ears hear what your mouth speaks? If the Holy One blessed be He sustains every single hair on a person's head, surely he would take care of your needs and provide you with livelihood. Therefore, what need is there for you to go outside the Land of Israel?!"

This is another story about a great woman, who manifested her deep faith in G-d and His continuous intervention. The Kohen's wife was able to apply to herself and her family, that which the Kohen knew theoretically, but failed to incorporate into his own world.

Hakham Yoseph Hayyim, 'a"h, adds that there is a profound lesson for every single person to learn from this story. One must always trust G-d and never be sad or lose hope. Hashem gives everyone their share, which is allocated specifically for them, without affecting the portion set aside for any other person.