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By the Hakham
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Letting the Children Read the Mizmorim on Shabbath

There is a custom that on Shabbath, children go to the Tebah and read all the Mizmorim out loud for the congregation. They start with "Hodu" and continue till the end of the "Shirath HaYam". The purpose is to train the children.

The children take turns, the first boy reads the first Mizmor, the next one reads the second and they continue like this, in rotation, till they have completed all the Mizmorim. This is a fine custom to follow.

The portions of "Hashem Melekh" and "Barukh Sheamar", however, which are contained within the Mizmorim, should not be read by the boys. Instead, the Hazzan should read them. If the Hazzan has not yet arrived, then another man should read them in his stead.

(See Derekh HaTorah, Shabbath 8:5)



מדרש בן איש חי
Midrash BEN ISH HAI

5782 פְּרַשַׁת רֵאֵה

Re-eh: Four Who Did Not Die on Account of a Sin

וְנָתַתָּה אֶת-הַבְּרָכָה עַל-הָרִים וְאֶת-הַקְּלָלָה עַל-הָרִים
עִיבָל "You shall place the blessing on Har Gerizim, and the curse on Har 'Ebal" (Debarim 11:29).

It says in Minhath Yehudah, that this Pasuq (verse) hints at the names of the four Şaddiqim (righteous individuals) who died on account of the Naḥash (serpent). They died because the serpent caused Adam and Eve to sin, but did not die on account of their own sins. According to the version of the Zohar, the four righteous individuals are: 'Amram - the father of Moshe Rabbenu, 'a"h, Yishai - father of King David, 'a"h, Binyamin, and Lewi (Levi).

The Pasuq says that the "curse is on Har 'Ebal." Ḥakham Yehudah Fetaya, 'a"h, explains that the "curse" refers to the curse of Adam, which was brought about through the serpent. The acronym of the word "'Ebal" ((עִיבָל) are the names in Hebrew of "'Amram, Yishai, Binyamin and Lewi." This hints at the fact that only these four did not die on account of their own sin, but because of the serpent. All the other righteous people died on account of their own sin, as it says in the Gemara, "there is no death without sin" (Shabbath 55a).

We pray that G-d will soon bring the Teḥiyyath HaMethim (revival of the dead) and remove death from the world forever.

(See Minhath Yehudah, 71, Parashath Re-eh)

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Why the Emphasis on Repentance in Elul?

Rosh Hodesh Elul is always two days (the 30th of Ab and the 1st of Elul). Apart from being the last month before Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, on which days we plead for a good year and for forgiveness, the month of Elul is a time of Teshubah (repentance) for an additional reason.

On the 17 of Tammuz, Moshe Rabbenu, 'a"h, descended from Mount Sinai with the first Luhot (Tablets of Stone) and broke them. Two days later, on the 19th of Tammuz he ascended again to ask for G-d's pardon. On the 40th day, which was the 29th of Ab he came down again. G-d told him that He had forgiven the Jewish people as per Moshe Rabbenu, 'a"h's request (Salahti Kidbarekha), and told him to bring 2 new tablets of stone from Earth.

On the first day of Rosh Hodesh Elul (30 Ab), Moshe Rabbenu once again ascended the mountain and finally returned 40 days later, on Yom Kippur, with full pardon (Ki Bayom Hazzeh). For this reason, we must start our sincere process of repentance from the beginning of Elul, throughout this auspicious period till Yom Kippur.

Avoiding Arguments Over Expenses

It says in the Pele Yo'eş that a fence to prevent argument and strife in one's home, is for the husband not be overly particular about every expense in the house. A man has to understand that a woman is very affected by what her friends have and do, and while not everyone has the same means and certain things are out of reach for some, but not for others, one must still allow some flexibility where this is possible.

Each person must understand the level of his blessings, in financial terms, and appease his wife appropriately. One must remember the words of our Rabbis (Baba Meşia 59a), that a blessing is only found in a man's home, on account of his wife.

In particular, one must remember, that even though all one's income for the year is decided on Rosh Hashanah, one's expenditure for Shabbath and Yom Tob is not included in that. If one spends more in their honor, one receives more from Heaven, but if one is stingy, one receives less. One should make a point of not being tightfisted when it comes to providing clothing, food and other necessities for Shabbath and Holy days.

(See Pele Yo'eş Ahabath Ish We-isha. Shulhan 'Arukh, 529:1. Kaf Haḥayyim, ibid, Oth 3)

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

Elul: From Darkness to Light (Part 1)

There are two different kinds of darkness in the world. The first one which comes to mind is physical darkness, when someone, G-d forbid, does not have the gift of sight. It's a terrible thing and, in fact, every morning in the blessings of ברכות השחר (Birkoth HaShahar), we thank הקדוש ברוך הוא (the Holy One blessed be He), for opening our eyes and giving us the ability to be able to see.

There is, however, another level of blindness, which is spiritual. Spiritual blindness is as difficult and as painful as physical blindness; in fact, in a sense, it is even worse and many are unaware that they are imprisoned in this dark lack of spirituality. Perhaps their נשמה (soul) cries out and says, "Set me free, get me out to the light!"

(To be continued)

