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By the Hakham

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5783/2023 Parashath 'Equeb

## Parashath 'Equeb: A Difficult Word to Translate

The Parasha of 'Equeb begins by telling us that "'Equeb" (when/as soon as) we hear G-d's ordinances (Mishpatim) and we perform and keep his commandments (Mishwoth), He will protect us and give us all the blessings that He promised the Patriarchs.

The truth is that the word 'Equeb (which literally means heel) is not so easy to translate. It says in Ben Ish Hai Derashoth, that many Mefarshim (commentators) have struggled with the explanation of the word and offered various explanations.

One explanation is that keeping the Torah and the observance of the commandments is dependant on the love and unity that the Jewish people have between them. The number of words in the 10 commandments is 172 which in Gematria (Jewish numerology) is equal to the numerical value of the word 'Equeb.

The last word in the 10 commandments is the word "Lere'ekha" (to your friend/neighbor). This is a word which has connotations of love and friendship. This comes to tell us that if love and friendship (which is connected to the word Lere'ekha) is a quality that you have when you hear G-d's ordinances, then it is certain that you will be able to do and keep the commandments (Mishwoth). (And this, in turn, will bring us the blessings G-d promised our forefathers)

(See Ben Ish Hai Derashoth, Parashath 'Equeb)



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## If Food Cooked Deliberately on Shabbath Gets Mixed With Other Food

A Jew who cooks deliberately on Shabbath is never permitted to eat what he cooked, whereas others may eat it after Shabbath is over. The question arises as to whether or not the forbidden food becomes nullified (and thus permitted to be eaten) if it became mixed in with 60 times the amount of permitted food.

There is a concept that when something will become permitted later by itself, it cannot be nullified and from this it would seem that for those who did not cook it, it would remain forbidden on Shabbath, since after Shabbath it would automatically become permitted to them. The one who cooked it, however, would be able to eat it on Shabbath, according to this. The reason is that since the food, before it became mixed in with the rest, would have been forbidden to him forever, it can be nullified.

The Mishna Berurah quotes the opinion of the Maghen Abraham who forbids it on Shabbath for the one who cooked it and also mentions the opinion of the Hawwath Da'ath who disagrees. The Mishnah Berurah does not give a clear ruling.

The Ben Ish Hai, however, says that it is ridiculous that the one who transgressed and cooked should be allowed to eat it on Shabbath, but no one else. He rules in accordance with the Maghen Abraham that it remains forbidden, even for the one who did the cooking.

(See Shulhan 'Arukh, with Rama, 289:1. Mishnah Berurah, ibid., 14. Maghen Abraham 2. Rab Pe'alim 1, O.H., 17. Ben Ish Hai, 2nd yr., 2)

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## Disrespecting Others

The Pele Yo'eş tells us that one must be exceedingly careful not to disrespect the honor of others, not in words and not in action. A person requires extreme understanding to comprehend what is considered disrespecting.

The only way to avoid it is by quickly giving intense thought, before doing anything to his friend or speaking to his friend, or about his friend, about how he would feel if others acted in that manner towards him, or spoke in such a way to him or about him. And if he would not be happy about it, he must not do it to his friend.

Our Rabbis of blessed memory tell us that whatever you would find distasteful, do not do to your friend (Shabbath 31a). The problem is, as they tell us (Negha'im 2:5), that a man sees all imperfections, except for his own. The Ḥakham said, "There is nothing easier in the world than finding the faults in one's friend, and nothing harder than recognizing one's own faults".

(See Pele Yo'eş, Zilzul)

## If People Step out During Birkath Kohanim

In order for the Kohanim to go up and recite the Birkath Kohanim (Priestly Blessing), there must be a Minyan (quorum) of ten Jewish males present in the Synagogue. The Kohanim themselves are counted towards the Minyan.

If there were 10 men present when the Kohanim began their blessing, but then some of the people stepped out, the Kohanim may continue. This assumes, however, that the majority of the people are still present.

If there were 10 men present at the start of the repetition of the 'Amidah, but before the Ḥazzan got to the Birkath Kohanim some stepped out, so that there was no longer a Minyan present, the Kohanim may not go up. However, the Ḥazzan does read the portion from the Siddur of, "Barkhenu Baberakha Hammeshulesheth", which contains the Birkath Kohanim. The reason is that this is part of the repetition of the 'Amidah and when the repetition is begun with a Minyan, it may be completed. The Birkath Kohanim which is recited by the Kohanim, however, is considered to be a separate entity.

(See Shulḥan 'Arukh, 128:1. Kaf Ḥaḥayyim, ibid., Oth 1,2. Mishnah Berurah, ibid., 1)

## Women's Corner - by Rabbanith Ruth Menashe 'a"ḥ

### Let Us Still Remember (Part 2)

(continued from last week)

The Pele Yo'eş, (Ḥakham Eliezer Papo from Turkey), writes that it is not sufficient to just utter the words and say that we believe in the future Geullah (salvation), rather, we must feel it with our hearts and await for the redemption wholeheartedly. He adds that a person's way of speech is an indication of his sincere expectation of the Geullah.

How so? When someone who makes plans for the future says: "May the Holy One Blessed be He bring the Geullah before that", this is a testimony to his true longing for the Geullah. For example, if we are planning a wedding or a trip that may take place a few months down the road, we should use this form of speech. Perhaps we should accustom ourselves to think and speak in this fashion.

The Pele Yo'eş shares another interesting point. Those of us who live outside the land of Israel, should refrain from building big homes with fancy and elaborate decorations. The constant daily longing for the land of Israel and for the redemption, does not go hand in hand with living in big comfortable houses.

A point to ponder...

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