

A Torah Minute com™

By the Hakham
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A PROJECT OF MIDRASH BEN ISH HAI (MIDRASH.ORG)

5784 פֶּרַשַׁת חַיֵּי שָׂרָה

Grinding Salt, Pepper or Mud on Shabbath

Salt, pepper and other spices, may not be ground in a grinder on Shabbath, since this comes under the Torah prohibition of Tohen (טוֹחֵן - grinding). In the past, they used to be ground using a mortar and pestle (Hawan), and this is likewise forbidden. Some are of the opinion that salt is not included since it does not grow from the ground (See A Torah Minute™, *Grinding Cooked Meat or Cheese on Shabbath*), however, the accepted practice is to be strict.

Grinding pepper and the like, on Shabbath, requires two changes from the norm. Therefore, they may be placed in a plate and ground with the handle (not blade) of the knife. Care should be taken to ensure that the plate can withstand the pressure, or else one should use a non breakable plate.

Crumbling dry mud, is also a derivative of grinding. As such, if any mud sticks to one's clothes, one may not break or crumble it off. Neither may one rub the garment from either side so that the mud will be broken up.

(See Shulhan 'Arukh, O.H., 321:7-8. Ben Ish Hai, 2nd year, Mishpatim, 4, 6. Mishnah Berurah, 321:25, 28)



מדרש בן איש חי
Midrash BEN ISH HAI

Hayyei Sarah: Why did Eliezer have to swear and not Isaac?

In the Parasha of Hayyei Sara it says: וְאַבְרָהָם זָקֵן "And Abraham was old, advanced in years, and G-d blessed Abraham with everything". Rabbenu Bahyei says that Abraham Abinu (the Patriarch Abraham), 'a"h, was blessed with much, including a long life. However, he had not yet been blessed with grandchildren, which is something he desired very much. He, therefore, made his servant Eli'ezer swear that he would find an appropriate wife for his son Isaac (Yis-haq Abinu, 'a"h).

The reason for requiring an oath from him was that Abraham Abinu was afraid that he might die before Eli'ezer accomplished his task. By making Eli'ezer swear, he felt that Eli'ezer would fulfill the task and he knew that his son Yis-haq would always listen to Eli'ezer and would, therefore, marry the girl.

The question is, why did Abraham Abinu not make Yis-haq Abinu swear instead? The answer is that he was concerned that if he did not place the servant Eli'ezer under an oath, he would find numerous excuses as to why he could not go get a suitable wife for Yis-haq Abinu. He made Eli'ezer swear, therefore, to ensure that he would take the responsibility seriously and find a wife for his son Yis-haq, who in turn would, as we mentioned, do Eliezer's bidding and would have no need to swear also.

(Rabbenu Bahyei on the Torah, Hayyei Sarah)

לעלוי נשמת ההרוגים, להחזרת השבויים בשלום
להצלחת החיילים, ולשמירת כל עם ישראל

How Many Windings on the Sişith?

How many windings should there be on the fringes of the Şişith? There are those who do a total of 26 which is the Gemaṭria (value in Jewish numerology), of G-d's ineffable Name. They are done in accordance with the Gemaṭria of each letter of G-d's Name: 10-5-6-5. Each set separated by two knots, with two knots tied both before and after the set.

The majority custom, however, is not like that. According to Rabbenu the Ari, z"l, in Sha'ar HaKawwanoth, there should be 39 windings, which is the Gemaṭria of Hashem Eḥad (G-d is One). They are wound in the following order: 7-8-11-13. Here too, each set separated by two knots, with two knots tied both before and after the set.

There are those who do 39 on the Tallith Gadol and 26 on the Ṭallith Qaṭan. The prevalent custom, however, is to do 39 on both the Ṭallith Gadol as well as Qaṭan.

(Shulḥan 'Arukh, 11:14. Ben Ish Ḥai, Parashath Lekh Lekha, 1st year, Oth 1. Dibrei Mordekhai, Parashath Shelaḥ Lekha, Halakha BaParasha)

Husbands Going on Business Trips

It used to be, years ago, that when a husband went overseas on a business trip, he had to travel by ship on a long journey. Because of the length of the trip, he would remain at his destination for an extended period, often months, before returning home to his wife and family. Nowadays, it is possible to complete the entire trip in a few days.

The Pele Yo'eş writes that a man should not go on long journeys for extended periods of time, because it is bad for him and causes pain to his wife, because she finds the separation very distressing. He writes that, at the very least, he must write to her regularly [or call, nowadays], and send her gifts periodically, to make her happy and lessen her pain.

It seems to me that, wherever possible, a man should avoid businesses which cause him to be away for extended periods. However, this is not always possible, and if a man finds that he has no option but to travel extensively, he should do whatever he can, to minimize the length of each trip and to return to his wife and family as soon as he can. If the need arises, he can always go on another short trip, and should not be concerned about the cost of an additional flight. After all, it is the well-being of his wife and home that he is protecting

(See Pele Yo'eş, Ahabath Ish We-ishto)

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

Twelve Loaves for Each Meal

Many of us associate Parashath Hayyei Sarah with the image of Sarah Immenu's tent and the freshly baked bread, which remained fresh from one Friday to the next. The Ari z"l states that one should prepare a total of twelve loaves of bread for each of the three meals of Shabbath.

A story is told about Hakham Moshe Ben Ezra, who lived in Baghdad and was known for his immense piety. Although he lived in extreme poverty, he was known for his devotion to the study of the Torah. Erebb Shabbath was the only time he made an exception and indulged by buying thirty six loaves of bread, twelve for each of the three meals. Unfortunately, many of the loaves of bread remained uneaten and got spoiled. His wife, upset over the wasted bread, took the mildewed bread to Hakham 'Abdallah Somekh, 'a"ḥ, and presented them to him.

The Hakham called Hakham Moshe and advised him to use a total of twelve loaves of bread every Shabbath, four at each meal. The next Friday, Hakham Moshe bought a total of twelve loaves and kept them in their place. That evening, when his wife prepared the Shabbath table, she counted a total of thirty six loaves of bread and realized that a miracle happened to her husband.

From that time on she allowed her husband to buy thirty six loaves of bread every Friday.