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By the Hakham
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Separating Tubs of Leben on Shabbath

In Israel, tubs of yogurt (Leben and Eshel) are sold connected in batches of multiples of two (commonly four attached together). When one wishes to eat them, one separates the container that one wants, and eats from it. This poses a problem on Shabbath, however, because they must not be separated on Shabbath because it is considered to be the completion of the making of the vessel.

If one plans to eat from one or more of these containers on Shabbath, one must separate them from before Shabbath. If one did not separate them, or forgot to do so, there is an opinion that one may not eat from them on Shabbath, because of the fear that one will come to separate them.

It says in Derekh HaTorah, however, that this is not the case. Instead, if one wishes to have some of the yogurt, one should take the whole cluster together, and pour out the yogurt from the tub one wants, into a different plate or container and eat it from there. One must not, however, eat it directly from one of the connected tubs, on account of the fear that one might come to separate it from the rest.

(See Derekh HaTorah, Hilkhoth Shabbath, 30:67)



מדרש בן איש חי
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5783 פֶּרֶשֶׁת פִּינְחָס

Pinhas: Why the Extra Harsh Language Towards the Midianites?

"Harass the Midianites and smite them" (BaMidbar 25:17). What is the necessity to say "harass them" when the Pasuq (verse) anyway says "smite them"? Furthermore, why is it that when the Egyptians enslaved the Jewish people and slaughtered their children, G-d commanded us not to hate them, yet, the Midianites who did not enslave Israel nor raise their hands against them, we are commanded to harass them forever and smite them?

Hakham Yoseph Hayyim, 'a"h, in 'Od Yoseph Hai explains that even though the Egyptians enslaved and afflicted us, the final result was the purification of the Jewish people, which was only possible through the affliction. The Midianites, on the other hand, caused impurity to be infused into the Jewish people through their idolatry and immoral practices.

This can be compared to a snake and a leech who were discussing. The snake complained to the leech that they both have a similar "professions" - that of biting humans. Yet humankind wishes to crush the head of the snake but are willing to spend money to buy the leech. The leech explained that the difference is that even though they both bite humans, the leech is used to let blood from the sick and heal them. The snake, however, infuses its poisonous venom into the one it bites.

An additional reason is that the Egyptians wished to harm the Jewish nation physically, whereas, the Midianites gave physical pleasure to us, which caused great spiritual harm.

(See 'Od Yoseph Hai Derashoth, Parashath Pinhas)

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Weddings and Engagements During the 22 Days (The 3 Weeks)

The custom is not to hold weddings from the seventeenth (17th) of Tammuz till the ninth of Ab. This applies even to one who has never married and, therefore, not yet been able to fulfill the Mišwah (commandment) of Peru Urbu (go forth and multiply).

This is the custom of all Ashkenazim. While there are some Sephardim who only prohibit weddings from Rosh Hodesh Ab, the prevalent custom amongst Sephardim also, is to avoid weddings from the seventeenth of Tammuz. The reason is that this is not considered to be a time when one sees Berakha (blessing).

For this reason, there are those who avoid engagements from the seventeenth of Tammuz also, whereas others hold them until Rosh Hodesh Ab. In the latter case they are held without a Se'uddah (festive meal) and, it goes without saying, without music, whether with live musical instruments or recorded.

(See Ben Ish Hai, 1st year, Parashath Debarim, Oth 4. H"R Mordechai Eliyahu, Hilkhoth Haggim, 25, Oth 3)

When to Recite Shehakol on Vegetables

When eating vegetables (and other foods whose blessing is ordinarily Borei Peri Ha-adamah), if they are normally eaten raw but not cooked, one recites the blessing of Borei Peri Ha-adamah on them when they are raw, but Shehakol on them when they are cooked.

The opposite is also true. If the majority of people would not eat them raw, but only cooked, then when eating them cooked one recites Borei Peri Ha-adamah and Shehakol if one were to eat them raw. (The same rule applies to fruit regarding whether one should recite the blessing of Borei Peri Ha'Es or Shehakol).

If people commonly eat the vegetables both raw as well as cooked, but they taste better cooked, the Shulhan 'Arukh rules that one should say Borei Peri Ha-adamah on them only when they are cooked, but Shehakol on them when they are raw. However, the custom in such a case, is to recite Borei Peri Ha-adamah on them whether raw or cooked, provided the majority of people eat them both raw as well as cooked.

(See Shulhan 'Arukh 205:1. Kaf Hachayim, ibid, Oth 1-6. Mishnah Berurah, ibid, 2-3)

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

Love - A Powerful Emotion

Love, as we all know, is a powerful emotion. It is much needed, sought by many and extremely praiseworthy. It is precisely because of this, that the evil inclination tries to plant seeds of jealousy and hatred amongst those who display affection to each other. That is why it tries to use any possible methods of deception and trickery to harden people's hearts, cause confusion and instill hatred amongst family members and friends. Its ultimate goal is to prevent us from displaying affection to each other and treating each other with love.

Hakham Yoseph Hayyim 'a"h, guides us with the following advice. He suggests that we overcome our nature to respond to hatred with hatred. Rather, we should respond with love to any negative feelings directed at us. We should repay gossip and strife with affection and closeness. As a result, he reassures us, much goodness and blessings will be showered upon us if we follow this path.

(to be continued)