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Can You Cry on Shabbath?

There is an opinion that there is an obligation from the Torah to eat on Shabbath, because it says **אכלהו היום כי** "Eat today, because it is a Sabbath to the L-rd" (Shemoth 16:25). Another opinion is that the reason for eating on Shabbath is in order to "delight in the Shabbath" ('Onegh Shabbath). What is the difference between the two reasons?

Once they saw Ribbi 'Aqiba crying on Shabbath. Ordinarily, one must not cry on Shabbath because we have to be happy. They said to him, "Why are you crying? Today is Shabbath." He replied that he was crying in order to ease the pain that he was feeling. The Rama, z"l, writes that one for whom it would be pleasurable to cry, because it would ease his pain, is permitted to do so.

There are those who may have a stomach ache on Shabbath and eating would cause them further discomfort. If not eating would be more of a "delight" for them, then, in such a case they should not eat.

(See Shulhan 'Arukh 288:2, 3. Derekh HaTorah, Shabbath 7:72)



מדרש בן איש חי
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Re-eh: Make Your Gift Be Worth Double

נָתַתָּן תִּתֵּן לוֹ וְלֹא יֵרֶע לְבָבְךָ בְּתַתֶּנּוּ לוֹ "You shall surely give him and your heart should not be upset when you give him" (Debarim 15:10).

There are many explanations as to why there is a doubling of the word "give" in Hebrew, in the verse which says, **נָתַתָּן תִּתֵּן לוֹ** (Nathon Titten Lo), which we translate as "You shall surely give him", but which literally says, "You shall give give him".

In Aboth of Ribbi Nathan (end ch. 13), it says that if a person gives his friend the most precious gifts in the world, but with a scowl and bad feeling, it is considered as if he gave him nothing. It says in Semah Dawid that if a person gives a present and wishes to improve the gift, he should give it quickly, without hesitation. By doing so, it is as if he has given twice, and that is the explanation of the doubling of the word "to give", when the verse says **נָתַתָּן תִּתֵּן לוֹ**.

From this we see that when someone comes to ask for money, you should not play with him and tell him, "come back tomorrow", and keep doing this till you finally give him. If you do, your gift to him has less value. You should "surely give him", right away, and your gift will be worth double. And not only should you give it with a happy face and not a scowl, but your heart should be happy to give too, as it says, "your heart should not be upset when you give him".

(See Penei Dawid, Parashath Re-eh)

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Defining Kosher Fish

Maran z"l states in the Shulḥan 'Arukh that the Torah defines Kasher fish as being those which have fins and scales. In fact, the Torah mentions these requirements in the singular, fin and scale (סנפיר וקשקשת). The Halakha is that even one fin and one scale makes it Kasher. However, irrespective of how many scales are on the fish, they must be of the type that come away from the skin, using one's finger or utensil. If they remain attached to the skin, they are forbidden.

According to the Shulḥan 'Arukh, the scale can be anywhere on the fish. The Rama, z"l, in his gloss, quotes the opinion of the Rosh and the Tur, that we can permit one scale, only if it is beneath the jaw, tail or fin. According to this opinion, when there is only one scale, if it is in one of the above mentioned places, it obviously belongs to that fish.

If it is elsewhere, it might have adhered to this fish when it was together with other fish and the scale of a Kasher fish became attached to it. The Halakha is like the Shulḥan 'Arukh, but it is advisable to be strict in this matter.

(See Sh. 'A. Yoreh De'ah, 83:1. Zibḥei Šedeq, 83, Oth 2. Ben Ish Ḥai, 2nd year, Parashath Emor, Oth 18. Kaf Ḥaḥayyim, 83, Oth 3)

Passing Next to One Who is Praying the 'Amidah

According to Maran Yosef Qaro, 'a"ḥ, one may not pass within four 'Ammoth (cubits) of one who is praying the 'Amidah. This refers to passing in front of him, but to the sides it is permitted to pass and to stop.

Ḥakham Yoseph Ḥayyim, 'a"ḥ, writes in Ben Ish Ḥai that ideally one should be concerned about the words of the Zohar which mentions that one should not pass in front of one who is praying the 'Amidah for as far as his eyes can see, and to the sides and behind him (on all sides), within a distance of four Ammoth.

If one has no choice, however, such as when one is passing in front of someone when he himself is going to pray, or when he is going to do a Mišwah that needs to be done right away, then we can rely on the words of Maran, z"l, who only forbade it in front of a person within four Ammoth. It would appear that this is the appropriate ruling for Sephardim to follow. The Mishnah Berurah, however, also quotes the Zohar, stating that according to the Zohar it is forbidden to pass within four Ammoth to the sides of one who is praying (the 'Amidah).

(See Shulḥan 'Arukh O.Ḥ. 102:4. Ben Ish Ḥai, 1st year, Parashath Yithro, Oth 7. M.B. 102:17)

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

What Do Women Have to Do With Torah and Water?

Our Holy Torah is likened to water. Why specifically water? In the Gemara of Ta'anith (7b), Ribbi Ḥanina Bar Idi brings an answer to this question. The nature of water is to always flow downwards, from high to low. The Torah too, is found amongst those who are lowly and humble. A true sage is one whose knowledge is accompanied by humility.

HaRab Mordechai Eliyahu, 'a"ḥ, (Dibrei Mordechai, Parashath Re-eh) brings a different fascinating explanation. He says that someone who has a deep understanding of how the world is created, will realize that every single entity in the world has the element of water contained in it. Let us look at a few examples: furniture is made out of wood, which cannot grow without water; buildings and houses are made out of concrete, which must contain water to create the correct consistency; even electricity is dependent on water, for its operation. Just as water is an essential element in the existence of the world, so too the Torah is crucial to the existence of the world.

(to be continued)