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By the Hakham
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5783 פְּרַשַׁת תְּרוּמָה

Terumah: Why Does It Say, "My" Offering?

וַיִּקְחוּ־לִי תְרוּמָה מֵאֵת כָּל־אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִדְבֹנּוּ
"You shall take for Me
an offering ... you shall take My offering"
(Shemoth 25:2). The Torah first states that
those whose spirit uplifts them should take
an offering and then proceeds to refer to it
as "My offering".

This comes to tell us that when the
gift is given by one whose spirit uplifts him
to give, G-d considers the gift to be as if G-d
had given it Himself. This is because G-d
loves those who give generously, but detests
those who are miserly.

The fact that the Torah now refers to
it as "My offering", tells us that the offering
belongs to G-d. Therefore, if the one
making the offering does not pay, it is
considered to be a theft from G-d. On the
other hand, since it is considered to be G-d's
offering, the donor is no longer responsible
if anything should happen to it, because it
now belongs to G-d.

(See Rabbenu Bahya, Shemoth 25:2)

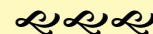
What Can We Speak About on Shabbath?

It says in Yeshayahu (58:13), וְקִרְאתָ לַשַּׁבָּת
"עֲנֵג...וְכַבֵּדְתָּ מַעֲשֵׂוֹת דְּרָכֶיךָ מִמָּצוֹא חֲפָצֶךָ וְדָבַר דְּבָר
And you shall call the Sabbath a delight ... and honor it by
keeping away from your [daily] ways, not going after
your weekday interests and speaking of [non Shabbath]
matters". From this verse, our Hakhmim of blessed
memory learn that one's speech on Shabbath may not
be like one's speech during the rest of the week.

Not only does this mean that one may not tell his
friend to do something for him the following day, but
even if one does not benefit by telling one's friend, such
as about a matter that one wishes to take care of oneself
after Shabbath, it is forbidden. It is forbidden, even if
one does not stipulate that one wishes to do it after
Shabbath, if it concerns a matter that is forbidden to be
taken care of on Shabbath.

Even if the matter concerned, is not forbidden by
the Torah, but by the Rabbis, one may still not mention
it on Shabbath. This assumes that the matter being
discussed is not for a Miswah and cannot be discussed
effectively, at a different time.

(See Shulhan 'Arukh, with Rama, 307:1, 8. Ben Ish Hai, 2nd year,
Wayyishlah, Oth 1)



מדרש בן איש חי
Midrash BEN ISH HAI

For the 'Ilui Neshamah of
Rabbanith Ruth Menashe, 'a"h.
רות בת אהובה, ע"ה

Reciprocating a Meal May Appear to be Interest

The Rama states that one should not say to another, "Come and eat my food, just like I ate yours", because it appears that he is repaying a debt. It looks as if the other person had lent it to him and, consequently, we would be concerned that he may feed him more than he received and that would be considered as interest (Ribbith).

Even though this is not actual interest in Halacha, it has the appearance of interest. Similarly, it could also happen that, when the first one feeds the second, the prices are low and when the second feeds the first, the food prices have risen. Even though it was not the first person's intention to feed the second at a lower price so that he would gain in the future and, as such, there is no question of actual interest, nevertheless, it looks like interest.

However, he can say to him, "Come and eat with me and on another occasion I will eat with you", even if the subsequent meal is larger. This is because it is not his intention to be repaid with a reciprocal meal, but his purpose in mentioning this is to put his guest at ease so that he will not refuse. It should be noted, however, that the Taz is hesitant to permit this.

(See Rama 170:13. Kaf HaChayyim ibid, Oth 50. Mishnah Berurah ibid, sq 31, 32)

Fulfilling Commandments in a Basic Manner

Is there a problem with fulfilling the commandments in a basic fashion and not in the choicest manner (Mišwah Min Hammubhar)? From Rashi's explanation on the Gemara of Berakhoth (30a) we see that someone who is in a position to perform the commandments in the choicest manner but does not do so, is called wicked. Why should that be so?

A person should look closely at how particular he is about his food and drink, that it should be to his taste and palate, with the right seasoning and ingredients. The wine has to be of the type and strength that he likes and all the utensils that he eats and drinks from should be pleasing to him. And when it comes to his clothing, he is not willing to wear the first thing that comes into his hands, but wants to ensure that it fits correctly and is of the right color and material for him.

If one is so particular about these items, how much more so should one be particular about pleasing the Creator. If one is in a position to perform a Mišwah (precept) in a better fashion and one does not do so, it gives the impression that one is not concerned about the honor of the Creator, Heaven forbid. Therefore, one should do whatever one can to fulfill the commandments in the best possible manner.

(See Pele Yo'eš, Mubhar)

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

Keeping Our Promises, Part 2

(Continued from last week)

During the times of the Beth HaMiqdash, if a person made a vow in his or her mind, even without verbalizing it, the person was obligated to fulfill it. Hakham Mordekhai Eliyahu, 'a"h, asks in Dibrei Mordekhai why we are particular even about vows or promises that a person makes to oneself, not only for holy matters or to other individuals, which we can understand.

The answer is that our speech is holy. Rabbeinu the Hida, 'a"h, amongst other Torah scholars, comments that our spoken words here, on this earth, make a remarkable impression in the upper worlds. He adds, that if one may wonder how such a thing is possible, the following example may illustrate it. He writes that when people step on grapes to extract their juice for the purpose of making wine, an unusual phenomena takes place. The wine kept in peoples' cellars starts moving! It may be hard for us to comprehend, for nowadays people do not keep wine in big barrels in their cellars, nevertheless, the message is clear: if the wine in the barrel is affected, we can understand that our actions on this earth have an affect in the upper world.

Our speech is holy and as such we must work on ourselves to perfect and sanctify our words and keep every single promise we make.