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5784 פְּרַשַׁת וַיִּשְׁלַח

Using an Alarm Clock on Shabbath

The Shulḥan 'Arukh says that there is a question whether a device for telling the time, whether it works with sand (hour glass) or by some other means, may be carried on Shabbath and the custom has become to forbid it. Today's timepieces are different, and some may be moved, whereas others may not.

Alarm clocks today generally run on batteries or electricity. It says in Derekh HaTorah that during the week, when an alarm clock rings and the person wakes up, he presses a button to turn it off. If, on Friday (before Shabbath), a person sets his alarm clock to wake him up on Shabbath to get up in time for prayer or read Tehillim, and so on, when it goes off it will keep ringing. It is forbidden to turn it off.

Instead, one should put a pillow over it or cover it with plastic bowls (and there is no concern of "Ohel" according to the Ben Ish Hai). If, however, during the week, the person is accustomed to moving the clock around, sometimes placing it near his bed and at other times further away, then on Shabbath he is permitted to move it and not consider it to be Muqṣeh. He must take care, however, not to turn it off.

(See Shulḥan 'Arukh, 308:51. Kaf Haḥayyim, ibid., Oth 276. Mishnah Berurah, ibid., 176, 168. Darkhei Torah, Shabbath, 33:74-75)



מדרש בן איש חי
Midrash BEN ISH HAI

Wayyishlah: Why We Must Thank G-d

וַעֲשֵׂה-שֵׁם מִזְבֵּחַ לֵאלֹהֵי הַנִּרְאָה אֵלֶיךָ בְּבִרְחֶךָ מִפְּנֵי עֲשׂוֹ

וְאָחִיךָ "And make there an altar to G-d who appeared to you when you fled from Esau your brother" (Bereshith 35:1). The Alshikh HaQadosh comments that G-d first appeared to Ya'aqob Abinu, 'a"h, (Jacob), in Luz and did not appear to him at all while he was outside the Land of Israel. Only G-d's angel appeared to him then. Now that he entered the Land of Israel, G-d wanted to appear to Ya'aqob Abinu, 'a"h, Himself again.

If a person does not show gratitude and appreciation to G-d for any good or kindness that G-d bestowed upon him, then G-d will not repeat this act of good or kindness for that person. Since Ya'aqob Abinu, 'a"h, had not shown sufficient appreciation to G-d the first time that G-d had appeared to him, and now G-d wished to reappear before him, He commanded Ya'aqob Abinu, 'a"h, to build an altar to thank Him for appearing to him when he fled from his brother Esau. Once he had done that, G-d once again appeared to him.

We see from this how careful we must be to thank G-d for each and every blessing that He bestows upon us, so that He can continue to bless us. Ideally, however, we should do this because of our gratitude and our appreciation for what He did for us.

(See Alshikh Perush on the Torah, Parashath Wayyishlah)

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

How much of the Shema' is read before bed?

The Shulḥan 'Arukh states that when reading the Shema' Yisrael before going to sleep, one reads the first passage. The prevalent custom amongst Ashkenazim is to read the Shema' Yisrael up to "'Al Mezuzoth Bethekha Ubish'arekha".

The Kaf Haḥayyim mentions the opinion according to what is written in the Midrash, that all 248 words of the Shema' must be recited as a protection for the 248 limbs of the body. It says in Sha'ar Hakkawwanoth, according to Rabbenu the Ari, z"l, that only the Ḥasidim Rishonim (pious men of early generations) were able to only recite the first verse of the Shema' because of their intense intent and concentration. But since we are not able to reach that level, we must recite the entire Shema' Yisrael.

This is the appropriate custom for those who pray according to the Sod (Qabbala), and is the custom of Sephardim.

(See Shulḥan 'Arukh, 239:1. Kaf Haḥayyim, ibid, Oth 1)

How Both Beth Hillel and Shammai Are Right

It says in the Gemara of Giṭṭin (5a), that if a person stole a beam and used it in the house he was building, Beth Shammai say that he has to destroy the house and return the beam. Beth Hillel say that the person only needs to pay the monetary value of the beam (See A Torah Minute™, *If Returning an Object Means Tearing Down a Skyscraper*). When we say "Ellu WeEllu" (both opinions) are words of a living G-d, how can we resolve these two opinions?

Each time a person sins, the Saṭan takes from him some of his sparks of holiness and uses them as a "beam" in the "house" of impurity that he is attempting to construct. When G-d retrieves the sparks from him, he destroys the house of impurity that the Saṭan built and returns the beam to the one it was taken from. This is in accordance with Beth Shammai.

When a man repents, however, G-d acts with him, in accordance with Beth Hillel. G-d does not expect the man to destroy the entire house that the Saṭan built, instead, G-d accepts his repentance and recovers the sparks of holiness Himself.

(See Ben Yehoyada', Giṭṭin 5a)

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

Money and Marriage (Part 1)

During one of the Shabbatons we held for Jewish singles, we had a very interesting discussion. We asked the men what women expected of them which was unreasonable and unfair, and we asked the women the same question about men. The most common answer from the men about women's unreasonable expectations was to do with the financial aspects.

We all know this, but I would like to reiterate it. Everything that we have in terms of our income, bank accounts and so on, is totally in the hand of Haqqadosh Barukh Hu. Just because a person has something today, does not mean that he will have it in ten years. I know people who have immigrated here from other countries. They had mansions, hotels and yachts. They were heads of their communities and well connected in government. For whatever reason they had to leave their countries and their comforts in a great rush and arrived here without anything, leaving all their wealth to the governments they had been so friendly with till just a few moments earlier.

(to be continued)