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By the Hakham, Rabbi Ya'aqob Menashe

29 Heshwan 5778/Nov 18 17' Toldoth

If One Prays Without the Mystical Intents

According to the holy Zohar and Rabbenu the Ari z"l, there are many mystical secrets and intents (Kawanoth) that one must have when saying the prayers. If someone understands the simple meaning of the text of the prayers, but does not understand its secrets according to the Zohar and teachings of the Ari z"l, is his prayer considered to be lacking?

In Torah Lishmah it mentions that King David, 'a"h, prayed that if one did not have the mystical intents, one's prayers would not be considered to be lacking, but on the contrary, would be fully complete and effective. That is why we should say the *Wih No'am* before any prayer, study of the Torah or commandment that we perform, because it re-awakens the prayer of King David .

He adds that even though a person should make the effort to understand the hidden meanings, if one did not merit to acquire this wisdom but only acquired the simple meaning, his prayer is complete and not lacking in any way.

(See Torah Lishmah, O.H 17)



מדרש בן איש חי
Midrash BEN ISH HAI

פרשת תולדות 5778

וַיֵּאָהֵב יִצְחָק אֶת-עֵשָׂו כִּי-צִיד בְּפִיו וְרֵבֵקָה אֲהָבָת אֶת-יַעֲקֹב:

And Isaac loved Esau, because the game (venison) was in his mouth, and Rebecca loved (loves) Jacob.

Rabbenu Bahyei mentions that Isaac loved Esau, not on account of him being his first-born, but rather, כִּי-צִיד בְּפִיו. This has two different meanings. One explanation is that he would hunt animals in the field and give pleasure to his father with the food. The second explanation, based on Midrash Tanhuma, is that he knew how to trap his father with his mouth.

When he returned from the field, he would ask his father complicated questions in Halakha, such as how to tithe salt. There is no obligation to tithe salt, neither on a Torah level, nor on a Rabbinical level, thus he wanted to appear to be very righteous in his father's eyes. But, of course, it was just one big hoax.

Hakham Yosef Hayyim Shrem, 'a"h, explains, based on the fact that anytime the word 'Eth" appears in the Torah, it comes to include something else. So since the Torah says, וַיֵּאָהֵב יִצְחָק אֶת-עֵשָׂו, it comes to tell us that he also loved Jacob, but he loved Esau more. Then when it says further, וְרֵבֵקָה אֲהָבָת אֶת-יַעֲקֹב, it comes to tell us that Rebecca also loved 'Esau, but loved Jacob more.

Hakham Yosef Hayyim, 'a"h, in Ben Ish Hai Derashoth, explains that we shouldn't think that Isaac really loved the wicked one, but had to show him love externally, for two reasons. One was that Isaac said, "If I don't show Esau my love, he will know that I see what he really is and then he will become wicked publicly". This would be far worse.

A second reason is that when he saw that Rebecca love Jacob, he said to himself that if he also showed his love for Jacob and his hatred for Esau, this would not bode well for Jacob, because Esau would be Jealous of him. Since Isaac showed him love, Esau had no reason to be jealous, since his father's love would be sufficient for him.

The relationship that one builds between a parent and a child is very important and has an effect that lasts throughout the child's life -- way after the parents have moved on.

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

Not Answering Amen in Parts of 'Alenu

It says in the H̄esed La-alafim, that when reciting 'Alenu Leshabbeyah, one (who prays according to Nusah Sefard or 'Edoth HaMizrah), should pause between the phrase: *Umithpallelim Il el Lo Yoshiya'* (and they pray to a god who cannot save), and the phrase: *Wa-anaḥnu Mishtaḥawim* (and we bow down to...).

While reading 'Alenu Leshabbeyah, when one reads the portion: *Shehem Mishtaḥawim Lahebel Wariq* (they bow down to emptiness), if one has the occasion to answer *Amen* at that time, one should not do so. Similarly, when saying the portion that follows: *Umithpallelim Il el Lo Yoshiya'* (and pray to a god who cannot save), one may not answer amen there either.



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

Making Things Work out

Once when I spoke about Deborah, the Prophetess, and Baraq, several women had questions. To mention a few, someone asked why a woman like Deborah a prophetess and a judge, would marry a man like Baraq? Another lady commented that as a parent, she would guide her daughter to marry a man who possesses as many fine qualities as possible, why compromise and marry a person who lacks adequate spiritual height and wisdom?

I would like to clarify this important topic and elaborate. Indeed, it is our duty as parents to guide and teach our children how to choose their right soul mate, especially in a world flooded with the wrong information and misconceptions. There are a number of essential practical guidelines to choosing the right person. I will briefly mention just a few, because of the nature of this topic.

Exploring and getting to know the character traits and qualities of the person is of extreme importance. How kind, happy, reliable, honest etc., he is. Sharing common life goals, values, ideals and interests is meaningful too. I cannot stress enough, how crucial it is to direct our children to refrain from any physical contact prior to the marriage, since it confuses our process of making rational and logical decisions.

(To be continued)