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Parasha

Toldoth: Was Jacob's Blessing Valid?

בָּא אַחִיד בְּמִרְמָה וַיִּקַּח בְּרָכָתוֹ Your brother came with cunning (*Bemirmah*) and took your blessing (*Bereshith* 27:35). If Yiş-ḥaq Abinu (Isaac), 'a"ḥ, blessed Ya'aqob Abinu, (Jacob), 'a"ḥ, thinking he was Esau, how can the blessing be valid?

When Ya'aqob Abinu, 'a"ḥ, came to his father he said, *Because the L-rd your G-d arranged it for me.* Our Rabbis of blessed memory say that Yiş-ḥaq Abinu, 'a"ḥ, said, "This cannot be Esau, it must be Ya'aqob", because Esau is not accustomed to mentioning G-d when he speaks. Knowing his brother's ways and manner of speech, surely Ya'aqob Abinu should not have spoken in such a refined and holy manner.

The answer is that Ya'aqob Abinu, 'a"ḥ, acted with great wisdom. Onkelos translates the word *Bemirmah* as meaning 'wisdom'. He wanted to receive the blessing in full accordance with the law, without any doubt or any question. That is why he spoke in a manner that made it abundantly clear to his father who it was who was actually speaking. In this way, the blessing was complete in both deed and intent.

(¹Od Yoseph Ḥai Derashoth,
Parashath Toldoth)



מדרש בן איש חי
Midrash BEN ISH HAI

5779 פרשת תולדות

Halakha

The Order of Reciting Berakhoth (Blessings) on Food

When eating a variety of foods and fruits, there is a specific order in which the Berakhoth (blessings) should be recited. The most important foods are the ones mentioned closest to the word *Land* (of Israel) in a specific verse in the Torah (*Debarim* 8:8). They are foods from wheat and barley, wine, olives, dates, grapes, figs and pomegranates, in that order.

Not all foods are included in the above, obviously. The final order of which blessing takes precedence over another contains the acronym in Hebrew of *Magga' Esh*. They are:

1. מ [Meem] (*Haṁoši* or) *Mezonoth*.
2. ג [Geemal] *Gefen* (wine).
3. ע ['Ahn] 'Eṣ - fruits of the trees, which are eaten in the order mentioned above, followed by all other fruits which are not specifically mentioned in the verse.
5. א [Aleph] *Adamah* - fruits from the earth, excluding the grains mentioned above, and finally
6. ש [Sheen] *Shehakol* - the blessing recited on all other foods, including water and ones we are uncertain about.

(See *Debarim* 8:8. *Hilkhoth Ḥaggim*, *Maamar Mordekhai* [Eliyahu], *Hilkhoth Ḥaggim* 611:7, *Seder Birkhoth Hannehenin* 1)

For the Refuah Shelemah of
Yeshayahu Ben Regina

Little Details That Could Invalidate a Wedding

The ring that the Ḥathan (bridegroom) gives the Kallah (bride) for the purpose of Qiddushin (marrying her), should not contain any stones, because not everyone is an expert in evaluating precious stones and this could lead to complications. The ring must belong to the bridegroom. If he uses a ring that is only borrowed, the bride is not betrothed through this act.

The two witnesses must actually see the handing over of the ring and must hear the Ḥathan say the sentence of 'Harei Aht Mequddesheth Li' (behold you are sanctified unto me) ..., because if either of the two is lacking (the hearing of the sentence or the seeing of the transfer of the ring by the witnesses), it is as if the wedding were performed without witnesses and she is not married.

The saying of 'Harei Aht' must precede the giving of the ring. If the Ḥathan gives the ring first and then recites the phrase, she is not married.

(See Meqor Haḥayyim 237:15-19)

Cleaning One's Teeth after a Meal

The Aḥaronim wrote that if one finds meat between one's teeth, one is obligated to remove it, but under normal circumstances one is not obligated to check. Nevertheless, one who has spaces or cavities in the teeth, where food is likely to get trapped, must certainly check, because we can assume that there is food there.

The same applies if one ate cheese and wishes to eat meat after it. In this case also, one is obligated to check in the spaces and clean one's teeth. In fact, it is appropriate for a person who has spaces and areas in his teeth where food is likely to be trapped, to get into the habit of cleaning his teeth and removing the bits of stuck food (with floss or a toothpick), after every meal. This way he can avoid transgressing in this area.

(See Ben Ish Ḥai, 2nd year, Parashath Shelaḥ Lekh, Oth 8)



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

Remembering to Say "Thank You"

The first words that come out of our mouths every morning, as soon as we open our eyes, are *Modeh Ani - I thank you*. We thank G-d for returning our Neshama (soul) to us. Expressing gratitude is a most basic yet important and essential attribute expected of any human being.

People who say thank you are happy and cheerful people, they do not feel that life "owes" them anything. Everything they have is a gift that they are grateful to have. They appreciate every little thing, while not taking anything for granted. For such people, challenges and hardships are gifts too, though many people may find it more difficult to appreciate them.

Our Rabbis of blessed memory teach us (Wayyiqra Rabbah:9:7), that when the redemption takes place (may it come speedily in our days), only one offering will still be brought to the Temple.

(To be continued)