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By the Hakham

Rabbi Ya'aqob Menashe, 'a"h

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5782 פֶּרֶשַׁת וַיֵּרָא

Washing dishes on Shabbath

The Shulhan 'Arukh writes that cutlery, crockery and the like may be washed on Shabbath, provided that they will be needed for that Shabbath, such as when there are other Se'uddoth (Shabbath meals) remaining. However, after Se'uddah Shelishith (the third Shabbath meal which is eaten after Minha), they may not be washed.

This implies that one may wash utensils after the Friday night meal for the Shabbath morning meal, or even for Se'uddah Shelishith, if they are needed. In addition, even if one requires only one cup, he may wash several since each of the ones washed would be fit to be used. However, if one has other clean utensils that could be used, it is good to use the clean ones and not wash the dirty dishes on Shabbath, because of the effort it requires.

The reason why we may not wash dishes and the like after Se'uddah Shelishith is because one does not normally eat after this, but if someone wishes to eat more, or guests are expected, then it is permitted.

(See Sh. 'A. 323: 6. Kaf Hahayim ibid, Oth 39-42)

Wayyera: Why Is it Not Called Isaac's Test?

וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וַהֲאֱלֹהִים נִסָּה אֶת־אַבְרָהָם

"And it came pass after these things, that G-d tested Abraham" (Bereshith 22:1). The Alshikh, 'a"h, asks a very interesting question. Shouldn't the Torah have said that G-d tested Abraham and Isaac? After all, it was a very major test for Yis-haq Abinu (Isaac), also. He was 37 years old and was willingly going to sacrifice himself.

He answers that there is a difference between Abraham Abinu, 'a"h, and Yis-haq Abinu, 'a"h. Yis-haq Abinu, 'a"h, represents the attribute of justice (Din). This means that his entire desire and entity was to do the will of G-d without any hesitation or second thoughts. Abraham Abinu, 'a"h, on the other hand, represents the attribute of kindness (Hesed), and desired kindness and mercy. We see this clearly in how he even tried to find some merit to save the wicked people of Sedom.

When G-d commanded him to sacrifice his son, he had to make a 180 degree about turn and change his whole nature from kindness to justice, and take a knife in his hand to slaughter his son. In fact, he did not even question G-d who had promised him that the Jewish nation would come from his son, Yis-haq Abinu, 'a"h. That is why it says, "G-d tested Abraham".

(See Alshikh on the Torah, Parashath Wayera)



מדרש בן איש חי
Midrash BEN ISH HAI

For the 'Ilui Neshamah of
Rabbi Ya'aqob Menashe, 'a"h.
יעקב אליהו עבדאללה פרג' חיים בן רחל, ע"ה

Not praying in vain

We are not permitted to utter a prayer in vain. A prayer over something that has already taken place, is considered to be a prayer prayed in vain.

The Shulhan 'Arukh (Code of Jewish Law) gives examples of this. For example, if one were to enter a town and hear loud screams coming from within, one is not permitted to pray that those screams are not coming from his house. This is because the deed has already been done and the screams are coming from wherever it took place, whether from the person's house or somewhere else.

Similarly, if a woman is more than 40 days pregnant, by which time the gender of the baby has already been determined, he cannot pray for it to be a boy or a girl. We cannot pray for some sort of retroactive action to take place and change what has already occurred.

Instead, a person must pray for the future and thank G-d for what has taken place. For instance, a person should pray that he will arrive in peace at his destination. And when he does, he must thank G-d for it.

(See Sh. 'A. 230: 1)

The Seriousness of Giving Decisions in (Halakha) Jewish Law

"בִּיָּרֵבִים חֲלָלִים הִפִּילָה וְעַצְמִים כָּל־הֶרְגָּהָ" For many wounded has she made fall; numerous are the ones she has killed" (Mishlei, 7:26). The Gemara of Sotah (22a) tells us that the first portion of this proverb refers to those Talmidei Hakhamim (Torah scholars) who are not qualified to decide Halakha (Jewish law), but do anyway, and the second half refers to those who are capable and do not.

It says further in the Gemara of Shabbath (145b) that if something is perfectly clear to you, then say it, but if not, don't say it. The Pele Yo'es comments that this refers to something that has no practical ramifications in Halakha. How much more so does it apply if it does. He adds that one must be concerned that one will permit something forbidden or declare something impure to be pure. He should feel as if a sword is resting on him and that Gehinnam (hell) is open before him.

He goes as far as saying that one may not rely on one's memory but must always look the matter up in the books in case his memory misleads him. If he does not find a way to permit something clearly mentioned in the written works, he must not rely on his knowledge, even if he is a well respected Hakham, but must consult with other sages.

(See Pele Yo'es, Hora-ah)

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

Precious Advice in Difficult Times

(Continued from previous week)

[Hakham Yosef Hayyim, 'a"h] speaks figuratively, about a person who found some apples and other fruit in the garbage. He was asking how these items found their way into the garbage, and was told that they were not important enough in the eyes of their owner and were discarded.

I wonder what this person would say today, if he passed by homes that have many items, from furniture to electronic items, in excellent condition, waiting at the curb for the garbage truck to pick them up. Just because we are blessed with the means to buy new items, does not mean that we should discard that which has value.

An additional practical piece of advice that the Ben Ish Hai shares with his readers is to work according to a plan, thereby eliminating any possible waste. One example he gives is of women who can cook seven types of tasty and delicious dishes out of just two pounds of meat. Whereas there are those who would cook four pounds of meat - but the outcome would not be appealing even to a hungry man. If we are organized and plan ahead, we can not only avoid waste, but can make what we have more meaningful.

My dear friends, I think there is a message here that we cannot ignore. Thank G-d, many of us do not experience, and I pray never will, real poverty. However, no matter what our financial situation is, we must develop sensitivity to appreciate what we have, avoid waste at all cost, and always be grateful for what we have. There are many who have a lot less than we do.

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