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By the Hakham

Rabbi Ya'aqob Menashe, 'a"h

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If Someone Is Unable to Drink the Required Amount of Wine for Qiddush

When making Qiddush, strictly speaking, even though it is preferable to drink a full Rebi'ith (3 ozs., though there are varying opinions), it is sufficient to drink 'Rob' (the majority of a) Rebi'ith. What should a person do if he finds it difficult to drink that amount, because he cannot take the alcohol, or for some other reason?

In such a case, he should taste some of the wine and have another man present drink a 'Rob Rebi'ith'. This is the preferable way of doing it under these circumstances, however, if he does not taste the wine himself, he has still fulfilled his obligation according to the Shulhan 'Arukh. Ideally, everyone will taste the wine.

If there is no one present who can drink the majority of a Rebi'ith, each person should drink a little so that together they will have drunk the required quantity. In a situation where there is no other option, this method is acceptable, even though it takes some time for everyone to drink.

(See Ben Ish Hai, 2nd year, Bereshith, Oth 23. Qol Eliyahu, 9: 15)



מדרש בן איש חי
Midrash BEN ISH HAI

Mishpaṭim: Only What You Give Away is Yours

"If you lend אִם-כֶּסֶף תַּלְוֶה אֶת-עַמִּי אֶת-הָעֹנִי עִמָּךְ money to My people, to the poor person who is with you" (Shemoth 22:24).

In Sefer Haqqadosh, 'Od Yoseph Hai it says, only the money that someone gives in Şedaqa (charity) is his. The money that he has in his possession, on the other hand, may leave him at any time. That is why our Rabbis refer to money as "Zuzim", because they can "Zaz" - move, leave - at any time.

There is a story about a king, who asked a very rich individual, "How much money do you have?" And the man replied, "I have a hundred thousand Dinars." The king says, "You are lying because you have land worth substantially more than that, to say nothing of the money in your possession." The man replied to the king, "Your Majesty, you asked me how much money I have. The only money I have is what I have given in charity, and that is one hundred thousand Dinars. The rest that you see, I cannot consider as mine, because I may lose it at any time".

So we see from the Pasuq that we mentioned above, that only the money that you give as charity is considered to be yours and can never leave you, but the money that is in your possession may leave you at any time and cannot be considered to be "עִמָּךְ" (with you).

(See 'Od Yoseph Hai Derashoth, Parashath Mishpaṭim)

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

We May Not Add to G-d's Praises in the 'Amidah

One may not add to the descriptive praises of G-d in the 'Amidah, over and above what our Rabbis of blessed memory ordained. The words "HaE-l HaGadol HaGibbor WehaNora" (the great, the mighty, and the awesome G-d) are a formula that we must use intact.

By adding to them we are effectively giving a finite description to One who is infinite. It is as if we would praise a king, made of flesh and blood, that he had 1 million silver Dinars, whereas, infact, he had a million gold Dinars (Berakhoth 33b).

This applies to the 'Amidah, because we are forbidden to change the formula of prayer that was established by the Ḥakhamim. When it comes to personal prayers (requests, supplications, and praises), that a man says for himself, we are permitted to add to the amount of praises we recite. However, even in this case, if one is able to say them through Pesuqim (verses), it is considered to be preferable.

(See Shulḥan 'Arukh 113:9)

Qaddish for Someone Who Has No Sons

The Qaddish that is said just before 'Aleinu Leshabbeyah (or right after 'Aleinu in the Ashkenazi Nusah) is considered to be the "orphan's" Qaddish, since it was instituted by our Rabbis of blessed memory to be recited by the orphans on the passing of their parents. It is considered to be a great assistance to the parents if the son recites it during the 12 months of their passing, as well as on the anniversary of their passing (Yahrzeit) every year.

It is effective in two areas: (1) to save one's parents from judgement in Gehinnam (hell), and (2) to help raise them into Gan 'Eden and to raise their souls from one level to the next.

Since it is known that a Qaddish read by one other than one's son does not have the same effect, is there any point in paying someone to read the Qaddish for someone who passed away without children? It says in Rab Pe'alim that this is the custom from long ago, that one hires someone to read the Qaddish for one who has no sons, and it does, indeed, help.

(See Ben Ish Ḥai, 1st year, Parashath Wayḥi, Oth 12. Torah Lishmah 412. Rab Pe'alim vol. 4:7)

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

More Haste, Less Speed - Part 2

(continued from last week)

[The man who had already come home after prayers on Friday while it was still day, said to his friend's wife who was still running around getting ready], "My wife finished all her preparations for Shabbath two hours ago, showered, changed, lit the candles and is now sitting at home relaxing, yet you are still standing next to the stove. When will you light your candles? And what will you do when the days become short?" Her husband answered that there was no difference if the Friday was short or long, she always left things for the last moment and was always running late, irrespective of how much time she had available.

The moral of the story is that one might see someone who is working fast and frantically, and one might mistakenly think that he or she is very diligent and efficient. In fact, it could well be that the rush that one witnesses is a direct result of laziness. We must be very particular to value our time throughout the week, and especially on Friday, so that our work is completed calmly. Let us not fall into the trap of being like the woman in our story.

(See Laws for Women, Chapter 38, 'Od Yosef Ḥai, Parashath Bereshith, Oth 6)