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By the Hakham
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5782 פרשת דברים

Waiting for Your Guest to Leave

The Ben Ish Hai mentions that it is a *Miṣwah* (Mitzvah) to lengthen the prayer on Saturday night, because of the concept of *Melaweh Malka* (accompanying the Sabbath bride who is leaving). He relates that people would gather together on Saturday evening, singing *Shbaḥoth* (songs of praise), or listening to the *Derasha* from the *Hakham*. One of them would constantly look out of the window to see if the stars had come out yet or not, to know if Shabbath had ended.

Some time later this person bought himself a gold pocket watch. When the time for Shabbath to end had arrived, he would open the covering of his watch and hint to the *Hakham* that it was time to end Shabbath and that he should finish his *Derasha*.

Hakham Yoseph Hayyim, 'a"h, obviously disturbed by this behavior, asks if this is the definition of *Melaweh Malka*. Is it appropriate for us to be waiting anxiously for the Shabbath bride to leave? When guests come to visit you in your home, do you look at your watch constantly, waiting for them to go?

(See *Derekh HaTorah*, Shabbath, ch. 4. Oth 14)

Debarim: Why Does it Say "Heads" and not "Judges"?

הָבוּ לָכֶם אֲנָשִׁים חֲכָמִים וְנִבְנִים וְיָדְעִים לְשִׁבְטֵיכֶם וְאֲשִׁימָם בְּרָאשֵׁיכֶם "Provide for yourself men who are wise...and I shall appoint them as your heads" (Debarim 1:13). In Ben Ish Hai *Derashoth* it says that it would have been more appropriate to have said, "I shall appoint them as your judges". *Hakham* Yoseph Hayyim, 'a"h, answers as follows:

The *Hakhamim* (those who are wise) are called "the eyes of Israel" because they are the ones who look closely at the deeds of the Jewish people and examine them. Our Rabbis of blessed memory say, *הַחֲכָמִים עֵינָיו* - "A wise man's eyes are in his head". This is a difficult statement to comprehend. Do not all people have their eyes in their head?

The answer is that a fool does not see his own shortcomings, but only the shortcomings of others. Therefore, he is likened to a person whose eyes are in his feet because he does not look at his entire body. A wise person, on the other hand, has his eyes in his head and can see his whole body and all that it does. That is why the Holy One Blessed Be He created us with our eyes in our heads to hint at the fact that a person must examine himself from head to toe, in order for him to realize his failings.

The reason it uses the word heads, is because, since the *Hakhamim* are the eyes of the people, they will observe closely the deeds of the entire community. This is in contrast to those judges who do not examine the deeds of all the community, and whose eyes appear to be in their feet.

(See Ben Ish Hai *Derashoth*, Debarim)



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After Sunset When Fast of 9th of Ab is on Sunday

Once the sun has set at the end of the Shabbath preceding the ninth of Ab, when Tish'ah Be-Ab falls on Sunday, or falls on Shabbath and the fast is postponed till Sunday, there are several things that one must stop doing.

One may no longer eat and drink till the end of the fast. One may no longer wash oneself, except as permitted on Tish'ah Be-Ab. Torah study is not permitted, except for those portions that one may read on Tish'ah Be-Ab.

These are items which do not contradict Shabbath. However, anything that goes against what is permitted on Shabbath, one may not do till nightfall. Therefore, one may not change one's Shabbath shoes for the non-leather Tish'ah Be-Ab shoes, until after the emergence of three stars.

(See Maamar Mordechai Hilkhoth Haggim 28:7)

Birkath HaLebanah after Tish'ah BeAb

When the fast of Tish'ah BeAb is over, if there is a clear and unobstructed view of the moon, Birkath Hallebanah (the blessing on the moon) should be recited. However, since one has been fasting the whole day, it is appropriate to taste something before reciting the blessing since this blessing should be recited in happiness.

Since one did not do a complete Ne'ilath Yadayim (ritual washing of the hands) that morning, but only did it up to the knuckles, one should do the complete Ne'ilath Yadayim, till the wrists, before reciting Birkath Hallebanah.

(See Ben Ish Hai, 1st Year, Parashath Debarim, Oth 28)

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

Finding G-d at Times of Distress (Part 2)

Our Rabbis of blessed memory, based on the Kabbalah, explain that these days [ימי בין המצרים, the 22 days from the 17th of Tammuz until the 9th of Ab] have another deep meaning. The word her pursuers in Hebrew (רדפיה) can be divided into two separate words: "רדפי" and "יה" - those who search G-d. It is during these days that we can truly search for G-d and find Him! This is the time to consciously make an effort to connect to our Father in Heaven.

How? Through focusing on the needs of the Jewish people as opposed to our own personal needs. Rather than feeling pity for ourselves for not being able to wear new clothing, we should focus on the lack of a Temple and the destruction of Yerushalayim. Instead of feeling sorry for not being able to swim during the nine days (between the first of Ab and the ninth of Ab), let us pray for the redemption to take place.

The more we think and pray for the Geullah (redemption) of our Jewish people and the pain of our Father in Heaven, the closer we get to Him. This way we will become "רדפי יה", those who truly search G-d and find Him. In this merit may we see the coming of the Mashiyah speedily in our days, Amen!