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By the Hakham
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Naso: Raising the Prayers of Others Together with Yours

"G-d will shine His Countenance upon you and be gracious to you" (Bamidbar 6: 25). The Mefarshim explain that "ויחנך" means that you will find favor in the eyes of G-d, and that He will grant you your desires.

A person who prays with great intent and holiness of thought has the merit to pull along with his prayer the prayers of those whose prayers get left behind and cannot make it on their own steam to Heaven. This is in accordance with what our Rabbis of blessed memory tell us, that when G-d remembered Sara (Immenu 'a"h) to allow her to conceive, other barren women were remembered along with her. The same happened when Yiş-ḥaq Abinu, 'a"h, (Isaac) prayed for Ribqa Immenu, 'a"h (Rebecca), that G-d remembered other barren women who did not have enough merits to be answered in their own right.

We can understand יחנך as meaning "you will find favor in the eyes of G-d to grant you your desires and allow your prayers to raise and pull along with them the prayers of others."

(See Ben Ish Hai Derashoth,
Parashath Naso)



מדרש בן איש חי
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Training a Pet to Turn on a Light on Shabbath

The Torah commands us to let our animals rest on Shabbath. It says in Derekh HaTorah that the Ohr LeShion (Rabbi Ben Shion Abba Shaul, 'a"h), was asked if it would be permissible to train a dog to do a specific Melakha (forbidden Shabbath labor), such as turning on or turning off a light on Shabbath.

He would train the dog, for instance, that when he lifted his cane, the dog would do a specific Melakha. Would one be permitted to hint at it in this manner? He replied that this would be forbidden because a man is commanded to allow his animal to rest on Shabbath, as it says, לִמְעַן יִנוּחַ שׁוֹרְךָ וַחֲמֹרְךָ, "in order that your ox and donkey rest" (Shemoth 23:12).

The Ohr LeShion was asked on a different occasion, if one may tell animals to do Melakha on Shabbath. He answered that it is forbidden because it comes under the same heading as the prohibition of instructing non-Jews on Shabbath. Even though one of the reasons for the prohibition, the fact that people might think the non-Jew is the agent of the Jew, does not apply in this case, nevertheless, another reason is that one is forbidden to speak about Melakha on Shabbath. This latter reason applies even with respect to animals.

(See Rambam, Shabbath 20:1. Shulḥan 'Arukh 305:1.

Ohr LeShion 1:23. Derekh HaTorah 44:6-7)

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What to Do With Flour in Which One Finds Worms

If one has flour in which worms have formed and cannot be removed, the flour becomes forbidden. One may not sell it to a non-Jew either, since the non-Jew could turn around and sell it to a Jew. Even if the worms or bugs are clearly visible, there is still the concern that the non-Jew could bake it and sell the finished product to a Jew.

This rule applies to any food which has developed worms. In the case of a major financial loss, an Orthodox Rabbi should be consulted about the manner in which to proceed.

One is, however, permitted to give it to one's domestic help if they wish to eat it, even if this means that the Jew benefits from it. One should not leave it lying around one's house for some time, however, since there is a fear that someone may come to eat it. Some are of the opinion that it may not even be left for a short period of time. Baking it in an unusual shape is, nevertheless, permitted, since the shape will remind people not to eat from it.

(See Shulhan 'Arukh, Yoreh De'ah, 84:5. Taz 9. Maghen Abraham 5. Ben Ish Hai, 2nd year, Parashath Naso, Oth 13-14)

Why Does a Kohen Go Up First?

A Kohen reads first from the Torah, followed by a Lewi. This was instituted by our Rabbis of blessed memory to ensure that there will be peace between people. This way we avoid the situation of each person demanding that he go up first.

There is also some support for this from the verse (Debarim 31:9), ויכתב משה את התורה הזאת ויתנה "And Moses wrote this Torah and gave it to the Kohanim (priests) the sons of Lewi". Isn't it obvious that the Kohanim are the sons of Lewi? The sages extrapolate from this that it must mean that the Kohanim go first, followed by the Levites.

Since the purpose was to ensure peace, even if the Kohen wishes to forgo his honor and would like to send his teacher or someone greater than himself in his place, he is not permitted to do so. We do not consider that this is disrespectful to the Torah, since it is a question of following the custom.

(See Shulhan 'Arukh, O.H. 135:3. Kaf Hachayyim, ibid., Oth 12. Mishnah Berurah, ibid., 11, 12)

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

Peace or Strife on the Eve of Shabbath

The famous mizmor of Lekha Dodi in the service of Qabbalath Shabbath ends with the words: "Boee Kallah" (come bride). This phrase is repeated three times at the end of Lekha Dodi. Hakham Yoseph Hayyim, 'a"h, in his famous work *Ben Ish Hai*, brings the fact that the numerical value of the word "Boee" (come), is identical to the value of the word for love in Hebrew - Ahava (Ahava). He adds that the repetition of the word "come" three times teaches us that the eve of Shabbath is a special time. It is a time when we should connect ourselves to the quality of love on three levels - thought, speech and action.

In fact, Hakham Yoseph Hayyim, 'a"h, quotes Rabbenu the Hida who writes that Friday afternoon is a time when arguments and fights between husband and wife are prone to occur. In addition, the "Siṭra Aḥara" (lit. the other side [Saṭan]) toils to initiate strife in the home and, therefore, one must consciously suppress his inclination to create controversy and instead seek peace.

(To be continued)