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Bediqath Ḥameş, Which Blessings We Do and Don't Say.

The night before Pesah, of course, is when we have to do the Bediqath Ḥameş (the search for the leaven). Before you do the Bediqath Ḥameş you say the Berakha of "אשר קדשנו במצוותיו וצוונו על בעור חמץ" The Berakha is for the burning of the Ḥameş.

Why do we say this Berakha when we are actually only searching for Ḥameş at night, and not burning the Ḥameş until the next day? The answer is that the purpose of checking for the Ḥameş at night is in order to burn it the next day. That is why we say the Berakha at night. And even though it is a Mişwa that comes every year at this specific time, we do not say the Berakha of Sheheḥyanu.

However, as it says in Ben Ish Hai, if a person can find a new fruit or an important new item of clothing on which you would normally say the Sheheḥyanu, then he should say the Sheheḥyanu on that item and have in mind the Bediqah (the search for leaven) also.

(See Ben Ish Hai, Shana Rishonah, Parashath Şaw, Oth Heh)

Şaw (Tzav): When One Must Show Authority

"This is the Torah (law) of the burnt offering; It is the burnt offering, that is on the flames". (Wayyiqra 6:2). Rabbenu the Ḥida, 'a"h, writes that there is a hint here that the leader of the generation, as well as the head of the household, or a Rabbi or teacher, should act with authority. There is a proviso, however. This is only permitted if they do so externally for the honor of the Torah, but have a broken heart inside. If, on the other hand, they are haughty or arrogant inside, they will be punished for it.

Where do we see this hint in the words of the Pasuq? *Zoth Torah Ha'Olah* can be understood as raising or giving honor to the Torah. This is also something that is permitted to a Torah scholar in honor of the Torah, that he can appear great so that people will respect him and will follow the path of the Torah. The Hebrew word היא (it or she), which is read in the feminine form in this verse, is actually written in the masculine form: הוא (it or he). היא העולה can be understood to mean that the Torah (which is feminine in Hebrew) is raised. But if it becomes הוא העולה (in the masculine), it could be understood to mean that the person himself becomes raised or arrogant. In that case, the verse adds the words: *Al Moqdash* "on the flames", Heaven forbid.

Humility may be difficult to come by, but is an exceptionally important trait for every Jewish individual. We see from this that even if one's position dictates that he behaves differently outwardly, inwardly he must be very humble.

(See Benayahu, Menaḥoth 89a)



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A Lesson to be Learned from the Dippings

On Pesah (Passover) we dip the Karpas (celery) into salt or lemon water or vinegar, and then later we dip the Maror (bitter herbs) into the Haroseth.

We can learn a lesson from these two dippings. From the first one we must learn that if things are going very well for us, we must not become proud or arrogant, because we do not know what the future has in store. The person should think of the Karpas, which has a somewhat sweet taste (representing good times), which is dipped into something sour, (which hints at times that do not go so well).

The reverse is true also. If a person is, Heaven forbid, immersed in troubles and difficulties, they should not despair of finding mercy from the Holy One Blessed Be He. But rather, just as we take the Maror, which is bitter, and dip it into the Haroseth which is sweet, so too a person must feel that the bad days will soon end and, through G-d's mercy, he will soon be surrounded by sweetness and better days.

(See 'Od Yoseph Hai, Parashath Saw, Oth Teth)

A Commandment to Behave with Importance

It is a Mišwah to act in an important manner on Pesah, and doing so acts as an atonement for behaving in an important and arrogant manner the rest of the year, when it is not permitted. Leaning to the left as free people is part of that. Therefore, even though one can fulfill one's obligation by leaning on the knee of the person on one's left, one may not lean on one's own knee, because it gives the impression of being worried.

If one's right hand is hurt, in such a way that he cannot use it to eat with, and if he would lean on his left, he would not be able to eat, he is exempt from leaning. Similarly, if one is hurt or has a wound on his left arm so that he is unable to lean on it, he is also exempt from leaning.

The reason is that our Hakhamim of blessed memory, instituted leaning to the left as a sign of freedom and for enjoyment. It was not instituted to cause pain or suffering.

(See Kaf Haḥayyim, 472, Oth 12,16,22)

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

How Come We Are Commanded to Waste Food by Burning?

One of the essential commandments of Pesah is that we are not allowed to eat Hamešš (חמץ). Hamešš is defined as any one of the five grains (wheat, barley, oat, spelt and rye that come in contact with water for more than 18 minutes). Not only can we not eat it, we cannot see or derive any pleasure from Hamešš. Indeed, if we find Hamešš in our homes during Pesah, we cannot give it to a non-Jew. Even more surprisingly, on 'Ereb Pesah we are actually commanded to burn Hamešš. Given the great value that Judaism places on not wasting things and, in particular, not wasting food, this is very surprising.

The reason why there is such a strong prohibition against getting any pleasure, of any sort, from Hamešš on Pesah, is because Hamešš represents our Yešer Hara' (evil inclination). The manner in which we are commanded to treat Hamešš, is the same way we must deal with our Yešer Hara'. If we do not work to totally burn, and eradicate our Yešer Hara', but rather, allow him some small space in which to reside, we will succumb to his devious plans, because he is a master at getting us to do his bidding, in sly and covert ways.

We must, therefore, totally eradicate our Yešer Hara' in the same manner in which we make sure to derive no pleasure from our Hamešš during Pesah, and even burn the Hamešš that is left in our possession, before Pesah begins. The Yešer Hara' is a master planner and manipulator, and if we make even an inch of space for him, we will find that he will totally overtake us in his devious ways.