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By the Hakham

Rabbi Ya'aqob Menashe, 'a"h

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Touching a Napkin With Fruit Stained Hands on Shabbath

The Shulhan 'Arukh quotes the opinion of the Ba'al HaYereim that if, on Shabbath, one eats berries or other fruits that can color other items, one must be careful not to touch one's clothes or a cloth, while one's hands are colored. The same applies to red wine, black grapes or other items that are known to stain. This is because of the concern of dyeing (צובע), which is a forbidden Shabbath labor (Melakha).

There is an opinion that this only applies when touching or wiping one's hands on a cloth of the same color as the fruit. Many others, however, are of the opinion that in all cases it is permitted, since it not a case of dyeing but rather a case of dirtying. There is a difference of opinion as to whether a case of wiping one's hand on disposable paper napkins is more stringent, and one should consult with one's Orthodox Rabbi.

In any case, when the juice of fruits colors bread on Shabbath, we are not concerned, because dyeing does not apply to foods.

(See Beth Yosef, 1:320. Darkhei Moshe, ibid. Shulhan 'Arukh, 320:20. Kaf Hachayim, ibid, Oth 118,119,121. Shemirath Shabbath Kehilkhatha, 4:21 new ed.)



מדרש בן איש חי
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Behar Sinai/Beḥuqqothai: Shemittah Testifies to G-d's Creation of the World

"And G-d spoke to Moses at Mount Sinai, saying" (Wayyiqra 25:1). The commandment that the Torah proceeds to give here, is that of Shemittah, allowing the Land (in Israel) to lie fallow for an entire year, once every seven years.

The Alshikh HaQadosh explains that just as the keeping of the Shabbath is testimony to G-d having created the world, so too, observing the seventh sabbatical year of the land is also testimony to the fact that G-d created the world. The fourth commandment tells us that G-d created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. This is why we are commanded to rest on the seventh day. If so, shouldn't the commandment of Shemittah also have been placed within the same fourth commandment?

In order to prevent this precise question the Torah precedes this commandment with the words "And G-d spoke to Moses at Mount Sinai". We understand from this, that these laws were indeed given at the same time, at Mount Sinai, but that Moses did not mention them to the Children of Israel till later, because they were not applicable till later.

(See Alshikh on the Torah, Behar Sinai)

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Not speaking from Baruch Sheamar

One may not interrupt the prayer by speaking, from when one begins Barukh Sheamar till the completion of the 'Amidah. Even if it's for the purpose of a Mišwah, one may not speak between Barukh Sheamar and Yishtabbaḥ.

The reason being that Baruch Sheamar is the Berakha (blessing) before the Pesuqei Dezimra and Yishtabbaḥ is the final Berakhah. Nevertheless, if one did speak during between Baruch Sheamar and the Pesuqei DeZimra, or during the Pesuqei DeZimra itself, one does not need to repeat Baruch Sheamar.

The above applies to talking. However, the Qaddish (until Be'alma), Qedusha and Barchu may be responded to. This applies even if one is in the blessing that is within Baruch Sheamar. However, one may not reply Amen to the portions after Be'alma in the Qaddish of Yehe Shelamah and 'Al Yisrael. "Baruch Hu Ubaruch Shemo" may not be said at the mention of G-d's Name in the blessings. The same rules apply when one is in the middle of the Pesuqei DeZimra.

(See Shulḥan 'Arukh 51:4. Rama ibid. Kaf Haḥayim ibid, Oth 7, 11)

Guiding Children Before They Grow Up

The obligation to train a child in the Mišwoth (commandments) is up to the age of thirteen for a boy and twelve for a girl. After that time, the children are obligated to perform all the commandments, as an obligation upon themselves, as adults.

Even though the children, at this age, become obligated themselves to perform the Mišwoth, nevertheless, the parents should not feel that their responsibility has ended. In fact, the parents are never released of the obligation to guide their children to ensure that they are on the correct path of Torah and Mišwoth.

One must realize that one's authority over one's children is only substantial when they are young. One must make every effort while they are still young, to guide them and teach them what is right and wrong, praise them and admonish them when necessary. Once they become older, one doesn't have the same ability to correct their ways. On the contrary, being overly heavy handed with them can cause them to turn away, Heaven forbid.

(See Meqor Ḥayyim 5, 250:13)

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

How Can We Stretch Our Home? (Part 2)

(continued from last week)

Ḥakham Yosef Ḥayyim, 'a"ḥ, writes in Ḥuqqei HaNashim that the importance of fostering love and affection among women, especially among sisters-in-law, is clearly highlighted by the fact that it is so difficult to achieve.

It is like the parable of a man who married two of his sons in the days when married sons lived with their wives and families in their parents' house. The sons came to him after their marriages and complained that their home was too small for them. The father replied, "My sons, my partner has twelve daughters-in-law who all live in a home which is as big as our kitchen. Surprisingly, I never heard them complain that their home is not spacious enough for them."

In the middle of his words his partner came in. When the father of the two sons asked him to explain how come so many of them were able to live in a confined space, the partner responded by telling the father to measure the rubber band he was holding in his hand. He measured it and then they stretched it to its maximum and saw that its new size was four times its original size. "This is our home", he answered. "On the outside it looks small, but we can stretch the inside so that it is spacious enough for all of us".

The father asked him how it was possible to stretch a home built of stone and he replied, "It is possible with the love that dwells between us!"