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By the Hakham
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5783/2023 Parashath Emor

Eating On The Grass On Shabbath

Watering seeds so that plants will grow falls under the forbidden Melakha (Shabbath labor) of Zoreya' (sowing) as well as Horesh (plowing). Therefore, on Shabbath, one must be very careful not to eat in the garden area of one's backyard, for instance, if the meal contains water, since it is virtually impossible to avoid water spilling on the ground.

There are different opinions about other liquids. According to the Eliyah Rabba, very strong wine which would actually harm the seeds, does not fall under this prohibition.

Not spilling water on the ground on Shabbath applies to a case where there is vegetation on the surface of the earth. If there is no growth apparent on the surface, however, it is not forbidden provided it is not one's intention to cause growth. If there are seeds under the surface, though, one may not pour water there, even if they have not yet sprouted above the earth, because they are certain to grow.

(See Shulhan 'Arukh with Rama 336:3. Kaf Hachayyim ibid, Oth 30,32,27. Mishnah Berurah, ibid,26-29)



מדרש בן איש חי
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5783 פֶּרֶשַׁת עֵמֹר

Emor: Learning How to Pray from the Sacrifices

"And when you offer a Todah (thanksgiving sacrifice) to G-d, you must offer it of your own will", (Wayyiqra, 22:29). Hakham Ya'aqob Abuḥaseira, 'a"h, writes that there is a hint in this Pasuq (verse) about the basic principles of Tefillah (prayer). As we know, prayer is in place of offerings, as it says, "ונשלמה פרים שפתינו" (And our lips will be a substitute for the oxen [Hoshea' 14:3]).

Just as sacrifices had to be brought whole heartedly, so too prayer must be made with a full heart and desire. Just as sacrifices had to be brought by a specific time, and if that time passed the offering was invalidated, so too, prayer must be made by a specific time. Even though our Rabbis of blessed memory permit us to make up a missed prayer by saying it after the prayer that comes after it, nevertheless, when doing so, one does not fulfill one's obligation of praying at the correct time. These are hinted to us in the verse, as follows:

The phrase, "When you bring a Todah (thanksgiving offering)", refers to prayer which is used to "thank" G-d and is in place of the sacrifice. "It must come with a full heart", tells us that one must pray with complete devotion. The next verse says, **בְּיוֹם הַהוּא יֵאָכֵל**, "It must be eaten on that day", which comes to tell us that each prayer has its own time and we must be particular to pray it at the correct time.

(See Pittuḥei Hotham, Parashath Emor)

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When is Love and Unity Required the Most?

Love and unity are required between the Jewish people at all times. During the days of the 'Omer, however, we must be extra careful about this and keep away from any quarrel or dispute.

On Rosh Hodesh (the first day of) Siwan the Children of Israel arrived at Mount Sinai. On that day there was enormous unity between the Children of Israel, as it says: "As one man with one heart". That is why the Torah states: "And Israel encamped [using the word Wayyeehan (וַיִּחַן) in the singular] in front of the mountain".

Some sages are of the opinion that the Children of Israel arrived at Mount Sinai on the second day of Siwan. In view of this we should be especially particular on these two days about brotherhood and friendship, more than on any other days of the 'Omer and more than the whole year.

(See Oraḥ Ḥayyim Haggadah, Inyan Hol Hammo'ed, Oth 29. H"R Mordekhai Eilyahu, MM, Hilkhoth Haggim, 21:2)

Salt and Spirituality in Eating

Eating, which is a physical act, also has a spiritual side. One should be more particular about the honor of one's soul than the honor of one's body. Therefore, before eating a meal, one should study some Torah.

When eating a meal, one should always place salt on the table and leave it there till after Birkath Hammazon (Grace after Meals). The bread must be dipped in it as soon as we recite the blessing of Hammosi. The reason is that since, for our sins, the Beth HaMiqdash (Temple) is not standing, the table at which we eat is likened to the altar and the food is in place of the offerings. And it is written, "Upon all your sacrifices you shall offer salt". In addition this a Tikkun (rectification) to the soul.

If one recites the blessing of Hammosi and finds there is no salt on the table, he must not wait, but breaks and eats the bread immediately. When salt is brought later he should dip the bread in it.

According to the Sod (Kabbalah), the bread must be dipped three times into the salt and there are Qabbalistic reasons for this. It should be noted that the words Lehem (bread - לחם) and Melah (salt - מלח) are made up of the same Hebrew letters.

(See Ben Ish Hai, 1st year, Parashath Emor, Oth 10. Kaf Haḥayim 157, Oth 8 & 9)

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

How Can We Stretch Our Home?

If we had to select one place, where love, peace and harmony are most commonly found and practised, we would probably unanimously say 'family'. While there are numerous families where close and tight relationships exist, often, perhaps too often, we find that the opposite is true. There are instances of one sister not speaking to another, children not speaking to their parents and so on.

It mentions in Huppei HaNashim that love and affection among women is much needed and praiseworthy, especially among sisters-in-law. Hakham Yoseph Hayyim, 'a"h, explains that it is precisely because there is such a great need to develop and deepen these relationships, that it is so difficult to achieve. The more valuable, meaningful and important the matter, the more challenges and difficulties are we likely to face. How victorious the evil inclination is when jealousy and hatred between sisters-in-law, cause a separation between brothers (their husbands)!

(to be continued)