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By the Hakham

Rabbi Ya'aqob Menashe, 'a"h

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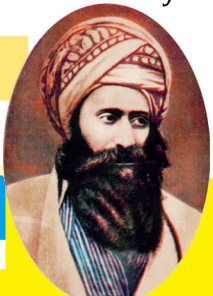
5783 פֶּרַשַׁת שְׁפִטִּים

Shoftim: Divination and Soothsaying is Forbidden

"You shall be perfect with the L-rd your G-d" (Shoftim, 18:13). This verse comes after the Torah forbids us from following the ways of the nations of the world who practice divination and the like. Our Rabbis of blessed memory explain (Nedarim 32a), that the word תָּמִים (perfect), comes from the word שְׁלֵמוֹת (completeness). The Ramban adds, quoting Onkelos, that it refers to something that is complete with no blemish or anything lacking.

This means that we have to only rely on and believe in Haqqadosh Barukh Hu (the Holy One blessed be He), because He knows the future, and only He and His Prophets can foretell the future. He is in charge of the whole world and everything in it, including the constellations, and He can change anything, anytime He wants to.

The path of following those who claim to foretell the future, is foreign to the Jewish people. The Seforno comments that anything that any soothsayers or magicians say about the Jewish people has no meaning or value, because the Jewish people are not under the jurisdiction of the constellations. We must place our faith firmly in the Creator of the world Who created, and is the Ruler of, the entire world and everything in it.



מדרש בן איש חי
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Answering Barukh Hu Ubarukh Shemo to the Qiddush

Rabbenu the Hida, 'a"h, writes that even though it is better not to answer "Barukh Hu Ubarukh Shemo" to a blessing that someone else is reciting with the intention of including him also, nevertheless, one must not stop those who do answer. This includes Qiddush, Hammosi, blowing of the Shofar and so on.

Rabbi Refael Barukh Toledano, 'a"h, writes in his Qışur Shulḥan 'Arukh, that their custom, throughout Morocco, is to answer Barukh Hu Ubarukh Shemo, to all blessings, even those that are recited on the listener's behalf, including the blessing on the Hallel, Shofar, Meghilla, and so on. He adds that one may certainly not argue on a Minhagh (accepted custom).

In truth, it is not just the custom that was prevalent in Morocco, but every Sephardi community that I have inquired about, also appears to have had the custom of answering Barukh Hu Ubarukh Shemo to all blessings, including Qiddush. It seems to me, therefore, that one who knows his custom should not deviate from it and should certainly not stop someone else from doing so.

All this applies to Sephardim. Ashkenazim follow somewhat different guidelines regarding Barukh Hu Ubarukh Shemo, and should not answer when they are being included in a blessing.

(Refer also to *Answering "Barukh Hu Ubarukh Shemo" to the Blessings of the Shofar.*)

(See Qışur Shulḥan 'Arukh of Hakham Rafael Barukh Toledano, 210, Oth 5)

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Benefitting From the Borrower Without Asking Permission

There are restrictions as to what benefit one may obtain from someone to whom one made a loan. The Shulhan 'Arukh writes that a lender may not benefit from the borrower without the knowledge of the borrower. This applies even if this was a favor that the borrower would have done for the lender, had there not been any loan. Since he is doing it without the knowledge of the borrower, it looks as if the lender is relying on the fact that the borrower will tolerate what was done, on account of the loan.

On the other hand, the lender may benefit from the borrower with the acquiescence of the borrower, assuming that it is a favor the borrower would have done, irrespective of whether or not he lent him money. There is a caveat, however. The Shulhan 'Arukh adds that this is only permitted if the favor is not obvious to the public. For example, allowing the lender to live in one's house would be forbidden, even if the borrower would have done that favor for the lender regardless of the loan.

The Shulhan 'Arukh Harab is of the opinion that the Shulhan 'Arukh's prohibition of benefitting from the borrower without his knowledge, only applies if he had not been doing so before the loan. However, if he was benefitting from him without his explicit consent, prior to the loan (for example, he would use his friend's phone without asking permission) then in this type of scenario it would be permitted to do so even after the loan.

(See Shulhan 'Arukh, Yoreh De'ah, 160:7)

Can Children Recite All the Morning Blessings?

The portion of "WeAttah 'Athid Littelaḥ Mimmeni" in the Elo-hai Neshamah of the morning blessings, refers to G-d taking one's soul during sleep and returning it upon awakening (see A Torah Minute™, *Why Is the Morning Blessing in the Future?*). According to the Kabbalists, however, the soul of a child under thirteen does not ascend when he goes to sleep. If so, it might appear that one should not allow children to read this praise in the morning blessings.

It says in Ben Ish Hai, however, that this is not a valid reason for not permitting them to say it. On the contrary, children are included with the adults and, as a result, may also recite this blessing, because the blessing is relevant to the adults whom they are included with. This is in the same way that a person recites all the morning blessings, even though some of them may not apply to him personally.

Even though the blessing is recited in the first person, it does not negate the fact that a child may still recite it. This is no different to a blessing that an adult recites in the first person even though it doesn't apply to him. Examples of this are the blessings of "HaMa'abir" (המעביר - Who removes the bonds of sleep from my eyes), that one recites even if one did not sleep, and "She'asah Li Kol Şorki" (שעשה לי כל צרכי - Who provided all my needs for me), even if he is a mourner and not wearing leather shoes. The same rule applies to children regarding reciting the blessing.

(See Ben Ish Hai, 1st year, Parashath WaYesheb, Oth 1)

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

What Do Women Have to Do With Torah and Water? (Part 2)

Our Holy Torah is likened to water. Ribbi Ḥanina Bar Idi explains that this is because the nature of water is to always flow from high to low, and the Torah too, is found amongst those who are lowly and humble. Hakham Mordechai Eliyahu, 'a"ḥ, brings a different explanation. He says that every single entity in the world has the element of water contained in it. Just as water is an essential element in the existence of the world, so too the Torah is crucial to the existence of the world.

The wise person, who understands how the entity of water is hidden in everything in the world, can also appreciate the hidden power of the Torah and its place in the continuity of the world. Now we can look at what women have to do with the concept of Torah and water.

When the Children of Israel traveled in the desert for forty years, they drank water from a well which traveled along with them, "Miriam's Well". Why is it that specifically 'water' was provided for them in the merit of Miriam the Prophetess? HaRab Mordechai Eliyahu, 'a"ḥ, writes that It was to teach us that, like water, the hidden foundation of the Jewish home is the woman. Those who only look at the externals may think that it is the man, who is out in the world, who is the pillar of the home. In truth, it is the exact opposite. The woman, even though, like water, she is hidden, is the internal power who sets the tone in every Jewish home, and is the core and the essence of her home.