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By the Hakham
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5784 פְּרַשַׁת תּוֹלְדוֹת

Toldoth: Let Me Sin and Bless Me

וַיִּצְעַק צָעָקָה גְּדֹלָה וַמָּרָה עַד מָאֵד וַיֹּאמֶר
[Esau] cried a great and bitter cry and said to his father, 'Bless me also, my Father' " (Bereshith 27:34). It says in Dibrei Mordekhai that it seems very strange that when Esau found out that his brother Jacob had taken the blessing before him, that he cried out and wanted to be blessed. Esau was so wicked, that he did everything that the Torah forbade, so why would he care to receive a blessing?

He answers that even sinners know G-d, and know also that the righteous have power to their blessings. However, they desire to remain on the path that they have chosen and go after the desires of their hearts and the world. It is not a contradiction to them, that despite this, they wish to receive a blessing.

He equates this to those who drive on Shabbath. They know well that it is a Torah prohibition to do so. Nevertheless, they will carry with them a Qameya' (amulet), which contains a holy blessing of protection. This is the explanation of Esau's request. He had no intention of correcting his ways, but still wanted to collect a blessing.

(See Dibrei Mordekhai, Toldoth, Parparaoth)



מדרש בן איש חי
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Minḥa Shortcuts

People often say that the most difficult prayer during the week is Minḥa. It has to be prayed at specific times which often coincide with the latter half of the work day. Because of that, one must be very careful to treat it seriously and not allow oneself leniencies where there are none.

It says in the Gemara that a person must be very careful about praying Minḥa, because even Eliyahu (Elijah the Prophet) was only answered during the Minḥa prayer. The Pele Yo'eš states that many of those who do not understand its importance, pray by themselves and not in a congregation, much later than they should, and often skip it altogether, saying to themselves that they will pray 'Arbith twice to make up for the Minḥa prayer that they missed. The truth is that the concept of a make up prayer does not apply in such a case because it can only be used when a person did not read a prayer for reasons out of his control or by mistake.

The fact that one wakes up early to pray in a Minyan is not an excuse to miss Minḥa or not pray it correctly. It is easier to pray Shaḥrith because businesses are closed at that time. Missing Minḥa makes a statement that making money is more important in one's eyes. Therefore, a person must make every effort to pray Minḥa correctly, at whatever time it falls throughout the year, and may G-d answer all our prayers for the good.

(See Mas. Berakhoth, 6b. Ben Ish Hai, 1st year, Parashath Wayyaqhel, Oth 1.
Pele Yo'eš, Minḥa)

לעלוי נשמת ההרוגים, להחזרת השבויים בשלום
להצלחת החיילים, ולשמירת כל עם ישראל

Leaving a Meal If No One Else at the Table

If one leaves the place where one started a meal with bread and goes to another place (without first reciting Birkath HaMazon), even though we previously stated that one does not repeat the blessing before the food again (See A Torah Minute™, *Eating Food of Seven Species in a Different Location*), this applies to foods that are considered part of the meal.

If he wishes to have any other foods, however, he must recite a separate blessing before eating them. This applies to foods that are eaten at the second location as well as foods eaten on return to the original house.

It should be noted that the Ḥakhamim did not permit one to leave the table in the middle of the meal, if there is no one else eating at the table, out of fear that one would forget to return and recite Birkath Hamazon. However, one should try to avoid leaving in the middle of a meal, whenever possible, even if others are present.

(See Shulḥan 'Arukh, with Rama, O. Ḥ. 178:2. Ben Ish Hai, 1st year, Parashath Beha'alothkha, Oth 2)

Washing Clothes Before Wednesday

Rab Ḥid"a, 'a"h, writes in Maḥziq Berakha that even though the Taqanah (edict) of Ezra HaSopher, 'a"h, was that we must wash clothes for Shabbath on Thursday, it doesn't mean Thursday alone. The reason he mentioned Thursday is to exclude Friday. However, if someone wished to do the laundry for Shabbath on Wednesday, that would be permitted.

It says in Meqabshiel that, nevertheless, washing clothes on Thursday is the most appropriate, because it is more obvious that it is being done in honor of Shabbath. If one washes on Wednesday it is less obvious, but there is no need to protest if someone does their wash on Wednesday. According to the Qabbalistic understanding, as explained by Rabbenu the Ari, z"l, preparation for Shabbath begins on Wednesday.

In view of this, there is no problem if one wishes to wash on Wednesday. However, since Tuesday is considered as belonging to the previous Shabbath, it is not appropriate to wash on Tuesday for Shabbath. Additionally, it is so far away from Shabbath that it will not be apparent that the wash was being made in honor of Shabbath. In view of this, one who is accustomed to doing a wash on Tuesday for Shabbath, should do it instead on Wednesday or, ideally, Thursday.

(See Meqabshiel, 2nd year, Lekh Lekha, Oth 15)

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

Why and What We Should We Pray for

Yis-ḥaq Abinu (Isaac) and Ribqa Immenu (Rebecca), 'a"h, prayed to the Holy One blessed be He, begging Him to grant them a child. The term used to describe Yis-ḥaq Abinu's Tefillah (prayer) is rather an unusual one - "ויעתר", which indicates increased prayers and supplications.

Yis-ḥaq Abinu, 'a"h, who grew up in the home of Abraham Abinu, 'a"h, was accustomed to the "art" of prayer. His father, Abraham Abinu, 'a"h, instituted the morning prayer, Tefillath Shaḥrith, he prayed on behalf of the people of Sedom to be saved and for Abimelekh, who abducted his wife Sara, to be healed.

Yis-ḥaq Abinu, 'a"h, himself, was the one who instituted Tefillath Minḥa. Prayer, is the tool that our ancestors used anytime they were in need of something. They truly understood the power of prayer, Tefillah.

(to be continued)