



Parashat Matot 5771 - #195

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On the Parashah...

"You should be innocent before Hashem and Israel" (Bamidbar 32:22)
[Tal Chermon]

With this verse, the Torah teaches us an important principle: A person should not bring himself to be suspect. One should not say: "What do I care what people think of me?! I know what I am doing is honest!" Rather just as one must act in a proper way before Hashem, so too must one act in a proper way before human beings, in order to increase the sanctification of Hashem's Name in the world.

Here are a few examples of this principle in action:

1. Abba Hoshiya was a launder by profession. His clothing was always made of one type of cotton and not a combination, so that people would not say that when he washed their clothing, he took little pieces of the material and made himself a garment (Yerushalayim, Baba Kama 10:10).
2. Beit Garmu (The family of Garmu) was responsible for baking the dough for the Lechem Panim in the Temple. The Rabbis praised them because they would not allow clean flour in their homes so that they would never be suspected of using the dough for their own sustenance, in fulfillment of the verse: "You should be innocent before Hashem and Israel" (Yoma 38a).
3. Beit Avtinas (The Family of Avtinas) was responsible for the incense in the Temple. The Rabbis praised them since whenever a woman in their family was married, she would not wear perfume for the wedding, and if one of their men married a woman from another place, it was on condition that she would not wear perfume, so that they would be above suspicion of using the incense for their own benefit, in fulfillment of the verse: "You should be innocent before Hashem and Israel" (ibid.).
4. The Midrash (Tanchuma, Pekudei) says that Moshe Rabbenu would give an accounting for every type of material received for the Mishkan: Gold, silver, copper, etc. He acted in this way to be above suspicion, even though it says (Melachim 2 12:16) "They did not require an accounting from those to whom they gave the money to pay the workers, because they acted with complete honesty." If Moshe Rabbenu acted this way, how much more so should we - a thousand times (Shelah)!

Rav Aviner on... Waiting Between Meat and Milk

[Be-Ahavah U-Be-Emunah – Pinchas 5771 – translated by R. Blumberg]

Why do we have to wait six hours between meat and milk?

It is a Rabbinic decree. According to Rambam, even if meat remains between one's teeth after six hours, and one then drinks milk, the meat is considered to have gone bad. Therefore, if he finds meat between his teeth after six hours, it does not prevent him from eating dairy. But if he chewed meat and spat it out, he must still wait six hours.

By contrast, according to Rashi, the reason is that one continues to taste a meaty taste from his stomach after eating meat. Therefore, even if he swallowed meat without chewing it, he must wait six hours (Tur and Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah #89).

What about just tasting something?

If someone tasted meat without chewing it and he spat it out, he needn't wait six hours. After all, there is not meat between his teeth and no taste coming from his stomach.

If someone has fillings, false teeth or holes in his teeth, is that worse?

The same six-hour rule applies.

Must one wait six hours, or is a little less possible?

Some required only waiting *into* the sixth hour, but there is no clear source for that. All of our Rabbis' time requirements are precise, as, for example, regarding the last moment you can recite the Shema or the Shemoneh Esrei. Yet if a person's Rabbi ruled that five hours is sufficient, one can follow his ruling. Likewise, if one has a precise, responsible tradition in his family that a Rabbi ruled that way for them, his family can hold to that tradition.

Can one wait less time after eating fowl (as opposed to red meat)?

It is true that the prohibition against eating fowl with milk is Rabbinic, and not from the Torah, but there is no source for being able to wait less time after fowl.

What is the law regarding a fleishig dish containing no actual meat? For example, what about fleishig soup without actual meat, or potatoes that were cooked with meat?

One must still wait six hours, because the taste is like the essence.

When does one start counting the six hours?

Some take the stricter view of starting the count from the end of the meal (Aruch Ha-Shulchan), but the law, based on the Talmud, is that we count from the moment one finishes eating the item in question.

Is there a source for the fact that Jews from Germany and Austria wait only three hours and Jews from Holland wait one hour?

This is the approach of Rama, Rabbi Moshe Isserles. The Talmud does not mention six hours. It only says that if one ate meat in a particular meal he should not consume dairy until his next meal. Rabbi Yitzchak Alfasi (Rif) explains that the intent is the next meal in accordance with the set conventions that people have. In other words, six hours between meals. Tosafot, however, explains that the intent is the next meal the person eats – whenever that is. In other words, if someone ate meat, he should recite the after-blessing, clear away the table, rinse his hands and mouth, and can then immediately eat dairy. In accordance with this, Rama ruled that one may eat meat after an hour. It's not immediate, but it is still after only one hour, and such is the practice of Dutch Jewry. Jews from Germany wait three hours, in other words, they chose a stricter version of the one-hour position, since anyway, Jews from there wait only three hours between meals. Yet apart from Jews from those places, all Jews - Ashkenazim, Sephardim, Yemenites and Ethiopians - have to wait six hours.

What does one do when husband and wife come from families with differing customs?

As in all such matters, the wife should follow her husband's custom, whether in the direction of stricture or lenience. Some sources require "Hatarat Nedarim", the absolution of a vow, but there is no need to take that strict view. It's like the law regarding a person who moves permanently from one place to another: he takes upon himself all the customs of his new place, whether they are more strict or more lenient than his previous customs (Shut Igrot Moshe). The reason is to maintain harmony, since differing customs are liable to lead to tension and unpleasantness, as well as to difficulties in child rearing.

What about somebody who is ill?

If an ill person has to eat milk after meat, an hour's wait suffices (Aruch Ha-Shulchan).

What about children?

A child before bar- or bat-mitzvah can eat dairy immediately without waiting, but he should be taught in accordance with his ability (see Shut Yechaveh Da'at). For example, if an infant only falls asleep if he has had a bottle of milk, and he has just eaten meat, he can be given milk. One should gradually lengthen the time span according to age, but legally one should give the maximum education possible in accordance with the child's capacity.

Conversely, how long should one wait between milk and meat?

Nothing. It's enough to wash one's hands and to brush one's teeth. Ashkenazim, however, wait six hours after "hard cheese", which refers to very expensive cheeses with a very sharp taste. By contrast, after less expensive, common regular yellow cheese, there is no need to wait (HaGaon Rav Shlomo Zalmen Auerbach; quoting the Chazon Ish).

Stories of Rabbenu — Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook

Hebrew Date

"I received your letter with a date which I do not know or understand, since I am unfamiliar with the counting of time from the year of the birth of 'that sinner of Israel whom the non-Jews made into idol worship' [the words of my father, my teacher and my Rabbi, Ha-Rav Kook tz"l in 'Igrot'], who practiced sorcery, enticed and led Israel astray (Sanhedrin 107), who caused Israel to be destroyed by the sword and its remnants scattered in humiliation, who exchanged the Torah and deceived the majority of the world to serve a god other than Hashem (Rambam, Hilchot Melachim chap. 11)" (Igrot Rabbenu from 24 Adar Rishon 5727).

Our Rabbi was particular that one should not write the Christian date, and when he was invited to a wedding and the Christian date appeared on the invitation, he would not attend the wedding (Gadol Shimushah p. 91 #31).

A rabbi of a community outside of Israel visited our Rabbi, and during the conversation our Rabbi asked about the date of a particular event. The guest answered with the date according to their count. Our Rabbi said: "Excuse me, I did not hear." He raised his voice and repeated his words. Our Rabbi again said to him: "I did not hear," and again a third time. On the fourth time the guest understood what our Rabbi did not hear, and he told him the Hebrew date. Our Rabbi heard and smiled, and the guest apologized.

Our Rabbi agreed to participate in an important ceremony on behalf of the Municipality of Jerusalem, but when he saw that only the Christian date and not the Hebrew date was on the announcement, he refused to attend, and all of the attempts to persuade him did not help.

When the ruling of Rav Ovadiah Yosef that there is no prohibition in using the Christian date and those who use it have what to rely on (Shut Yabia Omer vol. 3 Yoreh Deah #9) was publicized, our Rabbi expressed deep pain (see Le-Netivot Yisrael vol. 2 p. 239. From Shut Sheilat Shlomo 3:14).

He was amazed every time he saw a stamp on a letter in Israel which was marked with the date from the Creation of the World (Gadol Shimushah pg. 93 #34).

A student once read a printed sentence "the seventeenth century" and added: "May they be blotted out," and it got good laugh from our Rabbi (Iturei Coahnim #242 in the name of Ha-Rav Menachem Ha-Cohain).

*Family Matters - Ha-Rav writes weekly for
the parashah sheet "Rosh Yehudi" on family relationships*

Unconditional Love

A mother turned to me: "Our 16 year-old son acts irresponsibly. He ran away from home." I asked her: "Are the lines of communication open between you and your son? Can he speaking freely with you?"

"No, he is mad at me."

"Can he communicate with your husband?"

"Also no."

"Is there someone in the family, he trusts?"

"No."

"Perhaps an uncle, a grandparent?"

"No."

"A neighbor?"

"No."

"A teacher?"

"No."

"A Rabbi?"

"No."

"If so, he is alone. He is lost."

In our huge world, a person must have at least two people who love him unconditionally. If the love is conditional, he feels threatened. It is impossible to say to a child: "Look, I love you today because you acted so nicely."

This is not true love. We must love him even if he does not act nicely. If he acts properly, we should certainly express our love and respect, but this is in addition to the unconditional love we must convey to him. Before all else, there must be this foundation: We love you in every situation. Even if he returns from school and he was rude to all the teachers, ripped the other students clothing and broke windows and tables – it does not matter, we must love him!

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