



PO Box 1076 Jerusalem 91009 \* Tel. 972-2-628-4101

# Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim

IN THE HEART OF THE OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM

The Torah of Ha-Rav Shlomo Aviner, Rosh Ha-Yeshiva

---

Shemini Ateretz/Simchat Torah/Bereshit 5768 Prepared by Rabbi Mordechai Friedfertig

yeshivatateretyerushalayim-subscribe@yahoogroups.com archived at [www.ateret.org.il](http://www.ateret.org.il)

## Rav Aviner on the Passing of Ha-Gaon Rav Avraham Shapira ztz"l

(Printed on the front page of the Israeli newspaper "Maariv" for Erev Shabbat Chol HaMoed Sukkot)



## A True Gaon (Genius)

In this generation of widespread usage of superlatives, the honorific "Gaon" is given to every rabbi. Our Master, Rav Avraham Shapira, however, was a true gaon, the great rabbi of this generation, he therefore did not need this honorific, and all of his tens of thousands of students and admirers called him, "Rav Avrum." The entire Torah was before him like an open book, from the Talmudic sources to the latest halachic rulings. He was therefore capable of ruling in every area of Halachah, and to that which people say, "Hashem was with him," can be added, "You have spoken correctly" (see Berachot 30a, Ketubot 109b, etc..).

Out of the midst of this great Torah, he loved the Entirety of Israel (Klal Yisrael), like the love of the Cohain Gadol, and he was concerned about the life of Klal Yisrael. Not only did he have a wide open heart, a loving heart, for Klal Yisrael, but for each and every individual Jew. It once happened that he was a sandak (the one who holds the baby) at a Brit Milah, and they saw that tears were pouring from his eyes. The Mohel was not careful about the baby's head, despite the Rav's request, and the baby was crying...and this great Rabbi was crying along with the baby as he tried to calm him. This same Gaon, a man of kindness, once said that it seems that Avraham Avinu smiled all of the time, because smiling is a great kindness. He himself also received every person with a cheerful face.

This same Gaon stood at the forefront of the struggle for the entirety of our Land, the struggle was not only in his brain, but in his heart, in which he felt terrible pain. When he was asked, what use is it going to protest, he was surprised by the question and responded, "When we hurt, we scream." He admitted that he was not able to fall asleep on account of the great pain of giving up our Land. In truth, with all of his gentleness, he was a warrior; not over trivial matters, but over the essence of our lives: over the preservation of the Torah, the Nation and the Land. To this same Gaon, these were not three separate entities,

but one entity of Torah, since his teaching was whole and united. He fought against any distortion of Torah which was passed down from generation to generation.

We have lost the great Rabbi of this generation, a great leader, a great captain in the stormy sea of our spiritual and National lives, but his ways and his instructions will remain with us forever.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Rashi's First Comment on the Torah: This is Our Land

The issue of our right to our Land arose for the first time during the period of Yehoshua bin Nun, for the second time during the period of Ezra and Nechemiah and now, for the third time during the period of the third return to Zion. There are non-Jews who claim that we are thieves, and some Jews follow their lead.

This ethical issue can be clarified in two ways: from the perspective of Divine ethics and from the perspective of human ethics. There is no contradiction between them, but Divine ethics rises above

human ethics. Rashi provides an answer to this question at the beginning of his commentary on the Torah. Why does the Torah begin with the Creation of the World, and not Parashat Bo, where the first commandment appears? Because of the verse (Tehillim 111:6), "He has declared to His people the power of His works, in giving them the heritage of the nations." In order to understand that the heritage of the nations (i.e. the Land of Israel), which was given to us in the days of Yehoshua, really belongs to us, there is a need to inform us that Hashem created the entire world and all of the lands. He takes the lands from whomever He desires and He gives them to whomever He desires.

Perhaps you will say: This claim is only sufficiently powerful for one who believes in the Torah, and not for the Nations of the World? The answer: Almost half of humanity is Christian and Muslim, who believe in the Torah, and we conduct all of our negotiations with them, not with the Chinese, Japanese or Indians. The Christians remain believers in the Tanach, although they added to it. The Muslim's have the Koran, but it also says there, "And

#### **Text Message Responsa**

Rav Aviner answers hundreds of text message questions a week. Here is a sample:

Q: Is it permissible for me to wear the boots which the Army gave me to work in the garden?

A: You may only wear them for military activities, since this is the purpose for which they gave them to you.

Q: I received change and it included a counterfeit coin. May I buy something with it?

A: You may not use it since this is theft. The opportunity to perform a mitzvah has come to you not to transgress the prohibition of theft.

Q: Is it permissible to learn Torah during the repetition of the Shemoneh Esrei?

A: No. Mishnah Berurah 124:17.

Moshe said to the Children of Israel: the Land belongs to the Supreme God, He gives it as a heritage to whomever is upright in His eyes" (Koran 5, 125). Mohammed praised Yehoshua and Calev who believed in Hashem and did not falter in the conspiracy of the spies (ibid. 20), and it also says to the Children of Israel, "Come to the Holy Land that God designated for you, do not retreat backwards lest you be destroyed" (ibid. 24).

And perhaps you will doubt further: Although they believe in the Tanach, the verses of the Torah will not convince them. In the area of politics, only tanks convince, not verses of truth. Not so. Tanks convince for the short term, but verses convince for the long term. Rav Yaacov David, Dr. Herzog, who was the secretary of the Prime Minister, a brilliant politician and also a Torah scholar, a student of the great Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer, testifies: to think that these words of Rashi will convince people seems extremely irrational, but I, who engaged in politics all of my life, can inform you that there is nothing more political and convincing (from "Am Lebadad Yishkon").

- From Sefer Be-Ahava U-Be-Emuna vol. 1 #93

## **Stories of Rabbenu – Our Rabbi**

Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook

### DANCING FOR THE CHIEF RABBI ON SIMCHAT TORAH

It once happened that the political parties decided to arrange new elections for the Chief Rabbinate of Israel and to replace the Sephardic Chief Rabbi Ha-Gaon Rav Yitzchak Nissim, because of their unease with his great independence and his inflexibility with regard to all governmental demands. For example, on the day of the memorial for President Weizman, he refused to attend, based on two reasons: A. It was established according to the Christian date. B. The ceremony was devoid of any Jewish character. Ben Gurion was extremely offended and said that the Chief Rabbi is a functionary (pekid - also a "clerk") of the State and he is obligated to come. Our Rabbi, Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook, was outraged by this audacity to designate the Chief Rabbi as a "functionary" and to order him around. On Simchat Torah, our Rabbi went out with the students, and hundreds of others who joined, and danced from the yeshiva to the house of the Sephardic Chief Rabbi in the neighborhood of "Talbiya," in order to demonstrate his support for the Chief Rabbi and to protest against the politicians who think that the Chief Rabbi is a functionary who is easily changed. Despite the far distance, he girded his loins and danced the entire way.

The following year a call came from the home of the Chief Rabbi to ask what time the yeshiva would be arriving. Our Rabbi, however, was not planning to dance this long distance, since the entire affair was over, and the Chief Rabbi remained in his position. In order not to insult the honor of Torah, this custom continued. They also danced to the "Yeshurun" synagogue to visit Ha-Gaon Rav Isser Yehudah Unterman, who had been chosen as Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi, in order not to favor one Chief Rabbi over the other.

**Jonathan Pollard Count: 7986 Days in Jail**



**Free Pollard Now!**

To learn more: [www.jonathanpollard.org](http://www.jonathanpollard.org)

Book of the Week Written by Rav Aviner



## Tzvi Kodesh

This is the first volume (published a year ago) which details the life of our Rabbi, Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook, only son of Rav Kook and former Rosh Yeshiva of "Mercaz Ha-Rav." The book, which contains stories interweaved with letters and broadsides written by our Rabbi, follows the spiritual growth of our great teacher and role model.. The years discussed are 5652 (116 years ago – our Rabbi's birth) – 5712.

### **Shut She'eilat Shlomo - Questions of Jewish Law**

Each day at the end of lunch in the yeshiva, Rav Aviner delivers a talk. Here's a taste:

Question: What should one do if he is davening in a shul which has a different nusach (style of prayer, i.e. Ashkenaz, Sefardic, Sefard, Arizal, etc...) than his own?

Answer: There are three opinions: 1. He should daven like everyone else. "Lo titgogedu – do not make separate groups" (Yevamot 14a). 2. He should daven like he always does. "Do not forsake the Torah of your mother" (Mishlei 1:8). 3. When he davens quietly he should daven his own nusach, and when he davens out loud he should daven like the community. These three positions are brought in the book "Mikra'ei Kodesh" of Rav Harari. Different yeshivot act differently in deciding their nusach. For the High Holidays, the yeshiva in Maaleh Adumim has two people leading the davening: one Ashkenazic and one Sefardic. They have a complex combination of how one person leads the prayers according to his tradition followed by the next person reciting a prayer according to his tradition. Thus, Ashkenazic and Sefardic Jews daven their own nusach together. In Yeshivat "Mercaz Ha-Rav," Rav Avrum ztz"l (Ha-Rav Avraham Shapira) held that since he was the Rosh Yeshiva the nusach is fixed according to his nusach: nusach Ashkenaz. In our yeshiva, we have a "Tefillah Klal-Yisraelit – prayer for the entirety of Israel." The nusach for each time we pray is according to the nusach of the person leading the davening, and each person should daven using his own nusach as well. This is what our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Kook said: the person leading the davening should use his own nusach.