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# Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim

IN THE HEART OF THE OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM

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

Parashat Lech Lecha 5768

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## Going Up?

In this week's parashah, Parashat Lech Lecha, Avraham is commanded to move to Israel. He makes the long journey, and when he arrives, there is a drought. The Torah says that

Avraham descended to Egypt (Bereshit 12:10).

When Avraham returns, the Torah says that he

ascended to Israel (ibid. 13:1). Based on this

idea that one descends when leaving Israel and

ascends when going to Israel, the Gemara says

that the Land of Israel is higher than any other

place in the world (Zevachim 54b). In Parashat

Shoftim, the Torah says that if you have a

difficult halachic question or court case and

need to go to the Sanhedrin, which is located in

the Temple in Jerusalem, "you should arise and

ascend to the place" (Devarim 17:8).

Regardless of where one is located, he has to

ascend to get there. Based on this, the Gemara

says that the Temple is higher than any place in

the Land of Israel (ibid.).

How can the Gemara make such a claim? Mt.

Everest and the Himalays are higher than Mt.

Chermon – the highest spot in Israel?!

Ironically, Israel has the lowest point on earth –

the Dead Sea, not the highest!

Rav Aviner brings two answers to this

difficulty: The Radvaz, who lived about 500

years ago in Tzefat, explains how the Temple

Mount lost its crown as the highest spot in

### **Text Message Responsa**

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

Q: I took a picture of my friend without his permission and he wants me to erase it. Am I required to do so?

A: Absolutely, "Love your fellow as yourself."

Q: Is it permissible for me to say that I am dating someone in order to stop someone else from pursuing me and bothering me?

A: Certainly.

Q: May a single woman immerse in a mikvah to purify her soul?

A: No, she should immerse in the waters of knowledge of the book "Mesilat Yesharim – The Path of the Just."

Israel. He writes that the non-Jews lowered its height as it says, "Raze it, raze it, to its foundation" (Tehillim 137:7). The non-Jewish kings dug up the Temple Mount in order to build their houses, temples and churches higher than it. Furthermore, the rains flowed down the incline of the Temple Mount and instead of preventing the razing, they encouraged it. An earthquake also caused much destruction in Jerusalem and people built houses on the rubble. There is one archeological layer on top of another in Jerusalem. Archeological digs do not reveal virgin earth, but the remnants of earlier periods. Thus, while Jerusalem became higher, the Temple Mount was lowered, but it once was the highest spot (Shut Ha-Radvaz vol. 2 #639)

The Chatam Sofer – Rav Moshe Sofer, who lived in Pressberg, Hungary about 200 years ago and was never in Israel, says that reality does not substantiate the Radvaz's claim that the Temple Mount was once the highest spot in Israel. He provides an answer from a completely different perspective by focusing on the statement that the Land of Israel is the highest spot in the world. The Chatam Sofer explains that the earth is a sphere and it is therefore impossible to definitively say which is the highest point. Everything is dependent on how one holds the sphere. If you hold the earth in a proper way than Israel, Jerusalem and the Temple Mount are the highest places. If you hold the sphere in a different way, someplace else will be on top. The essential job of a Jew is to have a proper perspective in life to ensure that Israel, Jerusalem and the Temple Mount are always at the pinnacle (Chatam Sofer to Devarim 17:8) [Iturei Yerusalayim #6]

## **Stories of Rabbenu – Our Rabbi**

Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook

### Begin with Parashat Lech Lecha

When the school "Morashah" was established, our Rabbi instructed them to begin the young students with Parashat Lech Lecha and Avraham Avinu, the father of our Nation and his connection to the Land of Israel. (From Ha-Rav Chaim Steiner)

### Excavations of the Kotel Tunnels and Finding the Temple Implements

After the liberation of the Old City during the Six-Day War, there were extensive excavations of the Kotel Tunnels, which extend under the Temple Mount. Ha-Rav Meir Yehudah Getz, Rav of the Kotel, asked our Rabbi, is it permissible to excavate under the Temple Mount to find the Temple implements? Our Rabbi answered, "No, do not dig." Our generation is still not ready to merit discovering the treasures of the Temple. (The book "Rav Ha-Kotel" p. 306)

### The Study of Emunah (Jewish Faith)

The Talmud tells us that one of the questions a person is asked on his day of judgment is, "Did you carry out your business matters faithfully (i.e. honestly)?" Our Rabbi would interpret this figuratively to mean: "Did you busy yourself with faith (i.e. did you study Jewish faith)?" Regarding another of these questions, "Did you anxiously await the Redemption," he would bring the words of the Ran (Rabbenu Nissim), "Did you anxiously await the fulfillment of the words of the Prophets in your days?"

Book of the Week Written by Rav Aviner



**Chesed Ne'urayich**      The Kindness of your youth

Essays dealing with the challenges of maintaining modesty in the Religious Zionist youth movement. Subjects include: the movement in general, the local chapters (senifim), mixed activities with boys and girls and friendships between the genders. This classic work is often read by Religious Zionist youth in high school.

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

**Is it permissible for teachers of Torah to strike?**

With the teachers of the non-religious schools in Israel striking, Rav Aviner was interviewed by the Jerusalem Post about the halachic view on teachers' strikes. He answered that Jewish law is not unequivocally opposed to strikes, even when they disrupt Torah studies. "There are times when it is permitted to do something which appears to be a transgression if it brings about the wanted result." Ha-Rav brings the opinion of Ha-Rav Moshe Feinstein in his responsa "Igrot Moshe" (Choshen Mishpat 1:59) that a strike is permitted at times when teachers were so concerned about their low salaries that they were unable to concentrate on their teaching. In such a situation, a strike can be justified because in the long run it actually helped improve Torah study by relieving teachers of their economic worries and allowing them to devote all their energies to teaching. Ha-Rav stresses, however, that utmost caution must be exercised before permitting a strike, since disrupting children's Torah learning is a grave matter. The advice that he gives religious educators is to continue to teach Torah, but to do so outside school, in a shul or at home. "That way you are not openly breaking the strike and, at the same time, you can continue to teach Torah."

For full article by Matthew Wagner -

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Rav Aviner's article from the parashah sheet "Be-Ahava U-Ba-Emuna" of Machon  
Meir from Parashat Re'eh 5767 (Translated by Rafael Blumberg)

### I've Got a Kippah!

I've got a kippah.  
Day and night,  
And I love it.  
During ballgames,  
Lying on the grass,  
Or in bed,  
It's on my head.

It's never on the floor,  
Maybe because it's big,  
Or because it's on well.  
It's always on my head,  
Even during army drills.  
And, obviously, in battle.  
A helmet is also a kippah.

It's mine!  
My mother made it.  
Or my wife, after the wedding.  
I started with it  
Practically in my crib.  
Since then,  
It's always there.  
And I love it!  
I'm proud of it.

`Cause with it I declare  
For all to hear  
That there's a G-d on Earth  
And in Heaven – everywhere!

I'm not alone.  
I've got my kippah.  
And above, it, G-d.  
Even when I'm – forgive me! –  
In not such a good place,  
There too I wear it.  
`Cause I've got a G-d, always.

Here's my kippah.  
I'll never forget it.  
I'll always love it.  
I'll always wear it.  
All my life!