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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 Vayetze 5768

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archived at www.ateret.org.il/new/home.php

?????Anyone who would like to ask Rav Aviner a question may do so by e-mailing mororly@bezeqint.net. The question will be brought to the Rav and I will e-mail you the answer.?????

Text Message Responsa

Ha-Rav answers hundreds of text message questions a week.

Here's a sample:

Q: Is it permissible to save a seat on the Eged bus for my friend who is getting on at the next stop?

A: It is permissible if there are open seats for the other people getting on.

Q: Is it permissible to get drunk?

A: No. Rambam, Hilchot De'ot 5.

Q: Do you say a blessing on gum?

A: Yes, because a blessing before eating is recited on the smaller amount.

Q: Is it permissible to praise or say thank you to an Arab worker or it is forbidden because "Do not be gracious to them" (Devarim 7:2)?

A: Yes, it is showing gratitude.

Serving Your Employer with All of Your Might

We learn the great laws of work ethics from Yaacov Avinu. In this week's parashah, Parashat Vayetze, Yaacov Avinu says to his wives, "You have known that I have worked for your father with all of my might" (Bereshit 31:6), "which teaches you that he was not idle for even a moment and he toiled with all of my might" (Midrash Tanchuma, Vayetze 11).

The Rambam rules the same way: "Just as an employer is warned against stealing or delaying the wage of a poor person (the employee), so too is the poor person warned not to steal the labor of the employer, and to be idle here and there and to spend the day in deception, but he is obligated to be exacting with his time" (Hilchot Sechirut 13:7). What is the Rambam's source for this ruling? The "Magid Mishneh" answers: "It is obvious." It is obvious that it is forbidden to steal in any fashion.

The Rambam emphasizes the extent to which one must be exacting with his time. The Rabbis exempted employees from reciting the fourth

blessing of the Birkat Hamazon during work hours, since it was not part of the original establishment of the blessing. In order not to waste the employers time, he would not recite the entire Birkat Hamazon, unless the employer would allow this minute to be used for this purpose (as is the our practice – see Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 110:2 and Magen Avraham ibid.).

Not only is it forbidden for an employee "to be idle here and there," but the Rambam adds: "A person is obligated to work with all of his might as we learn from Yaacov Avinu who said, 'You have known that I have worked for your father with all of my might.'" Yaacov Avinu therefore also received a reward in this world, as it says, "The man greatly prospered" (Bereshit 30:43).

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 not familiar with the counting of time from the year of the birth of 'that sinner of Israel who the non-Jews made into idol worship' [the words of my father, my teacher and my Rabbi, Ha-Rav Kook ztz"l in 'Igrot'], who practiced sorcery, enticed and led Israel astray (Sanhedrin 107), who caused Israel to be destroyed by the sword, to scatter its remnant to humiliate them, to exchange the Torah and to deceive the majority of the world to serve a good 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 date appeared like this 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 do not hear." He raised his voice and repeated his words. Our Rabbi again said to him: "I do not hear," and again a third time. On the fourth time the guest understood what our Rabbi did not hear, and he told him with 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 at persuasion did not help.
- When the ruling of Rav Ovadiah Yosef was publicized 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), 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).

Shut She'eilat Shlomo - Questions of Jewish Law

Voting

Q: Does a student have to vote like his Rabbi? (In Israel)

A: Each person must vote according to his own conscience. He should vote based on what is best for the Nation of Israel. I never tell people who to vote for. When people ask me, I tell them who I vote for and the reasons for my choice. If they are convinced, they are convinced. If they are not convinced, they can vote for someone else. I love and respect all of the parties, each has a special quality.

Q: Should someone who made aliyah from the States still vote in the American elections?

A: No, this is not ethical. It is not ethical to interfere in another country's elections. I could also vote in France (Ha-Rav made aliyah from there), but I am not willing to be a soldier there. My desire is not to help them, but to help Israel. Voting in another country to help Israel does not help all that much.

Women reciting motzi

Q: Is it permissible for a woman to make "Hamotzi" for the family on Shabbat?

A: There is no difference in the level of obligation between a man and a woman, and it is completely acceptable.

Book of the Week Written by Rav Aviner



Le-Mikdashech Tuv To Your Temple Again

This work is a collection of articles on Cohanim, the Temple, the Temple Mount and Jerusalem. It was originally published as "Shalhevetya" in 5749, but was revised and expanded into this book in 5760. Some of the topics discussed are how will the Third Temple be built, the prohibition of entering the Temple Mount, Redeeming houses in Jerusalem and about the yeshiva.

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