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# Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim

IN THE HEART OF THE OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM

## The Torah of Ha-Rav Shlomo Aviner

Parashat Vayeshev 5768

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Would you like to ask Rav Aviner a question? E-mail [mororly@bezeqint.net](mailto:mororly@bezeqint.net) and the question will be brought to Ha-Rav and I will e-mail you the answer.



### Do What Hashem Commands You



Question: What is the mitzvah of the lights of Chanukah – lighting them or placing them in the correct place?

Answer: It is well-known that this is a dispute in the Gemara (Shabbat 22-23) as to whether the mitzvah is the lighting of the Chanukah lights, or whether the mitzvah is that the lights be placed in the proper spot, i.e. lit for a certain period of time. What is the difference? One example is in a case where someone who is not obligated in the mitzvah, like a non-Jew, kindles the lights and then a Jew, who is obligated, picks them up and puts them down. If the mitzvah is the actual lighting, since the lights were kindled by someone who is not obligated the Jew cannot fulfill his obligation with them. If, however, the mitzvah is placing the lights, even though the lights were kindled by someone who is not obligated, since they were put down by the Jew, he does fulfill his obligation. The Halachah is that the actual lighting is the mitzvah (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 675:1). This is also verified by the blessing itself: "Who has made us holy with His mitzvot and commands us to **light**..." Based on this discussion, we can ask: What exactly was the miracle of Chanukah? Was the miracle the actual lighting of the Menorah in the Temple or was the miracle that they were lit for a certain period of time? The miracle seems to be that they were lit for a certain period of time, since there was no problem lighting the Menorah – there was enough oil for one day! If we say that the miracle was the actual lighting of the Menorah what was the miracle? Answer: The miracle was that it took great strength to be bold enough to even light the Menorah in the first place. They could have said: "Why should we light it? It needs to be lit for eight days before new oil will be ready. It isn't worth it to light it for one day." But they did not say this. They said: "Hashem commanded us to light. We will light. What will be tomorrow? We don't know. Hashem will decide." The same is true of the revolt. "You are going to rebel against the Greeks?! You think you can win?! Sure you can begin a battle, but how are you going to win? Why even start then?" "We were commanded by Hashem, so we will begin. After that Hashem will decide." There was a great miracle, but they didn't know that this was going to occur when they began. This is "Mesirat Nefesh" – true self-sacrifice. There are many examples of great self-sacrifice in our tradition, but the miracle of Chanukah is unique. Up to this point, there were always prophets. Here, however, there were no prophets to give direction. They acted because they understood what Hashem commanded them to do.



## **Text Message Responsa**



Ha-Rav answers hundreds of text message questions a week. Here's a sample:

Q: Is it permissible to wear a weekday skirt on Shabbat in order to be wearing blue and white for Bnei Akiva (Religious-Zionist youth movement)?

A: Yes, this is a type of honoring Shabbat.

Q: Is it permissible for me to market a product when I know that an equivalent product is less expensive and better quality?

A: No, on account of "do not place a stumbling block before the blind," which also means that you should not offer bad advice.

Q: Is it obligatory to give an engagement ring?

A: There is no obligation. On the contrary, there is a concern that you may be betrothed.

Q: I spoke ill about someone (lashon ha-ra) and I want to be forgiven. What do I do?

A: If the person knows that you spoke ill about him, you must ask him for forgiveness. If he does not know, do not tell him because this will distress him, as Rabbi Yisrael Salanter ruled. You must talk to the people you told and remedy the situation.

Q: I downloaded a disk from the internet and now I regret it. What do I do?

A: Don't use it. Downloading disks is forbidden according to the law and is therefore forbidden according to Halachah.

Q: Is it permissible to eat in a vegetarian restaurant without kosher supervision?

A: It is forbidden. Although there is no meat, there are other kashrut problems.

Q: What is the proper size of kippah?

A: Some say the size is majority of one's head, but the custom is so that it can be seen from all sides.



## **Stories of Rabbenu – Our Rabbi**

Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook

Jerusalem, mountains surround her

Our Rabbi was once in the hospital, and he laid there and did not respond. Students tried to engage him in conversation, but our Rabbi did not answer. An announcement arrived that the Prime Minister, Mr. Menachem Begin, needed to see him. The students were concerned about what would happen; perhaps our Rabbi would be embarrassed because of his condition. Then a nurse came to perform a treatment for him, and our Rabbi awoke and said: "Perhaps later," because he did not want the Prime Minister to arrive in the middle of the treatment. He strengthened himself, sat on the bed and requested a towel. When the Prime Minister arrived, he became completely alert, which amazed everyone. Our Rabbi said: "Perhaps it is possible for just the two of us to be together?" Everyone left. At the end of the conversation, Mr. Begin said: "Jerusalem, mountains surround her, and Hashem surrounds his Nation" (Tehillim 125:2). This appears to have been the substance of their conversation.

### May you depart towards peace. Angels of Peace

When our Rabbi said "May you depart toward peace" in the song "Shalom Aleichem" before Kiddush on Shabbat night, he would pick up a cup of wine and say as one who is justifying his actions: Now that we are able to eat what do the Angels have to do with us (This was to justify saying this stanza since the minhag in some places – like Volozhin – was not to recite it and request the angels to leave) (from Ha-Rav Avihu Schwartz – Iturei Cohanim #81).



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

### Accidental Radio on on Shabbat

Q: The radio was accidentally connected to the Shabbat timer, and it turned on. What should one do in such a case?

A: There are three options: 1. Put a blanket over it. 2. Turn the dial on the timer to turn off in 5-10 minutes and the radio will turn off indirectly (gemara). 3. If the volume is controlled by a knob (not an electric button), you can turn the volume down with a "shinui" (an unusual way, i.e. with your thumb, back-handed, etc.)

### Askenazi in non-Ashkenaz minyan

Q: Should a Ashkenazi Jew davening with a Sefardic or Nusach Sefard minyan say Tachanun when they are saying the vidui or when they also put their heads down?

A: It does not matter. When he is the only one in the minyan who is Ashkenazi he should also say the vidui because of "Lo Titgodedu – do not make different groups," but today most minyanim in Israel are mixed. It is explicitly written that when the community is saying Aleinu one should also at least bow when others do, since it is said at different times in the davening.

### Direction of Davening at the Kotel

Q: Should one turn slightly to the left when davening at the Kotel to face the spot of the Temple?

A: There is no need since we do not know the exact spot of the Temple. We therefore face forward. I once ask Rav Simchah Ha-Cohain Kook – who grew up in Jerusalem -- when he was visiting the yeshiva, and he said that the custom is not to turn left (See Rav Aviner's book "Le-Mikdashech Tuv" p. 241 for a short responsum on this question).

### Book of the Week Written by Rav Aviner



## **Be-Ahavah U-Be-Emunah In Love & In Faith**

There are three volumes of articles written by Rav Aviner for the parashah sheet "Be-Ahava U-Be-Eemunah" of Machon Meir. The articles touch on contemporary issues from a Torah perspective and include the topics of love, proper character traits, faith, repentance, the Nation of Israel, the Land of Israel, Redemption and many others. They can be purchased through [www.havabooks.co.il](http://www.havabooks.co.il)



Rav Aviner's article from the parashah sheet "Be-Ahava U-Be-Emuna" of Machon Meir from Parashat Vayishlach 5768  
(Translated by Rafael Blumberg)

## Don't Cut Up the Land of Israel!

Question: What is the Torah's view about the new suggestion of bringing the destroyer right into Jerusalem, by transferring neighborhoods in which Jews do not live to either Jordan or the Palestinians, or other such ideas?

Answer: Obviously this strange and bizarre suggestion is pure nonsense. It is well-known that the mitzvah of the Land of Israel may be divided into three parts:

- 1) Living in the Land. Every Jew must live in Israel and not in Babylonia, New York or anywhere else on earth.
- 2) Settling the Land. The Land must be built, settled, filled with Jews, filled with factories, fields and vineyards. As Ramban wrote: "We must never abandon it to desolation" (Positive Commandment 4 of Ramban's additions to Rambam's Sefer HaMitzvot).
- 3) Occupying the Land. The Torah commands, "You shall clear out the Land" (Bamidbar 33:53); and, "Inherit the Land" (Devarim 4:1). These commands refer to the people taking ownership of the Land. As Ramban said, "We mustn't leave it in the hands of any other nation" (ibid.). This land must not be left in the hands of any other people, but only our people.

This mitzvah requires self-sacrifice. Without self-sacrifice it won't work out. No nation on earth succeeds in holding on to its independence without self-sacrifice, all the more so the Jewish People. Everything we have today in our land has come by way of self-sacrifice: 1) Self-sacrifice to move to Israel, even in face of danger, even traveling through deserts or by ship; 2) Self-sacrifice, down through the generations, to establish settlements in the Land, to establish neighborhoods and to build. Such self-sacrifice was exhibited by all Jews, secular, religious and Charedi (Ultra-Orthodox); 3) The self-sacrifice exhibited by our army in occupying our land.

The rule is this: This entire land has to be under our sovereignty (Ramban, ibid.). There is a place for non-Jews living here, under certain conditions (Ramban, ibid.), just as such conditions exist in every country on earth. Whoever wishes to live in a particular country must certainly fulfill its laws and practices. He must certainly not be involved in the murder of its citizens. There is room for deliberating on which non-Jews should be allowed to live here, in accordance with their religion and nationality, wickedness or faithfulness – yet all this is referring to a private calculation. If an Arab has a house or field, accompanied by proof that it is indeed his, and not just stolen – we won't take it away from him. (see Ma'amarei HaRe'iyah, page 252)

We are talking here about national ownership, in other words, by the State. How strange the argument that in the Jerusalem neighborhoods earmarked for transfer, "Arabs live there and not Jews anyway. What difference does it make if there is non-Jewish rule?" How senseless one must be to make such claims! After all, in every country in the world there are

minorities. Obviously, we are not like every country in the world – we must live as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. Yet we are not inferior to any other nation, as Maharal states at the beginning of his book Netzach Yisrael. Shall we fail to understand something that every nation on earth understands? For example, shall the French, because they have eight million Arabs or twelve million Arabs, suddenly establish a state for them there?! Every single country on earth has minorities. Obviously, we have to relate to them with human dignity, but that does not give them the right to national sovereignty.

Therefore, this entire idea is a one big deceit and a dangerous blunder. It is hard to understand how people can talk such nonsense, nonsense that no other nation on earth would spout. Find one people on earth ready to establish a state or to hand over to another people part of its territory since foreigners live there. This nonsense, according to the theory of our master Rabbi Tzvi Yehuda Kook, stems from the Holocaust (LeNetivot Yisrael 1:94): In the Holocaust, they not only murdered us but also drove us insane, until we lost our self-confidence to bang on the table and say: Eretz Yisrael is ours!

A friend who went on vacation in Alaska told me that he sat by the sea, fishing. During the trip in the light plane that brought them there, someone jokingly asked, "What happens if a bear approaches us?" Yet the group leader didn't laugh. He answered, "Look it straight in the eye and say to it, 'Hey bear! This is my place!'" Later on when my friend was fishing he heard a rustling behind him. He turned around and saw a terrifying sight – a bear was threatening him. He had the courage to look it in the eye without blinking and to say, "Hey bear! This is my place!" The bear made a noise, turned around and left.

We have to state clearly: This land is our place. It is all ours. The fact that we disappeared from the Land because we were cruelly exiled by our enemies, and foreigners came and built homes and stole our lands, does not suddenly make it theirs.

Also the claim that all of these non-Jewish Jerusalem neighborhoods cost us money is nonsense. We did not establish our country as a business venture. Millions of Jews lost billions. Ask any Jew who dwells in Zion: For you, is the Jewish State just about economics and security? He will be insulted and will respond, "G-d forbid! It's history! Thank G-d we've got an economy and security, but that's not the only reason we returned to our land. We came back because it is our land. We didn't wait two thousand years just to give part of it away to foreigners."

Ben Gurion once asked Yitzhak Tabenkin, one of the principle thinkers of the Kibbutz movement: "Is it possible to concede parts of Eretz Yisrael for peace?" and Tabenkin responded, "I have to get advice." The next day he answered no. Ben Gurion asked him, "May I asked you from whom you got advice?" and Tabenkin responded, "I asked my grandfather who has died and my grandson who is not yet born."

Let us be strong and courageous for our land.

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