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Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim

IN THE HEART OF THE OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM

The Torah of Ha-Rav Shlomo Aviner

Parashat Miketz 5768

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

It is Lucky that Yehudah the Maccabee Did Not Ask...

It is lucky that Yehudah the Maccabee did not ask politicians, because if he had they would have told him that one must consider the possible international pressure in the overall plan, and he would have sat and deliberated and deliberated.

It is lucky that he did not ask too many military strategists and experts, because they would have told him that there is no chance of delivering "the strong into the hands of the weak," and they would have broken his spirit.

It is lucky that he did not ask statisticians, because they would have revealed to him the secret that we are "the few against the many," and he would have been afraid of the demographic demon.

He also did not ask too many heads of Yeshivot, because if he had they would have ruled that it is forbidden to cause nullification of Torah learning from yeshiva students who engage in Torah study, and then there would have not be a delivering of "the heretics into the hands of those involved in Your Torah."

He also did not ask too many Rabbis, because if he had they would have told him, it is forbidden to challenge the nations of the world, and that we do not rely on a miracle, especially where there is a real potential for danger, etc..., etc...

He also did not ask the humanists, because they would have revealed to him the secret that one soul of Israel is worth more than a few kilometers of land and is more costly for the Nation.

He certainly did not ask those who are pure-of-heart, because they would have depressed his spirit, and preached to him that it is not proper to kill or to be killed.

He did not ask deep thinkers, because – within the midst of great depth - they would have confused him and stopped him with discussions of the order of priorities: Perhaps the Nation takes precedence, etc..., etc...

He did not ask the pacifists, because they would have illuminated his eyes to the greatness of peace, and that one should never use violence, and that goodwill will resolve everything.

He did not ask too many questions, but he fulfilled his national and spiritual obligation and jumped into the lion's den, with amazing self-sacrifice into the great battle which saved Israel. And then all of the politicians, all of the strategists, all of the statisticians, all of the heads of Yeshivot, all of the Rabbis, all of the humanists, all of the pure-of-heart, all of the thinkers and all of the pacifists became sages after the fact, and they lit Chanukah lights as a remembrance of the victory, and these lights illuminate our lives from those days until this time.

[Shut She'eilat Shlomo vol. 8 #35 and Sefer Am Ve-Artzo vol. 2 #182. Originally published in the Israeli newspaper "Ma'ariv"]



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

Q: Is it permissible to record songs from the radio?

A: According to the law, it is permissible. According to Halachah, it is permissible if you were not planning to buy the album.

Q: Is it permissible to use incense from India?

A: Yes. It is not made for idol worship, but simply to smell.

Q: Should one say the blessing of "Shehechyanu" on the first "sufganiyah" (jelly donut) he eats on Chanukah?

A: No, it is only said on fruits which come at set times during the year.

Q: Does a store which only sells fruit juice require kosher certification?

A: Yes, because they might mix in other ingredients.

Q: Can I listen to music after saying the bedtime Shema and the blessing "Ha-Mapil"?

A: It is permissible.



Stories of Rabbenu – Our Rabbi

Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook

A Jerusalem Holiday

Our Rabbi once said to the yeshiva students on Chanukah that one must remember that the holiday of Chanukah is a Jerusalem holiday (Gadol Shimusha p. 120).

Maoz Tzur

When Our Rabbi would sing Maoz Tzur, he would cry during the sad stanzas and would be full of excitement during the joyous stanzas. (Ha-Rav Yehoshua Wieszman)

Chanukiyah

Our Rabbi would light his Chanukiyah inside. (Ha-Rav Aviner)

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)



Shut She'eilat Shlomo - Questions of Jewish Law

Substituting a lower number to move up in line

Q: At the post office, you take a number and wait until your number comes up. I was waiting, and a woman – who had a lower number than me - got tired of waiting, put hers back on the machine and left. Is it permissible to take the lower number?

A: You should not take it.

Q: What if someone else is going to take it?

A: You should not take it. You should quietly wait your turn.

Where to light the chanukiyah

Q: In Israel, the chanukiyah is lit outside as was the original decree of our Sages. We have a gate which a few families enter to get to our connected apartments. Do I light the chanukiyah at the gate or at the door to my house?

A: This is a dispute between Rashi and Tosafot (Shabbat 21a). Rashi says that we light the chanukiyah at the door. Tosafot says that we light it at the gate which is facing the public domain. The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 671:5) rules in accordance with Tosafot. The book "Mikra'ei Kodesh of Rav Harari says that it should be lit at the gate, and it is preferable to place the chanukiyah in a glass box to protect it from the wind or other potential problems.

Where do yeshiva students light the chanukiyah

Q: Where should a single yeshiva student light the chanukiyah - the yeshiva or his parent's house?

A: The Gemara in Shabbat (23a) says that when Rabbi Zeira was single and learning in yeshiva, he went to the person's house where he lived. Rabbi Zeira went to the host's home because he ate and slept there, as was the custom for yeshiva students throughout the generations. Today, however, the yeshiva is the student's home. There is a dorm and he lives here, learns here, eats here, sleeps here, and pays money to the yeshiva to stay here. The yeshiva is his home. He can light in his room or in the study hall because he eats and sometimes sleeps in both places. Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, would say that for the years that a student is in yeshiva, it is his home. Rav Avrum (Rav Avraham Shapira ztz"l)

actually said that Yeshivat Mercaz Ha-Rav is a city because there are so students who live there. The hallway is the main street and you should light outside your door because this faces the public domain. It doesn't matter that someone goes to his parent's house if he is sick. A person's house is where he is when he is healthy. Students here are actually too much at home. They make it dirty, they eat from the communal plate, etc... It should be their home with proper manners. There are many opinions and discussion, but the basic Halachah for Ashkenazim and Sefardim is that one lights the chanukiyah at the yeshiva. If everyone in a dorm room is Ashkenazi, then everyone lights his own chanukiyah. If everyone is Sefardi, they light only one. If there is a mixture, it depends on the mixture.

Q: If the student is married, should he return home early to light at sundown or three stars (depending on the opinion he follows), or return home later?

A: If his wife is not upset, he should go home later. It is not a question of Chanukah lights, but of his wife. It is preferable to learn Torah than fulfill the stricture of lighting outside. Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, always lit inside. Children do not learn Torah on Erev Yom Kippur so that they do not forget to eat and on Erev Pesach so that they can clean a little. It is also forbidden to learn on Tisha Be-Av. One Chasidic Rebbe did learn on Tisha Be-Av and when asked he said: "If only this is the sin for which I go to "gehinom" (purgatory). I am going anyway, and I hope it is for this." On Chanukah, however, there is an obligation to learn. You take a break to light the chanukiyah and then go back. The Greeks wanted us to stop learning, so we do not do their work for them. I remember when I was a yeshiva student in Yeshivat Mitnachalei Chevron, the people there organized a trip of Chanukah. I went to Rav Tzvi Yehudah and asked if I could go. He said: "A trip. Why not? Even in Volozhin they walked around for a minute after morning davening." I understood what he meant.

Book of the Week Written by Rav Aviner

She'al Na - Please Ask

This book was published in 5760 and is a collection of questions which Rav Aviner was asked by youth as well as short articles directed to our young people. Topics include: Holidays, faith, mitzvot, relationship with other people, perfecting one's character traits, studies, serving in the army or national service, marriage, status of women, Land of Israel and Redemption. They are simple, straight forward answers to many of the questions which both young and old have.



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

Don't Murder Pollard

Why is Jonathan Pollard still in jail after 22 years? See

http://www.machonmeir.org.il/english/archive_id.asp?language=English&id=2150

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