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Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim

IN THE HEART OF THE OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM

The Torah of Ha-Rav Shlomo Aviner

Parashat Vaera 5768

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

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.

Glorifying Hashem's Name one Plague at a Time

Question: Couldn't Hashem redeem the Nation of Israel with one plague?

Answer: Of course! Our Sages already asked: Why was the world created with ten utterances? Couldn't Hashem have created it with one utterance (Avot 5:1)? Our world is not an expression of the divine ability to act at a single moment, but to act in stages. The Ramchal – Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzato - writes that each day the world gets closer to its wholeness. All the worlds that were created previously were done piecemeal, but they all could be exalted. Our world was not created with the omnipotence of the Master of the Universe. Hashem limited His power and revealed Himself in the way in which humans work: little by little, according to a divine plan which continues to be actualized over time. It is not true that the Master of the Universe needed to bring plague after plague because of the stubbornness of Pharaoh's heart. On the contrary, the Blessed One caused the stubbornness of his heart in order to bring the plagues upon him. "For I have made his heart and the heart of his servants heavy so that I can put My signs in his midst, and so that you may relate in the ears of your son and your grandsons" (Shemot 10:1-2). In our days as well, do not despair for the Redemption which is progressing slowly, slowly. This is not divine weakness – G-d forbid, but the greatest strength for the sake of increasing sanctification of Hashem's Name.

[From Rav Aviner's commentary on the Haggadah – The Ten Plagues]



Text Message Responsa



Ha-Rav answers hundreds of text message questions a week. Some appear in the parashah sheets "Ma'ayanei Ha-Yeshu'ah" and "Olam Ha-Katan." Here's a sample:

Q: My friend is having difficulty in learning Gemara, am I obligated to help him?

A: Based on the need and your ability.

Q: How can one favorably view a school which separates Ashkenazic and Sefardic girls?

A: I do not see a way to view it favorably.

Q: Someone saw a demon next to his house. How should we relate to this?

A: It is just his imagination.

Q: Does Ha-Rav suggest fasting for "Shovavaim Tat"? (There is a custom of the Arizal to fast on the Thursdays during which the first eight parashiyot of the Book of Shemot are read. The first letter of each parashah spells out "Shovavim Tat." The Arizal said that this is a propitious time for purifying the soul from sin)

A: No. Our master, Rav Kook, said that the way now is to strengthen the body and the soul in order to serve Hashem.

Q: What is the reason for covering tzitzit in a cemetery and is it permissible to learn there?

A: 1. In order not to mock the destitute, since the dead cannot fulfill mitzvot. 2. It is permissible to help the soul of the deceased ascend.

Q: If I am in the middle of the Shemoneh Esrei and the person leading the davening begins the Kedushah, what should I do? Am I still considered to be davening with the community?

A: Yes, davening with a community is when one begins reciting the Shemoneh Esrei with the community. Regarding the Kedushah, stop davening and listen. "Shome'a ke-oneh – One who listens is considered as if he says it."

Q: My cellphone has minchah and ma'ariv on it. Can I use it for davening?

A: Yes, it is like a Siddur (obviously not on Shabbat).

Q: Is it permissible to play games with play money on Shabbat?

A: Yes. Some permit it, although it is preferable to refrain from doing so (Shemirat Shabbat Ke-Hilchata 16:32).

Q: Is it permissible to learn Tanach, Mishnayot, etc... during the repetition of the Shemoneh Esrei or while I am waiting for the repetition?

A: It is permissible while you are waiting, but not during the repetition itself.



Stories of Rabbenu – Our Rabbi

Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook

Torah Scholars (continued)

Rabbi Aryeh Levin – the Tzadik of Jerusalem

Our Rabbi once walked with Reb Aryeh on Shabbat and someone was smoking. Reb Aryeh ran to the person and said: How can you smoke on Shabbat on the street where Rav Kook is walking?

Our Rabbi would direct people to him for his good counsel. (Ha-Rav David Chai Cohain).

Ha-Gaon Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik

Someone visited our Rabbi and told him in the name of Ha-Gaon Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik that the Torah scholars who are outside of Israel need to remain there in order to educate the community (See Nefesh Ha-Rav, pp. 98-99). Our Rabbi responded harshly and painfully: "But assimilation devours them there."

Ha-Rav David Cohen, "Ha-Nazir"

Regarding the book "Kol Ha-Nevu'ah" (The Voice of Prophecy), our Rabbi said that this is the personal book of "Ha-Nazir."

This book was placed in the last row of our Rabbi's bookshelf which was covered by a curtain.

He said about this book: It is dangerous to talk about prophecy today. (Ha-Rav Achyah Amitai).

When a student asked our Rabbi his opinion about the book "Kol Ha-Nevu'ah," he responded: I am not familiar with it. The student was surprised and said: Ha-Rav is not familiar with Ha-Nazir's book? Our Rabbi repeated: I am not familiar. Since the student was not satisfied, he said: I do not understand how it is possible to include quotes from complete heretics in a holy book. (Ha-Rav Eliyahu Mali).

Ha-Rav Natan Ra'anani (son-in-law of our master, Rav Kook)

At a gathering for Yom Yerushalayim, Rav Nosen (as he was known) was the opening speaker and our Rabbi was the closing speaker. Rav Nosen was introduced and referred to as Rav Kook's son-in-law and a few other titles. Our Rabbi felt that they did not honor Rav Nosen with enough titles and ask the introducer to add more.

Ha-Rav Shlomo Goren

Our Rabbi was asked why he respected Rav Goren when all of the great Rabbis of the generation came out against him, and he was therefore chosen to be Chief Rabbi by the secularists who also voted for the position of the Chief Rabbi. Our Rabbi responded: It is not true that "all of the great Rabbis of the generation came out against him," and many great Rabbis, decisors of Halachah, publicized their opinions that no one should question his rulings including Ha-Gaon Ha-Rav Yosef Eliyahu Henkin (Letters of our Rabbi and see Shut Bnei Banim vol. 2, p. 210).

When Ha-Gaon Ha-Rav Goren, the Chief Rabbi of the State of Israel, spoke in the yeshiva on Yom Ha-Atzmaut, our Rabbi stood. (Ha-Rav Achyah Amitai).



Shut She'eilat Shlomo - Questions of Jewish Law

A talk given after lunch at the yeshiva -

Waking up to music from a clock radio

Q: Is it permissible to wake up to music from a clock radio?

A: The Gemara in Gittin (7a) records that our Sages forbade listening to music after the destruction of the Temple. The Rambam (Hilchot Ta'aniyot 5:14) followed by the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 560:3) rule that instrumental music is forbidden. The Rama (ibid.) based on the Jerusalem Talmud (Megillah 3:2) rules that instrumental music is only forbidden for someone who is accustomed to it, such as kings who wake up and go to sleep with music. The custom follows the Rama, although many disagree (Bach, Magen Avraham, Mishnah Berurah ibid., Chayei Adam 137:3). Many authorities say that the original decree did not include "serious music," like classical music, but music which could lead to inappropriate behavior, as is discussed in the Gemara in Sotah (48a). According to the opinion of the Rama, there would seem to be a problem waking up to a clock radio since he explicitly says that it is forbidden "such as kings who wake up...with music." Answer: It is not

the same thing. The point of setting a clock radio is not to have pleasure from the music, but to have a loud noise to wake you up. Even if you take pleasure from hearing the music it is considered "a benefit which comes to a person against his will" (Pesachim 25b). The Ron (ibid.) says that this is a pleasure which one experiences, but "he did not come for this." For example, if you are on the way to our yeshiva and you hear Christians singing, you did not come for the singing, you came to get to the yeshiva. It is therefore permissible to wake up to music, since the music is not for pleasure, but to have noise in your ear.

Q: If the songs contain verses from the Torah, doesn't one need to say a blessing over Torah first?

A: While the Vilna Gaon (Biur Ha-Gra 47:4) says that even Torah thoughts require a blessing over Torah, the majority of authorities disagree and we follow them.



Rav Aviner's article from this week's parashah sheet "Be-Ahava U-Be-Emuna" of Machon Meir

(Translated by Rafael Blumberg)

Silence does not constitute admission

Buddy, I recommend that you not respond to all the lies and defamation against yourself, even if according to Jewish law you are entitled to. Sefer HaChinuch explains that the prohibition against insulting someone applies if you attack him with insults and invectives just like that, but if someone is attacked, he is allowed to respond, both in order to defend himself and because he is not required to be mute like stone (Mitzvah 338). Yet I recommend that you place yourself amongst those who "are insulted without insulting in return, who hear ridicule without responding... Of them Scripture states, 'Those that love Him are like the sun at its height' (Judges 5:31)."

See the next of the article at:

www.machonmeir.org.il/english/archive_id.asp?language=English&id=2197

Special thank you to Fred Casden for editing the Ateret Yerushalayim Parshah Sheet