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# Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim

IN THE HEART OF THE OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM

## The Torah of Ha-Rav Shlomo Aviner

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Parashat Shemini – Parah 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.

### I am a cochain

[originally written for a children's magazine  
and appears in the book "Mikdasheich Tuv", pp. 57-60]

Shalom. I am a cochain, but if you look for me in the Beit Ha-Mikdash, it is also certain that you will not find me. You think my entire life revolves around issues concerning the Beit Ha-Mikdash and sacrifices? You will be surprised to hear that I am only in the Beit Ha-Mikdash two weeks a year, because we are divided into twenty-four groups called "mishmarot," and it is also crowded on the holidays with many cochainim serving. You will obviously ask what I do all year long. I am something like a teacher.

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We were once reprimanded by one of the prophets. He was exasperated that there were cochainim who were like robots performing the sacrifices and who did not relate to the Beit Ha-Mikdash and other holy acts and objects with "cherdat kodesh – trembling of holiness." We were very distressed, but we "profited" by receiving a job description: "For the cochain's lips should guard knowledge, and they should seek Torah at his mouth, for he is a messenger of Hashem of Legions" (2:7). The prophet's name is Malachi, but he did not invent anything. He only reminded us of the words of Moshe Rabbenu which we had forgotten: "They shall teach your statutes to Yaakov and Your Torah to Israel" (Devarim 33:10).

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That's it, I am a teacher. Not just a regular school teacher, but someone capable of being a supreme teacher, like an angel. Not an official teacher, but a personal, intimate teacher. Not a teacher with a fixed position, but a "traveling" teacher. But the two weeks that I spend in the Temple, they are the heart of my time. You know that there are different levels in the Temple: The Temple Mount, the courtyards, the Holy, the Holy of Holies. And what is in the Holy of Holies? The Torah. I am full of Torah, full of the word of Hashem and I bring it to others. What do you think? How can I give it to others if I do not possess it myself?

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Understand me. We, the cochainim, are not an isolated and separated group. We are with you. We are connected and attached to you. All of the effort we exert in life is for you. You have certainly heard about our elder, Aharon Ha-Cochain, of whom it is said: "Aharon shall

bear the names of the sons of Israel on the Breastplate of Judgement on his heart when he enters the Holy, as a constant remembrance before Hashem" (Shemot 28:29). The entire Nation of Israel is on his heart.

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I have nothing. I do not have fields. I do not have vineyards. I do not have factories. Everything I have is for the Nation of Israel. But I do not worry. I know that any place I go, I will receive what I need for a modest life from a cheerful face. And you also do not need to worry that perhaps "you will be embarrassed" that you spend your entire lives involved with physical work. You know that there are religious people who are against building the Land, agriculture and the army. They fear that the profane will swallow up the holy. I am not afraid, just the opposite, I think that it is impossible to build a state with half of one's energy. But what about fearing the profane? On account of this, I exist and am traveling among you. I am an "angel" who travels among the living. My world is not outside of life or after life. It is even forbidden for me to come in contact with the dead, I am among the living. I am not a cohan who is closed-off, but a cohan who travels around.

Every place I go, everyone excitedly brings me something from his fruits. This one brings oranges and this one brings bananas for my children. I do not force anyone; just the opposite, everyone happily gives me. I am also happy to give them what I have. Over the course of a few weeks I soak up incredible holiness in the Beit Ha-Mikdash, and pass it out all year long, in an endless number of personal conversations with everyone. There are also sometimes complex questions in life, and there is someone with whom to take counsel. It is true that there are judges and sages for this purpose, but it sometimes preferable to have a cohan. I did not invent this idea. It is explicitly written that if you are in doubt about something: "You shall go to the cohanim, the levi'im and the judges who will be in those days" (Devarim 17:9).

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I will now reveal a secret to you, the entire truth. Everything I do for you is because I love you. Yes, I love you, I love all of you. When I bless you, I do not simply say a blessing, but I say: "Who has made us holy with the holiness of Aharon, and has commanded us to bless His Nation Israel with love." This is the holiness of Aharon: "Loving peace and pursuing peace, loving people and bringing them closer to the Torah" (Pirkei Avot 1:12).



### **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: Is it permissible to bring tefillin into a public bathroom if there is fear that they may be stolen if I leave them outside?

A: Yes, it is recommended. You must put them inside two bags.

Q: Do I have to immerse tongs and a grill in the mikveh?

A: Anything which comes in contact with food when it is edible must be immersed in a mikveh.

Q: I was released from combat duty a few weeks ago. Should I recite the "Birchat Ha-Gomel"?

A: Yes, if you were in danger,

Q: Which Psalms should I recite when the sirens sound in Sderot [for incoming mortars/missiles]?

A: 20, 130, but all are good.



## Stories of Rabbenu – Our Rabbi

Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook

### The Struggle Over the Land of Israel – Part 2

When the Jewish settlement was renewed in Hevron in Nisan 5728, a Jew visited there, and one of the settlers asked him why he did not recite the blessing of "Blessed is the One who establishes the widow's boundary" on the new settlement. This Jew responded: "Doubtful settlement, doubtful blessing." When these words were related to our Rabbi, he responded: "Doubtful in faith - doubtful in blessing."

Our Rabbi initiated the establishment of the movement "Gush Emunim" and threw all of his weight behind all of its activities. He encouraged many of his students to establish settlements in Yehudah, Shomron, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights, and he himself participated in the ground-breaking of various settlements, despite his advanced age, and through the following verse was fulfilled: "And those who place their hope in Hashem shall renew their strength" (Yeshayahu 40:31).

After Menachem Begin signed the Camp David agreement, our Rabbi took out the Rambam's Sefer HaMitzvot and said, "Perhaps he forgot that we are not here today by virtue of Herzl and Zionism, but by virtue of the word of G-d as it finds expression in the sacred writings of the Ramban" (Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman – Positive mitzvah #4 in additions to Rambam's Sefer Ha-Mitzvot)."

Our Rabbi took great pleasure when Yitzchak Tabenkin (the ideologue of the Labor Zionist movement before the establishment of the State, who was asked in 1947 for his position on the proposed UN Partition Plan) said: "The Land of Israel belongs to the grandfather who is no longer and to the grandson who is yet to be born, it is therefore impossible to relinquish parts of it."



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

#### Chinese Auctions

Q: Chinese Auctions have been around for a number of years already. It is my understanding that I can give Maaser money toward these auctions as the funds are being raised for Tzedakah. Is this correct?

A: Yes.

Q: Would it still be considered Tzedaka if I win the prize?

A: If you win it is no longer considered tzedakah and you would have to give the original amount to Tzedakah.

#### Ovulation Test on Shabbat

Q: Is it permissible to use an "at home" ovulation test on Shabbat that is not electric?

A: While "tzovea - coloring" is forbidden on Shabbat, various authorities permit using this type of test since one does not care about the color and throws it in the garbage when done.

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