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Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim

IN THE HEART OF THE OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM

The Torah of Ha-Rav Shlomo Aviner

Parashat Tazria – Ha-Chodesh 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.

The Ethics of Checkpoints

Q: At an army checkpoint of Tzahal, there was a long line of Arabs, who were traveling on foot, and extensive inspections were taking place. One Arab was not feeling well on account of the blazing sun and he asked for water. Is there an obligation to perform an act of loving-kindness for this non-Jew when he may be a murderer?

A: While there is no Torah obligation to perform an act of loving-kindness for a non-Jew (since the Torah largely governs relationships between Jews), throughout all generations, Jews performed acts of loving-kindness and did so without calculation. "Our Rabbis taught: We give tzedakah to the non-Jewish poor along with the Jewish poor" (Gittin 61a). The Rambam explains the reason: His mercies extend to all of His creations (Hilchot 10:12). A poor person does not necessarily have to be someone who is in a chronic state of poverty, but even someone who is in a situation in which he is lacking something. There is an additional reason to help in our case. We are not discussing an Arab who is in distress and he is asking us to help free him from it, but a distressful situation which we ourselves created. Obviously, we did nothing unethical. On the contrary, a checkpoint is one of the most ethical objects since it is designed to prevent murder. It is true that those who wait at the checkpoints suffer, but we have suffered much more from terror acts which injured and killed Jews, leaving behind widows and orphans. After all, we are at a time of war. We, however, created the checkpoints and it is incumbent upon us to take responsibility for the results which come with them. We must therefore provide him with water.

We should not come to the conclusion that he is a murderer without any proof. Not every Arab is a murderer. This does not mean that we should not be cautious. "Respect him and suspect him."
(Iturei Cohanim #248)



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: Why can't we perform havdalah with a guitar?

A: We do not change the accepted order of serving Hashem: unaccompanied music and prayer to Hashem.

Q: Is it permissible for a married couple to dance at a wedding?

A: It is certainly forbidden. A married couple should not have public displays of affection.

Q: The bus driver punched two holes on my bus pass in one spot. What should I do?

A: Rip up the bus pass when one empty spot remains.

Q: What is the blessing on chocolate?

A: It has been decided: "she-ha-kol."

Q: What should I do with counterfeit money which I found?

A: It is forbidden to give it to others; that would be considered theft.

Q: Is it forbidden to sleep in the bed of someone who died? What about using the sheets?

A: There is no problem. It is permissible to use all of the clothes and objects of the deceased except for the shoes which he wore at the time of death.

Q: Is it permissible for a young woman to get a driver's license for a motorcycle?

A: Yes, on condition that when she drives it her clothing is modest. But this is not recommended for anyone since it is extremely dangerous.



Stories of Rabbenu – Our Rabbi

Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook

Atchalta De-Geulah - The Beginning of Redemption

When our Rabbi would be asked, why isn't the Redemption explicitly mentioned in the Torah, he would quote from the book "Leshem Shevo Veachlama" that the Torah was given for us and not for Hashem. It includes things that we need to perform, not things that Hashem will perform. Hashem will perform the Redemption; therefore, it is only hinted at.

There is a dispute in the Gemara in Sanhedrin (97b) between Rabbi Yehoshua and Rabbi Eliezer. Rabbi Yehoshua says that there can be Redemption without repentance, and Rabbi Eliezer says that repentance will precede the final Redemption. Rav Elyashiv writes in the book "Leshem Shevo Veachlama" that it is almost explicit that Rabbi Yehoshua is correct (since Rabbi Eliezer was silent – Sanhedrin 98a). Our Rabbi said: What is "almost explicit"?! It is explicit!

When asked what should be said to the unconvinced sector of the Charedi (Ultra-Orthodox) public regarding the Redemption, he said, "We are not Karaites! We are Talmud-faithful Jews, and the Talmud itself teaches us about the revealed Final Redemption. It says that there is no more clear sign of the Final Redemption than the Land of Israel's offering its fruit generously to the ingathering Jews. This idea is explicitly expressed in the Talmud" (see Sanhedrin 98a).

Our Rabbi would say: Alchalta De-Geulah is not now; it was a hundred years ago! Now we are in a more advanced stage of the Redemption. (Ha-Rav Eliezer Waldman)

In response to the question of whether or not we stand today at the threshold of the long-awaited Final Redemption, our Rabbi answered that Rabbi Shlomo Alkabetz was already talking about the beginning of Redemption in his day (500 years ago). Our Rabbi also recounted how when he met with Rabbi Leib, the son of the Chofetz Chaim, Rabbi Leib recalled how when his father received word concerning the establishment of the city of Petach Tikvah, he called for his son, and exclaimed, "Reb Leib, the event has begun."

A student asked our Rabbi how we know that this is the Redemption. He responded: Is there an ingathering of the exiles or not?!

A second student who was serving our Rabbi sat next to him while our Rabbi was sleeping. The student accidentally moved the chair and it made a loud noise. Our Rabbi woke up in alarm and said: "Did you hear?" "No, I did not hear anything." "You did not hear? You do not hear the powerful voice of Hashem which gathers the downtrodden of His Nation to the Land of Israel?!" (Ha-Rav Eli Horowitz hy"d in Me-emek Chevron 2, Elul 5763, 94)

It happened that a farmer told our Rabbi that a red heifer was born to him and he asked whether this had any significance. Our Rabbi responded, "Sometimes brown cows are also born," and he was not excited. However, when another student told him that his cousin was making aliyah, and would be coming straight to the yeshiva from the airport, our Rabbi became very excited, even though he did not know the student's cousin. He turned his chair facing the door and he continued to teach. Every quarter of an hour he inquired if the person making aliyah had arrived yet. Finally he received the good news that he arrived. Our Rabbi stood up, and of course all of the students stood up with him, he approached the oleh chadash, hugged him, kissed him, cried and recited the "Shehechyanu" with Hashem's Name and Kingship. (Sichot Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah - Eretz Yisrael p. 374)



Shut She'eilat Shlomo - Questions of Jewish Law

Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook

Ashkenazi in a Sefardic Shul

Q: Rav Shmuel Jablon asked: How should I (an Ashkenazi) conduct myself in a Sefardic synagogue (regarding Tefillah)?

A: If you are praying out loud in a Sefardic synagogue, it is permissible to pray using Sefardic pronunciation. This is, in fact, the proper way to act. When you are praying on your own (i.e. silently), you must follow the custom of your forefathers. One fulfills his obligation in any pronunciation. It is permissible to learn and teach in Sefardic pronunciation. One only needs to be particular in prayer as there is a concept of Nusach (proper pronunciation).

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