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Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim

IN THE HEART OF THE OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM

The Torah of Ha-Rav Shlomo Aviner

Parashat Acharei Mot – Shabbat Ha-Gadol 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.

Checking for Chametz (Leaven) – Check Yourself

It once happened that a groom from Jerusalem was married shortly before Pesach, and he spent the Seder at his father-in-law's house. A terrible thing happened: he found a piece of wheat in the soup! Absolute chametz! The shaken young man summoned his father-in-law to a "din Torah" (Rabbinic court case) claiming that he was deceived in the marriage because he did not want to live in a house which had chametz on Pesach, and therefore he wanted to divorce his wife. Instead of answering him, the Rabbi took off the groom's shtreimel (fur hat), shook it and a few pieces of wheat flew off. The Rabbi said: These remained from the wheat which was thrown as a good sign on your head under the chuppah (wedding canopy), and now - before you check someone else, check yourself. [Iturei Yerushalayim #5]



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: What is the law regarding soap and shampoo for Pesach?

A: It does not require Pesach certification, since it is inedible for a dog.

Q: Is lipstick chametz?

A: It is doubtful. Include it in the sale of chametz.

Q: Does one have to check for chametz in a room which has kosher for Pesach dishes all year long?

A: There is no need, since one must only search in a place where there is concern that there is chametz.

Q: Can I burn my grandfather's chametz?

A: Yes, he can appoint you to be his agent both for the search and destroying of chametz.

Q: Do I have to change the food for my hamster on Pesach?

A: Yes, chametz is forbidden to eat, to possess and to benefit from, and animal food is not inedible.

Q: For those who do not eat kitniyot, are pumpkins seeds and sunflower seeds permissible?

A: Pumpkin seeds are permissible, since a pumpkin is not a legume. Obviously it must have Pesach certification since the salt may be stuck with flour. Sunflower seeds are kitniyot.

Q: Does hair cream require Pesach certification?

A: No, it is inedible for a dog.



Stories of Rabbenu – Our Rabbi

Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook

Pesach

If only my children would be in the Land of Israel

A certain Rav explained the line in the Haggadah, "If we received the Torah, but did not enter the Land of Israel – it would have been enough," that it would have been better for the non-religious pioneers to have remained outside of Israel rather than to commit sins in the Land of Israel. These words caused much consternation and when the students came to class, they told our Rabbi what they had heard. They thought he would discuss this issue at length, but he responded briefly: "See Yalkut Shimoni #1038" and taught the class as usual (The Yalkut Shimoni says: If only my children, my Nation, would be in the Land of Israel, even though they make it impure). (Iturei Cohanim #181)

Our Rabbi was particular to use machine-made matzah since it was decided by the halachic authorities that machine-made matzah is kosher, and there is, in fact, greater care regarding the concern of chametz than with hand-made matzah. (Haggadah with commentary of Rav Tzvi Yehudah arranged by Rav Aviner p. 93).

A student asked our Rabbi: Which is preferable, hand-made matzah or machine-made. Our Rabbi answered: In the same time that we exert ourselves to make one hand-made matzah it is possible to make Reb Noson's (our Rabbi's brother-in-law), his and many other people's matzah for the entire holiday (Iturei Cohanim Nisan 5766 #259 in the name of Ha-Rav Achyah Amitai).

Blessing after eating – Magdil - Migdol

Our Rabbi saw the comment of the author of the "Torah Temimah" that in the blessing after eating the fact that we say "magdil" on weekdays and "migdol" on Shabbat and holidays flows from a printer's error. The Torah Temimah writes: In the margin next to the word "magdil," the following appeared in parentheses: "B.S.B. migdol" (the Hebrew letters "Beit," "Shin" and "Beit"). He claims that the intention of that marginal note was that "in Shmuel Beit" (the second book of Shmuel) the word

"migdol" appears in a similar verse instead of "magdil." Later printers who copied from the earlier manuscripts misinterpreted the abbreviation to mean that "migdol" is recited "on Shabbat" (which can have the same abbreviation). Our Rabbi was shocked, angry and boiled over: What does this Jew – with all of his importance – think! That the Vilna Gaon and Rabbi Akiva Eiger said "magdil" on weekdays and "migdol" on Shabbat because some young man made a mistake with a verse! (Ha-Rav Chanan Porat. See Olat Re'eiyah vol. 2, p. 421 #95 for our Rabbi's explanation of this change) (By the way, even according to the scientific-historical perspective, the supposition that there was a printer's error is incorrect, since Rabbi David Abudraham already mentions this custom before printing was invented. Furthermore, the split between the two books of Shmuel is a Christian division which did not exist at the time of Rabbi David Abudraham).



Rav Aviner's article from Parashat Metzora 5768 in

the parashah sheet "Be-Ahava U-Be-Emuna" of Machon Meir

(Translated by Rafael Blumberg)

Go teach in the army!

Go teach in the army! The I.D.F. is our army. The army is the Jewish People. So go teach there. Volunteer once a week. For you it will be a small investment, but for the soldiers it's a lot. You've got to realize that there's an enormous thirst there for Jewishness, both amongst the officers and the rank and file. There is thirst, because they are Jews with a Jewish soul. And their thirst is even stronger because they are soldiers.

To win, weapons aren't enough. It's not enough to have practice maneuvers. You need motivation. You need a strong attachment to Judaism, Jewish history and the Jewish People. Obviously, we teach Torah for the sake of teaching Torah, for the sake of Heaven, yet we can also gain the enormous profit of a national spirit.

I am telling you: They are very thirsty for Jewishness. Not for religious coercion, not for insults and curses, but for Jewishness. So go teach! The Army Rabbinate are waiting for you to volunteer, each person in accordance with what most interests him, his proclivities, talents and ability: seminars, lectures, workshops, study partnerships, guided tours, family evenings for married couples, inviting soldiers to yeshiva, daf yomi on bases and at military posts. Adopt the base closest to you. And if you're a writer, they need you to produce written and electronic material of all sorts.

Go teach. Teach the religious, the traditional, and those called secular. I say "called" secular, because really there's no such thing as a secular Jew. Every Jew has a holy soul, and the fact is that he thirsts for Torah. Give Torah lectures, tell stories, sing songs! Everything is an option!

If you are a big Torah scholar, go there! If you are a small Torah scholar, go there! If you are just a plain Jew, go as well. If you are just a plain Jew who doesn't know anything, how humble you are! I like you! Go!

Teach the standing army. Teach the reserves. Teach far away. Teach close to home.

And if you're a woman, married or single, volunteer as well. Because the army has female soldiers, and the appropriateness of this is not the issue right now. The female soldier is there, and she too is a person. So please volunteer.

Call the Army Rabbinate right now, at 02-5012563, fax: 02-5012630. They're waiting for you. Obviously, it's all official. It's all legal. It's all with authorization.

This is the cure for all our problems, all our suffering, all our distress, all our weakness. Increase light! An enormous dissemination of light throughout the army! Therefore. Don't stand at attention. Don't stand at ease. Forward!



Shut She'eilat Shlomo - Questions of Jewish Law

Flashlight for Bedikat Chametz (a talk given at lunch in the yeshiva)

Q: Is it preferable to use a flashlight for bedikat chametz?

A: Why not? You need to see really well. It is not like the question whether one may use an electric light for Shabbat lights. Most authorities rule that one must use a candle. Sometimes the formula of a blessing defines a mitzvah. For example, why must we eat a "ke-zayit" (olive-size piece) of maror? The blessing is "Al achilat maror – on the eating of maror" and "eating" is defined as the minimum amount of a "ke-zayit" in Halachah. For the Shabbat lights the blessing is "to light," but there is no such issue for bedikat chametz since we do not recite a blessing on the light used. Nonetheless, there are limitations (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 433:2). We may not use a torch, since there is a concern that one may fear lighting things on fire and will not check properly. We may not use a candle made of animal fat, since there is a concern that one may fear it dripping and ruining things and will not check properly. One should preferably use a wax candle since these problems do not exist and it illuminates well. A flashlight seems to be a good option: it illuminates well, it does not create a huge fire and it does not drip. Conclusion: One should NOT use a flashlight. Why? We don't change things. The custom has always been to use a candle.

Bedikat Chametz in a school

Q: Does a Jewish school need to do a formal Bedikat Chametz or is it enough to ask teachers and students to clean out their lockers and desks?

A: If the school will be closed and locked during the entirety of Pesach, you can include the entire school building in the mechirat chametz and no cleaning is necessary. If the school or building will be used, both the individual teachers and students must clean out their chametz and the general building must be cleaned as well. In the latter case, it is proper to conduct a bedikat chametz. If it is a major effort to come back and perform it, it may be performed without reciting a blessing before everyone leaves.

Pesach certification for toothpaste

Q: Does toothpaste require kosher certification for Pesach?

A: While we have not seen that there are problems with toothpaste, the custom is to use toothpaste with Pesach certification.

String beans on Pesach

Q: May an Ashkenazi eat string beans on Pesach?

A: Some have the custom to eat them, while others have the custom not to eat them, but the majority in the Land of Israel have the custom not to eat them.

Last year's matzah products

Q: Is it permitted to eat matzah produced more than a year ago that has remained in a sealed box?

A: It is permissible.

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