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## Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim

IN THE HEART OF THE OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM

### From the Teachings of Ha-Rav Shlomo Aviner

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Parashat Re'eh 5768 - #50

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Would you like to ask Rav Aviner a question? E-mail [mororty@bezeqint.net](mailto:mororty@bezeqint.net) and the answer will come from Rav Aviner in 1 of 3 ways: 1. Drawn from his published material. 2. From my own notes of Ha-Rav's answers to questions. 3. If the question has not, to my knowledge, been answered in either of these sources, I will ask the question directly from the Rav.

### Unsuccessful Students

[From parashah sheet "Be-Ahavah U-Be-Emunah" – Translated by Rafael Blumberg]

1. There's a story about a ninth grader in a yeshiva ketana who was a slow learner, and no matter how much the teacher tried to explain the material to him, he couldn't grasp it. That student tried very hard, but without results. The teacher therefore assigned a patient student to help him, but that didn't help either. At the end of the year, when everyone went up to tenth grade, the boy was forced to repeat the ninth. He made a great effort, but unfortunately got nowhere. The same thing happened for seven straight years. Then, when he was twenty, he saw that it was now or never, and he cried out bitterly to G-d. Starting then, his situation improved slowly. He moved on to tenth grade and beyond that, then to post-high-school yeshiva, until he became the head of a Kollel (from the book, "Sod Hatzlacha, by Rav Shmueli, page 235).

2. Another story concerns a boy who moved to Israel from abroad, entered yeshiva and didn't understand a thing. He was also too embarrassed to ask questions, because he was afraid that people would make fun of him. When he finally got up the courage to ask a question, it was a stupid question but his teacher didn't want to insult him so he acted as though it was a real question and answered him. That student didn't despair, and ultimately became a Rosh Yeshiva (ibid., 238).

3. When Rabbi Re'even David Nawi was a young lad he toiled very hard at his studies, but he still never achieved clear understanding. Yet he persevered, entreating G-d to enlighten him, until he became great in Torah and was appointed Chief Justice of the Baghdad Rabbinical Court (ibid., 248).

4. Rabbi Amram Azulai was not a particularly gifted student during his youth, and no matter

how much he toiled, he did not achieve marked success. Yet he did not despair, but continued studying until he became an extraordinarily diligent student in the Porat Yosef Yeshiva (ibid., 250).

5. Rabbi Menachem Racanati, a disciple of the author of "Sefer HaRokeach", who wrote a commentary on the Torah, was a poor caliber student when he was young, but he loved Torah and ultimately became a great rabbi of the Jewish People (Sefer Shalshet HaKabbalah).

6. There was a seventeen or eighteen year old boy who came to the Chatam Sofer and divulged to him his desire to learn Torah. At the time, that was considered old, so the other students laughed, wondering how a boy who hadn't ever learned could want to immerse himself in learning now. Yet the Chatam Sofer castigated them, saying, "Why should you laugh? Surely all who want to learn may come and do so." He drew that lad near to him and set him up with study partners for an hour each. Yet besides being older, he was also a slow learner with little retentive ability, and even if someone learned a particular mishnah with him a hundred times, he still forgot it quickly, such that the next day it was as though he had never learned it. All the same, his desire for Torah never ceased and he persisted in his studies until he ultimately reached the level of an outstanding scholar and was appointed head of a rabbinical court and chief rabbi of a city.

7. When Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin (the Netziv) was twelve years old, he did not want to learn and he moved from teacher to teacher, but to no avail. One day he heard his father in the kitchen, worriedly saying to his mother, "What shall we do with our Naftali? I've tried everything and he doesn't want to learn. Perhaps we have to teach him a trade?" The boy was terrified. He ran into the kitchen and he began to cry, saying, "Abba! I'll study!" and starting then he did begin learning, becoming an illustrious scholar (She'al Avicha Veyaged'cha 2:14).

8. During his childhood, Maharam Schick (Rabbi Moshe Schick) was not blessed with sharp intelligence or a quick grasp. His ability to absorb material was very weak, he had trouble understanding, and he couldn't remember anything, not even one page of gemara. Yet he did not despair, and he toiled greatly, entreated G-d, reviewed his learning many times even though he didn't understand the subject matter well, until he ultimately became amongst the most famous of his contemporaries (Sefer "Ashrei Mi She'amalo", 3:56).



### **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 make toast in a non-kosher toaster if I wrap the bread in aluminum foil?

A: It is not possible.

Q: Is it permissible to lie about my age and add a year so I can get a job? My age will not affect my job performance.

A: It is not permissible to lie. One does not have to tell everything, but it is forbidden to lie.

Q: Why don't we build the Temple?

A: We first need the Kingship of Israel and to eradicate Amalek. Rambam, Hilchot Melachim 1:1-2.

Q: Is there a mitzvah to eradicate Amalek today – Hashem has not given us a rest from all of our enemies?

A: We must first completely build the Kingship of Israel. Rambam, Hilchot Melachim 1:1-2.

Q: Is it permissible to say something to my father if he is fiddling with his cell phone during davening?

A: After davening in a respectful and humble manner.

Q: Should I not even think about a match with a young woman who lives in the settlements and my parents are afraid that I will live there on account of the danger?

A: Yes, you should. Everything will work out.

Q: I sit next to my father in shul. When I want to get up, it is preferable to go out my father's side and then he will have to stand up or go out the other side and cause five other people to get up?

A: Your father will allow the disruption.

Q: What is Ha-Rav's opinion regarding transfer of Arabs?

A: Yehoshua bin Nun sent the non-Jews three letters went entering the Land of Israel: 1. Anyone who wants to leave should leave. 2. Anyone who wants to make peace should make peace. 3. Anyone who wants to wage war should wage war. These are the three options.

## Stories of Rabbenu – Our Rabbi

### Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook

#### Not Using Another Person

Our Rabbi would not burden others. Therefore, at the end of a class when his students wanted to daven Ma'ariv, our Rabbi would always get up himself to get his hat [This trait follows the Gemara (Sotah 10a) regarding Shimshon who asked Hashem to remember for him the merit that for all of the years that he judged Israel he did not burden another person to bring him his rod]. These traits of our Rabbi were exemplary like those of our master, Rav Kook, his father, who was also known to act this way. Our Rabbi related that his father told him that someone who desires to attain lofty and deep levels of spiritual growth is obligated to act this way. Nonetheless, when the students saw that our Rabbi needed his hat, they brought it on their own initiative.

After our Rabbi's release from the hospital in 5733, the students took turns bringing lunch from the yeshiva to our Rabbi each day during the course of a month. According to doctor's orders, our Rabbi was required to cease from eating his usual minimal amount. Our Rabbi apologized to each student for creating a burden, having him bring the meal, and always asked the student to eat with him.

When our Rabbi was healthy, he was extremely particular not to ask for help from anyone. Even when during the course of a day he did not eat, he would not ask them to bring him food.

Our Rabbi's sister, Ha-Rabbanit Batya Miriam Ra'anani, used to send our Rabbi a jar of jam with one of the students when they went from the old yeshiva building to our Rabbi's house. Our Rabbi would not touch them, and stacks of jars piled up. When Ha-Rabbanit asked for an explanation, our Rabbi said: "Send it with your son, not with the students."

It once happened that a bottle cap fell on the floor and a student bent down to pick it up. Our Rabbi said: "Oh sorry, sorry, I will pick it up." The student said: "It is nothing." But our

Rabbi remained steadfast. It bothered our Rabbi to be on the receiving end, he wanted to be the one to give, even with little things.

A student escorted our Rabbi on the way. Our Rabbi was carrying a bag and the student's hands were free. The student asked to carry the bag, but our Rabbi declined. The student said to him: "If someone sees us walking and notices that I, the younger one, am allowing my elder to carry a bag, I will appear cruel in his eyes. Therefore, if I take the bag, Ha-Rav is doing me a favor and the other way around." He then agreed.

After Bircat Cohanim, he would move his chair in order to tie his shoes. He would prevent his students from putting it back, and he would return it himself. One time a student succeeded in returning it before him. Our Rabbi sat for a moment and said: "Thank you very much," and immediately stood in order not to benefit from others.

Even when our Rabbi suffered from incredible pain, he was insistent that they should not support him. Once after a class, when the last of the student left his house, he sighed from the pain in his foot and he exerted himself to get up from his chair to get to his bed. The student, who lived with him to help him, knew that our Rabbi would be unhappy if he tried to help him get to the bed. An idea suddenly came to him to arrange two rows of chairs so our Rabbi could lean on them on his way, and he would not have to rely on flesh and blood. When our Rabbi saw this, he was very happy and a wide smile appeared on his face.



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

#### An Upshirin not at Meron

Q: We live in America and we want to give our son who is recently turned three an upshirin (first hair-cut) here in Israel. We are staying in Yerushalayim. We prefer not making the entire family take the long trip to the grave of the Rashbi in Meron. Are there other locations that people regularly use?

A: Many have it at the Kotel.

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