



PO Box 1076 Jerusalem 91009 * Tel. 972-2-628-4101

Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim

IN THE HEART OF THE OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM

From the Teachings of Ha-Rav Shlomo Aviner

Parashat Shoftim 5768 - #51

Prepared by Rabbi Mordechai Friedfertig

RavAviner-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

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

Would you like to ask Rav Aviner a question? E-mail 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.

Where We You Be For Rosh Hashanah?: Don't Travel to Uman

There is a new "custom" to leave Israel and travel to the grave of Rebbe Nachman in Uman (Ukraine) for Rosh Hashanah, since Rebbe Nachman of Breslov said: "Anyone who visits my grave and gives eighteen coins to tzedakah will merit life in the World to Come."

This is what Rav Aviner Shilt"a has said about this practice (Iturei Cohain #264, commentary to Eichah pp. 22-23, 40-43 and Q&A on Ha-Rav's radio program):

One may only leave Israel for a mitzvah. Anyone who violates this, we hope that he will repent. Worse than this is one who travels under the impression that he is performing a mitzvah, because how will he repent?!

Visiting the grave of tzadikim (righteous people) is not defined as a mitzvah – not a rabbinic mitzvah and not a Torah mitzvah; it is a positive act. Based on this, Maran (our revered teacher) Ha-Rav Kook ruled that we do not leave Israel to visit the graves of tzadikim and he wrote "are we without graves in the Land of Israel that you travel to the Exile?!" (Shut Mishpat Cohain #147).

It is true that Rebbe Nachman said: "Anyone who visits my grave and gives eighteen coins to tzedakah will merit life in the world to come," but Avraham Avinu is greater than Rebbe Nachman. Rebbe Nachman himself said this. Anyone who goes to Ma'arat Ha-Machpelah in Hevron and gives eighteen gold coins can be certain that Avraham Avinu will aid him. Furthermore, know that the Land of Israel is holier than Uman. Rebbe Nachman himself said this.

Also know that it is not enough to visit a grave and give eighteen coins to tzedakah to be worthy of life in the World to Come, but one needs to perform acts of loving-kindness, learn Torah and perform the mitzvot. And it is not proper to spend thousands of shekels to travel

there. You should give the money to tzedakah. The value of traveling there is unclear, but giving tzedakah is clear, it is an explicit verse in the Torah.

Also, if you leave your wife alone and sad on Rosh Hashanah, know that you will not leave guilt-free from the Heavenly Court.

The custom of Ha-Gaon Ha-Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach was to stand across from the national cemetery on Mt. Herzl and say: "These are the graves of the righteous who died sanctifying Hashem's Name. Why should I travel far distances?"

Therefore, go to Ma'arat Ha-Machpelah.

A Collection of Other Leading Rabbi's Statements on this Issue

Rav Mordechai Eliyahu: "It is not proper to leave Israel on Rosh Hashanah or during the rest of the year, and it is preferable for one who wants to pray at the graves of tzadikim to visit the graves of tzadikim in the Land of Israel – Hevron, Kever Rachel, Kever Rashbi – who was the teacher of Rebbe Nachman, etc... - and not to leave Israel for the impurity of the lands of the other nations."

Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv: "Go daven at the Kotel."

Rav Ovadiah Yosef: "How did the grave of Rebbe Nachman become more important than the graves of the Rambam and Ha-Gaon Rav Yosef Karo?"

Rav Dov Lior explained how absurd is the thought-process who those who travel to Uman: "People travel to the grave of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai in order to ask him to help them to travel to the grave of Rebbe Nachman so they can make a request of him."



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 buy items with tzedakah money from a bazaar in which all of the profits go to tzedakah?

A: No, since you receive something in return. But you can donate to it.

Q: May a boy and girl (from different biological parents) who were adopted by the same father marry one another?

A: Yes.

Q: If I need to use the rest room and everyone has already begun saying "Shemoneh Esrei" and it is forbidden to walk within four amot of someone saying "Shemoneh Esrei," what should I do?

A: They will allow it for someone who needs to use the restroom.

Q: Is it permissible to take off my kippah while driving in a car?

A: Certainly not. If you must, wear a hat.

Q: Is Hashem's Name holy in other languages besides Hebrew, such as "Allah" in Arabic and "G-d" in English?

A: Yes, in any language whether in speech or writing.

Q: What is the ruling if I forgot to say "Yaaleh Ve-Yavo" in Birchat Ha-Mazon on Rosh Chodesh?

A: After the fact, you have fulfilled your obligation.

Q: How do I gain atonement for speaking immodestly and looking at immodest pictures?

A: Regret and the essence – accepting not to do so in the future.

Stories of Rabbenu – Our Rabbi

Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook

Not Using Another Person (Part 2)

When our Rabbi had to send a letter, he wrote it himself, he put the stamp on it, and he brought it to the post office.

During Birchat Cohanim, when the cohanim saw that they had taken up all of the space on the rug and there was no room for our Rabbi, they moved to the side to make room. Our Rabbi hesitated and stood with one foot on the floor – in order to refrain from receiving help from others – and with one foot on the rug – in order not to insult someone who had done something for him.

Our Rabbi did not have a washing machine. He would hoist the laundry on his shoulder and deliver it to the laundromat in the neighborhood of Geulah. Sometimes a student would escort him and would want to carry the bag, but our Rabbi would never agree.

At the funeral of the father of one of the students, others were waiting for the funeral to depart and our Rabbi was greatly suffering from his legs. A student brought him a chair, but he would not sit despite his pain.

In his later years, when he needed medical treatment, he always said "thank you" whether to the nurses in the hospital or any person for everything that was done for him.

Our Rabbi was insistent on bringing his dishes to the kitchen after breakfast at the yeshiva, and only after real arguments would he agree to give them to someone who he met in the middle of the stairs.

It once happened that when he was walking in the street to bring a cup of coffee to someone who was sick, a student asked to take it from him and he would not agree.



Shut She'eilat Shlomo - Questions of Jewish Law

Permissible and forbidden marriages

Question: We know that it is permissible for first cousins to marry. Why is it not then permissible for an uncle to marry his niece? Is that relationship not the same as first cousins?

Answer: These are the secrets of Hashem.

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