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Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim

IN THE HEART OF THE OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM

From the Teachings of Ha-Rav Shlomo Aviner

Rosh Hashanah – Parashat Vayeleich 5768

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

The Practices of our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, during the Month of Tishrei

[Iturei Yerushalayim #24]

Rosh Hashanah

Our Rabbi would pray at the old yeshiva building on Rosh Hashanah. The prayers lasted many hours until late into the afternoon, and our Rabbi stood the entire time and did not sit for even a moment – until the age of 87. He did not even take a break for Kiddush, but only went to the restroom before Musaf. It was the same on the second day.

Before the meal, our Rabbi performed Tashlich in a well which was in the yeshiva's courtyard. Our Rabbi would then relate how during the War of Independence a great miracle occurred in that the yeshiva was saved from the bombs that fell nearby and from a bomb that fell in the courtyard but did not explode. (Ha-Rav Yechezkel Greenwald)

Talks on the High Holidays

During the High Holidays, our Rabbi would speak during the davening: on Rosh Hashanah before the Shofar and on Yom Kippur before Kol Nidrei. He stood next to the Ark with his talit covering half of his face as when davening the Shemoneh Esrei. He would begin with a great roar and slowly his speech would return to normal, and his talit would also slowly lift up to reveal his face.

Yom Kippur

On Yom Kippur, our Rabbi said that one day of the year is exclusively for The Holy One Blessed Be He: Yom Kippur, since Satan and the evil inclination have no power to influence

people on this day. "The days in which they are to be fashioned, but not for one of them" (Tehillim 139:16).

Vidui – The Confession

Our Rabbi would recite the Vidui of Erev Yom Kippur slowly and he would strike his heart hard, the sound of which could be heard from a distance (For which sins was our Rabbi striking himself so hard? Perhaps the sins of the community or sins which Hashem is exacting with the righteous within a hair's breadth). Our Rabbi said that it is not appropriate to singing "Ashamnu, Bagadnu..." rather it should be said with pain and hurt.

A Red Garment

A student once wore a vest that was partially red on Yom Kippur. Our Rabbi pointed out to him that this was not appropriate for Yom Kippur. We have the custom is to wear white and certainly not red (as it says in Yeshayahu 1:18: "though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool").

Sukkot

It happened one time that some people brought our Rabbi a schach mat (when they first became available): he examined it to see if it was kosher, and he was satisfied. Another time, some people brought him schach; he spent a long time investigating to be certain that it was taken from a permissible area and there was no fear of it being stolen. He requested that they check with the municipality that it was permissible to take them.

This year in Jerusalem

One year on Simchat Torah, the students were singing "Next year in Jerusalem." Our Rabbi stopped everyone and said: "This year!" (Ha-Rav Yechezkel Greenwald)

Simchat Torah

On Simchat Torah, our Rabbi would not make Kiddush and not eat anything until after Musaf so that he could say the Birchat Cohanim during Musaf.

The davening would become longer each year. They would take the Sifrei Torah outside and go to visit the Chief Rabbis. During the dancing, the students would stop traffic and our Rabbi would justify their actions, since one must honor the Torah when it is in the street. Our Rabbi danced the entire way with great strength.



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: If one takes a nap during the afternoon does he have to recite the Shema before going to sleep?

A: No.

Q: Is there a concern that mushrooms have kedushat shevi'it (the holiness of the Shemitah year)?

A: No, they are not considered produce which grew from the ground.

Q: I am a soldier and can carry around my weapon. Is it worthwhile?

A: Yes, it is preferable. It has the value of protecting the community.

Q: Is it permissible to stitch Hebrew on a towel that will be used in the shower?

A: It is permissible. The basic Halachah is that Hebrew letters do not possess holiness.

Q: In order to concentrate, I need to take Ritalin. May I take Ritalin on Yom Kippur in order to concentrate during the davening?

A: Yes, without water. Medicine is not food.

Q: What is Ha-Rav's opinion regarding wearing "Techelet" today?

A: Almost all of the halachic authorities reject this identification.

Stories of Rabbenu – Our Rabbi

Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook

Maran (our revered teacher) Ha-Rav Kook – Part 2

Our Rabbi's serving a Torah scholar – his father, Maran Ha-Rav - was not the usual, but great and wonderous. He absorbed words of Torah, conduct and ways of Torah to the point of unification of their souls. (Maran Ha-Gaon Rav Avraham Elkanah Kahana Shapira ztz"l)

Maran Ha-Rav would clarify together with our Rabbi the halachic questions which were brought before him. In one of his responsa from the period of St. Gallen in Switzerland, he writes: "My son, may he live a long life, pointed out..." (Mishpat Cohain, p. 308)

When people would ask our Rabbi to speak about Maran Ha-Rav, he would say: "It is impossible to talk about Ha-Rav, perhaps it is possible to learn something from him."

Our Rabbi had complete respect for his father and he completely nullified himself before him. He had many things of his own to say, but he hid his greatness and did not work at developing them in order to be a mouthpiece for his father. He never disagreed with him.

Our Rabbi said on 3 Elul (Maran Ha-Rav's yahrtzeit): "There are Torah scholars who are the Gadol Ha-Dor (the great Rabbi of the generation), but Abba z"l was Gadol Ha-Dorot (the great Rabbi of generations).

One of our Rabbi's students suggested to him to publish his writings together with the writings of Maran Ha-Rav. Our Rabbi said: "I am embarrassed."

When people came out against Maran Ha-Rav and shamed him, his supporters turned to Ha-Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer and asked why he did not protest publicly. He answered that if one protests publicly, this will draw more attention, and it is better not to relate to it at all and it will be forgotten. This answer did not find favor in our Rabbi's eyes. He said that one must respond with strength and alacrity against them.

Our Rabbi related that when Maran Ha-Rav appeared before the British court in the matter of Abraham Stavsky (who was accused of murdering Haim Arlozorov, the leader of the Mapai Party in 1933), the English judge said that he saw in Maran Ha-Rav's eyes the eyes of a man of war. Our Rabbi corroborated this statement and said: Abba z"l was full of kindness and mercy, from the students of Aharon, a lover of peace. But when it was required, he was a man of war.

Our Rabbi was opposed to being recorded. A student approached him one day and said: Ha-Rav, what would have been if we had recordings of Maran Ha-Rav ztz"l?! He then agreed. (Ha-Rav Yechezkel Greenwald in the name of Ha-Rav Avraham Remer ztz"l)

A donor asked our Rabbi what to donate to the yeshiva, and he did not say: dorms, rooms, etc..., but rather: "We are lacking chairs." He donated folding chairs and on each was written: "Yeshivat Ha-Rav Kook – the Yeshiva of Rav Kook." But our Rabbi refused to sit on them: "One does not sit on his father's name."



Shut She'eilat Shlomo - Questions of Jewish Law

Emotion towards the mitzvot

Question: I do not feel any emotion toward the mitzvot, such as davening and blessings. What should I do?

Answer: Serving Hashem is obviously the essence and the positive feeling of a person is secondary. Nonetheless, do not despair, since it is a process. It is similar to a child who is eating and his mother tells him that he will grow by doing so. If the child stands in front of the mirror, he will not see any growth. Growth is a lengthy process. This is even more so in spiritual matters and one should not expect immediate results. Fulfill the mitzvot and learn books having to do with faith and mussar (proper ethical behavior), and the emotion will come and grow slowly.



Family Matters - Ha-Rav writes weekly for the parashah sheet
"Rosh Yehudi" on family relationships

The poor of your house takes precedence

Question: My husband devotes many hours each day to learning Torah, communal activities and spreading Judaism at stands. At home, he is spent. When I am speaking with him, he falls asleep. We do not have much intimate time together. He does try to stay awake but without success.

Answer: Tell your dear husband in your name, in my name, in the Name of the Master of the Universe, and in the name of human conscience that "the poor of your house takes precedence." Even though you bring great benefit to humanity, and it is your glory, your wife takes precedence over the rest of humanity. Remember the story of King David, who refused to accept the kingship, as long as not everything was arranged with his wife Michal. All humanity is important, but it has other saviors. There were those who were concerned about it before you and there will be those who will be concerned about it after you. But your wife only has one savior: you. She therefore takes precedence. She relies on you. Do not betray her. All of this is written in the Ketubah, which is read under the chuppah, that you will cherish her and all sorts of other things. Before we add stringencies, one must fulfill his basic obligations. This is the general rule: your wife takes precedence. And, of course, I also say to you: your husband takes precedence.

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