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Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim

IN THE HEART OF THE OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM

From the Teachings of Ha-Rav Shlomo Aviner

Sukkot 5769

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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 Secret to Protecting the Nation of Israel

[Tal Orot – Bereshit, pp. 160-161]

Rabbi Eleazar of Mainz (who lived about 800 years ago in Germany), author of the book "Ha-Rokeach," brought a special protection (segulah) to save Jews from our enemies and any potential danger. He said that if three hundred Cohanim would recite the "Birkat Cohanim" (priestly blessing) at one time on the Mount of Olives, that would save us from distress. In our days, as well, G-d save us, Jews are killed by our enemies in wars and by terrorist attacks. Some people therefore initiated a mass "Birkat Cohanim" on Chol Ha-Moed at the Kotel, since the Mount of Olives is filled with graves and Cohanim are prohibited from going there (This ceremony is still performed to this day). When Rav Aviner asked our Rabbi, Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook, about this practice, he answered that it is nice, but he had two comments: one about the form and one about the content.

a. The Form: An act of Klal Yisrael (the entirety of Israel), like this one, needs to be done through the auspices of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel, and not by individuals taking the initiative in matters relating to Klal Yisrael.

b. The Content: There is a better way, and even Rabbi Eleazar of Worms, with all of the trembling of holiness which we have towards him, would have agreed that the words of our Sages are more important. Our Sages ask, why didn't soldiers in the army of Achav, one of the most evil kings of Israel, fall in battle? They answered that it was on account of the love and brotherhood that existed between them. They did not speak lashon ha-ra (ill about one another). For example, when Ovadiah hid a hundred prophets in a cave (Melachim 1 18), the matter was not leaked nor revealed. Similarly, it is written, "Ephraim is connected to idols, leave him alone" (Hoshea 4:17). Even though the tribe of Ephraim was connected to idols, they were also connected to one another, they were united, and they were therefore forgiven by Hashem. "Great is peace, since even idol worshippers who have peace between them, the

Almighty cannot reign over them (Bereshit Rabbah 38:10 and Yalkut Shimoni Hoshea #520). In contrast, in the generation of Shaul there was no love or brotherhood between people, but rather lashon ha-ra, and when David hid from Shaul, the other Jews informed on him (Tehillim 54), and they therefore fell in battle (Bamidbar Rabbah 14:1).

This is the tried and true "trick" - the way to protect the Nation of Israel: To increase love among the Nation. This is a great teaching for us. We should not grasp at peripheral ways – which when performed for their own sake are great, important and holy, while forgetting about the essence – the love of the Nation. We should not think that we will heal the split in the Nation by adding a stone of holiness here or there, like the "Birchat Cohanim," while not paying attention to the fact that the Nation of Israel is ripped to shreds. The love of Israel – this is the great educational need of the Nation, and also the foundation of the entire Torah.



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 someone who is in the first year of marriage exempt from sleeping in the sukkah?

A: No, unless he or his wife is distressed, which is in fact the same thing.

Q: What type of food requires one to eat in a sukkah?

A: Bread or cake, i.e. anything made with the five types of grain.

Q: Is it obligatory to sleep in the sukkah or is it a stricture?

A: It is a complete obligatory, unless a person is distressed. Therefore, one must build the sukkah in a manner that it is comfortable to sleep in.

Q: Is it permissible to take trips on Sukkot even though I will lose out of dwelling in the sukkah part of the time?

A: Yes, travelers are exempt from the sukkah. And it is permissible to put himself in a situation such as this, since trips are also an essential need and there is not always another time.

Q: Is it permissible to sleep in a sukkah when the security forces warn that it is dangerous or can one rely on Divine Providence?

A: We do not rely on miracles or on Divine Providence except where the Master of the Universe explicitly promised us.

Q: Is it worthwhile to buy an expensive four species?

A: A Kosher, inexpensive one is enough and this is not any different than other stringencies. In general, it is preferable to be strict regarding honoring parents and in mitzvot between yourself and other people, or to give the money to the poor.

Q: Is it permissible to use fabric walls for the sukkah?

A: Some are strict and others are lenient under the condition that the fabric is pulled tightly on all sides (so it does not move in the wind).

Q: What is with the rumors that the Messiah will come this year or that the Redemption will begin this year?

A: No one knows the dates. Nonetheless, the Redemption already began more than one hundred years ago with the building of the Land, ingathering of the exiles, establishment of the State, the establishment of Tzahal and the return of Torah to the Land of Israel.

Q: Should I say something to my father if he is playing with his cell phone during davening?

A: Respectfully and humbly.

Q: Is it permissible to get on a bus if it is crowded and there is a chance that I may touch a woman?

A: It is permissible, since it is unintentional and against your will. Shut Igrot Moshe.

Q: Is it permissible for me to steal from someone who I know is a thief, since one who steals from a thief is exempt [from punishment]?

A: Someone who steals from a thief is exempt from the punishment of paying back double the amount, but not from the principle, and it is a transgression to steal from him.

Q: Is winning a medal in the Olympics a source of national pride?

A: It is a complete emptiness.

Q: Is it a problem to rent an apartment where people who lived there have got divorced?

A: There is absolutely no problem. If there was a problem then one would need to give tzedakah and say Tehillim, but there is no problem. They were divorced on account of themselves and not the apartment.

Stories of Rabbenu – Our Rabbi

Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook

Maran (our revered teacher) Ha-Rav Kook – Part 4

When our Rabbi got up to speak on 3 Elul, the yahrtzeit of Maran Ha-Rav, he was completely covered with his talit; he leaned on the podium and cried. It was clear from his words the close connection he had even now with Maran Ha-Rav, as if he had ascended on high at this very moment.

Regarding difficult matters of the yeshiva, our Rabbi would say: "I am taking counsel with Abba Ha-Rav ztz"l."

Our Rabbi was once walking in the old yeshiva building and when he entered the little room where Maran Ha-Rav had learned and studied, he stopped and not only kissed the mezuzah, but also kissed the door.

During one of the days of the War of Independence, two students were in the yeshiva with our Rabbi, who would not leave the yeshiva even in dangerous times. There was a huge explosive near the yeshiva from which two women were killed. Our Rabbi took the two students into Maran Ha-Rav's study with him and proclaimed: "In merit of the one who sat on this chair, nothing at all will happen here!" and indeed nothing occurred.

"I heard from Ha-Rav Natan Ra'anan ztz"l that there was once an exhibition about [Maran] Ha-Rav ztz"l at a university. He approached Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah and told him about the exhibition, but Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah refused to go, and he said with excitement: "Although they are presenting his wisdom there, his fear of G-d will not be seen there and his faith will

not be seen there. Why then should we go there?!" (Ha-Rav Avraham Elkanah Kahana Shapira ztz"l)

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הנה

Shut She'eilat Shlomo - Questions of Jewish Law

Pregnancy and Tzom Gedalia

Question: I am three months pregnant and I am wondering if I must fast on Tzom Gedalya? I feel completely able to fast but should I do so?

Answer: You should fast if you feel good.

Visiting a grave

Q: My brother died three month ago and I have yet to visit his grave. I wanted to do so before Rosh Hashanah. Is this permissible or should I wait until after the holidays?

A: It does not matter.

Q: What should I pray there: Tehillim, Shacharit, Minchah, etc...?

A: Tehillin, not Shacharit or Minchah.

Q: When should I go: morning or afternoon?

A: It does not matter.

Q: What is Judaism's opinion regarding visiting graves?

A: It shows honor to the deceased.

Q: Are there days I should not visit?

A: Holidays.

Q: My mother says I should not visit so often because the soul is on high. But I want to visit...

A: There is no problem, but you should not overdo it.



Family Matters - Ha-Rav writes weekly for

the parashah sheet "Rosh Yehudi" on family relationships

A Response to an Overly Critical Wife

Excuse me for saying so, but you are critical in an intolerable manner. I am not blaming you, perhaps your parents were extremely critical of you, perhaps you are frustrated at work and with educating your kids, or perhaps you are angry with yourself and you are looking for a punching bag to get out your anger, perhaps, perhaps... But know, this is creating an unpleasant atmosphere in your house and the main ones to be damaged are the children. Your husband has learned to live with you. When he sees that you are preparing to talk, he pulls down the shades, shuts down, and listens to you. He does not even pray that you stop. No. He accepts the suffering with love. But the children are suffering greatly from this. If they are older, they will step back and may even be brazen enough to say to their father: why do you let her do this? Why don't you respond? If they are little, they do not realize the problem, but they realize that something is not right in the house and they begin to crumble. Therefore, I am giving you an interesting challenge: do not utter a word of criticism – even if it is justified. Don't worry, the world will not crumble. And I promise you, you will feel exalted, you will feel wonderful. Try it.

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