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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 Vayera 5769

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Would you like to ask Rav Aviner a question? E-mail [mororly@bezeqint.net](mailto:mororly@bezeqint.net).

### The Torah and the Big Bang Theory

[from parashah sheet "Ma'ayanei Ha-Yeshu'a – Lech Lecha 5769]

The Big Bang Theory is beloved among believers and those who fear G-d, since it is a scientific admission that there was in fact a beginning of the world. While it was long ago, there was still a beginning. The Creation of the World is a fundamental of faith. If the world was not created, then no miracle occurred. If the world is ancient, then the Torah does not precede the world, but is a patch on an existing world, and it is not the soul of the world.

While there is still a difference between the dating of the world between the Torah - 5769 years - and scientists - 15 billion years (this conclusion is reached through radioactivity in rocks, salts in oceans, etc...), this is not a difficult, since our Rabbis explain that Hashem built worlds and destroyed them before the ultimate creation of THIS world (Bereshit 3:6-9).

Maran (our revered teacher) Ha-Rav Kook therefore wrote: "And regarding the counting of the years of creation in relation to geological calculations in our time - it is a well-known teaching that there were already many epochs before the counting of our era. It is well-known among the early mystics and in Midrash Rabbah that He (Hashem) built worlds and destroyed them" (Igrot Re'eiyah vol. 1, p. 105). Our world is 5769 years old, but 15 billion years already preceded in other worlds (see the commentary of the Tiferet Yisrael on the Mishnah at the end of Seder Nezikin in "Or Ha-Chama" who explains this at length). This means that the different strata found in the world are remnants of the destroyed worlds.

The Torah says: "It was night, and it was day" (Bereshit 1:20). Bereshit Rabbah (3) explains that "it was" comes to teach us that there was an order of time before our world. Thus, Hashem built worlds and destroyed them. "And the land was unformed and void" (Bereshit 1:2). "What does 'was' mean? It (the world) already was, i.e. already existed (Sefer Ha-Bahir).

Regarding the basic issue, we are not necessarily for or against the Big Bang Theory. The point of the Torah is not to deal with physics. We respect scientists, and there is even a blessing for great scientists (Blessed is Hashem...who gave of His wisdom to flesh and blood), but the Torah is not a science book. Science describes the reality of what was and what is, and the Torah describes what reality should be (Maharal, Netivot Olam, Netiv Ha-Torah, 14). What is written at the beginning of the Torah is a secret and not simple, as Maran Ha-Rav Kook wrote: "And the Torah is certainly closed regarding the act of Creation and speaks in hints and parables, since everyone knows that the act of Creation is included in the secrets of the Torah" (Igrot Re'eiyah ibid.).



## **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: I am in a (kosher) hotel in Israel and I am not sure if the dishes and glasses in the room have been immersed in the mikveh. May I use them?

A: Some authorities permit using a hotel's dishes which have not been immersed and others forbid them. It is therefore permissible because of a double doubt.

Q: Is it permissible to travel outside of Israel for a trip? When is it permissible?

A: It is forbidden for a trip. It is temporarily permissible in order to get married, make a livelihood or for an actual mitzvah.

Q: Is it permissible to be involved with a pyramidal business model?

A: On condition that there is no deception and those on the bottom do not lose out. And you must be certain.

Q: Many people take the weekly parashah sheets in my shul. If I arrive early, can I take a bunch of copies for my family or is this considered stealing to a certain extent?

A: You can only take them if others remain because your family should not merit through the loss of others.

Q: If my fingernail breaks on Shabbat and it is bleeding, is it permissible to cut it?

A: No, put a band-aid on it.

Q: What should an Ashkenazi say during Kedushah when he is at a shul which is davening Nusach Sefard?

A: His own nusach – quietly.

Q: Is there a value to wearing a Jewish star?

A: No, it is like any jewelry.

Q: Is it permissible to use ma'aser money to buy holy books?

A: No, ma'aser is for the poor.

Q: Is it permissible to read books by Spinoza?

A: Certainly not, they are full of heresy.

Q: Is it permissible for a girl to get a short haircut like boys?

A: It is forbidden because of "Lo Tilbash" (the prohibition of women dressing or appearing as men), since it is a man's haircut.

Q: Is it permissible for boys to grow long hair?

A: There are three Torah prohibitions: A. A barrier between one's head and Tefillin and it causes a blessing recited in vain when putting on Tefillin. B. Following the ways of the non-Jews. C. "Lo Tilbash" (the prohibition of men dressing or appearing as women).

Q: What should I do to combat anger?

A: Read Mesilat Yesharim a lot.

Q: I have many fears. Is it a desecration of Hashem's Name to receive professional help, since people will say "what about faith?"

A: It is very good just like help from a doctor.

Q: Is there a problem with plastic surgery?

A: It is forbidden for beauty. It is permissible for removing a perceived ugliness by the person.

Q: Should a newly observant person say "Shehechyanu" the first time he wears tzitzit?

A: Yes, since it is the first time he fulfills the mitzvah.

Q: Sometimes I explode and tell people what I think about them. Should I keep it inside?

A: It is preferable to say it without anger.

Q: If I go to daven in the middle of a meal should I wash "netilat yadayim" before davening?

A: Yes, we always wash before davening.

Q: If someone receives a letter with a stamp which has not been canceled, does he have to rip it up?

A: He is obligated since the law of the land is the law, and one receives service in exchange for payment.

Q: Is it permissible to put Tefillin on a tattoo?

A: Yes.

Q: Is it permissible to write a "cheshbon nefesh" (accounting of one's spiritual state) on Chol Ha-Moed?

A: Yes, it is a "dvar avud" (something which will be lost if not done at the moment),

Q: I broke a plate which says "Shana Tova" (have a good year). What does this mean?

A: Nothing.

## Stories of Rabbenu – Our Rabbi

Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook

The Younger Years – Part 3

Finding a place to learn

Our Rabbi aided his father in his many public and private matters which he dealt with as Rav of Yafo and the surrounding settlements. When it became clear that this was becoming too distracting to our Rabbi's Torah learning, he moved to the Old City of Jerusalem, hid himself and learned in Yeshivat Porat Yosef. When it was too disturbing there as well, he considered traveling to one of the major yeshivot outside of Israel.

He consulted with Maran Ha-Rav Kook and Ha-Rav Binyamin Menasheh Levin and in the end decided to travel to Halberstat in Germany in order to teach Torah to a group of young men. His good friend, Ha-Rav Dr. Moshe Auerbach, the principle of the "Netzach Yisrael" School in Petach Tivkah, also advised him to go and learn with his brother Ha-Rav Dr. Yitzhak Auerbach, the Rav of Halberstat.

While he was in Halberstat, our Rabbi taught Gemara, Kuzari and Tanach to the young men (Tzemach Tzvi, letter #21). In order to become closer to these young men in Germany, our Rabbi neatened his beard a little, and wore similar clothing to them.

#### Our Rabbi with Maran Ha-Rav in Switzerland

When World War One broke out, Maran Ha-Rav Kook, who was invited to the Agudat Yisrael conference in Germany, was not able to return to Israel and was forced to stay in Switzerland for an extended period. Our Rabbi said: "During that period in Switzerland, I learned the entire Torah with Abba: the Babylonian Talmud, the Jerusalem Talmud, Rambam, Tur – a few times – which we would not have been able to learn in one hundred years."



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

#### Mayoral Elections in Jerusalem

Question: I understand that Ha-Rav supports Rav Porush for mayor. I would like to know why and why not to vote for Barkat?

Answer: Rav Aviner has mentioned many times over the last few weeks that he has a tradition from Rabbenu Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook not to give an opinion regarding municipal elections. Both sides have claimed Rav Aviner's support, but he has not given it. He repeats over and over that we must love, respect and admire each for their talents and willingness to work for Am Yisrael.



#### **Family Matters - Ha-Rav writes weekly for**

*the parashah sheet "Rosh Yehudi" on family relationships*

#### Mazel Tov Again

*A couple once brought an expensive, new car. During the first drive, the wife, who was driving alone, caused an accident and it resulted in major damage to the vehicle. An immense feeling of anxiety gripped her: My husband is going to kill me! She got the car registration and insurance card to give to the other driver. A small note fell out of the envelope, written in her husband's handwriting: "My sweet, remember, I love you more than the vehicle." This is the general principle: no one is whole. We are not angels. We must view things in their proper proportion. If your spouse breaks something like a plate or causes some kind of damage, then act as we do under the chuppah when we break the glass and say: "Mazel Tov!" It is not the right place there (since it is a remembrance of the destruction of the Temple), it is the right place here.*

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