



Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim

IN THE HEART OF THE OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM

From the Teachings of Ha-Rav Shlomo Aviner

Parashat Vayishlach 5769

Prepared by Rabbi Mordechai Friedfertig

To subscribe, send e-mail to: mororly@bezeqint.net

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

The Evacuation from "Beit Ha-Shalom" in Hevron

[Opening words from Ha-Rav's radio]

During the lifetime of Maran (our revered teacher) Ha-Rav Kook, there was a similar incident in which there was a violent disturbance at a gathering of Revisionists, i.e. Etzel and similar groups. In the article "Leshever Bat Ami" (The Hurt of the Daughter of My People) in Ma'amrei Ha-Re'iyah (pp. 365-366), Maran Ha-Rav Kook discussed this incident. He said that we would expect that with the return to Zion, the building of the Land and all of the wonders and miracles which Hashem performed for us, that the Nation of Israel would become closer to performing the mitzvot – Shabbat, Kashrut, etc..., but to our distress this is not so. There are all types of Shabbat desecrations and abominations which fill our Land. What can we do? People do what they want, and we cannot force them to do otherwise. But the prophet Yechezkel (20:39) said: "And you, House of Israel, thus says Hashem G-d: Let every man go serve his idol, but afterwards you will surely listen to me, and do not desecrate my Holy Name again with your gifts and idols." Do what you are going to do, but do not desecrate Hashem's Name. Maran Ha-Rav Kook said the same thing: Do not desecrate Hashem's Name, and a desecration of Hashem's Name is a war between brothers. "I do not know who is to blame; it is better to say that we are all at fault." But we must fix the situation, we must increase "Ahavat Yisrael" – love between Jews. This is what Maran Ha-Rav Kook taught us. We know that the general state of the Nation who dwells in Zion is one of "Ahavat Yisrael." This love overcomes any divisions and leaps over any walls. For example, the army has left-wingers and right-wingers, religious and secular, Ashkenazim and Sephardim and Ethiopian Jews and Yemenite Jews. We see that it is possible to live together with love and fraternity. The uniform breaks down many barriers. The majority of Jews from every stream and opinion live together in love and fraternity. The most troublesome thing is when we are unable to get along together. Differences of opinion are permissible. Difficult disagreements are permissible. Lifting a hand in violence, shaming and hatred are forbidden.

Maybe some people have forgotten that the Temple was destroyed on account of baseless hatred. Those people who hated baselessly certainly convinced themselves that they were

justified, and they said that it was hatred of brothers for the sake of Heaven. But everything was destroyed in the end. Therefore when there is fighting among Jews, we must cry. Maran Ha-Rav Kook began his article by saying that he was crying. We therefore cry that things have reached a point that we cannot talk together, clarify the situation together, and decide together.

During the time of the Second Temple, our Sages asked the prophet Zechariah: are we obligated to fast on Tisha Be-Av and the other fast over the destruction of the Temple – we have the Temple but not full independence? He answered: everything will work out, this is redemption. While the situation is difficult, is anything out of Hashem's ability to fix? This is only the beginning. There is only one thing which you have to do: "Love truth and peace" (Zechariah 8:19). This is all – said Hashem – I will take care of the rest. As is known, we have not fulfilled our obligation. Jews are not enemies, they are our brothers. "I am seeking my brothers" (Bereshit 37:16).



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: Can I daven on the bus if I know that I will not have any other time to do so?

A: It is permissible if there is no choice.

Q: The Torah says that it is forbidden to put an idol in the Temple, but the Keruvim had the image of angels. How is this permissible?

A: Because it is a Divine command. See the Kuzari in relation to the Golden Calf.

Q: What is Ha-Rav's opinion of the Bnei Akiva youth movement?

A: There are great features and parts which need to be fixed. This is obviously a lengthy subject to discuss. I wrote an entire book about it called "Chesed Ne'ura'ich."

Q: How much time has to pass after Pesach so that there is no concern that a chametz product in a store may have been owned by a Jew (and is forbidden for use)?

A: A month – by then the supplies will have certainly been depleted.

Q: Is it permissible to buy a product which seems to have been stolen?

A: It is forbidden.

Q: If it is forbidden to perform a mitzvah by sinning, why should one join Tzahal?

A: Tzahal is not a sin but a mitzvah, and there is no transgression there.

Q: Is it permissible to set an alarm clock on Friday to ring on Shabbat?

A: Yes, but you cannot turn it off on Shabbat.

Q: Is it permissible to use "maaser money" to pay for a child to go to camp when her parents cannot afford to send her?

A: Yes, "maaser" is for the poor.

Q: Is it permissible to take a vacation on a cruise?

A: It is forbidden to leave Israel for a vacation (Rambam, Melachim 5:9).

Q: It is permissible to enter a bathroom with a kippah which has a verse on it?

A: You need two coverings on it.

Q: My parents are angry at me all the time. I (a woman) am also angry at the Master of the Universe because of what He does to me, and it is hard for me to pray. What should I do?

A: Pray according to your ability. It is enough to recite the morning blessings. The essence is that the Master of the Universe is not angry with you, He loves you.

Q: Is it obligatory to bathe on Friday?

A: Yes, in honor of Shabbat. But if it is not possible, then bathe on Thursday and try to stay clean.

Q: Am I obligated to forgive someone who destroyed my life?

A: No. It is incumbent upon him to truly repair things.

Q: What should I teach a child who has difficulty in praying?

A: Explain the fundamentals of faith which are hidden in the prayers and blessings.

Q: If a person is born with homosexual tendencies, how can we blame him?

A: Everyone is born with an evil inclination, and each person is obligated to overcome it.

Q: My husband and I erred terribly when I was not pure, and now I am pregnant. Should I have an abortion? I will certainly die during childbirth! And also what will be with a baby who was born from an abdominal act?

A: Do not have an abortion. The fire of repentance will burn up the entire transgression – and the child will also be righteous.

Q: Are we obligated to remove a tattoo from a deceased person before burial?

A: No, this is desecration of the dead and we would also have to bury anything we removed with him.

Stories of Rabbenu – Our Rabbi

Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook

Always move forward

A student would bring our Rabbi to Selichot at the yeshiva in a taxi. He arrived to pick up our Rabbi at 6:30 AM, but our Rabbi's clock said: 7:30. Our Rabbi was surprised and began to fix it by moving it forward. The student suggested that he move it back an hour. But our Rabbi said: "Only forward," and he kept moving it. Our Rabbi passed the correct time a few times and he always went around and around again. He said: one should always move forwards and not backwards. (Ha-Rav Eliyahu Zohar)

Israeli soccer

Our Rabbi was asked whether the victory of the Israel soccer team over the Russia soccer team was a "Kiddush Hashem – sanctification of Hashem's Name." He replied: To a very limited extent. (Ha-Rav Eliyahu Mali)

Tzitzit at night

Our Rabbi would wear his tzitzit during the day as well as sleep with them at night. (Ha-Rav Yechezkel Greenwald)

Shut She'eilat Shlomo - Questions of Jewish Law

A Daughter of a Cohain Marrying an "Am Ha-aretz"

Question: We find in the Shulchan Aruch (Even Ha'ezer 2:8) based on the Gemara in Pesachim (49a) that a "Yisrael" (Am Ha-aretz) should not marry the daughter of a cohain and if he does, the marriage will not be successful. How are we to interpret this in our times? What exactly does the term "Am Ha-aretz" mean for purposes of this halachah?

Answer: If he is G-d-fearing and has set times for learning Torah, there is no problem. See Shut Yehaveh Da'at 5:61 who discusses this question at length.



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

Preparation for Marriage

So many marriages end in divorce. For sure, marriage is not simple; couples do not arrive ready for marriage. But how can one prepare? There are some people who say: "A couple should live together before marriage. Through this, they will come to know each other, prepare and become accustomed. And it is worthwhile for a young man to fraternize with many different young women, and also to live with his future spouse at least close to the marriage." It sounds logical, but it does not work in reality. On the contrary, experience has shown that one who abstains before marriage is the one who is happy. Why is this so? Because there are two possible types of connections with the opposite sex: a connection of benefit and a connection of obligation. A pre-marital connection is a connection of benefit, a non-obligatory connection, whose purpose is to receive and to live together without any ethical obligation to give. This is a connection which can be discarded when one is no longer benefiting. A marital connection is one of obligation, a groom does not say under the chuppah: I am obligated to benefit, rather: I am obligated to be concerned about you. A pre-marital connection is therefore not preparatory, but on the contrary deceiving, confusing and disappointing in the end. While abstinence before marriage shows that a spouse is not a passing adventure, not a summer night's dream, but something serious. It is an obligation, a truly pleasant obligation.

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