



Parashat Vayikra 5769

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## Rabbis with Different Opinions and Styles

[Q&A from Ha-Rav's Video Blog]

Question: Why haven't the students of Maran (our Master) Ha-Rav Kook excommunicated Ha-Rav Ovadiah Yosef? How is it possible for this Rabbi to speak in such a degrading and base manner, speaking ill about the secular, disparaging the soldiers of Tzahal and cursing other Jews (i.e. – Yossi Sarid, may his name be blotted out)? Is this how a Rabbi speaks? And his honorable, Ha-Rav Aviner, quotes him in his books?!

Answer: If one does not accept the fundamental principle that human beings are occasionally complex, we would have to distinguish between good and bad individuals, between light and darkness. But this is not so. People are complex. Ha-Rav Ovadiah Yosef is a great Torah scholar. How do we know? Read his books and see his Torah scholarship in his incredible breadth of knowledge, in the depth of his understanding and in his power to decide Halachah. He is a great Torah scholar. At the same time, we are students of other Torah scholars in relation to the Land of Israel and in relation to the love of Israel. One must also notice that that every Torah scholar has his own style. There are Torah scholars with harsh styles and Torah scholars with gentle styles, but they are often saying the same thing in different ways. Therefore, even if we do not agree with a specific idea, we do not need to excommunicate anyone. Pirkei Avot (6:6) says that the Torah is acquired by means of forty-eight qualities, and one of them is "sharing his fellow's yoke," i.e. Torah scholar "A" must carry the yoke with Torah scholar "B" even though he has serious disagreement, even severe criticism, with part of the other's opinions or words. But there is agreement on 90% or 95%. One does not have to focus on the things which separate, but on what connects, which is greater – beyond measure – than what separates. In the future, Torah scholars will sit together in the main hall and decide the Halachah together. In the meantime, we are in the entrance way, and therefore we respect one another even though we do not agree. If a Torah scholar says something which is correct: accept the truth from the one who says it (Rambam, Shemoneh Perakim – Introduction to Pirkei Avot). Just because he says something incorrect in one area, I won't accept his opinion in another area when he speaks the truth?! In sum: We must increase love of all Torah scholars from all streams.



## **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: What is Ha-Rav's opinion regarding alternative medicine?

A: The majority is nonsense, the minority is true.

Q: If I forgot to recite "Asher Yatzar" after using the restroom and I used it a second time, do I recite the blessing twice?

A: No, one time.

Q: If I buy something, should I ask for a receipt or should I trust the seller that he is paying taxes?

A: It is proper to ask.

Q: A friend told me that she loves a guy, and someone suggested that I meet him for the purpose of marriage. If I agree, is it theft?

A: It is preferable that you first suggest your friend to the young man.

Q: Does Amalek exist in our time?

A: Yes, but they are unknown - in the halachic sense.

Q: What is the source for spitting when you see a priest?

A: There is no such law.

Q: Does a person being set up on a date for the purpose of marriage need to inform the other person that his parents are divorced?

A: No. This is unimportant. See Yevamot 45 with Kehillat Yaakov.

Q: What can I do to bring my wife closer to Torah?

A: You should ask her.

Q: Is there a particular order to cut one's nails?

A: One need not be particular. Arizal.

Q: It is true that if a woman drinks the wine from Havdalah, she will grow a beard?

A: It is nonsense, but they customarily do not do so. If there is no man, she obviously recites Havdalah and drinks.

Q: If I am sick with a contagious illness, should I refrain from davening with a minyan?

A: Ask a doctor for his opinion.

Q: Is it true that if one says Shir Ha-Shirim forty times for something, it will be answered?

A: No, it has the same value as any other mitzvah.

Q: Should I recite "Shehechyanu" on the day I am drafted into Tzahal?

A: Yes, also for receiving your uniform.

Q: I prayed so much for something specific and it did not come about. Where did the prayer go?

A: It aided you in a different direction according to the Divine wisdom.

Q: If a Jew smokes does he commit a transgression?

A: If he disturbs others - it is definitely a transgression. If he does not disturb others and he smokes - he is endangering his life and violates "Safeguard your souls" (Devarim 4:15, 23:11).

Q: Is it a Jewish practice to propose marriage while down on one knee?

A: This is not a Jewish practice at all.

Q: Baruch Hashem, my wife is pregnant. But since she became pregnant, her life has been more difficult from every perspective. How should I relate to her?

A: You need to display much love and patience. This is your current worship of Hashem, and find ways of spiritual elevation while performing it. See Shemoneh Kevatzim vol. 1, 838.

Q: Is it permissible for a woman to show some of her hair?

A: Two fingers worth.

## Stories of Rabbenu — Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook

### Weddings

Rabbi Eliezer Melamed related: In our Rabbi's view, it was important that the students of the Yeshiva have their "Aufruf" (the Shabbat before the wedding) in the Yeshiva, since he said that this joy is for the young man and his friends in the Yeshiva. My father's "Aufruf," therefore, was in the Yeshiva, even though the family preferred that it would be where they lived in Tel Aviv. (Rav Eliezer Melamed in newspaper "Be-Sheva")

Our Rabbi would make a great effort to attend his students' weddings. When he was unable to attend, he was careful to send a telegram with a blessing. (Rav Eliezer Melamed in newspaper "Be-Sheva")

Our Rabbi was particular that one should not write the Christian date, and when he was invited to a wedding and the Christian date appeared on the invitation, he would not attend the wedding. (Gadol Shimushah p. 91 #31)

It once happened that our Rabbi was called up to recite one of the blessings at a wedding and they referred to him as "Ha-Rav Ha-Gaon." He did not move. When he was told that he had been called up, he explained that he is not a "Gaon" and that it is only proper to use this description for the Vilna Gaon. (Ha-Rav Yechezkel Greenwald)

Our Rabbi related: "A student of our Yeshiva approached me. I said to him: 'At first I did not recognize you.' He was wearing the army uniform. You know that I relate to this uniform in holiness. A lovely and precious man, full of G-d-fearing and holiness was approaching, and he was wearing an army uniform. At that time I mentioned what I said at one wedding [of Ha-Rav She'ar Yashuv Cohain], when the groom came dressed in an army uniform. There were some who were pointing one that it is inappropriate for a groom to stand under the chuppah with an army uniform. In Yerushalayim, the Holy City, it was customary that they came with Shabbat clothing, holy clothing, like a streimel. I will tell you the truth. I do not know if the holiness of the streimel is one-hundred percent clear. It was made holy after the fact. Many righteous and holy Geonim (great rabbis) wore it. There is certainly so much trembling of holiness before them, and we are dirt under the souls of their feet, and on account of this fact, the streimel was made holy. Also Yiddish, the language of Exile, was made holy because of its great use in words of holiness. But from the outset - it is not so certain. In comparison, the holiness of the army uniform in Israel is fundamental and

essential. (Sichot Rabbenu, Yom Ha-Atzmaut 5727, Mizmor 19 of Medinat Yisrael, pg. 76 #11).



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

#### Bedikat Chametz in a Tank

Q: Do soldiers have to check for chametz in a tank?

A: Yes, since they eat there.

Q: Should they recite a blessing?

A: No, a tank is not a house. They are inside for long periods of time but this does not transform it into a house.

Q: Should they check the tank with a candle?

A: No or else you will perform Bedikat Chametz and Biur Chametz (destroying the chametz) at the same time. The same applies in checking a car. The basic Halachah is that it is possible to use any source of light to check but the custom is to use a candle.

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



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