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

Rav Aviner is preparing to publish his Hebrew commentary of the book "Orot Ha-Kodesh" (vol. 1) of Maran Ha-Rav Kook. "Orot Ha-Kodesh" is a pillar of Rav Kook's philosophy and essential for understanding his thought. It is a dictionary of words and phrases of Jewish philosophy with Rav Kook's explanations. This work is extremely difficult to understand and Rav Aviner's commentary will open it up to everyone.

You can be a partner in this project by dedicating part of a book in memory or in honor of someone (any amount is appreciated and payment can be made over time).

Please be in touch with Rav Aviner or me if you are interested.

## Non-Zionist Rabbis

[From the book "Be-Ahavah U-Be-Emunah" vol. 1, #21]

Question: Should we relate to non-Zionist Rabbis reservedly and in a unpleasant manner?

Answer: G-d forbid that such an idea should enter your mind! We are obligated to honor all Torah scholars, even if there are sharp differences of opinion between us and them, and anyone who scorns a Torah scholar is in the category of a heretic (Sanhedrin 99b). It is also forbidden for Torah scholars to scorn other Torah scholars. Scorning Torah scholars is like scorning the Oral Torah, which appears through the medium of the Rabbis and their students, and it is therefore heretical. The Jerusalem Talmud compares this to a structure of stones, if one stone is shaken, the entire structure is shaken (Jerusalem Talmud, Sanhedrin 10:1). That is to say, one who scorns a Torah scholar, scorns and knocks over the entire building of the Torah in Israel (see "Perek Tzibbur" by Maran Ha-Rav Avraham in Ma'amrei Ha-Re'eiyah, p. 55).

It is, however, obviously permissible and a mitzvah to wage war against their mistaken opinions which do damage to all of Israel, but all of this must be done without scorning them, G-d forbid. The war of ideas is permissible, but it must be done with love, fraternity, peace and friendship, within the context of respect and

awe. Maran Ha-Rav Kook explained that the ideal of "Great is peace" ("Gadol Ha-Shalom" – a midrashic expression lauding the important of peace) does not imply complete agreement, but rather that responding to harmful opinions does not necessitate dispute. We are able to respond with reasoned explanations, and through this, it will not in any way destroy the peace (Notes on the booklet "Or La-Yesharim," Ginzei Re'eiya 3:27).

Note: In this vein, it is worth recalling the following story about our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah:

Even though the Satmar Rebbe had a completely different outlook from our Rabbi, he never scorned or denigrated him. Once Ha-Gaon Rav Moshe Feinstein ztz"l issued a ruling regarding the height of a mechitzah between men and women in a shul, that in pressing situations it is permissible to be lenient in a particular issue. The Satmar Rebbe came out against him. Our Rabbi said: "It is known that our paths are separate and different, but in this issue he (the Satmar Rebbe) is correct." Even though they were polar opposites regarding the Redemption of Israel and Klal Yisrael (the entirety of Israel), our Rabbi never said one negative word about him.



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 have an ex-boyfriend who wishes to come to my wedding to rejoice with us. Is it appropriate to invite him?

A: There is no reason to invite him, and it has the potential to upset your spouse-to-be.

Q: Can a mourner go on a date to find a spouse?

A: It is permissible.

Q: Is it permissible for a young woman to perform National Service in Israel? I have heard Rabbis would oppose it.

A: It is permissible and a mitzvah to perform National Service where a Rabbi or Rebbitzin certify that it is an appropriate place.

Q: Is it permissible to jump on a trampoline on Shabbat?

A: Yes.

Q: There are often Arabs selling wares – shavers, sunglasses, etc... on the street for an exceptionally low price. Can I buy from them or is there a fear that they are stolen?

A: If they are very inexpensive, there is a fear that they are stolen and you should not buy them.

Q: I experienced a spiritual descent a few years ago and did some forbidden things. I deeply regret it now and repented but it is hard for me to forgive myself. What can I do to heal myself?

A: Give a certain amount of tzedakah and learn a certain amount of Torah.

Q: Why is it forbidden to smoke?

A: It is life-threatening. 10,000 people die in Israel every year and tens of thousands are seriously sick.

Q: Is it permissible for a religious woman to date a non-religious man for the purpose of marriage?

A: No, for three reasons: 1. One should cleave to righteous people and not those who are far from Torah (Rambam, De'ot 6:1). 2. It will cause tension in a marriage. 3. It will cause damage to the religious education of the children.

Q: I work in a clothing store where half of the saleswomen are Arabs. I am simply incapable of looking at them in the eyes because of my negative feelings towards them. How should I act towards them?

A: A cold, but polite relationship.

Q: Is it permissible for a father to dance at the Kotel during his son's bar mitzvah when he is within the first thirty days of mourning for his parent?

A: No.

Q: Is it permissible to place on the floor a bag pack which contains holy books or Tefillin?

A: Yes, the bottom of the bag pack serves as a divider.

Q: How many prayers must a woman recite each day?

A: Some authorities say all of Shacharit and Minchah. Others say any prayer in any language once a day, and reciting the morning blessings is sufficient.

Q: Is it permissible for me to have a dog?

A: Yes, as long as it does not disturb others.

Q: Is there truth to the horoscope in the newspaper?

A: It is nonsense and also forbidden.

Q: Is there any truth that autistic people have hidden, special powers?

A: It has already been proven that it is nonsense, both by scientists and Rabbis.

Q: I discovered that my son was stealing from my wallet and he admitted it. What should I do?

A: 1. Give him allowance. 2. Hide all of the wallets in the house. 3. Tell him stories about integrity. 4. Convey to the child that he is a person of integrity, by saying: "This is not appropriate for you, since you are a person of integrity."

Q: A widow who lost her husband in war wants to get married in secret so she will not lose her payments from the government. Is this permissible?

A: It is forbidden and theft.

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

### Our Rabbi & the Kotel

Our Rabbi said on Taanit Esther: "I wanted to go to the Kotel, but since I have the practice of putting on Tefillin at Minchah on a fast day, I am concerned about appearing arrogant." When a student told him: "Many people put on tefillin there and

therefore you would not be viewed as arrogant," our Rabbi agreed to go. It was extremely hot and the student wanted to go back. Our Rabbi said to him with depth and gravity: "It is difficult for me to detach myself from here." When the student heard this, he was not tired or thirsty anymore for he felt the electricity of holiness.

Our Rabbi had reservations about placing notes in the Kotel, and he pointed out that there is a halachic problem of partially entering into the area of the Temple Mount by doing so.

When a Torah scholar mentioned to our Rabbi the custom of placing notes in the Western Wall, our Rabbi said that one should not do this, and one should even refrain from putting one's fingers into the Kotel [since it is forbidden for an impure person to enter the air of the Temple Mount in even the slightest way]. The Torah scholar said to him: "But this is the custom of Israel [Minhag Yisrael]?" Our Rabbi responded: The word "minhag" [custom] contains the same letters as "gehinom" [purgatory].

He similarly said that Maran Ha-Rav Kook refrained from kissing a stone of the Kotel, which was not protruding. And thus he wrote (Le-Sheloshah Be-Elul 1 pg. 59 #71): "And he [Maran Ha-Rav] was cautious about placing fingers of his hand between the stones of the Kotel."

When a groom asked our Rabbi what to pray for at the Kotel before his wedding, he responded to him that the Kotel is not a place to make personal requests but a place of meeting with the Master of the Universe.

Our Rabbi said that at the Kotel one should think about two things: A. We are located before the Divine Presence. B. The unity of Israel before the Divine Presence.

On the second Yom Yerushalayim after the Six-Day War, our Rabbi stood before the Kotel with his hand outstretched and prayed. Like one person, all of the students were startled on account of his trembling in holiness, and they felt as if our Rabbi was not standing with them in this world.



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

#### Extending not reciting Tachanun until after Yom Ha-Atzmaut

Question: If we do not say Tachanun for the whole month of Nisan because of our liberation from Egypt, why don't we continue that non-recital until after Yom Ha-Atzmaut - as one long period of national liberation?

Answer: We cannot make innovations which do not have a source.

*From Rav Aviner's Commentary on Birkat Ha-Mazon,  
entitled Shir Ha-Ma'alot*

Mayim Achronim - Washing after Eating

Is "Mayim Achronim" a law or a stringency? It is called an obligation in the Talmud (Berachot 53b). The Tosafot (ibid.) however writes that the reason for this washing is "salt from sodom" - a type of salt which can make one blind if it touches the eye, and since in our days this type of salt is uncommon, this custom creates no obligation to wash "Mayim Achronim." But there is another reason given for this washing: The Torah says (Vayikra 11:44), "For I am Hashem, your God – and you shall sanctify yourselves and you shall become holy..." The Talmud (ibid.) explains that "and you shall sanctify yourselves" refers to "Mayim Rishonim – washing before eating" and "you shall become holy" refers to "Mayim Achronim - washing after eating." This means that one should not bless Hashem with soiled hands. This law is not stated explicitly with regard to the blessing after eating, but with regard to all blessings, whether they are in the middle of a meal or the middle of the day (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 181, Shaar Ha-Tzion #32). Therefore, all depends on the situation. One who eats neatly without becoming soiled from the food is exempt from "Mayim Achronim." But if his hands are dirty, and it is to a degree that he would be careful to wash them for reasons of cleanliness or even because he is overly sensitive with regard to dirty hands, he may not recite the blessing without washing "Mayim Achronim." If his hands are completely clean, he is exempt according to the Halachah, although he is still required to according to the Kabbalists - the mystics (Mishnah Berurah ibid. #22). There is certainly no difference between men and women in regard to "Mayim Achronim."

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