



Shavuot - Naso 5769

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Chag Sameach from Ha-Rav Shlomo Aviner & Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim

The Power of Uninterrupted Torah Learning

[Rav Aviner once gave this talk in the yeshiva during lunch]

There are many sources which highlight the importance of Torah learning without interruption. Torah learning should be long and deep.

1. The Gemara in Shabbat (11a) says that Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai and his colleagues did not daven. They constantly learned Torah without any breaks. Since they never stopped, they were exempt from praying. We take all sorts of breaks to do this and that activity. The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 106:2) therefore says that we also stop to daven. Nonetheless, we see the ideal of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai and his colleagues.
2. The Gemara in Berachot (8a) relates that Rabbi Ami and Rabbi Asi davened in the place where they learned Torah, even if there was no minyan. The Rama in Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 90:18) rules that we do not act this way so that the less educated do not follow this practice. They did not go to shul so that they would not take up the time to go back and forth. They could immediately return to learning after praying.
3. The Midrash (Ketubot 62b-63a) explains how Rabbi Akiva went to learn in yeshiva for twelve years. When he returned, he overheard someone saying to his wife, "How long will you be like a widow waiting for him?" She replied that she would prefer that he learn for another 12 years! Rabbi Akiva turned around and went back to the yeshiva for another 12 years. Rav Chaim Shmulevitz in "Sichot Musar" asks, why didn't Rabbi Akiva come in to say

shalom or have a cup of coffee with his wife? Answer: Because 12 years plus 12 years of Torah learning is not the same as 24 continuous years.

4. There was a secret society established in the Volozhin Yeshiva called "Nes Tziona," with the purpose of spreading the idea of settling the Land of Israel among the Nation. A group of students signed a document describing its activities. Maran Ha-Rav Kook's signature did not appear on it even though he was learning there at the time. Someone once asked our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, why Maran Ha-Rav Kook was not part of it? He asked, "He was learning Torah" (see Tal Ha-Re'eiyah, p. 68).



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 it permissible to go to the ocean during Sefirat Ha-Omer?

A: Yes.

Q: Is it permissible for a girl to get a second earring?

A: It is permissible. The essence is for the earrings to be modest and not to attract attention.

Q: Why do we recite the confession (We have sinned, we have betrayed...) in the plural?

A: Responsibility for others.

Q: Is it permissible to imitate Rabbis in a respectful way?

A: With great care so that there is not even a hint of shaming them.

Q: May cohanim enter the grave of the Rashbi on Meiron?

A: No.

Q: Can a child play with a non-kosher animal?

A: Yes. The proof is from the Mishnah in Shabbat (9:7) that a child may play with a non-kosher locust.

Q: Is it permissible to daven without shoes?

A: No, it should be like you are standing before a king.

Q: Who did Dinah marry after the horrible episode with Shechem?

A: Some say Shimon, others say Iyov.

Q: Why do we say "Lechaim" (To Life) when drinking wine?

A: Since wine is given to one who is receiving capital punishment, we therefore emphasize that this is for life.

Q: Can you please provide sources that can strengthen me in the prohibition of not touching others of the opposite sex?

A: Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 152:8. Mesillat Yesharim, chap. 11.

Q: If someone is traveling to Poland, is it permissible to wrap himself in an Israeli flag even though it does not have tzitzit?

A: It is permissible. It is not clothing, but a symbol.

Q: I try not to become angry, but I have a friend who takes advantage on this and bothers me all of the time. Is it permissible to respond one time in the same way as he acts so it will stop once and for all?

A: Yes. It is permissible and preferable to do so without anger. Sefer Ha-Chinuch 338.

Q: Are women obligated to hear the Torah reading on Shabbat?

A: No.

Q: On Erev Shabbat, should one say one recite "Magdil" or "Migdol" in the Bircat Ha-Mazon?

A: "Magdil" as on a weekday.

Q: If I eat a meal of meat and potatoes, what blessing do I recite at the end?

A: "Borei Nefashot".

Q: What is the minimum size for a kippah?

A: Some say that it must cover the majority of the head, and others say that it should be seen from all sides.

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

Yerushalayim

Sacrifices

One of the students, who was present with our Rabbi at the liberation of the Temple Mount, asked: "What about sacrifices now?" Our Rabbi responded in a sharp and powerful manner: "Reb David Karlin said (Shut She'eilat David #1) do not hasten to build the Temple!"

The Temple

When asked about rebuilding the Temple, our Rabbi responded: "Israel was commanded regarding three mitzvot upon entering the Land: to appoint a king...to destroy the seed of Amalek...to build the Temple," and they are to be performed in this particular order (Rambam, Melachim 1:1-2). We must first build the State of Israel - the Kingdom of Israel - then defeat our enemies, and only then build the Temple. The Temple burns within you? Don't burn." (Rafael K.)

We Have Returned Home

Right after the liberation of Jerusalem, our Rabbi informed the entire world on the radio: "All Israel, the entire world and all of the nations of the world must know that we have returned home. And since we have returned home, know that no power in the world will move us from here. Every house has an entrance way and a main room. We first entered the entrance way and now we have reached the main room." (Iturei Yerushalayim #6)

It once happened that two writers from outside of Israel, a Jew and a non-Jew, were preparing a book and a film about Zionism in Jerusalem. They met with one of the students of our Rabbi, for many hours and were deeply impressed by him. The

student brought them to our Rabbi. After two minutes they were excited by him, and they understood that there was something unique here. One of the writers said: "We are going home, and we will return with all of the necessary equipment to film a movie about the 'settlements.'" After three months they returned to Israel and came straight to our Rabbi. Searching for a way to open the book and the movie, they asked our Rabbi: "We have a question and the book will begin with it: If you were given ten minutes, not a minute more, in order to explain your position to the President of the United States, what would you say, honored Rabbi?" Our Rabbi gave a lengthy smile, and said: "This is nine minutes too long. I would say only two words: Chazarnu Ha-Baita - We have returned home!"

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

For the miracles - additions for Chanukah and Purim

"For the miracles...and for the wars which You performed for our forefathers." There are those who say that miracles are the opposite of wars. They reason that the ideal is to sit with folded arms, because "Hashem will wage war for you, and you shall remain silent" (Shemot 14:14). According to their opinion, if we wage war, this is a sign of a lack of faith in Hashem. We see, however, that the Hasmoneans, who were certainly of great faith, also waged war. And similarly during the time of Purim, "...the Jews throughout the King's provinces gathered and defended themselves and gained relief from their enemies and slay those who hated them..." (Esther 9:16). We believe that the Master of the Universe does all and performs all, but this does not require that it be executed in a miraculous way beyond nature, since nature is also in the domain of God. The numerical value of the word "ha-teva - the nature" being equivalent to the word "Elohim - God" (86). Those wars during the time of Chanukah and Purim, were in fact performed by the Master of the Universe, "and for the wars which You performed for our forefathers," but He performed them through our hands and from within our midst. "I perform wars" (Avodah Zarah 2b) as it says, "Hashem is Master of War" (Shemot 15:3).

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