



Shelach Lecha 5769

Prepared by Rabbi Mordechai Friedfertig

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President Obama's Favor

[Opening words of Ha-Rav on his radio show]

President Obama has truly done us a great favor, despite what many think, because when people give us trouble, it unites us. The Nation which dwells in the Land is not panicked by threats and dictates. There is obviously a dispute within the Nation of Israel whether to evacuate settlements but when a demand comes from Obama it infuriates many Jews. They say: "This is an inner dispute between us. He is going to tell us what to do?! Furthermore, he doesn't want us to expand existing houses to allow for natural growth. Where should we put our children? – outside in boxes!" The Nation of Israel is therefore strengthened, and he is in fact doing us a big favor.

This obviously does not mean that we do not take into account what the Americans say. But we need to understand: we need them and they need us. Do not think that the Americans help us because of loving-kindness. Everything is based on cost-benefit analysis. They give aid to where it will benefit them. They give us military help because they profit from it. There was once the "Rogers' Plan" – it is always the same plan to expel us from parts of Eretz Yisrael but they change the name. Rogers said to Prime Minister Golda Meir: If you do not accept the plan, we will not provide you with weapons. Mrs. Golda Meir replied: We will live and see. In the end, they provided weapons. We do not need to panic. They need us just as we need them.

Regarding the money which we receive from the Americans, this is truly a shame and embarrassment which cannot be describe. Have we become beggars? Being a beggar is shameful when it is an individual and all-the-more-so when it is a nation. Why does an American need to provide me with a livelihood? We are an extremely wealthy Nation – the fifteenth wealthiest Nation in the world. We receive a few billion which is a negligible part of our budget. After the establishment of the State we did not have any money to buy weapons and to develop means to provide jobs – it wasn't good then – but I understand why we took money. But now, taking money from America is an illness. This is similar to the people who collect money at the Kotel and they are extremely wealthy. They continue to beg for money there because

it is a sickness. There was once a beggar there and his brother said to him: "Stop. I will give you money to establish a business." The beggar said: "Do not judge your fellow until you walk in his shoes. Come to ask for Tzedakah with me at the Kotel and then we will talk." The brother put on rags and stood at the Kotel all day with his brother asking for Tzedakah. The beggar said: "We leave at five." At five o'clock, the beggar said: "It's five, let's go." At that exact moment, wealthy tourists were coming. The normal brother said: "After them." The beggar said to his brother: "You see. One day of collecting Tzedakah and you are already addicted." It is a sickness! And now this sickness has become a national sickness, so that we are asking the Americans for a small percentage of our budget. This is a desecration of Hashem's Name. We should be doing the exact opposite: calculating how much we have received from the Americans and tell them that we are so grateful for their financial aid and we will pay it back little-by-little.

Some people think that if the Americans pressure we have to bow to the pressure. This is incorrect. Since the American see that we are willing to bow to the pressure, they exert pressure. This is a known saying: One who makes himself into a sheep, the wolf will eat him. We must say to the American that we do not interfere in their matters and please do not interfere in ours. We are ready to take advice and to discuss, but please do not dictate to us.

In conclusion: a true story. A President of the US once said: You Jews must stop dreaming of the whole Land of Israel. Two Rabbis wrote him: Honorable President, we are accustomed to you, the Americans, interfering in our affairs and giving us advice all of the time as to what we should do. But it is a huge innovation for you to interfere as to what we should dream.

Therefore, we are informing you that we began to dream about returning to the Land of Israel and building the Land, "When Hashem will bring the exiles back to Zion, we will be like dreamers" (Tehillim 126:1), before your country existed. And now – Baruch Hashem – our dream is beginning to come to fruition. Therefore, we will certainly take into consideration what you say but we are not afraid of all sorts of pressure.



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: How is it possible to establish Yom Ha-Atzmaut as a holiday without a Sanhedrin?

A: It is somewhat problematic but we do not need a Sanhedrin to give thanks to Hashem.

Q: Does one have to observe the mitzvot in space? Shabbat?

A: Yes. Shabbat is kept on the "seventh day" based on the time and place from which one left.

Q: What harsh statement can I say to the person next to me in shul who is talking?

A: He is showing that the Divine Presence does not rest there (Zohar brought in the Chayei Adam).

Q: Is it permissible to give birth at home?

A: No. If there are complications, you will have to travel to the hospital, and this occurs to approximately one-third of women who have home-births.

Q: If one's father hits his mother, is it permissible for a child to get in between them by force, such as by pushing his father?

A: He should get in the middle and take the hit in place of his mother.

Q: If the bus driver accidentally punches my bus ticket in a spot which was already punched, do I have to throw out the ticket when there is one punch left?

A: Yes.

Q: Is it permissible to wear Tzitzit directly on the body?

A: Yes.

Q: Who is more important – one's wife or parents?

A: This is incorrectly phrased. The husband and wife are one.

Q: Should one also wear Tzitzit at night?

A: Yes, a day-time piece of clothing must also have Tzitzit when worn at night.

Q: A mirror broke – it is a bad sign?

A: This is superstition.

Q: I found a Tanach printed with the New Testament – should I separate them?

A: It all goes in the garbage like a Sefer Torah written by a heretic.

Q: Is there a problem to have a wedding on Erev Shabbat?

A: No. Poorer communities did so before Kabbalat Shabbat [and had the Shabbat meal be the wedding meal as well] to save costs.

Q: I have friends who copied on a test and received 100% while I studied really hard and got less. It is not fair!

A: We'll see who has the last laugh.

Q: Can a cohan who works for the Mossad and killed someone still recite the Bircat Cohanim?

A: Yes, like a soldier. Shut Yechaveh Daat (2:14).

Q: I want to donate a Sefer Torah, but is there something more important to give to?

A: Give to those who learn Torah, since the Torah was given in order for people to learn it (Chayei Adam – Hilchot Sefer Torah).

Q: Is it permissible for me to drink coffee and have a piece of cake before davening? If I do not, I do not feel well and cannot pray?

A: The minimum necessary.

Q: How do I fix having spoke Lashon Ha-Ra?

A: You must repair the damage among those who heard you speak it.

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

The Struggle against Missionaries – Part 2

A student related: "During one of the years when the production of Handel's "Messiah" (a Christian creation) was playing in concert in 'Binyanei Ha-Umah' (a building in Yerushalayim which hosts gatherings, shows, conferences, etc...), our Rabbi tried to have the concert canceled [largely because it was being held in a public building]. Our Rabbi requested that I go with him to the house of Ha-Rav David Cohain – Ha-Nazir - since there was a telephone was there, and connect him to Chaim Moshe Shapira and Yosef Burg, who were members of the Knesset from the National-Religious Party. Our Rabbi asked them to work to cancel the concert, and their answer was that it is impossible to cancel this event. Our Rabbi was not satisfied and was concerned enough to send students who would disrupt the concert, and this is what indeed happened. After the concert-goers dispersed, however, the protesters from the Yeshiva and the police officers remained in the hall. The officers asked the protesters to leave the hall: 'The show is over.' But one of the students arose and lectured them about the grave act which occurred in this building and they therefore would not leave the building. When the officers' patience ran out, they took three of the yeshiva students to prison, and this caused the rest of them to leave the place. The next day they turned to our Rabbi and asked him to work to free those who were incarcerated. The answer of our Rabbi was: 'I do not understand why they did not disperse according to the police's request after the concert ended, since we are not protesting against the police officers!'"

Our Rabbi praised the students who staged a protest at the time of the concert of "Messiah" and particularly the student who jumped onto the stage and told those attending how terrible this event was. He related that the police commander told him afterwards: "Your young men are gold, and the one who got up on the stage deserves a medal."



Shut She'eilat Shlomo - Questions of Jewish Law

Waiting between meat and milk

Q: My grandfather waited 6 hours between meat and milk but my father changed it to 3 hours. Should I follow my grandfather or father?

A: The minhag follows the earlier generation. Therefore, you should follow your grandfather, unless his tradition was to wait for a shorter period of time and he was being strict by waiting longer.

Wearing skirts

Q: My daughter is 8 years old and refuses to wear skirts. How and when is the best way and age to get her to start?

A: There is an obligation to wear a skirt at this age. It is similar to all other educational issues in which she should be encouraged including prizes if need be.

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

In the days of Mordechai - addition for Purim

Why did Haman want "to destroy, kill, and wipe out" all of the Jews? It seems that for the same reason that following the Exodus from Egypt, their ancestors, Amalek, attacked the Nation of Israel - because the Children of Israel bring the light of morality into the world. In the Second Return to Zion, in the days of Ezra and Nechemiah, when the Nation of Israel began to build its Land, Haman the Agagite tried a second time, and he too failed. In the Third Return to Zion, when the Nation of Israel began to arouse itself out of the long Exile and to renew itself as in the days of old, a third Amalekite arose: Hitler, may his name be blotted out, and he too fell. After the "Black Shabbat," our Rabbi, Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook, wrote that the English are following in the path of the Nazi beast and are trying to prevent the establishment of the State in our Land (Le-Netivot Yisrael vol. 1 #84 - Black Shabbat occurred on Shabbat night of Parashat Korach 5706 when 17,000 British soldiers performed raids throughout the Land of Israel, backed up by tanks and armored cars to crush the "Hebrew Movement of Rebellion" - which combined the activities of the Haganah [and their striking force - the Palmach], Etzel and Lechi – against the British who blocked immigration in large numbers even after the Holocaust. On that night, curfews were declared, some 2,700 Jews were imprisoned in prison camps and the Haganah's largest cache of weapons was discovered.). This article was obviously not printed in the Israeli newspaper "Ha-Tzofeh" because of fear of the British censor (ibid. #86). And in the end, the English left here. Now too, the Arabs are trying to be a disturbance to our State. Do not worry, in all of these cases, the words of this prayer were fulfilled, "But You, in your great mercy, nullified his counsel and frustrated his intention and caused his design to return upon his own head and they hanged him and his sons on the gallows."

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Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim P.O.B. 1076 Jerusalem 91009 Tel.02-6284101 Fax.02-6261528

www.ateret.org.il To subscribe, send e-mail to: mororly@bezeqint.net

