



On the Air with Rav Aviner - #112

From Ha-Rav's weekly radio program in Israel and more

Prepared by Rabbi Mordechai Friedfertig

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A seven-branched candelabrum

Q: When it is not Chanukah, it is permissible to light a seven-branched candelabrum?

A: It is forbidden to make any item in the form of one of the objects in the Temple (Avodah Zarah 43a). It is possible that this candelabrum does not have the same form as the menorah in the Temple, but it does not matter since any seven-branched candelabrum would have been kosher for use in the Temple. When the Hasmoneans entered the Temple after defeating the Assyrian-Greeks, they did not have enough materials to create a beautiful menorah, so they did what they could and made a simply one. If you look into the Rambam's commentary on the Mishnah (Menachot 3:7), he has a picture with the menorah with rounds branches and not straight ones. There is a dispute whether the picture drawn by the Rambam is correct or not. Either way, it is forbidden to have a seven-branched candelabrum of any shape. There are a few solutions: 1. There is a novel ruling of our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, to which Ha-Rav Yitzchak Herzog (former Chief Rabbi of Israel) agreed: you should take screws and connect the candelabrum to a table or shelf, and it is thus not no

longer an object. An object is something which is carried, and this is no longer something which can be carried around. 2. Add a branch. There is a famous question for Chanukah which has one hundred answers (see the book "Ner Le-Meah"): if there was enough oil for one day, then the miracle of Chanukah only occurred for seven days. Why then is Chanukah celebrated for eight days? This is called "Kushiya Ha-Beit Yosef" (the difficulty of the Beit Yosef), since he quoted this question (Orach Chaim 670). One of the answers of Maran Ha-Rav Kook is that since it is forbidden to make an item in the form of one of the objects in the Temple, the Rabbis added a day to Chanukah or it would have been forbidden to use a chanukiyah (Mitzvah Re'eiyah, p. 84). Thus, you can add a branch. 3. You can remove a branch and you will have six.

"Erev Rav" today

Q: Who is the "Erev Rav" today? (The "mixed multitude" is a group of corrupt individuals who came out of Egypt with the Jewish People – Shemot 12:38)?

A: In his book "Heichal Yitzchak", Ha-Rav Yitzchak Isaac of Komarna says that whenever the Rabbis used the term "Erev Rav" it is not in order to say to others: "You are part of the 'Erev Rav'!" but in order for each of us to search within ourselves to see if we have a taint of the "Erev Rav." This means that a person can have traces of the "Erev Rav" within him, which is referred to by the mystics as "Resurrected Sparks." The Vilna Gaon wrote in Even Shelemah (chap. 11) that one who is involved with communal disputes or shames Torah scholars possesses traces of the "Erev Rav." There is no obligation to follow every Torah scholar, and it is impossible to do so, but it is forbidden to shame a Torah scholar, even if you do not accept his opinion. One must respect every Torah scholar. One who has the qualities of communal disputes and shaming Torah scholar must be wary about his "Erev Rav"-ness.

Repentance for someone who lost his memory

Q: How does a person who lost his memory repent for sins which he has forgotten?

A: He repents in general terms.

Text Message Responsa

Ha-Rav answers hundreds of text message questions a week. Some appear in the parashah sheets "Ma'ayanei Ha-Yeshu'ah," "Olam Ha-Katan" and "Be-Ahavah U-Be-Emunah." Here's a sample:

Q: Is it permissible to hire a builder who does not pay taxes to expand our caravan in an outpost?

A: No, we do not perform a mitzvah through a transgression.

Q: Is it permissible to write Lashon Ha-Ra in my personal diary?

A: Yes, but you must be careful to judge people favorably.

Q: How does one immerse an electrical appliance in the mikveh when it can be ruined?

A: Immerse it and dry it with a hair-dryer.

Q: Is it permissible to visit the Temple Mount?

A: No, there are signs from the Chief Rabbinate which forbid it.

Q: I am renting an apartment and am not sure the mezuzot are kosher. Do I have to replace them?

A: Put up your own mezuzot and then put the others back when you move out.

Q: Is there are importance to davening with a minyan?

A: Certainly. Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 12:7.

Q: Ha-Rav wrote that "Amen Meals" are a new creation. Is it permissible or is it reciting blessings in vain?

A: There are some who forbid it for this reason, but you may rely on those who permit it. Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 6:4. Sha'arei Teshuvah #6. Mishnah Berurah #13.

Q: Is it forbidden to touch one's grandmother?

A: No, she is like one's mother.

Q: Does one who overcomes his inclination and does not commit a sin receive a reward?

A: Certainly, sit and do not sin.

Q: Does one who eats and vomits recite Bircat Ha-Mazon?

A: No, it requires digestion.

Q: Ha-Rav wrote that the idea of someone who does not want to wear a seatbelt with the claim that he will rely on Hashem is nonsense. Why?

A: Hashem also protects us through our intellect. Mesillat Yesharim, chap. 9.

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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

