

HAMA'YAN

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Abstracts

Rav Avraham Yeshaya Karelitz ZT”L: On Aspects of Revelation and Intellectual Perception and thoughts about Our Land

The editors of *HaMa’yan* have received a copy of a letter written by the Hazon Ish in the Spring of 1921, exactly ninety years ago, which has already been published in the third volume of *Igrot haHazon Ish* – missing an important sentence in which the Hazon Ish gives expression to his inner concerns regarding the new situation in the Land of Israel in the wake of the Balfour Declaration, the British occupation and the new Jewish Governor of Palestine. The editor has added comments and explanations, and noted parallels in the Hazon Ish’s writings, some of which were themselves censored in the same volumes...

Rav Aryeh Levin ZT”L: Initial Letter to his Future Brother-in-Law

Rav Aryeh Levin, later known as the *tsaddik* of Jerusalem, was born in Russia in 1885. From an early age, he was known for his diligence and brilliance. At the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War, he received a draft notice from the Russian army, whereupon he hastily arranged to depart for the Holy Land, reaching Jerusalem in 1905. Shortly after his arrival, Rav Tzvi Pesach Frank suggested that he marry his sister-in-law, who had herself arrived a short while before. Their engagement was arranged before Pesach. Here we publish for the first time a letter he wrote 106 years ago to his future brother-in-law – brother of his intended – in which he describes his life story and his feelings for his fiancée and her family quite movingly. The letter appears on the forty-second anniversary of Rav Aryeh Levin’s passing in 1969.

Rav Yisrael Mordechai Peles: Disputes About a Practice Known Only Through Pesach Haggadot

This article draws attention to two disputes reflected neither in halakhic literature nor in usage manuals, but well represented in written and printed Pesach *haggadot*. For example, illustrations in *haggadot* from Provence or Catalonia dating from the era of the *Tur*, we find a custom practiced by men to point at their wives when reciting ‘This bitter herb’, and over a century later we find similar pictures in the *haggadot* of Ashkenaz, a number of which show the man placing his hand on his wife’s head during the recitation. The demise of the custom came, it seems, when the wives too began pointing towards their husbands... This stage, as well, is attested in a number of illustrated *haggadot*, while leaving no trace in the halakhic corpus. Rav Yisrael Peles, among the premier researchers at the Shlomo Aumann Institute, and an international expert in manuscripts, raises many points in his area of specialization, which bring to light and explain otherwise unknown phenomena.

Rav Yoel Catane: Intervention and Assistance on Shabbat in the Event of an Attack on a Settlement

Several weeks ago on a Friday night, five members of the Fogel family, may they

be avenged, were murdered in the Shomron settlement of Itamar. This is not the first attack to occur on Shabbat, and it is very important to delineate the limits of the requirements of lifesaving – not to be too lenient, and certainly not overly stringent, in a dangerous situation. Rav Catane, editor of *HaMa'yan*, in concert with professionals, outlines emergency systems and procedures in settlements in Judea and Samaria, and, in light of this, attempts to establish guidelines as to what is warranted and what is prohibited on Shabbat in this type of emergency.

Rav Dr. Dror Fixler: Using Light-Emitting Diodes (LED) on Shabbat

All Jews who observe Shabbat have the practice of refraining from turning electricity on or off during Shabbat. Electrical appliances that generate heat, such as incandescent light bulbs or ovens, are prohibited *mide'orayta*. However, appliances that generate light without heat (such as fluorescent light bulbs) do not clearly fall within any categories of prohibited activity. In the current paper Rav Dr. Dror Fixler, of the School of Engineering at Bar Ilan University, describes one of these options that generates light without heat – the light-emitting diode (LED). An LED is a semiconductor which is a light source. LEDs are used as indicator lamps in many devices, and are increasingly used for lighting. Early LEDs emitted low-intensity red light, but modern versions are available across the visible, ultraviolet and infrared wavelengths, with very high brightness. The paper describes the physical phenomena and how the LED generates light. The LED consists of a chip of semiconducting material doped with impurities to create a p-n junction. As in other diodes, current flows easily from the p-side, or anode, to the n-side, or cathode, but not in the reverse direction. Charge-carrier-electrons and holes-flow into the junction from electrodes with different voltages. When an electron meets a hole, it falls into a lower energy level, and releases energy in the form of a photon. The paper discusses in depth the alternative possible sources that might prohibit using an LED during Shabbat, concluding that the main problem is causing Shabbat to resemble a weekday – *Uvadin De-Chol*, or in other words, that Shabbat-observant Jews have traditionally acted upon the assumption that using electricity on Shabbat is prohibited.

Prof. Zohar Amar and Aryeh Cohen: Recipe for *Lechem haPanim* (Shewbread)

Prof. Amar is among the foremost researchers of realia relating to the Temple and its service. This monograph investigates the possibility of reconstructing the recipe for the preparation of the shewbread ('loaves of display') placed on the golden table in the Holy Temple. We are dealing with rather large flatbread unique in shape, made from semolina as opposed to flour, without leaven (yeast), which remains fresh enough to be edible after seven days. The study is based, inter alia, on rabbinic texts, ancient historical sources describing bread baking, archaeological findings, and more. It presents the results of a series of experiments conducted with expert bakers, to recreate – to the extent possible – bread with the requisite characteristics. The importance of this study lies in the fact that it allows real world, practical examination of many of the interpretations given to the different stages of baking the bread: choosing suitable grains of wheat, grinding them into flour, methods of preparing the

dough, baking the bread, removing it, maintaining proper ventilation, etc. The study concludes that each stage of preparation may be critical for obtaining suitable bread.

Rav Eli Gorfinkle: ‘The Third Redemption is Unending’ – In What Sense?

This article examines anew the view attributed to Chief Rabbi Herzog according to which there can be no further exile after the Third Redemption, and takes up the claim that this principle is based upon the Books of the Prophets and words of the Sages in the *midrash*. However, the author has reservations about the contemporary meaning that leaders and educators find in it as a source of faith and security in times of crisis. In his opinion, *chaza”l* were referring to advanced stages of redemption, in which the world will undergo fundamental changes of spiritual and miraculous character, not to the current state of reality. In his view, at this stage, the usual system of reward and punishment still obtains, including specifically the possibility of exile from the land, *Chas Veshalom*.

Rav Dr. Israel Meir Levinger: A Number on the Ear of an Animal as a Defect

Since the destruction of *Beth haMikdash*, the question of mumim (defects) in animals has little practical meaning. Yet, the question is relevant for a firstborn kosher animal (*bechor*) born to a Jewish owner. Such an animal is sanctified, and one can slaughter said animal only if it has a *mum* (defect). This paper discusses whether a number in the ear is considered a *mum*, and how it can be dealt with. Moreover, since we await the rebuilding of the *Beth haMikdash* at any moment, we have to examine animals, for bringing – soon, with God’s help – the Pesach sacrifice.

Prof. Nachum M. Bronznick: The Choosing of the Levites in Place of the Firstborn

According to the *Midrash Rabbah*, the use of the term **וְאֵי** in the verse regarding the above indicates that it was done with joy. But according to the *Sifrei*, as apparently understood by the **רַקָּה** in his commentary on the Torah, the use of **וְאֵי** in the verse concerning the appointment of the Levites implies that God consulted the celestial court. Probably, this is because it is improper to bestow with joy a good on someone while depriving someone else of it. However, the *Midrash Rabbah* holds that the firstborn were rendered unfit for their position by dint of the idolatrous act in their worshipping the golden calf. The Levites were thus appointed to a vacated position. In contrast, the *Sifrei* holds that it is not the act in and by itself that automatically causes the disqualification, but the sin thereof; and sin can be expiated by various means of repentance. Hence, the disqualification of the firstborn became final with the appointment of the Levites. A similar disagreement exists between Rav Sheshet and Rav Nachman concerning a **כֹּהֵן** who committed an idolatrous act, and repented, whether he is permitted to serve in the Sanctuary or not.

Rav Eyal Fischler: Desecration of God’s Name for a Single Point – Investigating the Reading of One Halakhah in New Editions of *Mishneh Torah*

There exists in our day a debate whether Israeli courts who decide their cases

according to civil law fall in the category of 'Goyim courts' to which it is prohibited to apply. Of one who comes to them, Maimonides writes, "he is evil and, as it were, blasphemes and raises his hand against the Torah of *Moshe Rabenu*". According to the reading in older editions, Maimonides writes this judgement upon "all who litigate before judges of all nations and their legal systems", and the question presents itself, is the nationality of the judge the decisive factor, or is it the judges' implementation of foreign laws? The article strives to clarify the correct reading of the pivotal term **ידידי** – spelled with two yod's (=judges) or one (=laws), pronounced with a *hiriq* (=laws) or a *qamats* (=judges)? – comparing the precisely edited versions printed in recent years, especially the vocalized editions.

Responses and Comments

Our previous issue elicited many comments: Eitam Henkin and Shmaria Gershuni add more data and facts in the matter of the Tevriger Rav and the beginnings of Yeshivat Merkaz Harav. The scholar R' Avraham Meir Glanzer of Antwerp comments on the words of the Rosh Yeshiva Rav Yacobson *Shlit" a* in the previous issue of *Hama'yan*, concerning the limits of the prohibition to present oneself as a non-Jew in a life-threatening situation, and describes events that occurred during the Holocaust. Rav Abergel rejects the criticism of Rav Friedman regarding the new edition of *Sefer Hatruma* edited by Rav David Avraham, and suggests that there is a '*torani*' style of editing early works and an 'academic' style, and that no purpose is served in comparing them, and Rabbi Friedman offers a rejoinder; Rav Ya'acov Epstein responds to an article in the previous issue about offering sacrifices in our time, and Rav Koenigsberg replies; Rav Rechel, *Ra" M* in the yeshiva of Ramat Hasharon, comments on the tendency to be stringent in the new edition of the well-known book *Shmirat Shabbat Kehilchata*; Rav Dovid Yitzchoki, member of the Hazon Ish Kollel in Bnei Brak, responding to Rav Amital's article in our previous issue, demonstrates that the Hazon Ish and the Gemara in Pesachim 3b, postulated as sources indicating that the rule of "an assimilated family" applies to gentiles, do not actually deal with this specific ruling, but with more general rules which also have ramifications in determining personal familial status in Jewish Law. In addition, he cites differences of opinion as to whether the *Ramban* (Nachmanides) applies this rule to a '*Hallal*' (profaned Cohen) and a slave. Moreover, he cites three *rishonim* who clearly interpret the *Rambam* (Maimonides) in a way that demonstrates that *gerut* (conversion) without a genuine undertaking to fulfill *mitzvot*, invalidates the *gerut* retroactively, thus challenging any contemporary or nearly contemporary interpretations claiming the contrary. This implies that *gerut* is in serious doubt until the contrary is indicated, if it was performed under the auspices of the governmental *gerut* organization and how much more so under the army auspices, wherein the great majority of candidates' declarations of undertaking *mitzvot* seem mere formal lip-service – Rav Amital replies briefly. Finally, Rav N. D. Rabinowitz of New York describes a source in the writings of Rav Daniel Prostiz, colleague of Chatam Sofer, that indicates that the latter left behind 1200 Halachic responsa.

The issue concludes, as usual, with a review of recent Judaica By Rav Catane.