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Continuing Education Courses for Rabbinic Professionals

The Rabbi as a Community Leader

In this plenum, we will survey sources throughout the writings of Chazal. We will then continue to examine the methods of the Rishonim, leading up to the period of our contemporary Acharonim. A special emphasis will be placed on examining responsa literature with the aim of demonstrating the Torah Sages' approach throughout the generations, in which they confronted the challenges of their times.

Suggested Topics

The Community

- Strengthening the family unit
- Spousal relations
- Relations between parents and children
- The synagogue as a community center
- The community and general society
- A Jew and his relationship with his community and country
- Immigrant absorption – a society in a process of change

The Synagogue

- Use of the synagogue for non-sacred purposes
- Selling a synagogue
- The mechitza
- Women's participation in communal and synagogue life
- Torah learning for women

Prayer

- Can a violator of halachah participate in a minyan and get an aliyah?
- Defining the prohibition of flattery
- Changing the prayer's nusach
- Translating prayers
- Interrupting prayer in order to make announcements
- How does one call a person to the Torah who was adopted or whose father isn't Jewish?
- Using a microphone for weekday prayers and the recitation of the Megillah
- Bat mitzvah

Shabbat

- Hiring workers
- Business partnership with a non-Jew
- Benefiting from work performed on Shabbat
- Causing worshippers to violate Shabbat (by driving to the synagogue, etc.)
- Electricity: amplification systems, burglary alarm systems, hearing aids, elevators
- Carrying in a public domain and making an eruv
- Kashrut of a restaurant open on Shabbat

Pesach

- Kashrut
- Selling chometz
- Communal seder

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Yom Tov

- Determining whether a person keeps a second day of Yom Tov
- A *ben Yisrael* as a *chazzan* on *Yom Tov Sheini*
- Performing *melachah* and praying in private

Kashrut

- Giving electric shock prior to shechitah
- Giving inoculations and injecting feed into livestock
- Gelatin
- Smoked foods
- *Bishul akum*, foods cooked by non-Jews
- *Chalav akum*, unsupervised milk
- Cheese
- Selling forbidden products
- *Hagalat keilim*, koshering vessels
- A non-Jew's credibility in kashrut issues
- A Jew who does not observe Shabbat and his credibility

Lifnei Iver

- Survey of the limits and particulars of the prohibition
- Instructing Jews who are not committed to completely observe mitzvot

Non-Jew

- Christian denominations and what is considered idolatry
- Entering a church
- Selling idolatrous accessories
- Ecumenical relations
- Can a non-Jew learn Torah (attend lectures or be admitted to a Jewish school)?

Circumcision

- Performing milah on a son of a non-Jewish mother
- Milah performed by one whose kashrut is suspect
- Milah involving *chillul Shabbat* by family members or guests
- Circumcisions that are not allowed to take place on Shabbat
- How far must a mohel sacrifice in order that a *brit* will take place on the eighth day?
- Using a clamp
- *Metzitzah bapeh* versus using a suction device

Burial and Mourning

- Burying a transgressor or one whose Jewishness is doubtful
- Burying in a cemetery which contains non-Jews
- Exhuming remains when necessary
- Mourning in the case of non-Jewish parents
- Reciting Kaddish by a son of a non-Jewish mother
- Guarding the deceased
- Reasons for not performing *taharah*

Conversions

- The validity of contemporary conversions
- The process of accepting converts
- The components of the conversion process
- Partial acceptance of mitzvot
- *Hatefach dam brit*
- Converting for purposes of marrying a Jew
- One who is suspected of having a relationship with a non-Jew
- Conversion when it is doubtful whether the convert sincerely accepted to observe mitzvot
- Reform and Conservative conversions
- Requirement of a *beit din* of three members
- The post-facto acceptance of a problematic conversion
- Testing sincerity
- Which is more preferable to adopt: a non-Jew or Jew?
- The conversion of a minor and a pregnant woman
- Halachic ramifications of conversions (lineage, positions of authority, relatives, etc.)

Lineage

- When one's halachic status is doubtful
- The credibility of one's testimony about his Jewishness
- *Pesulei kahal (mamzer)*, forbidden marriages
- *Pesulei kehunah (ger, challal)*, Jews who are forbidden to marry kohens
- Artificial insemination

Kiddushin

- The marriage ceremony and various communal customs
- Writing the *ketubah*, marriage contract
- Blessings when a minyan is not present
- *Chuppat niddah*
- Performing a marriage to couples who are civilly married
- A nursing mother and *havchanah*, the waiting period before marrying
- Pre-nuptial contracts
- Invalid witnesses
- Conservative, Reform, and civil marriages

Gittin

- Problems with compelling a husband to grant a divorce
- A woman who refuses to receive a *get*
- The problems of a *get* performed through a shaliach
- *Get le'chumrah*



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