

ספר

משנה ברורה

על

השלחן ערוך

אורח חיים

Mishnah Berurah

on

The Shulchan Aruch

Orach Chayim

א *Rabbi Moshe ben Naftoli Hertz Rivkes, the author of the Baer HaGolah was born in Vilna, Lithuania around 5360 (1600 CE) and died in Holland in 5432 (1672CE) ב He managed to escaped from the Chmelniczki massacres of 5048 (1648 CE) and the subsequent Polish-Russian war that resulted from the Cossak uprising against Polish rule, by settling in Amsterdam.*

א The Shulchan Aruch was written by Rabbi Yosef ben Ephraim Karo (also called *the Mechaber*) was born in Toledo, Spain in 5248 (1488 CE) and died in Tzfas in 5335 (1575 CE) : הנה *The Shulchan Aruch is printed with the comments of the Rema, Rabbi Moshe ben Yisroel Isserles. He was born in Krakow in 5280 and died in 5332 (1520 CE to 1572 CE). His comments are introduced by the word הגה meaning note. The Shulchan Aruch had based his rulings on the Rosh, the Rif and the Rambam. Only the Rosh had ever lived in an Ashkenazi community, before moving to Spain. Therefore,, the Shulchan Aruch primarily reflects the Sephardic customs. The Rema added his annotations whenever the Sephardic customs of the Shulchan Aruch differ from the Ashkenazic customs. He called his commentary the Mapah (tablecloth) :* ב The section of the Shulchan Aruch covered by the commentary of the Mishnah Berurah is Orach Chayim (the way of life). When

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[A] **Rabbi** · Chaim Mordechai Margoliot, lived in Poland from around 5510 (middle 1700s) until 5578 (1818 CE). The Margoliot family descended from Rashi on the one side and from the Maharsha on the other. The Shaarei Teshuvah firstly took a position as rabbi in Brestitzki, and later became rabbi in Dubno, Ukraine where he established his own printers. He was among

(A) **The Baer Heitev** · (explain well) was written by Rabbi Yehudah ben Shimon Ashkenazi. He lived from 5490 (1730 CE) to 5530 (1770 CE) and served as the rabbi of Frankfurt am Main and also as a dayan in Tiktin, Poland : (B) **The purpose** · of the Baer Heitev is to provide summaries of the halachic rulings and responsa gleaned from many diverse halachic sources. In doing so, the Baer Heitev aims to clarify the reason behind the Shulchan

Aruch and explain the rationale behind the various halachic rulings, through extensive discussion and comparison of the referred sources :

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* **The Beyur Halacha** (Explanation of the Law) is an additional commentary to the Mishnah Berurah that was also written by the Chofetz Chayim. The Chofetz Chayim writes in his introduction to the Mishnah Berurah that there was the purpose of the Beyur Halacha was to bring the in-depth discussion and reasoning that brought about the various halachic rulings found in the Mishnah Berurah. The Beyur Halacha therefore provides a more complex analysis of the rulings of the relevant earlier halachic authorities :

א (א) **The Mishnah Berurah** was written by Rabbi Yisroel Meir (HaCohen) Kagan who was born in Dzyatlava (Zhetil), Belarus in 5598 (1838 CE) and died in Raduń (Radin), Poland (today's Belarus) in 5693 (1933 CE). He was commonly known as The Chofetz Chaim (one who desired life) after the title of his first book. The Chofetz Chaim was taught by his father until he was ten years old when his father passed away. In order to continue his education, the Chofetz Chaim's mother moved the family to Vilna, Lithuania in 5608 (1848 CE). The Chofetz Chaim became a talmid of Rabbi Yaakov Barit of

Kovno. Later, the Chofetz Chaim's mother remarried and moved to Radin. When the Chofetz Chaim was 17, he married the daughter of his step-father (of the Poupko family), and settled in Radin, subsisting by opening a small grocery store, managed by his wife. His job was to balance the accounts of the shop to ensure that no one was accidentally underpaid. However, the business did not succeed enough to support the family and so from 5624 (1864 CE) to 5629 (1869 CE) the Chofetz Chaim took a position teaching in Minsk and Washilishok. He also served as the rabbi of Radin for a short time but as his reputation grew, talmidim from all over Europe flocked to him. He subsequently left his position as a pulpit rabbi in order to concentrate on learning and teaching. By 5629 (1869 CE) his house became known as the Radin Yeshiva. The Yeshiva was very successful and it became world renowned. In addition to establishing his Yeshiva in Radin, the Chofetz Chaim was engrossed in supporting and campaigning for Jewish causes. He traveled extensively, well into his old age, in order to encourage the keeping of the Mitzvot. During his final years, he became highly influential within the Jewish world, especially through his involvement with the Agudas Yisroel which he had originally helped to found : (ב) **The Chofetz Chaim** writes in the introduction to the Mishneh Berurah that the Torah is food for the soul. Nevertheless, unlike physical food that only nourishes the body for a short while, the Torah has gives eternal sustenance. He explains that while the entire Shulchan Aruch is important, learning Orach Chayim has the highest priority because it has an impact on every moment of every day. He goes on to explain that very few people study the Shulchan Aruch, even those who are wish to be mitzvah observant. He argues that in order to function properly as a Jew, those people should learn Orach Chayim before anything else. The Chofetz Chayim goes on to explain that the cause of this problem is that in order to correctly understand the Shulchan Aruch, it is necessary to first learn the Tur (by Rabbi Yaakov ben Asher) and the commentary on the Tur by Rabbi Yosef Karo, the Beis Yosef. Since the Beis Yosef gathered together all of the primary opinions relating to each law, he wrote the Shulchan Aruch in order that every Jew can know the final Halacha. Nevertheless, Rabbi Yosef Karo never intended the Shulchan Aruch to be a replacement for the learning the Tur and Beis Yosef, for it is impossible to fully understand the Halacha without knowing how it was derived. Since the study of the Tur with the Beis Yosef and the Shulchan Aruch for each Halacha was too arduous for most Jews, the study of Halacha became neglected. In addition, ordinary Jews were left bewildered by the numerous opinions brought in the Acharonim causing many to be left confused as to exactly how to observe Halacha correctly. Consequently, mitzvah observance was compromised by the entire generation. The Chofetz Chayim explained that these issues prompted him to write the Mishnah Berurah : (ג) **The Mishnah Berurah** was therefore written to explain every law of the Shulchan Aruch in Orach Chayim with the reason behind it and basis for it in the Talmud, its commentaries and later poskim. This made it possible for ordinary Jews to open the Shulchan Aruch, understand it and know how to apply its laws to their everyday life. In cases of disagreement between authorities, the Chofetz Chayim always endeavored to bring other authorities to identify which opinion we should follow, in order to guide each Jew in their Mitzvah observance. The first volume of the Mishnah Berurah was published in 5644 (1884 CE) and the work was only completed 23 years later in 5667 (1907 CE) : (ד) **The Chofetz Chaim** wrote extensively and besides from the Mishnah Berurah he authored many other works. The first book he published was the sefer Chofetz Chayim (one who desires of life) after which he is named. It was published in 5633 (1873 CE) and deals with the Biblical laws *Loshon Hora*. Three years later he published Sefer Shmiras HaLashon (Guarding of the Tongue) which discusses the power of speech and how to prevent transgressions of the Torah through speech :

שְׁעַר הַצִּיּוֹן

(A) The Shaar HaTziyon (Gate of Distinction), also written by the Chofetz Chayim, cites the sources of the halachic rulings and customs brought in the Mishnah Berurah and also recommends other sources that are related to the subject and may add depth to the discussion. (B) On occasion, the Shaar HaTziyon explains ambiguous statements in the Mishneh Berurah while sometimes highlighting points of disagreement between halachic authorities.

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printed with the Mishnah Berurah it is divided into six volumes : א The first section covers laws pertaining to waking up, washing hands, Tzitzis and Tefillin, morning blessings and prayers, the laws of the Shaliach Tzibbur, the Shema and general laws of prayer : ב The second section deals with the laws of the priestly blessing, Tachanun, the reading of the Torah, the laws of the synagogue, the laws of eating a meal, the laws of blessings and the Mincha and Maariv services : ג The third section deal with the laws of Shabbat : ד The fourth section includes the laws of Eiruvim and Rosh Chodesh : ה The fourth section is also considered part of the laws of Shabbat : ו The fifth section contains the laws of Pesach, the counting of the Omer, Shavuot and the laws of Yom Tov : ז The sixth and final section deals with Chol HaMoed, Tisha B'Av, fast days, Rosh HaShannah, Yom Kippur, Succot, Succah and Arbah Minim, Chanukah and Purim :

א The Baer HaGolah supplies the relevant cross-references to higher sources such as the Talmud, the Rishonim, the Tur, the Mishnah Torah, other commentaries and responsa
ב The Baer HaGolah was one of four great rabbis of Vilna who lived at the time of the Chmelnicki massacres.
ג The others were Rabbi Ephraim of Vilna (the Shaar Ephraim), Rabbi Shabsai Cohen (the Shach) and Rabbi Aharon Shmuel Kaidonover (Tiferes Shimuel).
ד The Cossaks murdered around 25,000 Jews in Vilna alone.
ה The Baer HaGolah is cited in the text of the Shulchan Aruch by a small superscript block letter.

ב דִּין [שֵׁם], וּבו ג' סְעִיפִים

א Rabbi Yosef Karo's Shulchan Aruch was based on his commentary to the Tur, the Beis Yosef after he is often called. ב The Beis Yosef carefully analyzes the rulings given in the Tur by locating their sources in the Talmud. ג The first printing of the Shulchan Aruch took place in Tzfas in 5325 (1565 CE) : ד The Rema's comments are based on his commentary to the Tur called Darchei Moshe :

בְּאֵר הַיֵּטֵב

(C) **The Baer Heitev** · commentary that was written by Rabbi Yehudah Ashkenazi is also printed with the original printing of the Shulchan Aruch on Orach Chayim and Even HaEzer. A commentary by the same name can also be found on the Yoreh Deah and Choshen Mishpat sections of the Shulchan Aruch. This commentary however, was written by Rabbi Zechariah Mendel ben Aryeh Leib, following a similar format : (D) **The** · notes of the Baer Heitev are cited by a Rashi script letter in curved brackets :

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those who elected the three representatives sent to St. Petersburg, Russia to discuss with the Russian government matters of Jewish interest : [B] **The Shaarei Teshuvah** · meaning the gates of Repentance, gives a summary of responsa on Orach Chaim and contains many quotes from other sources. :

מְשַׁנֵּה בְּרוּרָה

א (א) **The Chofetz Chayim** notes in the introduction to the Mishnah Berurah, that his Halachic commentaries were written after a deep and comprehensive analysis of the sources in the Gemara through the Rishonim, Acharonim and latter-day poskim : (ב) **Aside** form the Shulchan Aruch and Rema, the primary sources used by the Chofetz Chayim which may appear from time to time in the Mishnah Berurah and Shaar HaTziyon, are listed below : (ג) **The Bach**, (Bayis Chadash), a commentary on the Tur by Rabbi Yoel Sirkes, 5321 – 5400 (1561 CE – 1640 CE). The Derisha and Perisha, a twin commentary on the Tur by Rabbi Yehoshua HaCohen Falk, 5315 – 5374 (1565 CE – 1614 CE). Eliyahu Rabbah, a commentary on the Levush and Shulchan Aruch by Rabbi Eliyahu Shapira, 5420 – 5472 (1660 CE – 1712 CE). Beyur HaGra, a commentary on the Shulchan Aruch by Rabbi Eliyahu of Vilna (The Vilna Gaon), 5480 – 5558 (1720 CE – 1797 CE). Pri Megadim, a pair of commentaries consisting of Eishel Avraham, on the Magen Avraham, and Mishbetzos Zahav, on the Turei Zahav, were written by Rabbi Yosef Teomim, 5487 – 5552 (1727 CE – 1792 CE). Birkei Yosef, a commentary on the Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim by Rabbi Chayim Yosef David Azulai (The Chida), 5484 – 5566 (1724 CE – 1806 CE). Maamar Mordechai, is a commentary on the Shulchan Aruch by Rabbi Mordechai Karmi, 5509 – 5585 (1749 CE – 1825 CE). Mateh Yehuda, is a commentary on the Shulchan Aruch by Rabbi Yehudah Ayash who died in 5520 (1760 CE). Nehar Shalom is a collection of laws and novellae on the Shulchan Aruch Orach Chayim by Rabbi Shabsai Vintura (18th century). Dagul Mervavh, a commentary to the Shulchan Aruch Orach Chayim written by Rabbi Yechezkel ben Yehudah Landau 5474 – 5553 (1713 CE – 1793 CE). Baer Heitev, a commentary on the Shulchan Aruch Orach Chayim was written by Rabbi Yehudah ben Shimon Ashkenazi, 5490 – 5530 (1730 CE – 1770 CE). Shaarei Teshuvah, a commentary on the Shulchan Aruch Orach Chayim was written by Rabbi Chaim Mordechai Margoliot 5510 – 5578 (middle 1700s – 1818 CE). Shulchan Aruch of the Graz, written by the Gaon Rabbeinu Shneur Zalman of Liadi, 5505 – 5573 (1745 CE – 1813 CE). Levushay Sered, a commentary on the Shulchan Aruch by Rabbi David Shlomo Eibeschutz who died in 5570 (1809 CE). Shulchan Shlomo, an abridged version of the Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim by Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Mirkish (18th century). Derech HaChayim, published in Berlin in 5600 (1840CE) was a compilation of notes to the siddur containing laws pertaining to daily conduct, prayers, blessings, Shabbos and Holidays and was written by Rabbi Yaakov Lorbeerbaum, 5520 – 5592 (1760CE – 1832CE) : (ד) **Each section** of the Shulchan Aruch is called a Siman (see title of these pages). The Simanim are divided into Seifim (the bold block letters in the at the beginning of each halacha in each Siman). The notes to the Mishnah Berurah are cited by block letters in curved brackets that are embedded in the text of the Shulchan Aruch and Rema. Each entry of the Mishnah Berurah is called a Seif Katan :

בְּאוּר הַלְכָה

* **Many stories** are told about the Chofetz Chayim. One of the most famous involved a young man named Ephraim Lebowitz, who travelled from Germany to study in the Chofetz Chaim's yeshiva in Radin. He was tracked by a Russian detective who framed him as a German spy during the First World War. The Chofetz Chaim made every effort to see that the young man was not sentenced to death (the usual punishment for treason) : * **The Chofetz Chayim** even came to the trial to testify on his student's behalf. The lawyer introduced the Chofetz Chaim as the pious man who once ran after a thief who had robbed him shouting, 'I forgive you, I forgive you!' The Judge asked the lawyer 'You don't expect me to believe such a story, do you?' The lawyer replied, 'Whether you believe it or not, your Honor you must admit that people don't make up stories like that about you!' : * **Despite** all of the Chofetz Chaim's efforts the court sentenced Ephraim to ten years in prison. When he heard the verdict the Chofetz Chaim thanked Hashem for sparing his student's life and then angrily denounced the unfair sentence. 'Do those fools think that their corrupt government will last ten years, or ten months, or even ten weeks?' he said. Two months later the Czarist government was overthrown and Ephraim Lebowitz was freed from jail :

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(C) The name Shaar HaTziyon comes from the phrase shaarim mtzuyanim bahalacha, gateways distinguished in Jewish Law. (D) The 'gateways' are the homes of the Jewish people and it is the Torah study and learning that distinguishes them from the rest of the world. (E) The name can therefore be understood in one of two ways; either referring to the excellence of the Torah scholars who are cited in the Shaar HaTziyon, or referring to the function Shaar HaTziyon to detail the sources of the opinions cited in the Mishnah Berurah. (A) The Shaar HaTziyon is cited by a Rashi script letter in curved brackets in the text of the Mishnah Berurah. (B) For each new Siman, the numbering system resets and begins from (A) again.