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# Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim

IN THE HEART OF THE OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM

## On the Air with Ha-Rav Shlomo Aviner

Every Tuesday and Thursday night Rav Aviner answers questions of Jewish Law and faith on the radio in Israel. On the Air presents a sample of these answers each week.

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### TORAH LEARNING ON THE RADIO

Q: Is listening to a Torah class on the radio considered learning Torah?

A: Absolutely. There is no difference whether it is on the radio, from a book or in person, it is all considered learning Torah.

### THE EVIL EYE

Q: What is the "Evil Eye" and does it have the power to damage me?

A: The Mishnah and the Gemara state that the evil eye does exist, but not in the way that people think. People think that a mystical evil eye can be thrown upon them and cause them all sorts of damage. This does not exist. The simple meaning of the evil eye is jealousy, selfishness and miserliness (see Mishnah Terumah 4:3 and Pirkei Avot 2:11). This means that an evil eye is when a person desires other people's property. He is not happy with his own portion, and he is jealous of what others have. He then causes damage to these people since he takes things from them, or bothers them or speaks ill about them. There is another aspect to the evil eye which is when a person is a negative influence on others. If a person acts in an evil way, he will influence others to do the same. If he is always angry, he will cause others to be angry. We must all remember a fundamental principle of faith as taught by the Chazon Ish (Choshen Mishpat in likutim at the end of Baba Batra): Everything is from Heaven and Hashem is the One who decides what happens to people. Hashem decides who will possess something and who will lose something. At times, Hashem brings certain events about through the agency of a person who has caused you problems. This is called, "bad things are brought about through the agency of a bad person" (see Rashi to Devarim 22:8 – this is in order to punish the evil even more). For example, you have a car

and you lose it for some reason. Hashem may perform this through a person who has given you trouble in the past. I will end with what I saw in the book "Gam Ani Odecha" of Rav Gamliel Rabinowitz. Ha-Rav Chaim Kanievsky of Bnei Brak was asked, "Should we be concerned about potential damage caused by the evil eye?" He responded, "The evil eye does not reign in Bnei Brak." What does this mean? There is no evil eye in Bnei Brak, but there is in Jerusalem?! No, he did not mean that there is no evil eye in Bnei Brak only, but rather there is no evil eye at all.

#### TO GIVE OR NOT TO GIVE, THAT IS THE QUESTION

Q: A guard told me that I had to give him five shekels (approximately \$1.25), claiming that he watched my car. Do I have to give it to him?

A: Since you did not request anything from him, you are not obligated to give him anything. Five shekels, however, is hardly anything. If someone is asking for five shekels, it is almost certain that he is in a desperate financial state. This reminds me of a story about Ha-Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach. Once in the middle of the Pesach seder, a young girl came in, one of the neighbor's children, and asked if a certain egg was kosher or not. On the spot, he filled a basket with all types of food and sent it to the neighbor. They asked him, "Why did you do this?" He replied, "If a person has a question on an egg and sends it to the rabbi on seder night it is a sign that he is in a bad financial state. It is a sign that he does not have anything to eat." The same is true here. If the guard is asking for five shekels, which is almost nothing, he is in a bad state and it is proper to give it to him. The basic law is you are certainly not obligated, since you did ask him to perform this act, and he did not give you something tangible. For example, a person works your field, even though you did not request it, and the field improves. He did something tangible. In our case, however, you are not obligated to pay anything, but you should act beyond the letter of the law.

#### CAN YOU SAY HAVDALAH ON THURSDAY

Q: I remembered today (Thursday) that I forgot to say havdalah, what should I do?

A: It is too late to recite havdalah. One can say havdalah up to three days after Shabbat – Sunday, Monday and Tuesday. You can repent, regret the mistake of the past, and accept not repeating it in the future. This means that one should establish means in order that it does not happen again.

#### BLESSINGS IN AN UNDERSHIRT

Q: Is it permissible to recite blessings while wearing pants and an undershirt?

A: One can recite blessings over food, but one cannot daven the Shemoneh Esrei.