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# Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim

IN THE HEART OF THE OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM

## On the Air with Ha-Rav Shlomo Aviner

Rav Aviner answers questions of Jewish Law and faith on the radio in Israel on Tuesday & Thursday nights (To listen: [www.kimizion.org/shiur/shut.html](http://www.kimizion.org/shiur/shut.html)). On the Air presents a sample each week.

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### Two cans from coke machine

Q: I paid for one can of coke from a coke machine, but two cans came out. What do I do?

A: You have no way to put it back into the machine, so let's say that you try to find who the machine belongs to. You have to search and call and figure out, etc... The Halachah says that when I return a lost object I can ask for my expenses. My time and the telephone calls. In this case, since a can of coke only costs about five shekels, and you will ask for the expenses, let's say – twenty shekels, it will not be worthy it for them. Even though the can belongs to the owner of the machine, since the expenses are greater than the returned object you may keep the can of coke.

### Medicinal swimming in a mixed pool

Q: I am required to swim for medicinal purposes and there is no other pool with separate swimming in his area. Is it permissible to swim in a mixed pool?

A: This is the responsum of Ha-Rav Moshe Feinstein (Shut Igrot Moshe, Even Ha-Ezer 1:56) which is based on the Gemara in Baba Batra (57b) which discusses a place where women do laundry. The women rolled up their shelves to their elbows and hiked up their skirts above their knees. It is therefore not modest. It is permissible to pass there? The Gemara says that if he could have chosen a different path, he is wicked. Why did you go there? But if there is no other path, he is "onus" (forced). He has no choice. Rav Feinstein rules that the same thing applies here. If there is a separate swimming pool and you went to a mixed pool, you are wicked. If there is no other choice, however, it is permissible. If there is a separate swimming pool in the vicinity, you should travel even if it takes a long time. Furthermore, even when you are permitted, you should go when not many people are there. I therefore

recommend going early, early in the morning when no one or almost no one is there. If there are people there you must almost guard your eyes from looking at women.

#### Skipping mishnayot

Q: We are teaching children entire Massechetot (tractates) of the Mishnah. Should we skip the parts which deal with purity and impurity of men and women?

A: In general, we do not skip. You can read it and you do not have to explain it to them in great detail. Speak in general terms. There is such a thing as pure and impurity. For example, there are all types of discussions in Massechet Berachot. We should not skip, and not go into detail. On the contrary, if we skip, it raises the students' curiosity. We do not skip in the Torah or in the Mishnah. We read it all and explain to the students according to their level.

#### Late night Torah learning versus morning minyan

Q: Which is preferable – learning Torah until late at night or attending morning minyan?

A: A person certainly has to get up to attend minyan, but it is fine if he gets up later and attends a later minyan. There is no obligation to attend the early minyan, but he has to attend a minyan. First a person has to be a normal Jew – to daven with a minyan, and only afterwards an excellent Jew – to learn Torah late into the night.

#### Rebuke today

Q: Is there a mitzvah of rebuke today?

A: The Gemara in Arachin (16b) says that there is no one in our generation who knows how to rebuke. This statement of our Rabbis, however, does not come to uproot a Torah mitzvah, but to warn us that the mitzvah of rebuke is difficult and that we must uphold the parameters of the mitzvah. If one cannot uphold the parameters of the mitzvah, he is exempt from the mitzvah. If a person does not have tefillin or he has tefillin made of plastic, he is exempt. Similarly, if someone does not know how to rebuke, he is exempt. The Vilna Gaon says that someone who does not know how to rebuke has great contentment, since he is exempt. Before, you rebuke someone you have to think long and hard. How will he listen? Will it help? Etc..., etc..., etc.... But the mitzvah certainly exists.

#### "Shehechyanu" on gloves

Q: Do you recite the blessing of "Shehechyanu" on gloves?

A: Yes, one recites the blessing on everything new that one buys, and it is important enough to make the buyer happy. Perhaps a wealthy person who buys a new pair of gloves everyday

and throws them in the garbage at the end of the day does not recite it, but a regular person does. Gloves are important pieces of clothing. I am obviously not talking about a bag of plastic gloves which costs three shekels, but for regular gloves you certainly say the blessing.

#### Home with guests or shul

Q: Is it preferable for a woman to stay at home with guests who are not going to shul on Shabbat or to go to shul?

A: As is known, women are not obligated to go to shul. A woman has to decide where she davens the best. At home or at shul. In the case of guests, again, she has to decide where the best place will be. It is her decision.

#### Someone who only knows "Borei Nefashot"

Q: If someone only knows the blessing of "Borei Nefashot" after eating and not "Birkat Ha-Mazon," should he recite it?

A: If he ate bread, "Borei Nefashot" does not cover the bread even after the fact. It is possible that he ate other foods at the meal. On the bread, he does not recite a blessing after eating, but at least he will say a blessing on the other food. "Birkat Ha-Mazon" covers everything, but since he is not reciting it, he says "Borei Nefashot" on what he can.

#### Why don't my kids visit?

Q: I am close with my children, but they do not visit like they use to. Why don't they visit?

A: Did you ask them why they do not visit so often?

Q: Yes, they say that they are busy with work and their families, etc...

A: Do you think it is true or just an excuse?

Q: I know that it is true and that they love me, but why don't they visit?

A: You are saying that your children are extremely busy and are not able to visit, and you are looking for a solution. Many times what people do is the exact opposite. The grandparents go and visit the kids. I personally do this. I cannot demand from my children who work hard and have families and babies and traveling is a burden, and some do not have cars, to come and visit me. My wife and I go and visit them. When people love each other and they need to do something, they calculate who has the lightest burden in doing so. Grandparents are therefore the ones who often visit. This does not mean that they never come to visit you, but I see that many people do this.

## Feeling happy

Q: Thank G-d, I have many good things in life, but I do not feel joy over them. How can I feel joy in my heart?

A: Perhaps it is because you have gotten use to the goodness, and you think that that is the way it is. It says in the book "Mesilat Yesharim" in the chapter on alacrity in the service of Hashem that a person must think that the kindnesses he has are not necessarily the way it has to be. If he has money, it is not because that is the way it has to be, after all many people do not have money. If he has health, it is not because that is the way it has to be, after all many people who are sick. Our Sages explain that the reason that we dwell in the sukkah for seven days is that we were once in huts, and now we have house, but it does not necessarily have to be so. There are plenty of people without a house. People have to value the "riches" that they have. In your merit, I just remembered the following story: Once Rabbi Avraham ibn Ezra was in England for some time. He was very sad because he was sick, had no money and was not with his family. His students who were there said, "Let's at least solve one problem and give money to our Rabbi." They knew that he would refuse, so they placed gold coins on the path between his house and the shul. Of course, it was according to the Halachah. It was abandoned and he did not have to return it, etc... They hid behind the trees and saw that he was walking in a weird way. He walked and stumbled, walked and fell into a tree, stumbling and bumbling all the way like a drunk, and he did not pick up the money. He finally made it to the shul and their blessed plan failed. They asked, "His honor did not see the money?" "No." "Why did our Rabbi walk like this?" He answered: "I walked with my eyes closed the whole way." They said: "Why?" "I do not have health or money or any family here. I thought to myself: What if I was blind and they told me that there is a therapy or surgery which cures it in England, but it takes a long time, you will have to separate from your family, it will eat up all of your money and it will cause you to be sick. Do you want to have it? Of course, I will do it in order to see. I therefore walked the whole way with my eyes closed, arrived at shul and opened my eyes and said with great intention. Blessed is the One who gives sight to the blind. It says in all of the "Sifrei Musar" (Books of Ethics) that one must dedicate thoughts to all of the kindnesses that Hashem gives you. The siddur is filled with recognition of the kindnesses that Hashem gives us, and that it does not necessarily have to be so. Nothing is for certain. A person must realize that the world is filled with kindnesses, and he must express gratitude to Hashem for what he has. Furthermore, there is "Simchah shel Mitzvah" – a person should be happy for the mitzvot and kindnesses which he performs.