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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). On the Air presents a sample each week.

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Calling one's father-in-law by his first name

Q: Is it permissible to call your father-in-law by his first name?

A: A person is obligated to honor his father-in-law (Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 240:24). We learn this from Moshe Rabbenu who honored his father-in-law, Yitro, when he bowed before him (Shemot 18:7) and David when he honored his father-in-law, King Shaul, when he called him "my father" (Shmuel 1 24:12). This, however, is not the same as honoring one's parents. One is obligated to honor his in-laws, but is not obligated to fear them as he is for his parents. The way to honor in-laws is not define as it is for honoring parents. Furthermore, the prohibition to call a parent by his first name seems to be an issue of fear more than honor. Therefore, the basic Halachah is that there is no prohibition to call your father-in-law or mother-in-law by their first name, but the custom is not to do so. For example, if they want, you can call them "dad" and "mom" or you can add a title to their name such as Reb Shaul. In sum. You should do what makes your father-in-law and mother-in-law comfortable.

Coaching

Q: What is Ha-Rav's opinion about coaching?

A: The goal of coaching is to strengthen people and to build their self-confidence. This is certainly a positive thing since many people lack confidence and do not have someone to whom they can speak.

Meal after davening on a yahrtzeit

Q: Is it permissible to have a family meal after davening on a yahrtzeit? I have a relative who does not want to participate because he says that we should not have a party.

A: We understand what he is saying, but we do not change the customs of Israel. It is true that a yahrtzeit is not a party, but a meal is not necessary a party. People gather to eat together, to be together and to strengthen each other.

Advice to quit smoking

Q: I am newly religious but cannot stop smoking on Shabbat. I have tried so many different treatments, but none help. Does Ha-Rav have any advice on how to quit smoking?

A: You should begin a "behavioral program." How many cigarettes do you smoke a day?

Q: A pack and a half.

A: This is 30 cigarettes a day. For now on only smoke 29 a day. Then only 28, then 27, etc... It is not so hard to smoke one less cigarette. This is called a "behavioral program." You will gain encouragement and strength by the fact that you now smoke one cigarette less. You gradually take one away. One can take one away each day, every two days, each week, etc... The pace does not matter. The essential thing is not to backtrack. You must always move forward. The reason that people are unsuccessful in quitting smoking is that the cigarettes contain many ingredients. There are poisonous ingredients, but there are also ingredients which relax a person. If there are ingredients which relax a person perhaps we should all smoke? No! Hashem knows that we need to relax and the brain therefore releases endorphins into the blood which are like drugs which relax a person. When a person begins to smoke, the brain sees that there are relaxants coming from the outside, and ceases releasing the endorphins. When a person stops smoking, he has nothing to calm him, since he does not receive relaxants from the cigarettes or the body. If he is incredibly strong and can hold on, the brain will realize and eventually begin to release endorphins. A person must be extremely strong-willed to do this. If he cannot, he can follow the "behavioral program" as we said, and little by little as he stops receiving the endorphins from the cigarettes, the brain will release them. He will thus relax, and have clean lungs, clean air, a clear Shabbat and clean weekdays.