



PO Box 1076 Jerusalem 91009 \* Tel. 972-2-628-4101

# 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/shuf.html](http://www.kimizion.org/shiur/shuf.html)). On the Air presents a sample each week.

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Prepared by Rabbi Mordechai Friedfertig

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RavAviner-subscribe@yahogroups.com

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### Turning air conditioner off on Shabbat

Q: Is it permissible to move the Shabbat timer on an air conditioner on Shabbat when it is too cold?

A: The best solution is to turn off the air conditioner by what is called "gerama" – indirectly. This means that you should not move the timer so that the air conditioner turns off right now, but so it will turn off after a certain amount of time, such as ten minutes. This is called "gerama" and in a pressuring situation, such as this, it is permissible (Shemirat Shabbat Kehilchata 13:25, 23:22). This obviously does not apply to a digital timer.

### A necklace with a dollar bill

Q: I was given a necklace with a dollar bill as its charm. Is it permissible to daven while wearing the necklace? I do not know who is on the dollar, a Christian or someone else?! Also, can I wear the necklace on Shabbat?

A: There is no problem. It is not a Christian figure, it is George Washington. There is no fear that you are worshipping America by wearing it. It is just a piece of jewelry. Regarding Shabbat, this dollar is not muktzeh, even though money is generally muktzeh, since it is no longer considered to be currency, but is now part of the necklace.

#### Utensils which have not been immersed

Q: What is the law regarding utensils which I used but I did not immerse in a mikveh?

A: You need to immerse them and fix what you failed to do.

#### Why do we mourn?

Q: Why do we mourn if everything which Hashem does is for the best?

A: When someone dies, we mourn even though we know that it is for the best. But what is the meaning of "for the best"? It means that good will come from this event, but it is not good at this moment. When something bad occurs to a person from which good will come, should he recite the blessing of "Dayan Ha-Emet" which is recited upon hearing bad news or "Shehechyanu" which is recited upon hearing good news? The Gemara in Berachot (60a) discusses the case of one's land which was flooded and his crops are destroyed, but the flood deposited mud, which will help fertilize the field and produce even more produce in the future. Which blessing should he recite: "Dayan Ha-Emet" or "Shehechyanu"? Answer: since there is destruction now, he recites "Dayan Ha-Emet," and in the future, when there is abundant produce, he recites "Shehechyanu." This means that these blessings are said on one's current feelings and not over the future outcome. Therefore, if someone's loved one dies, this is sad and he recites "Dayan Ha-Emet." Furthermore, we know that death is beneficial for us in the end – it separates between the body and soul, it purifies the body and soul and it prepares a person for the Resurrection of the Dead. Thus, at the time of the Resurrection of the Dead, we will recite another blessing. Rashi asks a similar question. The end of Parashat Bereshit (6.6) says, "And Hashem repented that He had made man on the earth, and it saddened Him in His heart." Rashi quotes the words of our Sages that a heretic once asked Rabbi Yehoshua ben Karcha: "Don't you agree that Hashem sees the future?"

He said: "Yes."

The heretic said: "But it says, 'and it saddened Him in His heart?'"

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Karcha answered: "Do you have a son?"

"Yes."

"What did you do when he was born?"

"We had a party."

"Didn't you know that he would eventually die?"

"Yes."

"Then why did you have a party?"

The heretic responded. "We are joyous at times of joy, and mourn at times of mourning."

Thus, the question is also correct from the opposite angle: why are we glad when a baby is born when we know that he will eventually die? We are happy now and when he dies after 120 years, we will be sad. And the opposite: when he dies we are sad and when he rises at the time of the Resurrection of the Dead, we will be happy.

#### Nail cutting at night

Q: Is it permissible to cut my nails at night?

A: The basic Halachah is that there is no prohibition. All of the laws regarding cutting nails – not all at once, not hands and feet on the same day, cutting them according to a particular order, not to cut them on Thursday since they will begin to grow on Shabbat, not on Rosh Chodesh (regarding the last two issues see commentaries to Orach Chaim 260), etc... – are distance strictures which have not been accepted at Halachah. The basic Halachah is that you may cut your nails when and how you want. There is no concern and it is permissible to cut them at night.

#### Fish and dairy

Q: Is there a rabbinic prohibition, a custom or a fear of danger of eating fish and dairy together?

A: This is not written in the Gemara. As is well-known, the Gemara (Pesachim 76b) says that it is forbidden to eat fish and meat together, but it does not mention fish and dairy. The Beit Yosef (Yoreh Deah 87) says in the name of doctors that it is dangerous to eat fish and dairy together. This means that he does not mention it in the name of the Gemara, the Rishonim (Rabbis of Middle Ages) or the Divine Spirit, but in the name of doctors. It is possible that this is what doctors said at his time, but doctors do not say this now. If the source was the Gemara, the doctors could not change what is written in the Gemara, but if the source is the doctors of that time, the doctors of this time can overrule them. In practice, Ashkenazic Jews largely are not concerned about eating fish and dairy together. There are some Sefardic Jews who do refrain from eating them together and others who do not refrain from doing so. There is a teshuvah of Rav Ovadiah Yosef in Shut Yechaveh Daat (6.48) in which he rules that the basic halachah is that eating them together is permissible, but one who wants to be strict should do so.