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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/shuf.html). On the Air presents a sample each week.

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2. Clean your room!
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Shoes: to donate or throw out

Q: Is it preferable to donate shoes or throw them out?

A: It is certainly better to donate them. There are people who can use them. There are many second hand stores. People can come and pay a nominal amount of money and it can help them. While you could place them next to the garbage and people can see them and take them, this is not an organized method. It is therefore better to donate it. By the way, since we mentioned shoes, many ask: is it permissible to wear the shoes of the deceased? Yes, except for the shoes which a person died in. This is quite rare, since people often die in bed when they are not wearing shoes. Sometimes people ask: is it permissible to go to sleep and throw shoes upside down or is it a problem of the "evil eye"? Answer: Nonsense, you can throw them any way that you want.

Clean your room!

Q: I am eleven years old. I do not like cleaning my closet and it is pretty messy. My parents say that it is important. Is it important to have a clean closet?

A: Yes, there must be order. If a person has a clean closet, he also has a clean head. If he has a messy closet, he also has a messy head. If he is not responsible in his closet, he is not responsible in life. If he fulfills the mission to clean his closet, he becomes accustomed and educated to accept other missions and advance in them. Therefore, there should always be order. I understand that it is difficult for you to clean, but you need to see this as a challenge and begin in stages. Let's say that your closet has eight different areas, you can clean one or two areas a day. It does not matter how much as long as you are progressing. In the Mussar Yeshivot, there were two opinions regarding order. Some said that order was a preparation for serving Hashem. Others said that order itself was serving Hashem -- not serving Hashem like observing Shabbat, but serving Hashem nonetheless. The Master of the Universe created the world in disarray as it says (Bereshit 2:1): "And the earth was chaotic and darkness was upon the surface on the deep." Hashem organized the world and He asks us to continue to organize the chaos that is in the world.

"Overeaters Anonymous"

Q: Is it permissible to participate in the 12-step program of "Overeaters Anonymous" even though it was created by and run by people who are not observant Jews?

Q: This program was created by non-Jews in the United States, some of who were non-believers and others who were Christians. But the Rambam, in his introduction to Pirkei Avot called "Shemoneh Perakim," says: "Accept truth from one who says it." The Rambam mentions this teaching in "Shemoneh Perakim" in particular because it is a work on perfecting character traits and overeating is a negative character trait. I do not necessarily need Torah in order to repair a negative character trait, but I can reach supreme levels of proper character traits through the Torah. The motto of OA is not that "I believe in G-d," but "I believe in some power" and they leave it open to interpretation for each individual. A person who is an atheist understands it to refer to some power. One who believes understands it to refer to G-d. Someone like us will understand it to refer to being G-d-fearing and learning Torah and fulfilling mitzvot. We take this idea and convert this method of "I can" and we add faith and fear of Heaven. There are also various groups of "Overeaters Anonymous" in Israel which are run by religious individuals. One can overcome overeating even without Torah, but by adding faith and fear of Heaven, one reaches more supreme levels.

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