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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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Life's difficulties

Q: How does one deal with life's difficulties?

A: It is obviously true that there are difficulties in life, but they are not your failings. They are part of the divine plan for running the world, as is explained in the first chapter of Mesillat Yesharim.

Q: But I prefer my life to be quiet and content.

A: Mesillat Yesharim also writes that every one of us needs to understand two things about life's challenges: 1. Just like a doctor who hurts you during a medical procedure does not intend to injure you; he wants to help you, but sometimes medical procedures hurt. The same is true here: if Hashem hurts you, it is a divine decision and it is for your best even if you do not understand why this is so. I did not study medicine and do not understand what the doctor is doing to me, yet I trust that what he is doing is for my benefit; and so too is Hashem acting for our benefit and we must accept the difficulties with love. This does not mean that we do not try to solve the problems: if we are sick, we go to the doctor. But we understand that these distresses are part of the divine plan and they are for our best. This is an answer for every Jew. 2. There is also an answer for a Jew who has special character traits. A person is in this world to serve Hashem. Obviously, nothing can disturb a person's

service of Hashem. On the contrary, the more difficult the situation, the greater the divine service. Mesillat Yesharim brings the example of a military officer in battle. The greater the mission he is given, the greater opportunity he has to display his prowess as a soldier. Here too, the more difficult the situation, the more of an opportunity to show one's love of Hashem. It is not only that the difficulties cannot disturb divine service, but they are an opportunity for it. These are the two answers. I suggest that you learn the chapter on "Bitachon" (Trust in Hashem) from the book "Chovot Ha-Levavot." During the course of our Exile, the Nation of Israel experienced many difficulties and learning this chapter filled us with strength and courage. This does not mean that our troubles will all go away, but it will give you the tools to struggle against them.

Blessing for a guest

Q: When a married child eats at his parents' home, does he recite the blessing as a guest during Birchat Ha-Mazon?

A: No, he is not a guest. He is a family member, even if he is married.

Washing dishes on Shabbat

Q: Is it permissible to wash dishes on Shabbat?

A: It is certainly permissible to wash dishes on Shabbat for their use on Shabbat with the condition that you do not use a sponge and you use liquid soap. Even if I have other dishes for Shabbat, it is permissible to wash dirty dishes if I want those particular dishes. There is no obligation to use other dishes. Therefore, I can wash dishes from Shabbat dinner for Shabbat lunch and dishes from Shabbat lunch for Seudat Shelishit. There is also no obligation to count the exact number you need; you can estimate. There is no permission, however, to wash what is left in the sink or on the counters which make the kitchen look messy. One can solve this problem in one of two ways: cover the sink with a towel or place all of the dirty dishes in a bag and put it on the side. Theoretically, if one is suffering from the mess and wants a clean kitchen, washing the dishes would not be considered preparing on Shabbat for a weekday, but performing an act for the present. It is similar to a case in which you finish eating Seudat Shelishit and it is forbidden to clear the table because it is preparing on Shabbat for a weekday. But it is permissible if you want to sing zemirot at a clean table. The same is true here: it is permissible to wash the dishes if the mother is walking around the kitchen and the mess is destroying her spirit. I, however, gave two other solutions to the problem.

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