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Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim

IN THE HEART OF THE OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM

From the Teachings of Ha-Rav Shlomo Aviner

Parashat Noach 5769

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Would you like to ask Rav Aviner a question? E-mail mororly@bezeqint.net and the answer will come from Rav Aviner in 1 of 3 ways: 1. Drawn from his published material. 2. From my own notes of Ha-Rav's answers to questions. 3. If the question has not, to my knowledge, been answered in either of these sources, I will ask the question directly from the Rav.

A Few Important Reminders

[From "Ma'anayei Ha-Yeshua"]

We were asked by the Ramchal (Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto) to remind ourselves of a few important reminders:

- While almost everyone does it, i.e. speaks Lashon Ha-Ra, it does not give it a stamp of approval.
- Speaking the truth does not nullify the prohibition of Lashon Ha-Ra. If it is a lie, it is even more severe. That is called "Motzi Shem Ra."
- When it appears necessary to speak Lashon Ha-Ra to save a person from damage or injury, one must be certain that the following seven conditions are met:
 1. You know the facts directly and not second-hand.
 2. You are certain that something wrong was done and you carefully checked the context.
 3. You first approach the person and rebuke him with a pleasant manner.
 4. You do not exaggerate or skip details, since it is known that the truth is all of the truth from Alef to Tav through Mem (truth in Hebrew is "Emet" spelled Alef, Mem, Tav).
 5. Your intentions are completely pure, and you are not relating this because of revenge, jealous, etc...
 6. There is no other way to solve the problem besides speaking Lashon Ha-Ra.
 7. The Lashon Ha-Ra does not cause the person more damage than allowed by Halachah.

- Do not speak Lashon Ha-Ra about our Land (including our State and our army). The spies spoke Lashon Ha-Rav about our Land and we were stuck in the desert for forty years on account of it.
- But why should all of us be punished on account of ten spies? Answer: Because it is not only forbidden to speak Lashon Ha-Ra, it is also forbidden to hear and listen to it. And to our distress, to this day, we all hear and believe it.
- Don't say: "I was just kidding." This is also Lashon Ha-Ra!
- Don't speak Lashon Ha-Rav through hints. It is the same result. It does not help to be deceptive.
- The declaration "I would have told him to his face" does not permit Lashon Ha-Ra, except in something which is not negative itself, but can be interpreted either way based on the way it is said.
- Even saying something which is not negative but can be damaging is forbidden. And if there is no fear of damage but it is negative – it is forbidden.
- The Holy One Blessed Be He cannot suffer one who speaks Lashon Ha-Ra: "Regarding one who relates Lashon Ha-Ra, the Holy One Blessed Be He said: He and I cannot dwell in this world" (Arachin 15b).
- "Do you know what Reuven said about you..." "Stop! This is tale bearing (rechilut)." "I heard that Shimon is planning to do the following to you..." "Stop! This is tale bearing." Even if it is not negative, even if it is true, even if he does not have bad intentions – it is nonetheless rechilut, because even innocent words are liable to cause tensions, such as reviving old disputes.
- Do not think that Lashon Ha-Ra is a light transgression. "One who speaks Lashon Ha-Ra increases transgressions corresponding to the three sins: idol worship, forbidden sexual relationship and murder" (Arachin ibid.). Lashon Ha-Ra kills three: "The speaker, the receiver, those who spoken about" (ibid. emendations of the Bach).
- "One who speaks Lashon Ha-Rav is considered as if he denies everything" (ibid.), i.e. an atheist. Isn't that enough!
- Even if you lose money or other important things – it is forbidden to speak Lashon Ha-Ra. This is the ruling in the Shulchan Aruch: it is forbidden to commit transgressions even if you will sustain losses (Orach Chaim 656 and Yoreh Deah 157:1).
- If you speak Lashon Ha-Ra it is a sign that you are rotting inside. The punishment for speaking Lashon Ha-Ra is "tzara'at." Motzi Shem Ra (literally bringing out a bad name) brings out what is inside.
- Even if you are an extremely important person, you are not permitted to speak Lashon Ha-Ra. To our distress, people who are at a high level also sometimes stumble in this area. For example, Doeg Ha-Edomi, who was the head of the Sanhedrin, told King Shaul that Achimelech, Cohain of Nov, gave food and a weapon to David, and following this all of the cohanim of Nov were murdered.
- People search for "segulot" (spiritual remedies) for good and long lives and sometimes created a new "segulah" which never existed. We therefore have a "segulah" to you: "Who is the person who desires life and loves many days that he may see good?" Answer: "Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit. Turn from evil and perform good, search peace and pursue it" (Tehillim 34:13-15).



Text Message Responsa

Ha-Rav answers hundreds of text message questions a week. Some appear in the parashah sheets "Ma'ayanei Ha-Yeshu'ah" and "Olam Ha-Katan." Here's a sample:

Q: Is it permissible to recite a blessing on the Lulav more than once a day?

A: No (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 651:5).

Q: Are there sources that women cannot touch or carry the Torah when it passes in shul or on Simchat Torah?

A: There is a mention in the Rama (Orach Chaim 88), but it involves a broader discussion regarding changing the practices of prayer which were followed through the generations

Q: Should I wake my wife so I can go and daven with a minyan so she can watch the kids?

A: Only if this was agreed upon together beforehand.

Q: Everyone is matched with a future spouse before birth. If one of them dies while young, with whom will the remaining partner marry?

A: He/she will marry someone whose intended spouse also died. And Hashem "returns home those who are alone," and they will live happily with effort.

Q: The bus driver did not make me pay because I was schlepping the baby carriage onto the bus. Is this permissible?

A: It does not seem so.

Q: I stole a book from a store and I am embarrassed to return it. What should I do?

A: Return it or the money anonymously.

Q: Is it permissible to pop balloons on Shabbat?

A: It is forbidden because of ruining things.

Q: Is it permissible to eat parve chocolate without Rabbinic certification, but its ingredients appear to be kosher?

A: No, not all of the ingredients are listed.

Q: How do you check figs and dates for bugs?

A: Open them and check really well.

Q: It is my birthday. What is proper for me to do today?

A: "Chesbon Nefesh – an accounting of the soul."

Q: Is it permissible to use incense which came from India?

A: Yes, it is just for smelling and not for idol worship.

Q: What is Ha-Rav's opinion regarding National Service for women?

A: It is a great mitzvah, but only in a place which is under the certification and guidance of a Rabbi or Rebbetzin.

Q: I have been dating someone for three months. Is it permissible for just the two of us to eat Shabbat lunch in his parent's house, if the door is open and anyone can enter?

A: It is certainly forbidden (Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 152:8-10).

Q: If a single woman has sexual relations, should she go to the mikveh?

A: It is certainly forbidden for her to immerse in a mikveh.

Q: If a woman is a Baal Teshuvah and had sexual relations in the past, should she tell someone who she is dating?

A: She should not relate it.

Q: What should I do if my parents are opposed to me getting married at this stage of my life?

A: It depends if their reasons make sense. You can call me – 052-365-3028.

Q: My father wants me to get married after I finish my degree (I'll be older than 25), but I want to get married earlier. Is there an issue of honoring father and mother here?

A: In matters such as these a person should decide about his or her life, and there is no obligation for your opinion to be the same as your parents.

Q: I have been bitten a few times by a spider. Is this telling me something?

A: No. Everything has meaning but we do not know the secrets of Hashem.

Q: Is cooking for a woman who just gave birth considered tzedakah?

A: If she is poor. Tzedakah is for the poor.

Q: Is it permissible to take a picture of someone without permission?

A: It is certainly forbidden. "Love your fellow as yourself."

Stories of Rabbenu – Our Rabbi

Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook

The Younger Years

Our Rabbi was born on the night of Pesach in the year 5651 to Maran Ha-Rav Avraham Yitzchak Ha-Cohain Kook and Ha-Rabbanit Raiza Rivka. He was named Tzvi Yehudah after his mother's father, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Rabinowitz-Te'omim, the twin brother of Ha-Rav Eliyahu David Rabinowitz-Te'omim, the Aderet (who was Maran Ha-Rav's father-in-law). With all of our Rabbi's great humility, he well understood his worth and would say: "My soul appeared on the night of the Seder."

Our Rabbi was his mother's first-born, but not his father's. During the time when Maran Ha-Rav was Rav of Zoimel, there was a plague and his first wife, Ha-Rabbanit Batsheva Alta, the daughter of the Aderet, died when their daughter, Freida Chana, was one and a half. The Aderet wanted Maran Ha-Rav to marry Raiza Rivka, the daughter of his twin brother, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Rabinowitz-Te'omim, Rav of Ragoli, who died in the middle of his life at the age of forty-four. His brother's children were raised in the Aderet's house and were like his own children. The Aderet said to Maran Ha-Rav: "It is a pity for me if with the loss of my daughter I also lose you from being a member of my family. Marry my brother's daughter and you will be my son like before" (Shivchei Ha-Re'eiyah, p. 60). Maran Ha-Rav married his wife's cousin and our Rabbi and two other sisters – Batya Miriam and Esther Yael – were born from this marriage.

Our Rabbi was born in Zoimel in the area of Kovno in Lithuania and then moved with his family to Boisk, next to Riga, where Maran Ha-Rav was appointed Rabbi. He learned Gemara from Ha-Rav Reuven Gutfried (Yedidya), the son-in-law of Rabbi Yoel Moshe Solomon, and Ha-Rav Binyamin Menasheh Levin, author of "Otzar Ha-Geonim," who came

to dwell in the shadow of Maran Ha-Rav's yeshiva in Boisk and then became our Rabbi's personal teacher (Sichot Ha-Re'eiyah, pp. 223, 233-234). Our Rabbi learned Tanach from Ha-Rav Moshe Dr. Zeidel who also came to receive abundant holiness from Maran Ha-Rav. The essence of his learning, however, was from the mouth of his father, Maran Ha-Rav.



Shut She'eilat Shlomo - Questions of Jewish Law

Charedim and Religious-Zionists

Question: Why are the Charedim opposed to the path of Religious-Zionists and Religious-Zionists opposed to the path of the Charedim?

Answer: "I believe with perfect faith that this Torah will not be changed" (Rambam's 13 Principles of Faith, #9). Everything said by the community called "Charedim" is said by the community called "Religious-Zionists." But the Religious-Zionists speak about something additional – the revival of our Nation, which our generation has merited. This subject, upon which the essence of Torah depends, was forgotten by us over 2,000 years of Exile and not all of the Nation of Israel has merited to return and engage in it. Fortunate is one who toils in Torah, and fortunate is one who engages in our redemptive Torah which draws from the wellsprings of salvation.

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