



Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim

IN THE HEART OF THE OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM

On the Air with Ha-Rav Shlomo Aviner

From Ha-Rav's weekly radio programs in Israel

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Visiting non-religious parents on Shabbat

Q: Should I go to visit my parents on Shabbat even though they do not observe Shabbat?

A: There is no law that one is obligated to visit his parents. It is a kindness and as in every kindness, it is according to one's ability and the need. It is possible that your parents really need it: they are sick, lonely, etc... And according to your ability – this is a technical question: is it far or near? Do you have a car or time? And it is an emotional question: it is pleasant or difficult there? As a result, you do not have to go every Shabbat, this is extreme. And never going for Shabbat is also extreme. It is based on your ability and their need. It is not easy to quantify: perhaps once a month.

Q: What should I do when they watch TV and the phone rings?

A: Do not watch the TV and do not answer the phone.

A child who hits

Q: What should we do with our son who hits everybody?

A. There are various tactics. 1. Do not let him do it. You need to prevent him by gently taking his arm and explaining that we do not hit – without insulting him. 2. It is possible that he hits for many reasons. It is possible that he is bored and he is looking for activities which possess elements of alacrity and danger – he hits, runs, hits, runs, etc... If this is the case, you have to find activities which will allow him to release his excess energy: get boxes and let me break them with a hammer, give him a bath and let his spritz water all around, bring him on little trips. Or perhaps he is distressed. Why? I do not know – he has an older brother or a younger brother, there are tensions at home, etc... and this is how he releases his stress. It is also possible that he feels neglected and is in competition with his siblings. If this is the case, you need to give him attention. Either the father or mother should give him their undivided attention for 15 minutes a day. There are many possible reasons and it is hard to judge from afar. 3. I recommend to all parents to buy ten books for child-rearing at a young age – it does not matter which, they are all good but not all are complete, so they will complement one another. If you read these ten books, you will have a good picture of what to do.

Census

Q: Is it permissible to participate in the population census?

A. It is true that it is forbidden to count Jews but the Chief Rabbis of Israel already ruled that in the first population census in Israel that it is permissible since we are not counting Jews but pieces of paper. When they needed to count Jews in the Temple, they counted fingers (Yoma 22b). When a commander needs to count soldiers in the army, he does not count soldiers but helmets. Even though it is a life-threatening situation and counting them would be permissible, since if a soldier is missing it is extremely dangerous, he still counts helmets. During fieldtrips, the teacher counts hats or each kid says a number and he counts the numbers. During the census, we count pieces of paper.

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