



## On the Air with Rav Aviner ~ #68

From Ha-Rav's weekly radio programs in Israel

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Prepared by Rabbi Mordechai Friedfertig

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A Soldier Killed by Friendly Fire [From Rav Aviner's video blog – [www.video.maale.org.il](http://www.video.maale.org.il)]

Question: It is known that a soldier killed in battle is considered holy. Is a soldier killed by friendly fire also considered holy?

Answer: If a soldier is killed in battle or during military exercises under any circumstances, whether it is in error or in superfluous mission, he is considered holy and was killed sanctifying Hashem's name. The use of the expression "holy" in this context is taken from the responsa of the Chatam Sofer (Yoreh Deah #333) regarding a person who was murdered by non-Jews. While here the soldier was seemingly killed by our own troops, this is not correct, because the reason we are at war is that the non-Jews continually attack us. There is no difference in how he was killed since the nature of war is bound up with danger. In war, there is the fog of battle and it is complex. It is impossible to run a war in a gentle manner until the enemy says "uncle." These occurrences are a part of war and part of the self-sacrifice of the soldiers. If in the responsa of the Chatam Sofer the murdered was referred to as "holy" since he was murdered by non-Jews for no reason, this is all the more so true in our case in which a soldier willingly goes into battle to protect the Nation of Israel, the Land of Israel and to sanctify Hashem's name. And he knows from the outset that

things such as this can occur as it says in the Gemara in Shevuot (35b) that a king who kills a sixth of his soldiers in battle is not punished, since this is part of the calculations of war. We are obviously not freeing those who made the error, Tzahal thoroughly investigates such incidents. We are only discussing the soldier who was killed sanctifying Hashem's name.

#### Rejoice or cry?

Q: I am confused. our military operation in Gaza is succeeding but there are also Jews who are being killed, which is extremely distressing. Should we rejoice or cry?

A: We need to distinguish between the community and the individual. There are communal calculations and personal calculations which are not always the same. The majority of the time, we are concerned for both the community and the individual, but there is occasionally an exception such at a time of war. During a war, the national goal overrides the individual's needs. The individual displays self-sacrifice for the national goal. Regarding the question, we are both rejoicing and crying. The Halachah says that if a person is happy he recites "Shehechyanu" and if he is sad he recites "Dayan Ha-Emet." What is the law if one's wife gives birth to a boy and she dies in childbirth? He recites two blessings. "Shehechyanu" and "Dayan Ha-Emet" (see Bereachot 59b). They are two different calculations and we do not mix them together. Is the husband not sad about his wife because a baby was born to him? And is the father not happy about his new child baby because his wife died? He has both feelings. Therefore, we are sad for those who have been killed and wounded but this does not affect our joy over our accomplishments. Our operation is succeeding and it is a great victory. One officer said. it will take years for them to reconstruct what we have destroyed. In the war of the Maccabees, people were killed, but we still rejoice. The same is true with the war for the conquest of Israel and all of the wars. Therefore, we are sad for the killed and wounded and we rejoice over Tzahal's accomplishments.

#### Punishing children

Q: Is it permissible to punish a six year old by not allowing him to learn Torah with his father?

A: We cannot educate our children through punishment. They do not understand what we want from them. A child often acts up because he cannot overcome his emotions, and not because he is a bad kid. When we punish him, he does not understand and loses faith in his parents. One certainly needs to educate, but one should be very careful about punishing children. We need to emphasize the positives and limit the negatives. When a person buys a cow, there are two ways to move it. by hitting it in the back or by calling to it. The same is true for children. you can push them forward with punishments or encourage them with

love. This is in general. In your case, learning Torah is a mitzvah and we must increase it as much as possible. On the contrary, if he is not acting properly, in order to fix it and have him repent, he needs to learn more Torah.

#### Night-time Shema and chatting

Q: Should I say the Night-time Shema and then talk or talk and risk falling asleep without reciting it?

A: The ideal is obviously to chat and then say the Night-time Shema, but if there is a risk that you will forget it, it is preferable to recite it and then talk. There is one opinion – the book "Seder Ha-Yom" – that the blessing of the Night-Time Shema is a blessing over a benefit (Birchat Nehenin). With such blessings, such as eating an apple, one first says the blessing and then immediately eats, and if he does not immediately eat, it is considered an interruption. The same applies here if that one says the Nighttime Shema and does not immediately go to sleep then it is an interruption. But the rest of the halachic authorities say that it is not a blessing over a benefit but a blessing of praise (Birchat Shevach). This means that we thank Hashem for creating sleep. If this is so, speaking after the Night-time Shema is not an interruption after the fact. Therefore, if there is a concern that you will forget it, you should recite the Shema and then chat.

#### Shaking hands with an elderly woman

Q: Is it permissible to shake hands with an elderly woman?

A: No. It does not matter whether she is elderly or young. Ha-Rav Ovadiah Yosef once received the Israel Prize and it was presented by the Prime Minister, Mrs. Golda Meir. She put out her hand but he did not shake it. People said that it was not polite. He responded: The Torah is more important than politeness. And Ha-Rav Mordechai Eliyahu once met with the Queen of England and she put out her hand. There were cameras from all around the world but he stood still like a soldier and he did not shake it. That evening Rav Eliyahu received a letter from the person responsible for royal protocol and they apologized. They checked the books of protocol of the British Kingship and they found that the Queen of England was not to put out her hand to a Jewish Rabbi (A **Jewish** Rabbi!). As a result, if you do not shake a woman's hand, you have the authority of Halachah, as well as Rav Yosef, as well as Rav Eliyahu and the Queen of England, who is extremely polite! Therefore, one has to plan: carry a bag in each hand. Or I once saw someone said: I am saving my hand for my wife. Or say: My Rabbi said it is forbidden. He is strict. What can I do?

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