



On the Air with Rav Aviner ~ #71

From Ha-Rav's weekly radio programs in Israel

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Elections and honoring father and mother

Q: Must a child obey his parents if they ask him to vote for a certain political party?

A: No. 'Honoring one's parents' applies only when an act directly relates to one's parents. Honoring one's parents is giving them something to eat and drink, clothing them, covering them, and transporting them (Kiddushin 31b and Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah 240.4). If something relates to the child's private life – what he eats, what he wears, where he lives, etc... – this is his own business. This is also the case with if one wants to vote right, left or center – it is his life. Honoring one's parent is related to caring for them.

Long Pe'ot

Q: What is the source for the custom of having long pe'ot?

A: First of all, it is similar to every mitzvah in which it is possible to be strict. May a blessing come upon one who is strict. There is an innovation in growing long pe'ot because usually having a stricture of quantity (having longer tzitzit, etc...) is for positive mitzvot and this is a negative mitzvot. We do not have other such examples. The commentators on the Shulchan Aruch (Yoreh Deah, chap. 181) discuss the issue of long pe'ot, insofar as some

authorities raise an issue based on the words of the Arizal that one should not mix the pe'ot of one's head with the pe'ot of one's beard (the five places it is forbidden to cut on one's beard). These are different mitzvot and represent different mystic lights. Therefore, when one's pe'ot reach one's beard, he should trim them. This is why Chabad Chasidim have short peyot. It thus appears that long pe'ot are a disadvantage, not according to the Halachah but according to the mystical teachings of the Arizal. There are authorities who do justify this custom together with the teaching of the Arizal. For example, see Shut Mishneh Halachot of Ha-Rav Menashe Klein (4:116, 5:124, 6:149) who wrote that it is explicitly written in the Shulchan Aruch that one should not touch his pe'ot, that we do not find anywhere any prohibition to let them grow, and that it is known that Rabbi Akiva Eiger would not even brush his pe'ot. By the way, it seems that a cohein in the Temple may not have long pe'ot since the Halachah says that it is forbidden for a cohein to be unkempt with long hair. What is long hair? Hair which has not be cut for 30 days. There is no problem for them to have a long beard, just long pe'ot. Therefore, when the Temple is rebuilt – may it be speedily in our days – cohanim will have short pe'ot.

Organ Donation to Arabs in Israel

Q: It is well-known that Ha-Rav supports organ donation. I feel uncomfortable with the idea that my organs may go to an Arab. Is there a problem with the organs being donated to an Arab?

A: You are correct that according to the procedures used in organ donation, a person cannot make a condition that his organs go to Jews and not non-Jews. There are two answers to your question. 1. In a best case scenario, a person can donate seven organs and it is possible that one would go to an Arab. This is like a tax: in order for six organs to save Jews, you also give one to an Arab. 2. The pool of organs donor is all encompassing. This means that non-Jews donate to us, including non-Jews from other countries. As a result, when I donate to an American in America, Jews will always receive organs, since we are in the pool and they will donate to us. There are countries who say: If you do not donate to us, we will not donate to you. Currently in Israel, the Arabs donate to us. They donate a lot. The two largest groups of donors in Israel are the Jews who made aliyah from Russia, apparently because they do not have extraneous mystical outlooks such as what will be with the body at the time of the Resurrection of the Dead, etc... and the Arabs for reasons which I do not know. If we say that we will not donate to the Arabs, they will say tomorrow that they will not donate to us. Therefore, when I donate to Arabs, in the end, I donate to Jews.

Q: This is an intellectual answer, but what about the emotion. What would Ha-Rav say regarding the fact that I am uncomfortable to give to an Arab?

A: It is the same answer but it must be said with emotion. Look, I remember a young man who died and he donated his organs and there was a woman who received his kidneys. The doctors told his parents: if he had not donated she would have died and he saved her at the last moment. What a miracle! One of his organs also went to a non-Jew and people ridiculed him but the parents were happy that he saved a Jewish woman. This is a true story. This is the same answer but with feeling. We can also say – don't you care about Jewish lives?! Don't you know that a 1000 Jews are waiting for a transplant and they will die without it. Put yourself in their place or it's your sister or daughter, and someone does not want to give because an Arab will receive too. Same answer with feeling!

A man with an unpleasant odor

Q: I know a man who consistently has an unpleasant odor. I bump into him quite often. What can I do?

A: You should send him an anonymous letter, one that is not insulting. You should say that we love you and blame yourself. For example. I am not blaming you but I am very sensitive and it causes me distress. It is possible that there are others like me – perhaps we are overly sensitive – but we think you should be careful to bathe, change clothing and use deodorant which will really help. Obviously, when he receives the letter he will be hurt, but in the end you are performing a kindness for him.

Special thank you to Fred Casden for editing "On the Air"



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