



Parashat Yitro 5769

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## Jealousy

[A talk given in the yeshiva during lunch]

Question: How does one overcome feelings of jealousy?

Answer: The solution is faith in Hashem. First of all, Hashem gives to each person exactly what he needs – no more and no less. After all, we believe that Hashem is omnipotent. Furthermore, Hashem is good. He is good to all and His mercies extend to all of His creations (Tehillim 145:9). If He does not give something to you, it is a sign that it is not good for you. Therefore, you do not need to be jealous that your friend is wealthy and you are poor, your friend succeeds in learning Torah and you have trouble, your friend is married and you are still single, your friend has weak urges and you have strong ones, etc... This is exactly how Hashem arranged it. Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov were extremely wealthy, while the prophets Eliyahu and Elisha were incredibly poor. Rabbi Avraham ben Ha-Rambam writes in the book "Ha-Maspik Le-Ovdei Hashem" (Sha'ar Ha-Perishut) that they were so poor that they did not know if they could get married because they had no money to buy any kind of housing or food. This is the way it was meant to be according to Divine directive. The reign of one's kingship does not impede on another's kingship (Berachot 48b and other places). You have received the best conditions in which to serve Hashem. The Rambam in "Moreh Nevuchim" wrote that the angels are greater than us and there is no need for us to be jealous of them. You can serve Hashem even if you are not an angel. A person should not say: Either I am the Chief of Staff or I am not serving in Tzahal. Each and every soldier has a role to play. One does not say: Either I will be a great Torah scholar or I will not learn Torah. Not true – "every man at his camp and every man at his banner" (Bamidbar 1:52). Each person receives his role. Therefore, everyone needs to be happy with his roles because he is needed there. Every person should say: The world was created for me. This part of serving Hashem and this part in the Nation of Israel is mine and no one can take it from me. Therefore, I do not need to be jealous of anyone and I should be happy with my lot. I am happy with my physical lot (Pirkei Avot 4:1) and I am happy with my spiritual lot (Pirkei Avot 6:6).



## 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: There are Torah scholars whom I greatly respected. When I became close to them, my level of respect dropped after seeing their weaknesses. How do I get that level of respect back?

A: They are not completely angels, but close to angels in relation to this generation. Ha-Arizal said to Ha-Rav Chaim Vital that he should not be too distressed over his deficiencies, because in this generation it is difficult to be a righteous person, while the earlier generation was on a much higher level. The same applies all the more so to us and our generation.

Q: Regarding the same issue, during the expulsion from Gush Katif, there were some Rabbis who ridiculed others and this was very damaging in my eyes.

A: Same as above. It is not easy to be a complete angel.

Q: If someone insults me and yells at me, is it permissible for me to respond in kind or should I keep quiet?

A: It is permissible to respond but it is preferable to ignore it. Sefer Ha-Chinuch 338.

Q: What is the blessing for coconut milk?

A: "She-ha-kol."

Q: Why do I have to save myself for marriage. In the meantime, I spend my life sinning. Why can't I be with my girlfriend, which would save me from the internet, clubs, etc...?

A: This happens when one is defeated in a battle. The greatest tragedy is when one is defeated without a battle and gives legitimacy to evil. Be strong and courageous.

Q: Is it permissible to do "netilat yadayim" with a disposal plastic or paper cup?

A: Some are strict, because it is disposal and therefore is not considered a vessel. But the basic Halachah is that it is permissible since it can in fact be used many times.

Q: Is there a way to give the benefit of the doubt to people who learn Torah full-time and do not say the "korbanot" (sacrifices) in the davening?

A: It is not obligatory (Chidah in Yosef Ometz), for learning Torah has the same effect of granting atonement (Chikrei Lev).

Q: It is a good idea to buy a new outfit to honor the Messiah and not wear it until he arrives – or is it a waste?

A: Give the money to the poor – it will help actualize the coming of the Messiah.

Q: Does a nursery school require a mezuzah and should it be affixed with a blessing?

A: Yes. The teachers eat there.

Q: Does an Ashkenazic Jew fulfill the mitzvah of Tefillin with Sefardic Tefillin?

A: Yes. But from the outset one should always follow the customs of their ancestor.

Q: Am I obligated to make up Psalms from Pesukei De-Zimra which I skipped when I was hurrying?

A: You are not obligated, but it is certainly appropriate.

Q: I dreamed that a good friend died. What does it mean? What should I do?

A: It does not mean anything; it happens to everyone and there is no reason to worry. If you are concerned, recite the "Hatavat Chalom" (improvement of a dream) which is printed in the siddur before three friends.

Q: Should a soldier wear his tzitzit out?

A: Certainly, as the Halachah requires. The soldiers of Bar Cochba also wore Tefillin.

Q: I said something positive about someone which caused someone else to say something negative. How do I fix it?

A: Fix the impression among those who are listening.

## Stories of Rabbenu — Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook

### Our Rabbi & Eating

#### Eating minimal amounts

In response to one Rabbi who said that Maran Ha-Rav Kook abstained from eating in an exaggerated manner, our Rabbi said: He did not abstain, but there are people who do not need a lot (see Even Shlomo chap. 2).

Our Rabbi was not interested in eating, and he only ate for health reasons. He ate foods which were praised in the Gemara such as olives, eggs, or honey, and no other food besides these entered his mouth. When the doctors instructed him to eat particular foods, he strictly fulfilled their instructions. In connection to this, he related the words of a doctor in Europe, who said that among hundreds of ill people whom they treated, only one precisely followed his instructions: Rabbi Yisrael Salanter, and it appeared that he was the only one who truly wanted to be cured. An example of our Rabbi's disinterest in eating: Our Rabbi once separated the tag with the name of the bakery from the bread in order to throw it out, but he put it in his mouth. When a student pointed this out, he removed it from his mouth and said in seriousness: "This is what happens when we do not pay attention, we need to pay attention when we eat." He then praised one Rabbi who was surprised one day why the sugar cube which he would suck while drinking tea during his learning was not melting like usual. When they checked, they found that he was sucking a button that fell off his clothing without his noticing. (Ha-Rav Yosef Kelner. See Sefer Chasidim 569 and Makor Chesed ibid., Magid Meisharim p. 50 and Even Shlomo, p. 32)

It once happened that a student came to take counsel with our Rabbi who was sitting in the library after morning prayers. Our Rabbi said to him: "You already ate morning bread?" The student responded: "I'll eat afterwards." Our Rabbi said: "No, morning bread comes first, as is written in the Gemara" (Baba Metzia 107b). The student asked: "And what about the honorable Rav himself?!" Our Rabbi responded: "Blessed is Hashem, I am not yet enslaved to the routine of eating."

Our Rabbi said: There are those who call "morning bread" (Pat Shacharit) - about which he was very particular – "Aruchat Ha-Boker" (breakfast), and it is possible that the word "Aruchah" (meal) derived from the word "Orchim" (guests), to teach you that in relation to

food we should be guests and not permanent residents. (Kinyan torah of Rav Yosef Elnakveh vol. 2, p. 74)

When he was informed that one student was eating extremely minimal amounts, he said to him: "Every person must eat in a normal manner in the amount which he requires."

Our Rabbi would sometimes eat breakfast in the afternoon. Sometimes after Yom Kippur he would only drink a little and delay a long time until eating. If it were not for the students who worried about his meals, our Rabbi would hardly eat anything.

They would bring him breakfast but he would not always eat it, even though he was particular about safeguarding the body. His mother, Ha-Rabbanit, would sometimes point out to him during the late hours of the night that he should eat something.

Our Rabbi had the custom to fast on his father's yahrtzeit. After one yahrtzeit, the students arrived for a class a few hours after dark and our Rabbi still had not davened ma'ariv since he was waiting for a minyan and he had not eaten. They davened and they suggested to our Rabbi that he eat before the class since he had not eaten anything all day. Our Rabbi rejected the idea: I am not enslaved to food. They said: Then only a cup of tea? He again completely rejected the idea: I am not enslaved to food! None of the pleas helped, and the class went on as usual into the night.



### **Shut She'eilat Shlomo - Questions of Jewish Law**

#### Shehechyanu on voting for the first time in Israel

Question: I have heard Ha-Rav tell the story that the Chazon Ish was asked: Should one vote in the Israeli elections? He answered: It is a mitzvah. They asked him: A mitzvah like matzah? He said: No, a mitzvah like maror. And Ha-Rav says that it is indeed a mitzvah like matzah since we have independence and our own State. Is it a mitzvah to the extent that someone who votes for the first time in Israeli should recite a Shehechyanu (since Maran Ha-Rav Kook ruled that one should recite Shehechyanu the first time he performs a mitzvah – Shut Orach Mishpat, pp. 268-269 and see Sefer Chayei Ha-Re'iyah pp. 117-119, Sefer Moadim Ha-Re'iyah pp. 215-217 and Likutei Ha-Re'iyah vol. 2, p. 140)?

Answer: One should not recite Shehechyanu for two reasons: 1. We do not recite a blessing on an act which is a quasi-mitzvah. The State of Israel is not the fulfillment of establishing the Kingdom of Israel, but rather a quasi-Kingdom of Israel, as stated by Maran Ha-Rav Kook in Shut Mishpat Cohain (p. 338). 2. No one performs the entire mitzvah by voting but only a part of the mitzvah which is similar to building the Temple.

#### Dried Figs

Question: I heard that a Rabbi said that it is forbidden to eat dried figs because of the bugs. What is Ha-Rav's opinion? If it is permissible, how should one check them?

Answer: It is permissible. Check them very well. See all of the details on the Kashrut website of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel.

## Precedence in Hitching-A-Ride (Tremvim)

(Shut She'eilat Shlomo vol. 2, #436)

Responses of Ha-Rav Ha-Gaon Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu Shilt"a, Chief Rabbi of Israel

1. Question: If there is room in the vehicle, is there a obligation to take someone who is standing in the hitchhiking waiting area because of "Midat Sedom" (conduct of the people of Sedom) of "One benefits while the other does not suffer" or is it pious behavior?

Ha-Rav: This is a full mitzvah. And the non-fulfillment is worse than "Midat Sedom" since in the case of "Midat Sedom" there is the possibility that this person can fulfill his need in an alternative way, but here he has no other possibilities, and he needs this kindness.

2. Question: Regarding who gets the ride, do we apply the principle "the first who comes merits" or are there other principles of precedence?

Ha-Rav: There are other general principles. For example, one should take the passenger who is traveling the farthest distance, and not one who needs to get out in the middle of the trip.

3. Question: If so, must I take one who lives farther away, like in Shiloh, before someone who lives in my settlement, Beit El?

Ha-Rav: The residents of Beit El take precedence in all cases since "The poor of your city take precedence."

4. Question: Are the two settlements of Beit El (alef and bet) considered as two settlements or like one settlement regarding the issue "The poor of your city take precedence."

Ha-Rav: In general, they are considered two settlements. Regarding this issue of hitchhiking, however, they are like one settlement since the trip takes the same road.

5. Question: Does a Torah scholar take precedence? Does a woman take precedence?

Ha-Rav: A Torah scholar and a woman take precedence. A woman takes precedence over a Torah scholar.

6. Question: Does a Cohain and Levi take precedence?

Ha-Rav: They do not customarily take precedence in these matters.

7. Question: There are young men who cut in a line of children who are before them with the claim that they are kids and they can wait.

Ha-Rav: There is absolutely no justification for this behavior. A child is like everyone else in this matter.

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