



On the Air with Rav Aviner - #74

From Ha-Rav's weekly radio programs in Israel

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Learning about the Torah of Maran Ha-Rav Kook

Q: I am interested in learning and understanding the Torah of Rav Kook. Is it possible to briefly define his Torah?

A: The Torah of Maran Ha-Rav Kook was defined by his son, our Rabbi Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, as "the Redeeming Torah," which is comprised of three parts: Torah, Redeeming, and the Redeeming Torah. 1. Torah – the Torah is what built the world. The Torah protects the individual and the Nation. It guides us in all situations. It is possible to see all circumstances and goals in it. 2. Redeeming – Maran Ha-Rav Kook understood that Hashem is redeeming His Nation: building the Land, allowing Jews to return to Israel, returning the Torah to Israel, etc... We see the revival of the Nation of Israel in its Land. 3. The Redeeming Torah – the revival of the Nation requires a soul and this is the Torah of Maran Ha-Rav Kook: the Divine guide for the Nation in its revival.

Truth in making a match

Q: Is there a need to relate to a young man that the woman I am suggesting for him to date for the purpose of marriage takes anti-depressant pills? If there is an obligation, who should relate it?

A: This is the general principle: a severe matter must be related and if it is not, it is deception, but an unimportant matter need not be related. An unimportant matter is what is brought in the Gemara in Yevamot (45a): A person has a non-Jewish father and a Jewish mother, he is Jewish and there is therefore no obligation to tell. Depression is severe in that it can ruin a marriage. But it depends: if she takes pills and thus does not suffer from depression, there is thus no depression. What is the difference if there is no depression on account of a natural process or on account of the pills? If the current state is stable and there is no risk of a future deterioration, there is no need to tell. But if there is a risk that the pills will not work properly and depression will return – a risk greater than a regular person to whom this can also occur – then there is an obligation to reveal it. Who should reveal it – the woman or the matchmaker? It does not matter. They should work it out and the person for whom it is most comfortable should tell him.

"Ma'aser Kesafim" for cat food

Q: My neighborhood (in Israel) has so many cats. They recently changed the garbage cans and the cats cannot open them. They are literally starving. It is permissible for me to buy them food with "ma'aser" money?

A: The huge amount of cats in Israel is a known problem. They are also a great benefit since – in their merit – there are hardly any mice and snakes. At the same time, we need to solve this problem and reduce their population by spreading chemicals in their food which will prevent reproduction. But "ma'aser" money is for the poor: first for poor Jews, then for non-Jews and only then for animals. Mercy for animals is certainly important but we must first be merciful to people. The proper order of concern is first people and then the cats.

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