



On the Air with Rav Aviner - #78

From Ha-Rav's weekly radio programs in Israel

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"Get Yourself a Rav"

Q: Does the concept of "Get Yourself a Rav" (Pirkei Avot 1.6, 16) mean that you must have one Rabbi for everything?

A: "Get Yourself a Rav" is not an obligation. It is not stated in the Rambam or the Shulchan Aruch that one is obligated to have a Rav but it is exalted advice. If a man has a Rabbi, the Rabbi can direct and guide him. He helps to exalt him in a spiritual sense. But it is not an obligation. A person can therefore have more than one Rabbi. He can also have a Rabbi for all questions and issues except for one. For example, the Gemara in Shabbat (22a) writes that Rava followed his Rabbi - who was called "Rav" - in everything except three cases. There is also a concept called "Rabo Muvhak," i.e. a Rabbi from whom one has acquired the majority of his wisdom (see Bava Metzia 33a). Nonetheless, there is a halachah in the Shulchan Aruch (Yoreh Deah 242.4) that it is forbidden for a person to give a halachic ruling or to establish a yeshiva without permission of "Rabo Muvhak." The exact wording is that one needs permission from one's foremost teachers - "Rabotav Ha-Muvhakim." But how can one have more than one "Rabo Muvhak" - after all a "Rabo Muvhak" is a Rabbi

from whom one has acquired the majority of his wisdom?! The Shach explains there (#12) he has "Rabo Muvhak" in Torah, "Rabo Muvhak" in Gemara, "Rabo Muvhak" in Halachah, etc... We see from here that a person can have various Rabbis, each in a different area. The ideal is obviously for a person to have one Rabbi for everything so that he can have a unified system of thought and practice.

Daily immersion in a mikveh

Q: Is it a daily obligation to immerse in a mikveh before davening?

A: There is no obligation. Ezra decreed that there is an obligation to immerse if one has a seminal emission, but as is known, our Sages ruled that we do not follow this as is written in the Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 88. In our time, it is a stringency if one wants to do so and it is a double stringency for one who is pure and wants to do so. A person is not obligated to immerse before davening and not on Shabbat, but there is an established custom to do so on Erev Yom Kippur (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 606.4). Chasidim do have the daily custom to immerse since they say: sadness is not a transgression but it is the worst thing and immersion is not a mitzvah but it is the best thing. "Mitnagdim" (non-Chasidim Jews) do not have the custom to immerse on a daily basis. One important "Mitnaged" Rabbi was asked: why don't you immerse? He answered: I immerse in the waters of knowledge. I immerse in the Torah which is a purifying fire. In sum: there is no obligation to immerse. If a person sees that immersion increases his holiness and awe of Heaven, he should immerse. If someone sees Torah or something else increases his holiness and awe of Heaven, then each person should follow his own path.

Establishing a yeshiva on Mt. Sinai (from Ha-Rav's video blog)

Q: I saw in the media that the President of Israel, Mr. Shimon Peres, suggested establishing a yeshiva on Mt. Sinai. I do not know if it was serious or not. What is Ha-Rav's opinion?

A: I did not hear this, but it is possible to establish a yeshiva anywhere. We obviously do not know where Mt. Sinai is located. There are many suggestions, but we do not know. Nonetheless, there is nothing holy about Mt. Sinai. And if Mt. Sinai is in the Sinai Desert, there are no Jews there and it is not under the control of the State of Israel. One needs to live within Eretz Yisrael and within the State of Israel. Before the establishment of the State of Israel, we lived everywhere in the Land of Israel. After the establishment of the State, we need to live within the State of Israel and it is forbidden to leave it. The proof is from King David who said (Shmuel 1 26:19): "they drove me away today from being connected to the inheritance of Hashem, saying: Go serve other gods." Our Sages explain in the Gemara in Ketubot (110b): Did anyone tell David to serve idolatry? Rather this teaches that anyone

who lives outside of Israel is like one who serves idolatry. But King David did not leave Israel, he was in Gat. But it was not under the control of Israel and one should not leave it. We do not know where Mt. Sinai is but it is logical to assume that it is in the Sinai Desert. Sinai. If so, there is no need to leave Israel to establish yeshivot, we need to establish them here in Eretz Yisrael.

A woman who does not want to immerse in a Mikveh (from Ha-Rav's video blog)

Q: What should a newly observant man do if his unobservant wife adamantly refuses to immerse in a mikveh? After all, he cannot even touch her if she does not immerse in the mikveh after her menstruation. Can he have marital relations since he is "anus" (in a situation beyond his control) or must he divorce her?

A: It is truly a tragedy that she will not immerse. However, he is not considered "anus," but he also does not have to divorce her. He needs to speak to her heart since all couples have issues on which one concedes to the other. He sometimes concedes to her and she sometimes concedes to him when something is extremely important to the other. He needs to say to her: I concede on certain things for you, please do so for me since this is extremely important to me. In such a situation, we should not be strict with her on all of the stringencies in the laws of immersing in the mikveh; he has to be as lenient as the Halachah allows. If they do not succeed in solving this issue, they should go to a marriage counselor and we hope that he will succeed in bringing peace.

The tenth man

Q: If someone is one of the first ten men of the minyan, but then leaves, does he still get the merit for being one of the first ten?

A: The merit remains his if there is a reason forcing him to leave. After all, he exerted the effort to arrive early.

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