



Ekev 5769

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The War of Every Mother to Stay Happy

[Translated from Rav Aviner's "Happy Women" by Chana Jenny Weisberg, creator of the "Jewish Mom Video Series" available at JewishMom.com]

G-d will help you, but in order for that to happen, you must, first of all, help yourself. "How can I help myself?" you ask.

In every way possible. This is an all-out war, a war on all fronts, and like in the army, you must use all available weapons.

So too, in order to be happy, you must use all kosher means, and all the kosher tricks at your disposal. These tricks don't get to the root of the problem, they will however solve it for the time being:

- Listen to music
- Read good books
- Listen to interesting classes
- Take trips and go to fun events
- Eat delicious (low-calorie) cakes
- Drink cans of juice
- Talk with your girlfriends until 3 AM (even though you still haven't cooked anything for Shabbat)

It doesn't matter! Your husband prefers a happy wife and a meal of sandwiches over a royal meal served by an angry and mournful wife. Food is not such an important thing. Anyway it disappears and it's as though it never existed.

It's much more important that you make yourself happy.

These tricks don't solve the problems at their root and they don't remove the difficulties and the crises...but these tricks can cause us to forget our problems, at least temporarily, so that it is possible to take care of the them. Just like the car mechanics say: "You can't fix the engine while it's under pressure." First of all, we need to remove our negativity.

To make ourselves happy is a matter of life and death, literally, because happiness can add years to your life.



Text Message Responsa

Ha-Rav answers hundreds of text message questions a week. Some appear in the parashah sheets "Ma'ayanei Ha-Yeshu'ah," "Olam Ha-Katan" and "Be-Ahavah U-Be-Eumnah." Here's a sample:

Q: Is it possible that there are Arabs free from sin?

A: Certainly.

Q: My mother is exhausted and asks me to say on the phone that she is sleeping. Is it permissible?

A: It is permissible to lie for the sake of peace.

Q: [A woman asked:] I feel spiritually weak and am not succeeding in praying. What should I do?

A: Pray to the best of your ability, at least the morning blessings.

Q: They say that there will soon be the War of Gog and Magog and two-thirds of the Nation of Israel will die. I am scared

A: No one knows the future. We will win this war and there is no reason to be scared.

Q: If this world is a hallway to the World to Come, why is there the Resurrection of the Dead which returns people to this world?

A: There are two Worlds to Come: 1. The eternal life of the soul after death. 2. The physical Resurrection of the Dead, and eternal life.

Q: Does one have to wash "netilat yadayim" after using the restroom?

A: This is a stringency. It is sufficient to wash your hands.

Q: They found Obama's name in the Tanach. What is the meaning?

A: It has no meaning. It is possible to find every name.

Q: A person wrote that he is the Messiah and there will soon be a war. I am scared.

A: He is not the Messiah. The State of Israel will certainly have wars, but there is nothing to fear.

Q: Is it permissible to wear a shirt with a picture of a skull?

A: One should not wear clothing which draw attention.

Q: Can a Rabbi tell if a man and woman will be a good match based on their names and birthdays?

A: These are not the deciding factors. What decides is valuing the other and love.

Q: Can a cochain study medicine?

A: Yes, it is a mitzvah. Ask a Rabbi how it is to be done.

Q: Should one honor a teacher even if he/she is not a Torah scholar?

A: Certainly.

Q: Is it permissible to download songs and movies from the internet?

A: No. There are copyright laws. It is only permissible on sites where it is allowed according to the law.

Q: Is it permissible to erase Hashem's Name from the computer?

A: Yes, this is not true writing but temporary writing, and the Torah did not discuss this type of writing.

Q: I once cheated on a test. I want to fix it. What can I do?

A: Learn the material from the test extremely well.

Q: Is it permissible to recite a blessing over artificially created perfume?

A: No.

Q: Where should I give Tzedakah: my yeshiva or another place?

A: Your yeshiva. The poor of your city takes precedence.

Q: Is it forbidden to hear a girl sing or watch her dance. How about play an instrument?

A: It is permissible with the condition that you do not stare at her.

Q: Have you got a supernatural remedy for staying healthy?

A: Prayer, repentance and giving charity.

Q: As a soldier, when I come back from strenuous security operations all night, I am extremely tired and I have no strength to pray.

A: Pray a shortened prayer: Morning blessings, Baruch She'amar, Ashrei, Yishtabach to Shemoneh Esreh, and Ashrei.

Q: What is the minimum length that one's earlocks have to be?

A: Five millimeters.

Q: Is one allowed to cook pareve food in a meat pot and then to eat it at a milk meal?

A: According to the Sefardim it is permitted, and according to the Ashkenazim it is permitted as well as long as the pot has not been used with meat in the last twenty-four hours before its present use.

Q: Should a girl recite "Modeh Ani" in masculine language or feminine language?

A: Feminine Language.

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

Humility – Part 4

When the Beit Midrash was in the dormitory building, the women's section was close to the entrance to the Beit Midrash. They hung a sign: "Women are requested not to linger in the hallway after daveing" [in order that women and men not intermingle]. When our Rabbi saw it, he asked that the note be taken down and rewritten in a more general manner: "The community is requested not to linger in the hallway after davening," in order not to offend the honor of the women.

With all of our Rabbi's care regarding issues relating to modesty, our Rabbi was also strict about women's honor. Before Kiddush on Shabbat day, he would ask over and over: "Are all the women here? 'Women are obligated in Kiddush during the day' (Berachot 20b)."

When the doctor informed our Rabbi that he could return home from "Neveh Simchah," where for many months he was recuperating from illness, he sat on his chair for a long time, and then slowly distanced himself from his bed. When he left the room, he burst out crying and explained the difficulty in his leaving: "The Divine Presence is above the head of the ill" (see Shabbat 12b). And when he was in Hadassah Hospital, he was once sitting on a chair, and hinted that he wanted to return to bed by saying: "The One who returns His Divine Presence" (from the end of "Retzei" in the Shemoneh Esrei).

Our Rabbi visited his brother-in-law, Ha-Rav Shalom Natan Ra'anan, in the hospital and took care not to sit but to stand in awe and caution as when praying, because of the statement of our Sages: "The Divine Presence is above the head of the ill" (see Shabbat 12b). Even when he left the room, he did not turn his back, but walked out backwards.

Shut She'eilat Shlomo - Questions of Jewish Law

Toy Animals & Dolls

Question: Is it permissible to have children's toy which are miniature models of various animals in one's home (whales, lions...)?

Answer: Based on "Do not make me" (Shemot 20:19), there is a problem to make and possess the image of an eagle, lion and ox (the vision of Yechezkel). Further, it is a problem to have images even if not used for Avodah Zarah (idol worship). In the case of a toy animal, however, it is "derech zilzul" (shaming them) and authorities therefore allow them.

Q: Is it permissible to have a doll which is a very good model of a human being?

A: The same applies for doll. Since a doll is thrown, gets dirty, etc., it is considered "derech zilzul" and thus permissible. Although some are strict to remove part of the doll so that it is not a complete figure.

*From Rav Aviner's Commentary on Birkat Ha-Mazon,
entitled Shir Ha-Ma'a Lot*

Later Additions to the Birkat Ha-Mazon
May the Merciful One reign

These requests were added at a later period to the Birkat Ha-Mazon. They express different personal wishes, and they exist in different forms. After we recall that the Master of the Universe is Beneficent and performs beneficent acts for the Nation, we add that He is the Merciful Father to each one of his children in a personal manner. This is a wonder: the first three wishes of the Jew are in fact for the sanctification of His Blessed Name in the world: "May the Merciful One reign." "May the Merciful One be blessed." "May the Merciful One be praised." Only after comes the request for a livelihood, and then requests for the Messiah. Truly, for a Jew, these exalted Divine and Messianic wishes are in his soul like the bread which he consumes.



*Family Matters - Ha-Rav writes weekly for
the parashah sheet "Rosh Yehudi" on family relationships*

Together

- *We had a daughter.*
- *Mazel tov!*
- *I decided to name her a particular name found in the Tanach.*
- *That's a beautiful name.*

- *But my wife does not agree.*
- *You have to figure it out, together.*
- *According to the Halachah, who has the right to name the child?*
- *Regardless, you have to do this together.*
- *Isn't naming a child an important matter?*
- *A very important matter.*
- *Therefore, do I have to consider my wife's opinion?*
- *You need to consider her opinion and she needs to consider your opinion: a marriage is built upon mutual consideration.*
- *But how can we do so? We have different opinions regarding this matter.*
- *Even people with different opinions can figure something out together. This is the heart of marriage.*
- *But our Sages say that in certain realms a man decides and in certain realms a woman decides. I want to know who decides regarding a name for the child.*
- *Marriage is not a contract which delineates who is granted authority in particular matters. Even in areas where the opinion of one member of the couple carries greater weight, you must always figure it out together.*
- *Regarding our question, there is no middle ground. The decision will either follow my opinion or her opinion. What then is there to figure out together?*
- *You must even arrive at one of these decisions together.*
- *If I understand what you are saying, you are suggesting that my wife and I should discuss and figure it out together.*
- *Yes, together.*

Special thank you to Fred Casden for editing the Ateret Yerushalayim Parshah Sheet



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