



On the Air with Rav Aviner - #95

From Ha-Rav's weekly radio program in Israel

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Crossing against a red light

Q: Is it permissible to cross against a red light? Is there a difference whether one is pressed for time or it is Shabbat and there are no cars?

A: It is certainly forbidden to cross against a red light because of two reasons, each of which is sufficient:

1. It is a law of the State and the laws are binding. We are obviously not discussing a law which is contrary to the Torah. According to the Torah, the laws of the State are obligatory.
2. It is dangerous – both in Israel and in the rest of the world. There are parameters where it is proper to place a stop light based on information gathered from experience.

Regarding Shabbat, to our great distress, you cannot be certain that there are no cars.

Hugging and kissing children

Q: Is it permissible for a father to hug and kiss his daughter?

A. Yes, a father may hug and kiss his daughter, even when she is grown up and even when she is married. Her entire life. And a daughter may hug and kiss her father. The same applies for a mother hugging and kissing her son. She can even kiss him when he is grown and when he is married. And a son can hug and kiss his mother – even when she is married, which most of the time – with the help of Hashem – will be to his father! The same also applies to grandparents and grandchildren. They are considered like a "great father" and a "great mother." Regarding brothers and sisters, it is an intermediate state where some things are permissible and some are not. All other relatives – uncles, aunts, cousins, sisters-in-law, brothers-in-law, etc. – are like strangers in this regard and it is forbidden to touch them.

Ritually washing hands in bathroom

Q: Is it permissible to wash "netilat yada'im" in the bathroom?

A: It is generally forbidden to wash "netilat yada'im" in a bathroom, and, on the contrary, if you just enter a bathroom you have to wash "netilat yada'im." This is what is written in the Gemara, but more recent authorities explain that our bathrooms are clean. This is similar to what the Gemara calls the "bathrooms of the Parsa'im" which was a hole and an incline which took the refuse outside of the bathroom. Our bathrooms are slightly different. The refuse is not immediately taken away, but it is completely cleaned. There are those who therefore explain that if someone enters the bathroom, they do not need to wash "netilat yada'im" when they leave. This applies even more so if there is a bathtub, washing machine, etc. It is not simply a bathroom, but a multi-functional room. The blessing must be recited outside and it is certainly preferable to wash "netilat yada'im" if there is someplace else.

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