



On the Air with Rav Aviner ~ #98

From Ha-Rav's weekly radio program in Israel

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Parents supporting children

Q: Parents supported their daughter and son-in-law for many years while the son-in-law learned in Kollel, but now they have decided to stop. The son-in-law will not allow the daughter to talk to her parents unless they give them all of the money they promised. What should the parents do?

A: This is certainly a desecration of Hashem's Name. First of all, parents have no obligation to give money to their children. The basic obligation is only to support child until they are six years old. According to a decree of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel after the establishment of the State, one must support children until the age of fifteen years old. After that, they can go out to work. Parents obviously help their children even after that, but it is a kindness and not an obligation. For this, the children should have gratitude and thank them each day. I do not understand what happened in this case. One must first be a human being. Ethics precede Torah. Before learning Torah, you have to be a good person. Perhaps the parents should speak with the Rabbi of our "scholar" and he will explain to him the proper way to act.

Killing mosquitoes

Q: I read in the name of the Arizal that it is forbidden to kill bugs. What is the law?

A: The basic Halachah is that it is permissible to kill mosquitoes that are bothering you, and this applies to mice and other animals as well. The Arizal was strict. Everyone is obligated to follow a law, but a stricture is the personal decision of each person. Ha-Rav Moshe Sternbuch has a Teshuvah on this issue in Shut Teshuvot Ve-Hanhagot (2:726). He was asked: Is it permissible to kill flies? He answers that there is no prohibition of "tza'ar baalei chaim" (cruelty to animal) for such small creatures. He quoted from the Yavetz (Shut Yavetz #110) that the prohibition of "tza'ar baalei chaim" applies to animals who perform labor, and it is doubtful whether it applies to dog and cats. Ha-Rav Sternbuch wrote that he thinks that this prohibition certainly applies to cats and dogs but not to these tiny bugs. It is therefore completely permissible to kill them. He also mentions that the Arizal would not kill any creature and explains that it was not on account of "tza'ar baalei chaim" but rather because of his great holiness that he did not want to destroy any creature for which there was some need in the world. In Shut Igrot Moshe (Choshen Mishpat 2:47), Ha-Rav Moshe Feinstein wrote that if possible it is preferable not to kill the insects, mice, etc. with your bare hands. His proof is that the Torah promises that in the destruction of the "Ir Ha-Nidachat" (the wayward city – see Devarim 13:13-19) that Hashem will instill those who carry it out with mercy. The Or Ha-Chaim (Devarim 13:18) explained there is a need for the promise since by nature when one kills it makes him cruel. It is therefore better not to kill the bugs, mice, etc. with your hands. This, however, is also a stricture and it is also permissible if it is not possible to do it any other way.

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