



On the Air with Rav Aviner - #111

From Ha-Rav's weekly radio program in Israel and more

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How does one response to hardship?

Q: We have experienced all types of hardships lately. Our house was broken into twice, and everything was stolen. I fell and broke my hand; our grandchild is in the hospital, etc. What should I do?

A: There are two answers: 1. If someone has hardships he should repent, pray and give Tzedakah (Musaf of the High Holidays). 2. A story: There was once a man who discovered that his Rabbi, in addition to all of his wisdom, also knew secrets such as understanding the conversations of birds, just like King Shlomo. He said to his Rabbi: Teach me how to understand the conversations of birds. The Rabbi said: It is impossible, it is a secret. The man pressured him and pressured him and pressured him, and the Rabbi wanted to free himself, so he said: You need to fast for a year. The man fasted for a year and said: Teach me how to understand the conversations of the birds. The rabbi was perplexed and said: You have to immerse yourself in freezing cold water every day for a year. The student did it and said: Teach me how to understand the conversations of the birds. The Rabbi trying to avoid him said: You have to immerse in boiling water for a year. The student did it and said: Teach me. The Rabbi saw that he had no choice and taught him to understand the conversations of birds.

One day the man overheard two birds talking above his head. One said: You see this guy below, robbers will break into his house in a half an hour and steal all of his belongings. He immediately called the police. They arrived and caught the robbers red-handed. The police rejoiced as did he. It is good to know what the birds are saying. Two weeks later, he overheard another conversation: You see this guy below, a fire will break in his house in a half an hour and will destroy all of his belongings. He immediately called the fire department. They arrived and extinguished the fire right when it broke out. The firemen rejoiced as did he. It is good to know what birds are saying. Another two weeks passed, and he again overheard the birds: You see this guy below, he is going to die in an hour. There was nothing he could do. There is no police or fire department which can stop the angel of death as it says: "There is no power on the day of death" (Kohelet 8:8). He walked broken-hearted in the street and he met his Rabbi. The Rabbi asked: What happened? He told him the entire story. The Rabbi said: You now see why I didn't want to teach you how to understand the conversations of birds. Heaven decreed that you would die but they had mercy on you, and instead of death all of your possessions would be stolen, but you stopped it. They still had mercy and instead of death all of your possessions would be destroyed by fire, but you also stopped it. Now the angel of death is coming and there is no way to stop it...

We therefore bless you and all of your family that you will have no more hardship and that these hardships will save you from death. May you live long and happy lives. Amen.

Shut She'eilat Shlomo - Questions of Jewish Law

The Rambam and the Mitzvah of Conquering and Dwelling in Eretz Israel

Question: If there is a mitzvah of conquering and dwelling in Eretz Yisrael throughout all generations, why doesn't the Rambam count it in his enumeration of the mitzvot?

Answer: Maran Ha-Rav Kook answered this question: It is not because conquering and dwelling in Eretz Yisrael is less of a mitzvah that he does not count it but, on the contrary, because it is greater than the other mitzvot. The Rambam explained in his principles for which mitzvot are included among the 613 mitzvot that he does not include general mitzvot which apply to the entire Torah (fourth principle). The mitzvah of conquering and dwelling in Eretz Yisrael is a general mitzvah since the essence of observing the entire Torah and all of its mitzvot is in Eretz Yisrael in particular. As a result, "Dwelling in Eretz Yisrael is equal to all of the other mitzvot in the Torah" (Sifri Devarim 11:17). One who looks in the Sefer Ha-Mitzvot of the Rambam, in the mitzvah of sanctifying the new month, can see how the Rambam understood the mitzvah of settling Eretz Yisrael as the root of all of the mitzvot (mitzvah 153). The Or Ha-Chaim

Ha-Kadosh similarly wrote: "For dwelling in the Land is a mitzvah which encompasses the entire Torah" (Devarim 30:20). This mitzvah is the root and foundation which stands above all of the mitzvot, the Rambam therefore does not enumerate it.

[Sichot Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah – Eretz Yisrael p. 100, Le-Netivot Yisrael vol. 1 p. 121 [161], Ha-Rav David Cohain Ha-Nazir in the booklet "Hitnotzetzut Or Ha-Geulah p. 17, Ha-Rav Shlomo Goren in Torat Ha-Moadim p. 36 and Torat Ha-Shabbat Ve-Ha-Moed p. 150 and Shut Tzitz Eliezer 7:48 in Kuntres Orchot Ha-Mishpatim chap. 12 - in the name of Maran Ha-Rav Kook]

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-Emunah." Here's a sample:

Q: Is it permissible to travel outside of Israel to visit my grandfather who is ill.

A: Yes, for a mitzvah such as this it is permissible.

Q: My health provider recommends vaccinations against Swine Flu, but I heard some doctors are opposed because there is not enough information about the side effects. What should I do?

A: Nonsense. Besides a tiny minority, doctors in Israel as well as in Europe and America recommend it as does the World Health Organization. Follow the majority.

Q: Is it permissible to buy from Arabs if items are much cheaper?

A: It is permissible with the condition that they pay taxes.

Q: Must one wash "Netilat Yadayim" after using the bathroom or is washing one's hands sufficient?

A: Some are strict, but it is sufficient to wash one's hands.

Q: What is the source for "Amen Meals"?

A: It is a new creation.

Q: My mom asked me to do something and my dad told me not to help. Who should I listen to?

A: Help your mom, since you do not listen to a parent who tells you to violate a mitzvah.

Q: Why is it forbidden for women to be drafted into the army?

A: It is immodest. The Chief Rabbinate of Israel.

Q: Can a woman daven in pants?

A: No, but even worse is not to daven at all. We do not tell a person transgressing to perform another transgression. Rambam's letter "Kiddush Hashem".

Q: What do I do with my father who drinks alcohol every day?

A: Ask him if he wants help to stop.

Q: Is it permissible to be a lawyer? These are not the Torah's laws.

A: Yes, it is a way to help the oppressed.

Q: Is it permissible to recite Shehechyanu for new shoes?

A: Yes, but not "May you wear them out and get new ones" if they are leather, since it will require killing another animal.

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