



On the Air with Rav Aviner - #121

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

Prepared by Rabbi Mordechai Tzion (Friedfertig)

Visit our blog: www.ravaviner.com

Questions in this issue:

1. "Yashar Koach" to Cohanim
2. Visiting non-religious parents on Shabbat
3. SMS Q&A

"Yashar Koach" to Cohanim

Q: Is it a proper minhag for everyone to shake the Cohanim's hands and say "Yashar Koach" after Birkat Cohanim? After all, they are obligated from the Torah to recite the blessing and they also cannot hear the prayers that are now being said.

A: 1. Regarding saying "Yashar Koach" even though the Cohanim are obligated in the mitzvah, there is a Mishnah in Shevi'it (4:2) which says that the poor people who are entitled to take the ownerless crops during the Shemita year would nevertheless go to the owner of the field and say "Thank you", even though the owner was obligated to allow the poor to take the crop from his field during that year. There are versions of the Mishnah which say that everyone agrees that this is permissible. The Rashash (ibid.) said that this Mishnah is the source for the minhag to say "Yashar Koach" to the Cohanim after Birkat Cohanim. He emphasized that even though the Cohain would be neglecting the fulfillment of a positive mitzvah from the Torah if he

did not recite the blessing, we learn that the circumstances which cause the giver to provide others with something does not diminish the receivers obligation to express gratitude. Ha-Rav Ovadiah Yosef in Yalkut Yosef (Tefila p. 338) also has written that it is proper to say "Chazak U-Varuch" or "Yashar Koach" based on this idea. Regarding the problem of missing out on the prayers during that time, this is improper. One should therefore say "Yashar Koach" quietly in order not to disturb others or wait until after the prayers so that it is not at the expense of the prayers.

Visiting non-religious parents on Shabbat

Q: Should I go to visit my parents on Shabbat even though they do not observe Shabbat?

A: There is no law that one is obligated to visit his parents. It is a kindness and as in every kindness, it is according to one's ability and the need. It is possible that your parents really need it: they are sick, lonely, etc... And according to your ability – this is a technical question: is it far or near? Do you have a car or time? And it is an emotional question: it is pleasant or difficult there? As a result, you do not have to go every Shabbat, this is extreme. And never going for Shabbat is also extreme. It is based on your ability and their need. It is not easy to quantify: perhaps once a month.

Q: What should I do when they watch TV and the phone rings?

A: Do not watch the TV and do not answer the phone.

Text Message Responsa

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

Q: Is it permissible to hang pictures of Rabbis in a baby's room where we change diapers?

A: Yes.

Q: Is education a wisdom which can be learned from non-Jews or only from the Torah?

A: From non-Jews as well, which is appropriate with the Torah.

Q: I accidentally ate dairy after meat. Do I say a blessing afterwards?

A: Yes.

Q: Was the story about the 93 Bais Yaakov girls committing suicide instead of falling into the hands of the Nazis correct according to the Halachah?

A: Yes. See Tosafot 57b d.h. kaftzu. But this story does not have historical documentation except for a letter which seems unreliable.

Q: What should I do if my parents call in the middle of a Torah class?

A: Discuss with them what you should do in such a situation.

Q: Do I have to tell my parents that I am meeting a young man for the purpose of marriage?

A: No. It is a personal decision.

Q: Why are pants forbidden for women when they are not only for men today?

A: It is a man's piece of clothing in its essence, and like other things it is not dependent on the prevailing custom.

Q: Why is it forbidden to touch a girl?

A: Before one benefits from food we recite one blessing, before one benefits from his wife, we must recite seven blessings under the chuppah.

Q: I don't call this the State of Israel. It is just a state like the USA.

A: You are mistaken, because in the USA only 25% of the Jewish children learn in a Jewish school or study in a non-Jewish school and learn in a Jewish after-school program one day a week. And in general, that is not our country.

Q: Rabbis tell me that it is forbidden to leave Israel because it will make my soul impure, but I do not feel this impurity. Is it permissible for me to travel there?

A: The Halachah is that it is forbidden, even if you do not feel it. Similarly, it is forbidden to eat something non-kosher even if you do not feel that it makes you impure.

Q: Is it permissible to study Kabbalah?

A: Only for great Torah scholars. Shulchan Aruch.

Q: I have a customer who constantly speaks ill of the Religious-Zionist community. How do I explain the Torah of Rav Kook to him?

A: It is a waste of time. Someone with bad character traits will not understand.

Q: Why are there Rabbis who announce that the Messiah will arrive on a given date and then he does not come?

A: The fact is that no one knows when he will come. Rambam, Hilchot Melachim 12:2.

Q: I was told that if I recite "Nishmat Kol Chai" 40 days straight, my prayer would be answered but it did not work?

A: It is certainly great to recite this prayer. However, it is not magic but a petition to Hashem. There is no Divine promise that it will work.

Donating Organs

Q: Is it permissible to donate organs after death?

A: It is a great mitzvah of saving lives. "Love your fellow as yourself."

Q: Including the cornea?

A: Yes, every organ.

Q: Isn't it a mitzvah to bury all organs?

A: It is superseded by the mitzvah of saving a life. And it also comes back to life in the recipient.

Q: Isn't there a fear that they will take the organ before the sick person is completely dead?

A: G-d forbid. They only take it from the person after brain stem death.

Q: What will happen to these organs during the Resurrection of the Dead?

A: A limb which was used for a great mitzvah will appear illuminated with an even greater light.

Special thank you to Fred Casden for editing "On the Air"



Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim P.O.B. 1076 Jerusalem 91009 Tel.02-6284101 Fax.02-6261528

www.ateret.org.il To subscribe, send e-mail to: mororly@bezeqint.net

