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# Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim

IN THE HEART OF THE OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM

## On the Air with Ha-Rav Shlomo Aviner

Rav Aviner answers questions of Jewish Law and faith on the radio in Israel on Tuesday & Thursday nights (To listen: [www.kimizion.org/shiur/shut.html](http://www.kimizion.org/shiur/shut.html)). On the Air presents a sample each week.

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### Questions in this issue.

1. Vow for a meal of thanksgiving
2. Locusts – parve or fleischig
3. Speaking "lashon ha-ra" (ill) about secular Jews
4. Mourner and "Sivuv She'arim" (Circling the gates of the Old City of Jerusalem)
5. Only a women's voice?
6. Preventing adverse affects at work
7. Peyot (Not cutting the corners of one's hair)
8. Stopping to pray for someone who is healed
9. "Zimun" for women
10. How many blessings?

### Vow for a meal of thanksgiving

Q: I am pregnant and I vowed that I would make a meal of thanksgiving to Hashem. My neighbors are still waiting to have children. I do not want to invite them, since it may upset them, but I do not want to have it without them, since if they hear they may also be upset. What should I do?

A: You should perform a "hatarat nedarim" (annulment of vows) before three Rabbis and give the money to the poor and hungry. It is certainly more of a mitzvah to give food to the hungry than those who have food. You certainly need to thank Hashem, but you can thank Hashem even without a meal. You correctly said that this can lead to upset and jealous as it says: "Why do you make yourselves conspicuous?" (Bereshit 42:1). A person should not display things to others which can cause negative feelings. You can also give the money to the poor in order for them to have a meal of thanksgiving and to announce that this is the

thanksgiving meal of so-and-so. Even if you planned to have the meal in your house, this is also considered a meal of thanksgiving, and then you do not even need a "hatarat nedarim." The essential point is to thank Hashem.

#### Locusts – parve or fleischig

Q: Are locusts parve or fleischig?

A: Locusts are parve like fish.

Q: Is it like fish which cannot be cooked with meat?

A: People do not cook locusts. Our Sages in the Gemara (Pesachim 76b) say that we should not mix fish and meat, since it causes "tza'arat" (skin disease), but they do not say this about locusts and meat. Therefore, one can eat locust with meat. Nonetheless, Ashkenazic Jews do not eat locusts since we do not have a tradition as to which types are kosher. Sefardic Jews from North Africa received permission to eat them. Yememite Jews also eat them.

#### Speaking "lashon ha-ra" (ill) about secular Jews

Q: Is it permissible to speaking "lashon ha-ra" about secular Jews?

A: The Chafetz Chaim writes that it is permissible to speak "lashon ha-ra" about an "apikoros" (heretic). Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, agreed that this is correct, but he said that this also opens up a breach to allow everyone to decide who is an "apikoros." I will decide that anyone who does not think exactly like me is an "apikoros." The entire House of Israel will then be full of "lashon ha-ra." It is permissible to me to disagree with a G-d-fearing Jew, but I do not have to consider him an "apikoros." Further, while secular Jews certainly seem to be heretics, many authorities have already ruled that they are "Tinokot She-nishbu" (literally Jewish children captured and raise among non-Jews), i.e. Jews who did not receive a proper Jewish upbringing and education. In order to be an "apikoros," one must be knowledgeable. Someone once came to our master, Rav Kook, and said all sorts of thing against the Tanach. Rav Kook said: You are right. He said: I am?! "Yes, if the Tanach is as you say then what you are saying is correct, but the Tanach is something else." He was not denying the Tanach, he simply did not know it. This is not an "apikoros," it is an unknowledgeable Jew. Secular Jews are not heretics, they are simply "Tinokot She-nishbu." They have not learned and do not know, therefore do not speaking ill against them. It is possible that a secular Jew is an "apikoros," but it is not so simple, because the "spirit of the time" is extremely strong. Sometimes someone did learn Torah, but there are all sorts of influences. The Rambam (Hilchot Mamrim 3:3) defines someone with a corrupt education as a "Tinok She-nishba." Today, however, one's education is not limited to one's parents, but includes the "street." What is the "street"? These are all of the possible "foggy" influences.

Radio, TV, Internet, books, etc... We build walls, but things still enter. There is a saying that the apple does not fall far from the tree. The Chief Rabbi of Israel, Rav Herzog, was once asked, what happened with his son Chaim, who became the President of Israel and who was secular? Rav Herzog said: The apple doesn't fall from the tree only applies with a usual wind, but an unusual wind can carry it far away. He was referring to the Tosafot on Baba Kamma 27b. It is therefore even possible for the son of the Chief Rabbi to receive a corrupt education. Not from the Chief Rabbi, but from what is going around in the "street." In short: Do not be quick to apply the term "apikoros" to anyone.

#### Mourner and "Sivuv She'arim" (Circling the gates of the Old City of Jerusalem)

Q: My father died a month ago. Can I participate in the "Sivuv She'arim" as I do each month?

A: "Sivuv She'arim" is a mitzvah, but it is not possible for you to participate. When you go, you meet all kinds of friends. The problem is not circling the gate itself, but meeting with friends. If you want, you can go alone. Not actually alone, but before or after everyone else.

#### Only a women's voice?

Q: Why is a women's voice considered nudity, but not other aspects of a woman?

A: In the same Gemara in Kiddushin (70a) which mentions "Kol be-isha erva – a women's voice is nudity," there is also a list of other things which are considered nudity. All of the senses: Sight, hearing, smell, touch and even thought. It is written in the book "Mesilat Yesharim" in chapter 11 on cleanliness, which deals with forbidden things about which people are not conscious, that it is forbidden to derive benefit from a woman with any sense and he brings many proofs.

#### Preventing adverse affects at work

Q: How can I avoid being adversely affected by the atmosphere at work?

A: I will give the advice which many follow. Before you go to work learn some of the book "Mesilat Yesharim." It will fill you with holiness, strength and courage. You should also learn it in the middle of the day and it will keep you on the right track.

#### Peyot (Not cutting the corners of one's hair)

Q: Does one need "peyot"? What about long "peyot"?

A: The Torah says that one must have "peyot" (Vayikra 19:27). It is forbidden to shave the corners of your head, but there is no obligation for them to be long. A half of a centimeter is certainly long enough. I did not say that this is the minimum, but it will definitely fulfill the

mitzvah. Some people are strict and have long "peyot." Why are they strict? It is like every mitzvah. May a blessing come to one who is strict. Some people, therefore, grow very long "peyot." This is your personal decision, but it is absolutely forbidden to shave them completely.

#### Stopping to pray for someone who is healed

Q: I was praying for someone who was sick and now – Baruch Hashem – she is healed. Should I continue to pray for her?

A: If you prayed for the person to be healed and she is healed, you no longer need to pray. If she is still in danger – she is still undergoing treatment or there is a possibility of a recurrence – you should continue to pray.

#### "Zimun" for women

Q: I was at a party for women and after eating they said the "zimun" (introduction to blessing after eating). It seemed strange to me. Is it permissible?

A: The Halachah is that three or more women who ate bread can recite the "zimun," but the custom is not to do so. It is not a transgression, but it is not the custom.

#### How many blessings?

Q: I drank water and I now want to eat something with the same blessing of "She-ha-kol." Do I need to say another blessing?

A: It is all dependent on your intention. If your intention was to eat the second food, you do not say another blessing. If your intention was not to eat the second food, you have to say another blessing. For example, I ate an apple and afterwards I say: "That was tasty. I'll have another," you need to say another blessing, since you changed your mind. There are many discussions regarding one who eats one apple and did not have intention for another apple, but it was in front of him. Or a guest who does not know what the host will bring out, so his intention is for anything that the host brings. Your question, however, is simple. It depends on your intention.