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Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim

IN THE HEART OF THE OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM

The Torah of Ha-Rav Shlomo Aviner

Parashat Terumah 5768

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archived at www.ateret.org.il/new/home.php

Would you like to ask Rav Aviner a question? E-mail mororly@bezeqint.net and the question will be brought to Ha-Rav and I will e-mail you the answer.

On the Website www.ynetnews.com this week (27 Shevat 5768)

[Written by Kobi Nahshoni]

Rabbi Aviner: Divorcees are just as valuable, if not more so

Rabbi of Bet-El speaks out against the ‘evil stereotype’ attached to divorcees in Judaism, calls on followers ‘not to judge anyone by past marital status’

In an article recently published in the Rosh Yehudi (Weekly parashah sheet distributed in shul each week in Israel) pamphlet, the Rabbi of Bet El and spiritual leader of the Religious Zionist movement, Rabbi Shlomo Aviner, called on Orthodox Jews to change their deeply entrenched prejudices against divorcees, and to start judging people based upon their character rather than their past marital status.

“Divorcees are just like all other women, they do not have horns,” the rabbi noted. “As a matter of fact, these women are probably more worthwhile because of their previous experience with married life.” [Rav] Aviner went on to state that divorcees have “feelings and emotions like all other women, and are just as G-d-fearing, dependable and worthy as their never married counterparts.

“I have no idea where all of the evil stereotypes regarding divorcees originated,” said the Rabbi. “These women do not have horns on their heads; in fact they probably have a far broader and more mature outlook on life.”

Addressing Orthodox men’s reluctance to marry divorcees, Rabbi Aviner stated that “one must naturally take the time to find out whether there is some character flaw in the person in question that brought about the divorce, but as a general rule you should always take the time to assess your future spouses’ character and nature before marriage, whether or not they were previously married.” Strong faith, fear of G-d, and dependability, explained the Rabbi, are all traits that one can most definitely find in a divorcee. “Divorcees do not fall short of other women in this respect, and their feelings and emotions must also be respected.”

In that vein, the Rabbi stated that divorced Orthodox women should be allowed a second chance at marriage, not only with a widower or fellow divorcee but even with a single man.

“One must not marry right off the bat like a blind fool,” advised the Rabbi. “A couple who marries must be well matched and compatible. That being said, “We must judge each individual based on their character rather than their past marital status.”

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: Can I read poems and stories by Bialik?

A: In general, it is permissible, asides for a few poems written after the pogroms which are defiant [to Hashem]. We obviously have better writings.

Q: Is it permissible to object to my father speaking lashon ha-ra (evil speech)?

A: Yes, with humility, and say: "Would you like to talk about this...?" [Thus changing the subject]

Q: I bought a disk and it is scratched and it does not play well. Is it permissible to burn another one from it?

A: Yes, this is like insurance.

Q: How should one act at a stop light on Shabbat?

A: One should be careful like on a weekday. We have to beware of danger on Shabbat as well.

Q: How does one check figs for bugs before eating them?

A: One should make sure that a dried fig does not have holes. Then one should open it and check it by light to be certain that there are not bugs' eggs inside. A black color is generally a sign of worms.



Stories of Rabbenu – Our Rabbi

Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook

Herzl's picture which hangs in our Rabbi's home

It is well known that our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook, had a picture of Herzl hanging in his home.

Three stories about the picture:

Rav Avraham Romer related: "The picture of Herzl once disappeared from our Rabbi's house and there was a suspicion that one of the students wanted 'to teach him a lesson.' When I suggested that perhaps the picture fell behind the desk, he permitted me to look there. When I found the picture, he was extremely happy and saw a need to comfort me because he saw that I had been distressed. He told me wondrous stories about Herzl and his position. He repeated the opinion of Reb Aharon Marcus z"l who said that Herzl was a descendant of Mahari Titzak (a famous Rabbi) and was from a Sefardic family. (Gadol Shimusha, p. 54)

When a particular Jew from the neighborhood of Geulah would come to our Rabbi's house, he would flip over the picture of Herzl. Our Rabbi once caught him in the act and asked him: Why are you doing this? Doesn't he have all five corners of his beard [which may not be shaved according to the Torah]?! (Iturei Cohanim #212)

A student of our Rabbi saw Herzl's picture hanging in the room where our Rabbi taught classes in his house, and it was hanging among the pictures of our great Rabbis. He asked for an explanation and our Rabbi gave an entire class on the fact that Herzl was the agent of the Master of the Universe in returning independence to Israel in this generation whether we like it or not. (ibid.)



Shut She'eilat Shlomo - Questions of Jewish Law

It snowed in Yerushalayim last week and Rav Aviner spoke about the laws of snow in his talk during lunch -

Hilchot Sheleg – Laws of Snow

Muktzeh on Shabbat?

Q: Is snow muktzeh on Shabbat?

A: The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 300:11) says that one may not crush ice on Shabbat. This implies that snow is not muktzeh, since the only problem is crushing. We can reject this by saying that perhaps the Shulchan Aruch is discussing snow which fell before Shabbat, but snow which fell on Shabbat is muktzeh based on "nolad" (something created on Shabbat). One can argue, however, that snow is like rain and rain is not muktzeh on Shabbat (Mishneh Berurah ibid. 338:30). Even though the rain was not necessarily in the clouds before Shabbat, it is not muktzeh. As such, what is the different between rain and snow?! Some explain that they are not the same since snow is never in the clouds. Tiny drops fall and they become snow close to the ground. Some therefore say that snow is "nolad" (Igrot Moshe, Orach Chaim 5:22). This is not exact, because the rain is also not necessarily in the clouds and made before Shabbat. There are tiny drops in the clouds and they thicken on Shabbat and become rain, just like snow. There are therefore many authorities who rule that snow is not muktzeh (Shemirat Shabbat Ke-Hilchata 15:36 and 16:44 in the name of Rav Tzvi Pesach Frank and Ha-Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach. This is also the opinion of Ha-Rav Ovadiah Yosef). Similarly, many authorities allow putting water into a freezer to make ice on Shabbat.

Making and throwing a snowball

Q: Is it permissible to make a snowball on Shabbat?

A: The Rambam (Hilchot Shabbat 10:12) writes that putting all sorts of things together is forbidden on Shabbat because of "boneh" (building). Some argue that making a snowball on Shabbat is therefore forbidden (Shemirat Shabbat Ke-Hilchata ibid). Some explain, however, that since a snowball is temporary it is permissible. One may therefore be lenient. Making snowballs before Shabbat which one sets aside to throw on Shabbat (within an eruv) is permissible. There is a question about throwing a snowball since it is crushed. One can argue that if the snowball is crushed it is an "unintended act which is not

beneficial to him," since the thrower wants a full snowball to hit the other person. This is not the intention of the one who is hit, but we follow the intention of the thrower.

Making a snowman

Q: Is it permissible to make a snowman of Shabbat?

A: Building a snowman is not a temporary, since it is meant to last. One should therefore not build a snowman on Shabbat.

Eating snow

The blessing before eating snow is "She-ha-kol," and there is no blessing after eating since one does not eat enough (ke-zayit – approximately the size of an olive) and one eats it slowly (like tea or coffee).

Blessing on seeing snow

Q: Is there a blessing on seeing snow?

A: No. It seems that snow was not a rare occurrence in Israel (see Tehillim 148 where King David said that we should praise Hashem for fire, hail, snow... and Yoma 35b where Hillel climbs on the roof of the yeshiva because he does not have enough money to pay to get in and snow falls on him).

Immersing in snow

Q: May one immerse oneself in the snow as in a mikveh?

A: If there is forty seah of snow, which would be about 200 gallons, in one area that is all connected to each other, there is a dispute whether one may immerse in it. It is also quite difficult since the snow must touch all parts of the body.

Q: How about immersing one's hands for "netilat yadayim"?

A: Again there is a need for forty seah. Since some authorities rule that one may immerse one's hands, no blessing should be recited in one's is required to do so.

Q: Can one's immerse a utensil?

A: This is also a dispute (see Pitchei Teshuvah, Yoreh De'ah 108).

I once went to the mikveh and it was undergoing repairs so there was no hot water for a long time. When I came in, there was a Jew in front of me. I said: Is there hot water? He said: My commanding officer in the army said that water is always hot. It is clear: In Russia it was negative sixty degrees, the water was therefore always hot. I said: You were in the Russian army. He said: Yes. I asked him: Gehinom (Purgatory)? He said: A mini-gehinom. I said: It is better here. He said: Much better. Incomparable. Baruch Hashem.