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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). On the Air presents a sample each week.

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Children putting on shoes in the proper order

Q: I am a nursery school teacher. Do younger children need to put on their shoes according to the proper order – right/left – or is it not necessary to be particular with them about this?

A: One does not need to over burden young children. It is therefore not necessary. If it is possible, however, it is certainly worthwhile since it is a proper custom.

Changing your mind for giving tzedakah

Q: A family wanted to donate money to build a shul, but the project is not progressing. Is it permissible to donate the money elsewhere?

A: It depends. If the family promised and made a vow, they need to give the money, since a person must stick to his word. If they want to change their mind, they need to go to three

Rabbis for a "hatarat nedarim" (annulment of vows). If they said "bli neder" (without vowing), they do not need a "hatarat nedarim."

Laws of Lashon Ha-Ra (speaking ill) in Shulchan Aruch

Q: Why aren't the laws of Lashon Ha-Ra mentioned in the Shulchan Aruch?

A: The Shulchan Aruch does not mention many, many things, since he does not mention simple and obvious laws and customs. The Shulchan Aruch also does not mention that it is forbidden to murder, that it is forbidden to steal and that it is forbidden to light a fire on Shabbat. It mentioned details which may not be known. The Rambam, however, does mention the prohibition of Lashon Ha-Ra in Hilchot De'ot (last chapter), since the Rambam mentions everything, including simple things. Many items which are not mentioned by the Shulchan Aruch are filled in by the commentaries on it. The Magen Avraham (156:2) mentions all of the mitzvot between people which were skipped by the Shulchan Aruch. For example, the Shulchan Aruch also skips "Love your fellow as yourself," the mitzvah of rebuking, prohibition of dispute, revenge, grudges, "Do not place a stumbling block before the blind," judging another person favorably, loving the convert, etc... The Mishnah Berurah (156:4) also mentions these items. Why does the Shulchan Aruch virtually skip over the mitzvot between people? Because everyone knew them. The laws of Lashon Ha-Ra are explained at great length by the Rambam, Rabbenu Yona in Sha'arei Teshuvah and the Chafetz Chaim did awesome and holy work and gathered them together from all of the different places.

Mourner visiting the cemetery during the first year

Q: May a mourner visit the cemetery each month during the year of mourning for his mother?

A: It is permissible to visit each week or each month. There are no restrictions. Some authorities say that one should not visit each week since it is not spiritually proper to live in a cemetery, but there is no halachic problem.

Cooking garlic and onions together

Q: Is it permissible to cook garlic and onions together in the same pan?

A: Yes, I do not understand why some say not to do this. There is no source for this practice.

Removing hair from food on Shabbat

Q: Is it permissible to remove a hair from food on Shabbat because of "Muktzeh" (not moving certain things on Shabbat) or "Borer" (selecting)?

A: It is not a problem of "Muktzeh," since it is disgusting. This is called "geref shel re'ei – chamber pot," and our Sages did not make a decree for disgusting things so that people could remove them. It is, however, a problem of "Borer," since it is removing an undesired item from a desired item. You cannot remove the hair by itself, but it is permissible to remove the hair with a little bit of food. It is thus no longer "Borer," since it is hair plus food.

Violating Shabbat to save a Shabbat desecrater in a car accident

Q: I heard that Ha-Rav said that it is permissible to save someone who has a car accident while violating Shabbat. Is this correct?

A: It is true that the Mishnah Berurah (329:9) says that we do not save a Shabbat desecrator, since he is violating Shabbat. In our time, however, Shabbat desecrators are considered "Tinokot She-nishbu" – Jews who did not receive a proper Jewish upbringing and education. They are not heretics or evil, they are confused. They do not understand anything. No one explained or taught them anything about Torah. We therefore relate to them as "Tinokot She-nishbu" regarding Shabbat desecration and all other transgressions.

Benefiting baby sister who died

Q: What can I do for the benefit of my sister who died at the age of one and a half, when we have not done anything for many years?

A: You can do what you have not done up to this point. Light a yahrzeit candle, say Kaddish, give tzedakah, repent, etc...and what you missed, you missed.

Tarot cards

Q: Is it idol worship to predict the future by using tarot cards?

A: It is not idol worship, but what is called "Darkei Emori" (the ways of the Emorites). It is not idol worship since you are not serving another god, but you are involved in nonsense. Something which has no logic reason and non-Jews perform it is called "Darkei Emori" or "Chukat Ha-Goyim" (the practices of the non-Jews). This is also forbidden according to the Torah. It is not the Torah prohibition of idol worship for which one is liable for death, but it is still forbidden. It is therefore forbidden to use such cards, as it says: "There shall not be found among you...one who practices divinations, an astrologer, one who reads omens, a sorcerer, an animal charmer, one who inquires of Ov or Yidoni or one who consults the dead" (Devarim 18:10-11). All of these activities are severe transgressions. While the Rambam says that these things have some ancient connection to idol worship, today they no longer do, and are therefore included in the prohibition of "Darkei Emor."
