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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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Questions in this issue.

1. One who is working on Purim
2. Learning the Torah portion of the week for one's husband
3. Kaddish after learning Torah and reciting Kaddish too many times
4. Headaches and Learning Torah
5. Invitation from a poor person
6. Immersing a pan for Pesach in a mikveh used for chametz
7. Tzedakah for found money
8. Prayers during surgery

One who is working on Purim

Q: My wife is a nurse who works all day, what should she do on Purim for Mishloach Manot and the Festive Meal?

A: There are two answers. 1. Mishloach Manot – It is possible to send it through an agent. You can be her agent. Furthermore, many married couples send the Mishloach Manot together. My wife and I send to certain families and we send enough food to fulfill the mitzvah for both of us. The Festive Meal – The nurses will eat. It is not written that one has to eat swan, quail and fish. It is not even written that one has to eat bread. One is required to eat. They will eat and this will be the Purim meal. If she wants to have something special, she can bring some cookies and a bottle of coke. 2. One who is involved in one mitzvah is exempt from another mitzvah. She is involved with a great mitzvah, she is taking care of the sick. Therefore, if there is no agent, no time, nothing – she is exempt.

Learning the Torah portion of the week for one's husband

Q: My husband works very hard and he is not able to fulfill the obligation of learning the Torah portion each week. Can I learn it with him in mind since I am the other half of his soul?

A: Certainly, but he also has to learn a little. Our Sages says that one must learn something in the daytime and something at nighttime, even if it is only two minutes. He can certainly do this. Even though he will only learn a small amount in quantity, the quality will be great, since he does not have a lot of time and it is a sacrifice for him.

Kaddish after learning Torah and reciting Kaddish too many times

Q: Should one recite Kaddish after learning Torah with a minyan, since the Aruch Ha-Shulchan said that we should not recite Kaddish too many times?

A: The Aruch Ha-Shulchan was upset that people were reciting Kaddish too many times during prayer. He is not speaking about learning Torah, and one must certainly recite the Kaddish after learning Torah. The Kaddish after learning Torah is mentioned in the Gemara in Sotah (49a). The Mourner's Kaddish is not mentioned in the Gemara, but in the Midrash. The Mourner's Kaddish is also not mentioned by the Rambam or the Shulchan Aruch, but by the Rama (Orach Chaim 25:13 and 132:2). One must therefore certainly recite the Kaddish after learning. The "custom" of reciting a Psalm, Kaddish, Psalm, Kaddish, etc... is not needed. One can recite two or more Psalms or prayers in a row followed by a Kaddish. The Aruch Ha-Shulchan is objecting to this practice. The practice of reciting Kaddish over and over is based on a German custom, mentioned by the Rama (Yoreh De'ah 376:4) that only one person recites a Kaddish at a time. There were therefore many recitations of Kaddish so that each mourner could have one. The Gabbai would pass out each Kaddish: Dr. Burgman, you have the first Kaddish, etc... The Sefardic custom is for everyone to stand in a line and recite the Kaddish simultaneously. Only one Kaddish is needed. Then there is an Ashekenazic custom of Poland in which everyone stands on their own and starts when they want, and everyone goes at his own pace and whoever finishes first wins. This is a bad custom since no one hears and no one understands (see Gesher Ha-Chaim vol. 1, chap. 30 #12). Nevertheless, in a place in which everyone recites Kaddish together, the Aruch Ha-Shulchan is correct: There is such a thing as a Kaddish in vain, just as there is a blessing in vain.

Headaches and Learning Torah

Q: The Gemara (Eruvin 54a) says that "one whose head aches should learn Torah." Do we understand this teaching literally?

A: The Maharal says in his book "Netivot Olam" that the Torah is the guide for a person for everything he does in life. Therefore, if a person has a "headache," i.e. he is confused in an intellectual sense, he should learn Torah. By learning Torah, with the help of Hashem, his head will no longer ache.

Invitation from a poor person

Q: If a poor person invites one to a wedding or a meal, should I attend since it may cost him money which he does not have?

A: If he invites you to a wedding or a meal, he wants you to attend. If you think that he is simply being polite by inviting you, you should attend and bring a gift that is at least equal to the cost of the meal. Even though you do not eat such expensive meals at home, this is a unique situation so that he does not lose money on your account.

Immersing a pan for Pesach in a mikveh used for chametz

Q: I bought a pan for Pesach and I want to immerse it in the mikveh now. Is there a problem to immerse it in the same mikveh which is used to immerse utensils used for chametz?

A: There is no problem since people generally immerse utensils when they are new. This means that one buys a utensil and his intention is to use it for chametz and he immerses it before he uses it. Even if someone immerses utensils in the mikveh after use, there is no problem since no one brings dirty utensils to the mikveh.

Tzedakah for found money

Q: Do I have to give tzedakah from money which I found?

A: Yes, any money which comes to a person – be it found, an inheritance, work, etc... needs to be tithed.

Prayers during surgery

Q: What prayers should one say while a loved one is having surgery?

A: It is always proper to recite "Tehillim" (Psalms) and of course – repentance, prayer and tzedakah push off the harshness of the decree.