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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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Showering after immersion in a mikveh

Q: Is a woman obligated to shower after immersion in a mikveh?

A: No, it is the opposite. Our Sages decreed that a woman should not bathe after immersion in the mikveh. Women use to bathe after immersing in a mikveh since they did not immerse in clean mikvaot like we have. They immersed in pits of water which were filled with mud and they emerged filthy, so they bathed afterwards. As a result, an error entrenched itself that both the mikveh and the bathing were required for purification. The Rabbis therefore decreed that it is forbidden to bathe after immersing in the mikveh (Shabbat 14a and Rama to Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 201:75). We have similar problems in our time. Although our mikvaot are extremely clean, there are women who are sensitive and feel that they need to bathe after the mikveh. Even though a man's immersion in the mikveh is less strict than a woman's immersion (since in the majority of cases he is not obligated to immerse), there is a story in the name of Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach that he would bathe before and after immersion in the mikveh. The students asked why he acted this way. Rav Shlomo Zalman said: I shower beforehand to fulfill "Love your fellow as yourself" – so I do not make the mikveh dirty and I shower afterwards because of those who do not fulfill "love your fellow as yourself." Regarding women who want to bathe after the

mikveh, it is permissible to wash the body one part at a time: the hands, then the feet, then the head, then the back, etc... Ha-Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv said a "chidush" (innovative ruling) that a shower does not wash the entire body all at one time but part by part. And even if the shower covers the entire body, each drop of water is still separate and touches a different part of the body. This "chidush" allows women to shower after immersion in the mikveh if she wishes, but she is certainly not obligated to do so.

Ketubah with sister

Q: Is it a problem for a woman to keep her ketubah with her sister?

A: No, it is not a problem. A married woman must have a ketubah. It is permissible to have the Ketubah with her in her house and there is no problem of "Ayin Ra – the Evil Eye" or she can have it with her sister or a friend. The essence is that the Ketubah not be lost. Under the chuppah, Ha-Rav Mordechai Eliyahu always says: "Here is the Ketubah and may you never use it," since it is only used in the case of a divorce. We want you to have a Ketubah in order that you never use it.

Lost Ketubah

Q: What does a couple do if they lost their Ketubah?

A: You go to a Rabbi and he will write you a new Ketubah. There is a special formula which is called a "Ketubah De-Irkesa" – a replacement Ketubah.

Preparation for receiving the Torah and oversleeping on that day

Q: How can it be that the Nation of Israel waited and waited to receive the Torah and then overslept on the day of the giving of the Torah?

A: People are complex. A man once told a joke: I visited Vilna and saw a person who made a great effort to learn Torah all day. And I saw a person who spent all day thinking about how to make money. And I saw a person whose inclination raged within him every time he saw a woman in the street. And I saw a person who would always close his eyes so he would not stumble in seeing forbidden things. And I saw a person who always spoke gossip. And I saw someone who struggled to keep his mouth closed. They said to him: what is so surprising – Vilna is a huge city with many Jews? He said: It was only one person! We have a good inclination and an evil inclination. We can also ask: how could the Nation of Israel be at Mt. Sinai to receive the Torah and sin with the Golden Calf, which our Sages compare to "a bride who engaged in extramarital relations during the wedding" (Shabbat 88b)? Because people have a good inclination and an evil inclination and both of them pull him. So do not fall asleep while standing guard, because the evil inclination works overtime.