



# Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim

IN THE HEART OF THE OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM

## On the Air with Ha-Rav Shlomo Aviner

From Ha-Rav's weekly radio programs in Israel

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Questions in this issue:

1. Buying from a store which does not charge tax
2. Educating about modesty
3. Drying lettuce on Shabbat

### Buying from a store which does not charge tax

Q: Is it permissible to buy from a store which disregards taxes?

A: Certainly not. There are three different levels:

1. If you buy in a store, you are not obligated to check if they pay taxes or not. It is certainly a good thing if you inquire, but it is not a transgression if you do not check, as it is the store owner's obligation.
2. If you know that he disregards taxes, it is forbidden to buy from him because you are helping him to sin. Our Sages say that it is forbidden to buy from a thief and they use the expression: "It's not the mouse that steals, it's the hole that steals" (Kiddushin 56b and elsewhere in the Gemara. Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Mishpat 356:1), i.e. if the mouse would not have a hole to conceal what he steals, he would not steal. In our situation, if the thief would not have anyone to purchase what he stole, he would cease stealing; and if the person who disregards taxes would not have anyone to buy from him, he would stop avoiding paying taxes. Therefore, one who purchases from a store which does not pay taxes is aiding in the transgression.
3. Even worst still – if a store owner says: "If you buy it with a receipt it is 100 shekels, but if you buy it without a receipt it is 80 shekels." If you buy it, it is not that you are helping him, you yourself are stealing! You are stealing and he is stealing.

### Educating about modesty

Q: I am a teacher in a high school for girls. How do I teach about modesty?

A: This is not an easy subject. Girls will wage war over their clothing, because they see it as an issue of free expression. We must therefore take a broader tactic than simply saying that is type of clothing is forbidden or that style is prohibited. Instead we should discuss about modesty and humility in general and that a person should not make himself conspicuous, draw attention to himself, or take pains to make an impression on others. We understand that a person feels a need to feel the "I" or else he is miserable. In order to feel the "I" a person does not need to impress others, but can do so by performing mitzvot and good deeds, by having sterling character traits and through faith in Hashem. This is what the Maharal of Prague explains in "Netivot Olam" – "Netivat Tzeniyut" that there are even good things which a person should save for himself. Our Sages compared a thigh and words of Torah (based on Shir Ha-Shirim 7:2). Why? Since just as a thigh is to be hidden, so too words of Torah are to be learned in private, not in public (Sukkah 49b and Moed Katan 16a). Torah learning is certainly something good but it is not to be used to impress others. The students of Rabbi Yehudah Ha-Nasi were once learning in the market and he said to them: Go inside (Moed Katan ibid.). Emotions are also not to be so noticeable. A person can relate his feelings to a friend or spouse, but not on the TV scene. I was once listening to an interview of the Prime Minister Golda Meir on the radio during the Yom Kippur War. After a difficult night the interviewer asked: Mrs. Prime Minister, and what did you personally feel? She answered: "What I personally felt is personal." This is a good answer! Emotions are personal. One does not need to pour into the open everything that is inside: not emotions, not opinions and not one's body. A person's body is private. Therefore, modesty is related to the overall trait of humility.

### Drying lettuce on Shabbat

Q: Is it permissible to dry lettuce on Shabbat using a hand-operated, salad spinner?

A: Yes, there is no problem since it is hand-operated, i.e. not electric, and there is no forbidden labor of Shabbat involved.

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