



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. A male lifeguard at a women's pool or beach
2. "Amen Meals"
3. Shemoneh Esrei with eyes closed or from a siddur
4. Reciting Kaddish for a non-relative

A male lifeguard at a women's pool or beach

Q: Is it permissible to have a male lifeguard at a women's pool or beach?

A: It is very difficult to find a female lifeguard since there are not exclusive courses for female lifeguards in Israel. It is sometimes possible to find a female lifeguard who is a "Baalat Teshuvah"- a woman who became religious. If it is not possible to find a female lifeguard, it is permissible to have a male one since it is a potentially life-threatening situation to swim without a lifeguard, people can drown. I am constantly warning people not to swim or immerse in a place without a lifeguard. I know people who drowned in places without a lifeguard even though they were excellent swimmers. Based on the fact that it is a life-threatening situation and that the lifeguard is involved in his job by making sure everyone is alright and is therefore not staring at women, it is permissible. My advice for women is to wear a robe until you reach the water and put it on when you leave the water.

"Amen Meals"

Q: What is Ha-Rav's opinion about "Amen Meals" (participants take different types of food, recite a blessing before eating and those who hear the blessings answer "Amen")?

A: This is a new creation. It is permissible to participate since they are not doing anything inappropriate; they are reciting blessings and saying "amen." Why do women do this? In order to increase merits for themselves, for the sick, for young women to find mates, etc... But if people want to increase merits they do not have to invent new venues. The problem of increasing merit has always existed, and we have already been told what to do: repent, pray and give tzedakah (prayers of the High Holidays). One should pray, give the money one would spend on the "Amen meal" to tzedakah and repent for things he is not doing well. Is it worthwhile to participate in an "Amen meal"? It is preferable to increase merits not through newly created paths but through well-established and clear ones. There is, however, another aspect to these meals: they are a social gathering. Some women are being constricted at home by running the home and taking care of the children and they need to get together with friends. Without friends they will die, as it says in the Gemara: "friendship or death" (Ta'anit 23a). Instead of bumping into friends at the supermarket and chatting, they recite blessings and answer amen. This is fine, but if it is to increase merits, Hashem already thought of this and gave us 613 mitzvot and we do not have to create new things.

Q: What about women gathering to separate challah?

A: This is also a new creation. If one bakes and uses a certain amount of flour there is a mitzvah to separate challah, but nowhere is it written that people should gather together to do so. It is possible to take that time and use it to fulfill other mitzvot – ancient creations.

Shemoneh Esrei with eyes closed or from a siddur

Q: Is it preferable to daven Shemoneh Esrei with my eyes closed or from a siddur?

A: This is no ruling regarding this. There are different paths to serving Hashem and each person should find the best way to daven which gives him the most proper intention.

Reciting Kaddish for a non-relative

Q: Is it permissible to recite Kaddish for someone who is not a relative.

A: There is no obligation but it is permissible and certainly a great mitzvah. If your parents are still living, you must ask permission from them to recite Mourner's Kaddish for someone else. You do not need to ask permission to recite Kaddish De-Rabbanan, since it is not a Kaddish for the deceased but over Torah learning.

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