



On the Air with Rav Aviner ~ #102

From Ha-Rav's weekly radio program in Israel and more

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Earrings for girls

Q: Is it permissible for a girl to have her ears pierced? What is the difference today between earrings in one's ear and earrings in other places on the body?

A: The Maharik (#88) says that the prohibition against following non-Jewish practices including acts that are arrogant and haughty. An earring in a usual place like an ear is permissible, an earring in an unusual place which draws attention of others is forbidden. It is related in the book "Ve-Alehu Lo Yibol" (vol. 2, p. 172) that the daughter of Ha-Rav Aharon Lichtenstein (Rosh Yeshiva of Har Etzion) wanted to get her ear pierced but her father was uncomfortable with the idea. They agreed that

they would go and ask Ha-Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach and follow his ruling. When they asked him, Ha-Rav Auerbach Shlomo Zalman said, "What is your question? By us, we give the boys a Brit Milah and pierce the girls' ears."

Q: Why is piercing an ear a "usual place"? Perhaps it was not always the usual place and now it is? Perhaps an earring in another place became the usual place?

A: We follow the reality, what religious people do at a particular time, and one who deviates from that is transgressing.

Tzitzit in the army (Q&A from Ha-Rav's blog)

Q: Is it permissible not to wear Tzitzit during strenuous military exercises?

A: Only a four-cornered garment is obligated in Tzitzit. If you are not wearing a four-cornered garment, you are exempt from wearing Tzitzit. People do not usually wear four-cornered garments today, there thus seems to be no mitzvah of Tzitzit. But we should not avoid the mitzvah. The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 24:1) says that it is proper to deliberately wear a four-cornered garment in order to put on Tzitzit. And this is indeed our custom. The basic Halachah is that if a man does not want to wear Tzitzit under specific circumstances, such as army exercises, it is permissible. But it is better and more proper to always wear Tzitzit during military exercises and during war. During the time of Bar Cochba, they waged war wearing Tefillin, we can therefore wage war wearing Tzitzit.



Shut She'eilat Shlomo - Questions of Jewish Law

"Amen" by a Women during Kiddush in the Sukkah

Question: Should a woman hearing Kiddush on Sukkot answer amen to the blessing of "Leshev Ba-Sukkah," since she is not obligated to dwell in Sukkah and the amen may constitute an interruption before the drinking of the wine?

Answer: While she is not obligated in the mitzvah, she can fulfill it. According to Ashkenzim, she recites a blessing over dwelling in the Sukkah if she fulfills it, while according to Sefaradim, she does not. There is therefore only a question according to the Sefaradim. Regardless, there is no problem of an interruption, since the blessing being recited is a necessary one for the person reciting it and it is not an "amen in vain."

Women bowing on Yom Kippur

Question: Can women fall on their knees during the Musaf on Yom Kippur since women were not located in the courtyard in the Temple and therefore would not bow? [In the book "Nefesh Ha-Rav" (pp. 214-215), Rav Soloveitchik rules that woman should not prostrate on account of this reason].

Answer: Yes. While women were not in the Temple courtyard in the times of the Temple, this is a minhag. As long as there is a modest place and she does not have a bad back, a woman may prostrate.



Text Message Responsa

Ha-Rav answers hundreds of text message questions a week. Some appear in the parashah sheets "Ma'ayanei Ha-Yeshu'ah," "Olam Ha-Katan" and "Be-Ahavah U-Be-Emunah." Here's a sample:

Q: I am in a place without water and want to eat bread. What should I do?

A: Wrap both of your hands.

Q: Is it permissible to eat fish with milk or cheese?

A: Some are strict, but the basic Halachah is that it is permissible.

Q: Is it necessary to kasher a utensil which was cooked in on Shabbat?

A: The Mishnah Berurah requires it, but Ha-Rav Ovadiah Yosef does not.

Q: Does a person die only after fulfilling his mission in life?

A: Not necessarily. He dies at the time when Hashem decrees.

Q: Is it permissible to buy a Kosher product in a closed package in a store which is open on Shabbat?

A: Yes, but it is obviously preferable not to do so.

Q: Does an Amulet work?

A: Not necessarily, especially in our time.

Q: Ha-Rav wrote that one should not give a boy's name to a girl or visa-versa. What is the source?

A: There is no source and it is actually not forbidden, but it is not proper to do so.

Q: How should we have a "Chanukat Ha-Bayit" (dedication of a house)?

A: The custom is that the first act in the house should be a holy one such as learning Torah or praying.

Q: I sin all the time. I get up and fall, get up and fall. I feel like Hashem is angry with me. What will be will me?

A: Be encouraged. Never despair. Everything will work out. And read "Mesillat Yesharim."

Q: When I was young, I stole little things here and there. The stores are no longer there and I do not even remember all of them. How do I repent?

A: Estimate the amount and give it to Tzedakah.

Q: Is there a source for a red string which people wear?

A: Yes, the Tosefta says that it is forbidden on account of "Darchei Emori" (superstitious practice, close to idol-worship).

Q: Perhaps we should stop answering text message questions since there are people who ask ridiculous questions and it shames the Halachah?

A: Out of 1000 serious questions I receive, there is one ridiculous one, and it is not correct to punish all the serious people because of a few stupid ones.

Q: Is it a sanctification of Hashem's Name if an Israeli sports team is victorious?

A: No. To be a sanctification of Hashem, it needs to be a mitzvah, and competitive sports are a "Moshav Leitzim" (frivolity).

Q: Is it permissible for children to participate in the second marriage of a parent?

A: Yes. There is no prohibition. It is a personal decision.

Q: Is it permissible to take medicine which does not have kosher certification?

A: If it lacks taste.

Q: My husband claims that a woman is supposed to bring the blessing of a livelihood, and since we have been married he does not have a livelihood and he blames me.

A: It is the opposite. Our Rabbis say that a husband should honor his wife and then there will be a livelihood.

Q: Should I get an amulet for the sake of my health?

A: See "Sefer Chasidim" that some amulets are nonsense and some cause damage. Therefore, you should give Tzedakah to the poor since Tzedakah saves from death.

Q: I spoke Lashon Ha-Ra about someone and he does not know. Should I tell him and ask forgiveness?

A: No, it will cause him pain. Rabbi Yisrael Salanter.

Q: Is there any value in refrain from buying German products?

A: Yes, but it is not obligatory. There are various considerations such as saving money and giving Tzedakah.

Q: What is the meaning of the stones we place on graves?

A: A sign of respect that we visited.

Q: What is the source of the term "baseless love" (i.e. just as the Temple was destroyed on account of "baseless hatred," it will be rebuilt on account of "baseless love")?

A: Maran Ha-Rav Kook.

Q: Is it permissible to read Tehillim at night?

A: Some are strict, but the basic Halachah is that it is permissible.

Q: Is it permissible to wrap parashah sheets in two plastic bags and throw them in the garbage?

A: No, they will be crushed up and mixed with the garbage in the garbage truck.

Q: Is it permissible to throw away a immodest piece of clothing or is it "Bal Tashchit" (wanton destruction)?

A: It is permissible. "Bal Tashchit" is only when destroying something for no reason.

Q: Is it permissible to charge my cell phone in a public socket?

A: Yes, it is a negligible amount and they will forgive it.

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