



On the Air with Rav Aviner - #123

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

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Wedding Q & A

Prayers by the bride

Q: If a bride prays for five or ten minutes and the assembled wait for her, why is such a short period of time considered "Tircha De'tzibura" – a burden on the public?

A: "Tircha De'tzibura" is not a matter of quantity, but of attitude. The bride has all day to pray. Why should she do it when everyone is standing around her waiting for her? There is a time for weddings and a time for prayer.

Words of Torah under the Chupah

Q: Our Sages said, "The reward of a wedding consists of the words," which Rashi explains to mean, "Words that bring joy to the bride and groom." Why then shouldn't one say words of Torah under the Chupah?

A: The main thing is to gladden the groom by such utterances as, "She's a lovely and pious bride," and the same goes regarding gladdening the bride. The point is this: Certainly one should utter many words of Torah during the wedding, but not necessarily under the Chupah. There is a time for a Chupah and a time for Torah learning. Yet we should leave this decision up to the officiating Rabbi.

"Guided tours"

Q: Why shouldn't the Rabbi give a "guided tour" of the ceremony under the Chupah so that people can understand what's going on?

A: Very good, but not just then. There's a time for a chuppah and a time for a guided tour.

Under the Talit

Q: Is it proper to place a Talit over the heads of the bride and groom?

A: A Talit being placed over the heads of the bride and groom is an ancient, holy Sefardic custom. I should add that it is also an ancient and holy custom of many Ashkenazic communities, and everyone should follow his own custom. The main thing is to conduct oneself modestly.

The bride's head-covering

Q: Should a bride cover her hair right after the ceremony?

A: As far as head coverings following the ceremony, for Sefardim who do not go into seclusion in a "Yichud Room," some Halachic authorities have ruled that even after just "Kiddushin" [the placing of the ring on the finger], the bride must cover her head (see "Sova Semachot, Ha-Rav Ya'akov Yosef, p. 175). Others have ruled that the ceremony itself marks the completion of "Nissu'in" [full marriage, hence the bride must cover her head] (see Sova Semachot, p. 52 note 7, and p. 132). Yet even for those who take the lenient view, Ha-Rav Ovadiah Yosef wrote, "According to the main letter of the law, the bride is entitled to remain throughout the wedding feast in the head-covering of the wedding ceremony," i.e. the head covering suffices, but she cannot appear without anything on her head.

The Yichud (seclusion) room

Q: how long should the couple stay in the Yichud room?

A: There are rabbis who say that twenty minutes in the Yichud room is enough, but this is obviously just meant to provide a general guideline. That specific time frame is not something from Moshe at Sinai. The main thing is not to exaggerate and to turn the Yichud room into an extended vacation.

The proper agenda

Q: What is the general idea that should guide the wedding?

A: Our Sages assigned a particular character to the wedding ceremony down through the generations, each community in accordance with its customs. There are many other fine activities that can be performed in life, but they needn't be pushed into the wedding ceremony.

Text Message Responsa

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

Q: Does one always have to follow the same Rabbi?

A: No, but the principle of "Get yourself a Rabbi" is a supreme concept in the service of Hashem.

Q: Is it permissible for a child to wear Tzitzit when they always get filthy?

A: No problem.

Q: Until what point of the day can one say Birchot Ha-Shachar?

A: After the fact, until sundown.

Q: Is it permissible to recite blessings and davening while barefoot?

A: Blessings - yes. Davening - no, one must stand as before a king.

Q: Why do we remove a tattoo from the deceased?

A: We do not.

Q: Does a towel need Tzitzit since we wrap ourselves in it?

A: No, it is not a garment.

Q: What is the path for becoming great in Torah learning?

A: There is no need to invent a way. Learning in a Yeshiva is the way to become a Torah scholar. See Tosafot Ketubot 63a. The only condition is to have the will. Rambam, Talmud Torah 3:1.

Q: Before long Iran will have a nuclear weapon and that will be the end. I wonder if it is worthwhile to bring more children into the world?

A: Nonsense. There is not going to be any end. May Hashem bless you with many children.

Q: Should I visit my parents or talk to them on the telephone if they always speak Lashon Ha-Ra?

A: Certainly. And if they begin to speak Lashon Ha-Rav humbly veer the conversation in a different direction.

Q: Why can't I say "Death to Arabs"? I hate them.

A: You can say "Death to terrorists," but not all Arabs are terrorists or support them.

Q: If I am in the army and someone turns on the light in a room on Shabbat, may I enter?

A: It is permissible. Do not intentionally benefit from the light, but you do not have to close your eyes. It is a benefit which comes to a person against his will. Pesachim 25.

Q: Is it permissible to read the Koran or the New Testament?

A: Koran – no, it is heresy. New Testament – No, it is idol worship.

Q: Should one stand for an elderly or important woman?

A: One who is 70 or older, a Torah scholar or the wife of a Torah scholar.

Q: How could those who went to save Nachshon Waxman have been killed, may Hashem avenge their blood, when "Harm will not befall one on the way to perform a mitzvah?"

A: Our Sages told us that when there is a frequent danger there is a chance that one may be harmed. Pesachim 8b. By the way, this applies to all the wars of Israel and I do not understand why you did not ask about them.

Q: Is it good to travel to Poland?

A: It is not. A. It is forbidden to leave Israel. B. It is providing a livelihood to murderers.

Q: Is there a "segulah" (spiritual act that yields a given outcome) to find a spouse?

A: Repentance, prayer and Tzedakah.

Q: Which takes precedence – paying back a loan or Tzedakah?

A: Paying a loan since we do not give Tzedakah on someone else's account.

Q: If my wife is not home, should I light Shabbat candles?

A: Yes, with a blessing. It is an obligation on the household.

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