

כרך כ"א ח"א

ח"א

נדברו

סימן מו

א"ז

והלבוש בסוף א"ח (בסוף המנהגים) כתב וז"ל, אמרו בספר חסידים כל מקום שאנשים יגשים רואין זה את זה כגון בסעודת נשואין אין לברך שהשמחה במעונו לפי שאין שמחה לפני הקב"ה כשיש בו הרהורי עבירה ע"כ ואין נוהרים עכשיו בזה ואפשר משום דעכשיו

מורגלות הנשים הרבה בין האנשים ואין כאן הרהורי עבירה כל כך וכו', עכ"ל. ורבים תמהו על דברים אלו, דהלא בגמ' מפורש להדיא דאפי' כשאין יצה"ר שולט אמרה תורה אנשים לבד וגשים לבד, ומכאן קושיא זו ועוד קושיות, יש שכתבו דהדברים לא יצאו מפי הלבוש ולא דסמכא הם. ונראה ליישב, דזה פשוט וברור, דגם כשאין יצה"ר שולט הייבים להפריד בין אנשים לגשים ומעולם לא עלה על דעת הלבוש להתיר לשבת באופן כזה, דהלא הלבוש בעצמו כתב דאין הרהורי עבירה כל כך, ומי התיר קצת הרהורי עבירה. אלא דהלבוש לא התיר אלא לברך שהשמחה במעונו, דלא אסרו אלא במקום שיצה"ר שולט ובמקום שמורגלות הנשים הרבה בין האנשים אולי אין יצה"ר שולט כל כך. אבל תמוה קצת שכל הפוסקים שדבריו הלבוש שגורים בפיהם כמו הב"ש, הש"ך, הבאה"ט, וכו' כולם סתמו לאיסור לברך שהשמחה במעונו ולא הזכירו דברי הלבוש כלל.

עכ"פ פשוט וברור דמסקנת הפוסקים דאסור מדינא דגמרא (מקרא דזכריה) לשבת בכל סעודת נשואין בחדר אחד ולאכול אנשים ונשים בחדר אחד, ואין לחלק בין סעודה שעושין באולם בליל החתונה לסעודה שעושין בביתם בשבעת ימי המשתה, אלא בכל ענין איסור גמור הוא לאכול בחדר אחד.

נדברו

סימן מז

א"ז

ומה שמע"כ העיר אודות האג"מ אין זה כל כך פלא על הגאון שליט"א באג"מ שמאחר שמצד אחד הוא מחמיר מאד ומוכיח דמחיצה במקדש גם בבהכ"נ הוא דאורייתא, ע"ז כותב ומסתפק שבחתונה אין איסור זה, אבל ח"ו לומר שנתעלם ממנו כל דברי הפוסקים הנ"ל. ועוד יש הרבה פוסקים שלא הזכירתי אבל עיקר יסודם הוא מכת המנהג

בכל אופן מה שנוגע למעשה המנהג הזה שנתקבל בכל ב"י שיש מחיצה בין נשים לאנשים בחתונה הוא חמור יותר מכל הראיות בש"ס ופוסקים ואין ספק שעוברים על לא תטוש תורת אמך כמבואר בש"ס, ואין לסמוך על הלבוש אף שמסתבר שלא תלמיד טועה כתבו, הוא מדבר מענין השמחה במעונו ואצלנו עיקר הבעי' הוא עצם המחיצה, אף שבמקומו הי' מי שהקילו בזה אבל בזמנינו לא פגשתי כאן באה"ק באף חתונה אחת בחוגים החרדיים שלא יהי' מחיצה ואם בזמנו הי' מקילין לכל הפחות הי' מלובשים בבגדי צניעות כראוי לא כן בזמנינו שאפי' אם מלובשות כראוי אבל זה הוי על טהרת האופנה ובפרט שיש שאינן מלובשות בצניעות.

① Subject: Separate Seating at a Wedding
June 16 1995

While there is certainly no prohibition against separate seating at a wedding, there is no absolute need for it either, halakhically. When I got married, I had a long discussion with Rav Soloveitchik zt'l on the subject and he told me straight that there is nothing wrong with mixed seating at the tables at a wedding. Of course mixed dancing is a different issue. Given the general mayhem at weddings, I can't see why anyone would feel self-conscious dancing. But then I'm a man...

Jeffrey Woolf

② Date: Thu, 6 Jul 1995 10:18:35 -0400 (EDT)
>From: Moshe J. Bernstein <mjbrnstn@yul.yu.edu>
Subject: Mixed seating at Weddings

As far as the Rov zt'l's views on mixing of the sexes at weddings is concerned, when asked regarding the seating of men and women at the huppah at my wedding (which was being held outdoors), he replied, "Let them sit any way they want." Since he was the mesaddeh kiddushin and we would have followed his decision regardless, I believe that this is an case of "maaseh rav" which cannot be disregarded easily.

③ Date: Mon, 10 Jul 1995 14:53:14 -0400
>From: Chaimwass@aol.com (Chaim Wasserman)
Subject: Mixed Seating at Weddings

Fact is that Rabbi Dr. Jeffrey Woolf represented Rav Soloveitchik's position authentically.

Let me append to this an incident which occurred with my soon-to-be-musmach son about to get married in the summer 1987. He wanted, as is expected of this generation, separate seating and a mechitah at the wedding. When the parent generation told him that they saw no necessity for even it "In Lithuania in Telshe they didn't have such an arrangement" he stridently rejected that assertion spouting all sorts of (worthy) Torah information.

It took strenuous urging to get him to call Rav Gifter whose opinion I personally heard years before directly from him of the halachic irony that has developed as a result of the mechitzah at a wedding. He told me in my car on the way to a wedding in the Catskills his estimation of the mechitzah and that in the original Telshe they didn't have such arrangements.

It was a motza'ay Shabbos, when he called R. Gifter at his home and spoke from my study behind closed doors. After about 10-12 minutes he emerged from my study sullen, even defeated. I asked him "Nu?" He replied in an barely audible undertone: "He said that R. Moshe holds that a mechitzah is a din in bais hamikdash only."

Date: Thu, 20 Jul 95 09:59:28 -0700
>From: yitzchok.adlerstein@support.com
Subject: Wedding Mechitza

Recent postings concerning the propriety of a mechitza at weddings ignore one crucial factor. A changing world requires Klal Yisroel [the Jewish people] to find ways to cope with changing pressures on its sense of kedushah [holiness].

Those who decried the recent insistence upon mechitzos in many circles, cited the Rov z"l, and yibadel l'chaim, Rav Gifter, shlit"a. I would add Rav Yaakov Kaminetzky, z"l, who reportedly argued that just as we possess a mesorah [tradition] concerning where we must be machmir [take a stringent view], we also have a mesorah that dictates where NOT to be machmir. It is inappropriate to call into question any part of our mesorah. And back in the old country, argued Rav Yaakov, men and women sat at the same table at weddings. Calling this halachically forbidden would, therefore, not only cast aspersions on great people of the past, but it compromises our view of the mesorah itself.

We would be wise, though, to take heed of another story about Rav Yaakov. He disagreed (as did Rav Moshe, z"l) with the many who pasken [halachically decide] that the mitzvah of chinuch [educating children] requires that three year old girls dress in full accord with standards of adult tznius. In other words, many people insist that their three year old girls always wear skirts and sleeves of the appropriate length, never wear pants, never go mixed swimming, etc. Rav Yaakov held that it was not until several years beyond that age - at a time that the girl could understand much more what tznius is about - that parents should train their child in this area.

He had a particular age in mind, whose number now escapes me. To a granddaughter who lived in my neck of the woods, the mother of small children, Rav Yaakov hastened to add a beautiful insight. "In Los Angeles, where there is so much pritzus [immorality], you must start the chinuch of tznius a year or two earlier."

Rav Yaakov was not arguing that there is a different Shulchan Aruch that operates on the West Coast. Halacha is halacha. He did understand, as we should endeavor to understand, that where the kedusha of Klal Yisroel is under siege, we develop ways in which to strengthen the fortress. Sometimes we dig a moat, and withdraw from the threat. Sometimes we find ways, by public demonstration, to reinforce values that need shoring up. Sometimes we do things that we don't really HAVE to halachically, in order to show our contempt for "alternative" life styles.

Separate seating at weddings, IMHO, should be seen in the same way.

We may not be required, halachically, to have it. But as the world swirls ever more vigorously around the opening of a moral sewer, insisting on this public standard of tznius proclaims an important message to ourselves and our children. Barriers, separation of the sexes, mechitzos have always been part of our antidote to possibilities of compromised kedusha. (See Rashi, beginning of Kedoshim, and his stress on GEDER ervah as synonymous with kedusha.

This point will undoubtedly not sit well with certain contributors to mail-jewish, but it is a matter that is quite basic to many others of us. It is not a matter I wish to debate publically.) The institution of separate seating is an appropriate way to remind ourselves of the traditional armaments with which we have successfully girded ourselves in the past - emphasizing our sense of and understanding of kedusha, even beyond the letter of the law.

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From: levenstein@netmedia.net.il (JACOB LEVENSTEIN)
Date: Thu, 8 May 1997 19:20:00 +0200 (IST)
Subject: Rabbi Aharon Rakeffet: Separate vs. Mixed Seating

At least let me tell you something from Rav Yosaif Breuer, something in his memory.

When they started the separate seating mishigas, Breuer was very upset. The Yekkes had a tradition that they never sat mixed. They sat husband, wife, wife, husband, husband, wife....., so eight people sat at one table. You sat next to your wife or next to a man. There was never any mixed seating. Then they started the binge. He made a tenai [condition]. Anyone know what the tenai was? He said, okay you're going along with this craziness. I can't stop it. It's American. We have to be frummer than we were in Germany; but on one condition, that boys and girls have to sit together. When they asked him why, he said anyone that is not married has to sit together. The purpose of a wedding is to bring another shiduch. Mitzvah goreret mitzvah.

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She'elot u-Teshuvot ha-Bach ha-Chadashot, Yoreh De'ah, no. 55

Because that particular dinner on the second evening they make only for relatives and they all sit in the "winterhouse" and they dine with the groom and several men and women;⁴⁹ therefore, they do not recite "*she-ha-simchah bi-m'ono*" in accordance with the *Sefer Chasidim*. This is not the case on the Sabbath at the Third Dinner which they make a great meal with men apart and women apart. Nor at the dinner on Sabbath eve and Sabbath morning, where the only diners in Cracow are the [unmarried] young men and women, [in which case] there are no sinful thoughts. Rather, [the benediction is omitted] only when they dine on the second evening with women who have had relations with their husbands.⁵⁰

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From: Nahum Spirn <spirn@omnifest.uwm.edu>
Date: Wed, 30 Jul 1997 14:18:47 -0500
Subject: Re: Mixed Seating at Weddings

Though I am sympathetic to R. Rakeffet's views on mixed seating at weddings, the truth is there *is* a difference between the Shabbos table and a wedding - namely, the dancing. Many frum women feel uncomfortable dancing in the presence of men, and the argument goes that if men are seated near the women's side of the dance floor (as will happen in mixed seating), the men who don't get up to dance will watch the women dancing. Rav Schachter recommends separate seating in our day because of the "leibedig" nature of women's dancing which is perhaps less tzniusdik than the more "tame" dancing of yesteryear.

Nahum Spirn

⑧ From: turkel@icase.edu (Eli Turkel)
Date: Wed, 6 Aug 1997 11:42:19 -0400
Subject: Mixed Seating

To back up Rabbi Rakefet's arguments I checked with another rabbi who is a musmach of YU from earlier days. He told me that he was at Rav Moshe Tendler's wedding which had mixed seating. Both sets of parents, Rav Tendler and Rav Moshe Feinstein were well known roshei yeshiva. He also told me that he sat at several other weddings at the same table with Rav Moshe Feinstein and his rebbetzin. He also said that both weddings of Rav Soloveitchik's daughters had mixed seating and he remembers Rav Soloveitchik walking down the aisle with his daughters. I find it hard to believe that these rabbis had mixed seating at their own children's weddings because yiddishkeit was just beginning in America.

As several other posters have mentioned it has been frequent at many weddings (especially at hesder weddings in Israel including my sons) to have a mechitza just for the women's dancing so that they are separate from all the tables and certainly separated from the men's dancing. The Talmud mentions chazal dancing in front of the bride to increase the joy of the bride. This obviously could not occur today.

I have checked with some people from Frankfurt and was told that the custom there was to have mixed seating at the wedding, with the extra proviso that a man sat next to his wife while his other neighbor was another man with the wife at the far end. Hence, no man sat adjacent to a woman except for his wife. While learning years ago at Yeshiva University some of the students inquired of Rav Mendel Zaks (son-in-law of Chafetz Chaim) what was the procedure at his wedding. He replied that while there was mixed seating, each table was occupied by a family. Thus, the mixed seating would only be between close relatives. Thus, we see that in practice many different customs were observed.