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Text Message Q&A #11

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Ha-Rav answers hundreds of text messages questions a day! Here's a sample:

#### Suit and Hat

Q: Is one obligated to wear a suit and a hat?

A: It is enough to wear respectful clothing based on the time and place in which you live (see Shut She'eilat Shlomo 2:232-233).

#### Broken Utensils

Q: It is written somewhere that eating from broken utensils causes forgetfulness. Where is it? Should we be concerned about this?

A: Kaf Ha-Chaim, siman 2. It is a minority opinion. There is therefore no reason to be concerned.

#### Pre-Natal Testing

Q: Should one have pre-natal testing or is it preferable to trust in Hashem?

A: Trusting in Hashem is only where Hashem explicitly informed you that He will take care of you without you having to exert any effort. He did not say such a thing in this area, and He commanded that one should follow the instructions of doctors (see Rabbi Avraham ben Ha-Rambam, Ha-Maspik Le-Ovdei Hashem, Sha'ar Ha-Bitachon. Kovetz Teshuvot of Ha-Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv vol. 1).

#### Meat and Milk to Children

Q: At what age must a child wait 6 hours between meat and milk?

A: Gradually, according to his ability (Shut Yabia Omer vol. 1 Yoreh Deah #4).

#### Lecture in a Shul

Q: Is it permissible to have a lecture on a secular subject in a Shul?

A: No. It is only permissible to have Torah lectures. During the time of the Holocaust, when it was only possible to gather in shuls, the "Seridei Aish" permitted secular lectures with the purpose of strengthening people's hearts and preventing them from going to the Reform Temples. He stipulated, however, that 1. the lecturer be G-d-fearing 2. that he begins with Divrei Torah or Tehillim 3. that there be no arguments, and 4. that they be held only during pressing circumstances. Shut Seridei Aish (1:16-17).

#### Lightning

Q: If one does not see the lightning itself but only its light, should he recite the blessing?

A: Yes. Piskei Teshuvot (227:3).

#### Fathers and Diapers

Q: Is it permissible for a father to change his daughter's diaper?

A: There is no problem.

#### Damages

Q: If someone broke an object of mine which is only available outside of Israel, is he obligated to travel there to replace it?

A: No. He has to pay its cost here.

#### Lengthening a Class

Q: Is it permissible for a teacher to lengthen a class which takes away from the break?

A: Everything is dependent on the school's rules.

#### Swallowing Blood

Q: My tooth fell out and I have blood in my mouth. Is it permissible to swallow the blood?

A: Yes. It is forbidden to eat blood because of "Marit Ayin". Therefore, it is permissible if it remains in one's mouth.

#### Woman Driver

Q: Is it permissible for a woman to drive a car?

A: Yes.

#### Spaying Cats

Q: Is it permissible to spay cats?

A: No. It is a Torah prohibition. But spaying a female cat is a Rabbinic prohibition and is permissible if done by a non-Jew. The same applies to a female dog (Shut She'eilat Shlomo 4:262).

#### Ultra-Orthodox and Army Service

Q: Why don't the Ultra-Orthodox serve in Tzahal?

A: They are good and righteous people, but they err in this area.

#### Blessing on Uniform

Q: Does one recite a blessing on being drafted into Tzahal? On the uniform?

A: Yes. One Shehechyanu on both of them (Mei-Chayil El Chayil vol. 1 p. 320).

#### Herzl

Q: I saw a movie which compared Herzl and secular Zionists to Anti-Semites and Nazis. How should I relate to it?

A: I don't understand how one can ask a question like this. It is clear that this is horrendous. It is a film of partial, incorrect quotes.

#### Self-Sacrifice

Q: Is it permissible, an obligation, or forbidden for a bodyguard of the Prime Minister to jump on him to be killed in his place?

A: It is permissible for him to sacrifice his life in order to save the Prime Minister. Hagahot Maimoniyot in the name of the Yerushalmi (Beit Yosef, Choshen Mishpat 426).

#### Wicked Father

Q: Am I obligated to honor my father, who disgraces and hits my mother?

A: There is a dispute whether one is obligated to honor an evil parent. Honor him to the best of your ability (Shulchan Aruch and Rama, Yoreh Deah 240:18).

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