



Text Message Q&A #14

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

Tree Hanging over into a Neighbor's Yard

Q: If a tree is hanging into a neighbor's yard and it is bothering him, is the owner of the tree obligated to trim it?

A: No. But, as opposed to what was previously published, the one who is being disturbed may trim it. Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Mishpat 155:32. Shut Chelkat Yaakov 1:175. Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Mishpat 417:4.

Beautiful Voice

Q: A young man feels that it is important for his future wife to have a beautiful singing voice. Is it permissible for him to ask a Shiduch to sing for him for a short time?

A: G-d forbid. It is forbidden to hear Kol Isha. He can ask his mother or sister to listen to her, but this is beyond the pale, and I would not recommend that the young woman marry him.

Verse on an Invitation

Q: Is it permissible to write a verse on a wedding invitation?

A: No, since in all likelihood it will be thrown in the garbage. See Rosh Hashanah 18b that the Sages established a holiday on the day they succeeded in removing Hashem's Name from documents (Shut Igrot Moshe Yoreh Deah 2:135).

Census

Q: Is it permissible to have a census in Israel?

A: Yes. They are not counting people but papers, as in "And he counted them in Bezek" (Shmuel 1 11:8 – Shut Mishpatei Uziel, Choshen Mishpat, Shut Inyanim Klali'im at the end of the book #2 p. 228. Shut Aseh Lecha Rav 6:378. Torah Sheleimah vol. 21, pp. 161-168).

Haircut

Q: As a barber, is it permissible for me to cut a person's hair not according to Halachah if that is what he requests?

A: It is certainly forbidden (Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah 181:4-6).

Wedding Dress

Q: I heard that it is forbidden for a new bride to lend out her dress during the first year. Is there such a problem?

A: There is no problem.

9/11

Q: Is it ethical to get married on the anniversary of the tragedy of the World Trade Center?

A: Yes. There is no disrespect in doing so. And, in general, we do not use the Christian date.

Mezuzah in an Office

Q: Is there a need to put up a Mezuzah in an office? After all, we don't live there.

A: Yes, since you eat and drink there.

Shiduch with Someone Whose Parents are Divorced

Q: Should I meet with someone whose parents are divorced, or is there a concern that he will have an inclination to get divorced?

A: You should meet. The essence is the person himself and whether or not he has proper character traits. The same applies to a woman.

Karaites

Q: Is it permissible to visit the synagogue of Karaites?

A: No. They are heretics (Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 159:3. Rama, Even Ha-Ezer 4:37).

Alarm Clock

Q: Is it permissible for me to set a loud alarm clock if it will also wake up my roommates?

A: Only if they agree, or if it is at the time when everyone needs to get up. If not, put it close to your ear in order not to disturb them.

Trimming One's Beard

Q: Is it permissible to trim one's beard with scissors without touching the skin?

A: Yes (Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 181:10).

Dyeing Hair

Q: Is it permissible for boys to dye their hair?

A: No. The prohibition of "Lo Tilbash" (the prohibition of men dressing or appearing as women - Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 182:6).

Ashkenazi

Q: What is the meaning of the word "Ashkenazi"?

A: A Jew who comes from the Exile of Ashkenaz, i.e. Germany. We should not use the term "Ashkenazi" rather we should say one who immigrated from the Exile of Ashkenaz, and we should not say "Sefardi", but rather one who immigrated from the Exile of Sefard. The same applies to Yemen, Ethiopia, etc. None of these is our land.

Hair Covering

Q: I am going out with a woman who has proper character traits and is G-d-fearing, and is a perfect match for me, but does not want to cover her hair after marriage. Should I stop dating her?

A: No. Since she has a good heart and is G-d-fearing, it is certain that she will agree.

BS"D ("With Hashem's Help" in Aramaic)

Q: Why do we write BS"D?

A: It is a new custom. One can also write B"H (in Hebrew). Neither possesses any holiness, since they are abbreviations.

Q: Is it permissible to throw a page with BS"D in the garbage?

A: Yes. And one may also bring it into the restroom (Rama, Yoreh Deah 276:10. Aruch Ha-Shulchan ibid. #28).

Cross-Dressing for Purim

Q: Is it permissible for a man to dress as a woman for Purim?

A: Some authorities permit it, but most forbid it. Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim end of siman 696 and Mishnah Berurah ibid (Aruch Ha-Shulchan ibid. #12. Shut Yechaveh Da'at 2:50. Orchot Rabbenu 3:60).

Cholent Egg

Q: If I ate an egg which was cooked in a meat Cholent, am I Fleishig?

A: Certainly. The shell is permeable.

Kiddush and Modesty

Q: How do I make Kiddush if there are married women there without their hair covered?

A: With your eyes fixed on the Siddur.

Meat and Milk

Q: I accidentally drank milk before the end of 6 hours from eating meat. Do I recite a blessing afterwards?

A: Yes.

Splitting the Bill

Q: When I go on a Shiduch with a young man, who should pay for the meal and the expenses?

A: You should split the bill. If it is only a drink for a few Shekels, he can pay. But if it is a significant amount, you should split it. After all, maybe he is poor, or maybe he has gone on a lot of Shiduchim, and it is not right that only he should pay. Therefore, even when he says that he will pay it all, you should insist that you pay half.

Notes in the Kotel

Q: Should one place notes in the Kotel?

A: No. We should pray to Hashem.

Q: If my students want to put in notes, should I stop them?

A: Let them do as they please.

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