



Text Message Q&A #16

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

Pictures of Victims of Terrorist Attack

Q: Is it permissible to publicize pictures of the victims of the terrorist attack in Itamar in order to shock people and awaken them to action, based on the ruling of Ha-Rav Moshe Feinstein (Shut Igrot Moshe, Yoreh Deah 2:150) which permits someone to bring organs to a rally against organ donation to shock people?

A: It is preferable not to publicize them since in our time it will weaken the resolve of the Nation. When the terrorists see our pain, they will be strengthened, as it is written in the lament of King David: "Do not relate it in Gat...lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice" (Shmuel 2 1:20).

Price Tag

Q: Should individuals take revenge against the terrorists by attacking the Arabs?

A: No. We should not attack Arab B. for an offense committed by Arab A. And even Arab A. should only be dealt with by Tzahal, who has permission from the Nation to wage war.

Organ Donor Card

Q: Is it permissible to sign an organ donor card? My parents oppose it.

A: It is a great Mitzvah of saving lives. Parents cannot prevent one from performing a Mitzvah (Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 240:15).

A Five Year Old Begins Torah

Q: In our days, should we follow the guideline (given in Pirkei Avot, 5:25) that a five -year-old begins learning Torah, a ten year old begins Mishnah, and a fifteen year old begins Gemara?

A: No. This Mishnah's ruling is not brought in the Rambam or the Shulchan Aruch. We should follow the curriculum practiced for generations in Talmudei Torah (of learning all them at the same time).

Plastic Surgery

Q: Is it permissible for a woman to have plastic surgery?

A: Not in order to increase beauty, but only in order to remove an ugliness (Shut Igrot Moshe, Choshen Mishpat 2:66. Shut Tzitz Eliezer 11:41).

A Beautiful Spouse

Q: Is it permissible to pray for a beautiful spouse?

A: You should pray for a spouse who finds favor in your eyes. You do not love because of beauty, but because you love, your spouse is the most beautiful in the world.

Uncovered Drink

Q: Is it permissible to drink something which remained uncovered over night?

A: In our time many are lenient, since the reason for the prohibition is the concern that a snake will put its poison into the drink, and snakes are no longer a common danger (Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 116:1. Rama, Yoreh Deah 60:3).

Journalist

Q: Is it permissible to be a G-d-fearing journalist?

A: Certainly. One who is careful not to lie, shame, mock, write Lashon HaRa, etc.

Blessing for the Bad

Q: How is it possible to joyously recite a blessing for the bad?

A: With the knowledge that it will be good in the end. Mesilat Yesharim, chap. 19. But this is a very high spiritual level. (When the Aderet's daughter [Maran Ha-Rav Kook's wife] died, the Aderet delayed coming to the funeral. When he arrived, he said: Since one is obligated to recite a blessing for the bad just as one recites a blessing for the good, I made an accounting and saw that I had yet to reach the level where I could recite "Blessed be the True Judge" over my daughter's death with the same joy as I recite Shehechyanu over her birth. I therefore needed time to work on myself in order to reach the feeling of "Just as one recites a blessing for the good." Tuvcha Yabi'u vol. 1, p. 345. Aleinu Le-Shabe'ach, pp. 287-288).

Wonders

Q: Is it true that Rabbi [so-and-so] performs wonders?

A: A fool believes everything. A heretic is one who does not believe anything.

Mitzvot and Feelings

Q: Can I perform a Mitzvah if I don't really feel the meaning of it?

A: Yes. A Mitzvah is service of Hashem, and it has value even without feeling, since it causes inner purification. When there is no pleasant feeling, it is an opportunity to serve Hashem for His sake, and not one's own personal benefit.

Forgetting to Light Shabbat Candles

Q: My wife fell asleep on Erev Shabbat out of exhaustion and I lit Shabbat candles in her place. Does she still have to light an additional candle each Shabbat (as a penalty)?

A: No, since the basic Mitzvah is to have the Shabbat candles lit in the house (see Shulchan Aruch, Orach #263).

Gum

Q: Is there an obligation to recite a blessing for chewing gum?

A: One must recite a blessing before, since one swallows the sweetness. But there is not a blessing after chewing the gum, since it is not a large enough amount of food (Ve-Zot Ha-Beracha, p. 393).

Basketball

Q: Is it permissible to play basketball on Shabbat?

A: Yes. But only in moderation, since Shabbat is for Hashem (Shut She'eilat Shlomo 1:185. 4:94).

Housework

Q: Do both parents have to take care of the kids and perform housework, or is this only required of the wife, and they husband can help when he wants?

A: It is a partnership. The husband can hire others to do the work...

Monthly Bus Pass

Q: Is it permissible to give one's monthly bus pass to another person?

A: No. It is only for the person who buys it. For questions such as these, one should ask the company who provides the service.

Vegetarianism

Q: Should one be a vegetarian?

A: No. Humanity should first be merciful to human beings.

Broken Mirror

Q: Is it permissible to sleep in a room with a broken mirror?

A: There is no problem.

Meeting with one's Fiancee

Q: How many times a week should I meet with my fiancee?

A: Only when it is truly necessary.

Rabbi's Picture

Q: Is it permissible to bring my cell phone into a bathroom, when it has a Rabbi's picture as the screen saver?

A: It is permissible. It does not possess independent holiness. It is to awaken fear of Hashem.

Mixed Marathon

Q: Is it permissible to participate in a marathon with men and women?

A: It is certainly forbidden. It is immodest. See Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 152:8.

Loving Non-Jews

Q: Is there a Mitzvah to love non-Jews?

A: No. But loving every person is a condition for gaining Ruach Ha-Kodesh. (Sha'arei Kedusha of Rabbi Chaim Vital).

Strictures

Q: Is it proper to be strict according to Halachah?

A: After fulfilling what is obligatory. See Mesilat Yesharim, Sha'ar Ha-Perishut.

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