



Text Message Q&A #17

Ask Rav Aviner: mororly@bezeqint.net

Prepared by Rabbi Mordechai Tzion

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

Coffee and Cake at Work

Q: Is it permissible for a man to bring coffee and cake to a woman at work, or visa-versa?

A: If it is in the framework of performing one's job, there is no prohibition. In general, however, one should distance oneself from signs of friendship with the opposite gender, but one should be polite.

Mourning Mother at Wedding

Q: How should a mother who is in mourning act at her child's wedding?

A: She can participate in everything. The same applies to the father. Hilchot Chatan Ve-Kallah of Ha-Rav Ovadiah Yosef.

Cohain Remarrying His Wife

Q: If a Cohain divorces his wife and then regrets it and wants to remarry her, is there a solution?

A: To our distress, there is no solution.

Loving My Wife

Q: I love my wife, but there are a few things about my best friend's wife that I admire, which is confusing me. How do I free myself from this?

A: Oy va-voy that you are looking at what is going on with your friend's wife. From the moment of the wedding, your wife is the only woman in the world. All other "women" are like monkeys to you. Your wife is obviously not an angel, she has faults, she is just a human being, but a person is judged by the majority of his actions and traits. If your wife was an

angel, she wouldn't have married you, since you are also not an angel and are merely human. Nonetheless, you should relate to your wife like an angel, since she is the only woman in the world to you (see Baba Batra 58a).

Shiduch

Q: Is it permissible for me NOT to relate at the beginning of a Shiduch that I am a Baal Teshuvah?

A: Yes. This fact is not important.

Shehechyanu over Daughter

Q: When does one recite a blessing over the birth of a daughter?

A: One should recite Shehechyanu when seeing her for the first time (Mishnah Berurah 223:2).

Taking Customers to New Position

Q: Is it permissible for a worker who leaves his job to bring his customers over to his new company?

A: No. They belong to the previous employer, unless he had a connection with them before the previous job.

Watching Someone's Bag

Q: Someone asked me to watch his bag at the bus station, and he has not come back for a while and my bus has arrived. Should I get on?

A: Yes, and ask someone else to watch it.

Cohain at Birth

Q: I am a Cohain. My wife wants me to be in the room during the birth of our baby. Is it permissible?

A: It is permissible for a Cohain to enter a hospital for the sake of a Mitzvah. The concern is a Rabbinic one and the chance of someone dying in the hospital at that time is low.

Dancing on Shabbat

Q: Is it permissible to dance on Shabbat?

A: Yes. What people do today is not considered "dancing." People go around in a circle and jump up and down. People do not dance in a way that must be accompanied by musical instruments and there is thus no fear that someone will repair a musical instrument. Aruch

Ha-Shulchan (Orach Chaim 339:9. See Shut Minchat Eleazar 1:29. Ma'aseh Ish vol. 5 p. 17. Ashrei Ish vol. 2 p. 128. There is a story about Ha-Rav Moshe Feinstein that a student in his yeshiva finally got married after many, many years. At the Aufruf, they were so excited that they (including Ha-Rav Feinstein) began to dance around the Bima. A student asked him: Isn't it forbidden to dance on Shabbat? Ha-Rav Feinstein responded: You call this dancing?!).

Popularity

Q: Why do Rabbis express their opinion when because of doing so, they lose "points" with the public?

A: If this is their opinion, they are obligated to express the Torah's position. Rabbis are not searching for popularity, but for the truth.

Beauty

Q: Is beauty subjective or objective?

A: Subjective. Netivot Olam of the Maharal, Netiv Ha-Emet on Ketubot 17.

Amalek

Q: Is Amalek a phenomenon or an actual nation?

A: An actual nation. But we do not presently know who they are. Although the Nazis were similar to Amalek, this is not a halachic proof (Ha-Rav Yosef Soloveitchik related in the name of his father, Ha-Rav Moshe - that any nation that conspires to destroy the Nation of Israel is considered by the Halachah to be Amalek. Five Derashot. Kol Dodi Dofek note #23. Nefesh Ha-Rav p. 97. But our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, was not pleased with what Ha-Rav Soloveitchik wrote in this matter, and he said that it was only a Derashah [a homily, or inspirational discourse], and one should refrain from saying things like this. Melumdei Milchamah p. 24).

Q: But isn't it cruel to kill women and children of Amalek?

A: The point is not to kill them, but to deter their actions so they will not dare to attack us again. Moreh Nevuchim.

Special thank you to Orly Tzion for editing the Ateret Yerushalayim Parashah Sheet

