



Text Message Q&A #20

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:

Kever Yosef

Q: Should one try to visit Kever Yosef?

A: Certainly. It is Eretz Yisrael. But obviously with the permission of Tzahal (Chief Rabbis of Israel. Kum Hithalech Ba-Aretz pp. 244-245).

Shlissel Challah

Q: Is there an authentic source for making Challah with a key in it (or in the shape of a key) on the Shabbat after Pesach as a Segulah for Parnasah, or is it superstition?

A: It is not forbidden but there is no meaning in doing so (This custom is mentioned in Ta'amei Ha-Minhagim pp. 249-250).

Yom Ha-Shoah in Nisan

Q: How was Yom Ha-Shoah established on 27th of Nisan when it is forbidden to mourning during Nisan?

A: It is true that it would have been proper to establish it on another day, and the Chief Rabbinate established 10th of Tevet as remembrance day for the Holocaust. But after it has already been established, we should not separate ourselves from the community.

Mt. Herzl in Nisan

Q: Is it permissible to organize a tour of Mt. Herzl during the month of Nisan?

A: Yes. Some permit visit graves during Nisan. While there are some who forbid it, it is permissible to visit "Kivrei Tzadikim" (the graves of the righteous), and those buried on Mt. Herzl are Tzadikim who sacrificed their lives for the Nation of Israel. (The custom of Ha-Rav

Shlomo Zalman Auerbach was to stand across from the national cemetery on Mt. Herzl and say: "These are the graves of the righteous who died sanctifying Hashem's Name. Why should I travel far distances?")

Washing Tzitzit

Q: Is it permissible to wash Tzitzit with the rest of the wash?

A: Yes. This is not considered disrespectful. It is also permissible to enter the bathroom with Tzitzit.

Suicide

Q: Is it permissible to perform acts for the ascension of the soul of someone who committed suicide?

A: Yes. His soul greatly requires rectification.

Criticism

Q: Someone was giving me a ride and texting at the same time. Should I mention to him that this is dangerous?

A: No. His car is like his house. If it is dangerous, give an excuse to get out.

Public Property

Q: Is it permissible to take some toilet paper to put in my pocket from a public bathroom?

A: Yes. Since it is a minimal amount, it is allowed.

Tzitzit with a Stench

Q: Can I wear my Tzitzit if they have a bad smell?

A: Hand-wash them and wear them while they are wet.

Praying for the Sick

Q: I want to pray for a sick person but I do not know his mother's name.

A: You can use his father's name, his last name or even just his first name. Hashem knows.

Blessing at Auschwitz

Q: My father is an Auschwitz survivor. When I visit Poland, should I recite the blessing "Blessed is Hashem who performed a miracle for my father in this place"?

A: No. This blessing is only for a super-natural miracle (Biur Halachah #218).

Sitting Next to a Woman

Q: Is it permissible for a man to sit next to a woman on the bus?

A: It is permissible if there is no other place, as is found in Baba Batra 57. The most important thing is not to stare at her.

Tefillin for a Lefty

Q: If a left-handed person is unable to find Tefillin for a lefty, can he put on a right-handed person's Tefillin while the Tefillin is upside down, or is it disgracing the Tefillin?

A: It is permissible, since the basic halachah is that the "Yud" of the knot must be facing the heart (Piskei Teshuvot 27:5).

Davening with a Minyan

Q: If I am tired, weak and do not feel so well, am I obligated to go to shul and daven with a minyan or is it permissible to daven at home on my own?

A: With a minyan. One needs to strengthen himself!

Broken Bone on Shabbat

Q: If a child breaks his hand or foot on Shabbat, do we desecrate Shabbat for him?

A: Yes. It contains an aspect of a life-threatening situation.

Digital Album

Q: Is it permissible on Shabbat to look at a digital album?

A: It is permissible if it is attached to the wall, and not on a computer, lest one adjust it.

Doula on Shabbat

Q: Is it permissible for a doula to travel to the hospital on Shabbat?

A: On foot or by riding in the vehicle together with the woman giving birth, but without a special trip for her and without stopping to pick her up.

House Number

Q: Does the number of one's house or apartment have any significance?

A: No. Superstition.

Holy Nation

Q: Did Maran Ha-Rav Kook really refer to the Nation of Israel as a Holy Nation, despite all of the sins?

A: Yes, when he served as the Rabbi of Yafo, a secular city, he signed: Servant to the Holy Nation in the Holy Land.

Seat Belts

Q: Is it an obligation to wear a seatbelt according to Halachah?

A: Certainly. For two reasons: A. It is a life-threatening situation. B. Obeying the laws of the State is required by Halachah (Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Mishpat 379:6. See Shut Chatam Sofer vol. 5 Choshen Mishpat #44).

Garden of Eden for Animals

Q: Do animals go to the Garden of Eden or Gehinom?

A: No. Only a person, who is created in the Image of G-d. Tiferet Yisrael on Pirkei Avot, chap. 3 on the Mishnah: "Beloved is man, who is created in His image".

Shortening Tzitzit

Q: Is it permissible to shorten Tzitzit with scissors or a knife?

A: Yes. But it is preferable to do so with one's teeth (Mishnah Berurah 11:61. Kaf Ha-Chaim ibid. #17).

Immodest TV Program

Q: Is it permissible for girls to watch a TV program in which young male and female singers compete to see who is the most talented?

A: It is certainly forbidden. This program is prohibited and one should not benefit from it.

Tefillin on a Watch

Q: It is permissible to wind Tefillin straps over a watch?

A: Yes. The Mishnah Berurah (27:16) permits it; the Aruch Ha-Shulchan (27:13) prohibits it. Since it is a dispute, you may follow the lenient position.

Laws of Mourning on Shabbat

Q: Is it permissible to learn the Halachot of mourning on Shabbat?

A: Yes. Torah itself makes one joyous.

Prophecy

Q: Does prophecy exist today?

A: Since the destruction of the Temple, prophecy ceased and was given to children and fools. Baba Batra 14. We hope that if people are claiming to prophesy, they are either children or fools, otherwise they are false prophets.

Swiss Flag

Q: Is it permissible to buy a product which has the Swiss flag on it, since it includes a cross?

A: Yes. It is similar to a decoration which is permissible.

Immersing Utensils

Q: If a utensil was used without being immersed, does it still require immersion?

A: Yes.

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Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim P.O.B. 1076 Jerusalem 91009 Tel.02-6284101 Fax.02-6261528

www.ateret.org.il To subscribe, send e-mail to: mororly@bezeqint.net

