



Text Message Q&A #24

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

Death Penalty for Terrorists

Q: Is it proper to impose the death penalty on terrorists?

A: Yes. In order that they not murder again, and so that others see and fear, and do not murder (Shut Igrot Moshe, Choshen Mishpat 2:68).

New Testament

Q: Is it permissible to read the New Testament in order to know it, but not to believe it?

A: It is definitely forbidden. Rambam, Hilchot Avodah Zarah 2:2.

Q: Is it permissible to learn it in order to combat missionaries?

A: No. Rather one should read books on how to combat missionaries.

Trust in Hashem

Q: Is it possible to say with complete certainty that things will be good for me?

A: No, since Hashem did not promise you. "Emunah U-Bitachon" of the Chazon Ish. But everything which Hashem does is according to Divine Providence.

My Wife's Cooking

Q: We were married a month ago, and I don't like my wife's cooking. Should I tell her?

A: Gently tell her what type of food you enjoy.

Hashem is Not with Me

Q: I am interesting in a particular Shiduch but she is not interested. I have repeatedly davened for it but my prayers have gone unanswered. I feel that Hashem is not with me, and it depresses me!

A: Hashem is not obligated to be with you, rather you are obligated to be with Him.

Q: What do I do in order to be with Him?

A: Learn Torah and perform Mitzvot. Mesilat Yesharim, chap. 1 and onward.

Q: And if I am with Him, He will honor my prayer?

A: He does what is good, but it is not necessarily according to your calculations.

Get Yourself a Rabbi

Q: Is it permissible for someone to have more than one Rabbi: one Rabbi who he follows in Halachah and another Rabbi who he follows regarding the State of Israel and Redemption?

A: Yes (Shach Yoreh Deah 242:12).

Divine Providence

Q: Does everything that happens to me have meaning?

A: Certainly. But we do not know what it is.

"Ha-Mapil"

Q: After reciting the blessing of "Ha-Mapil" before going to sleep, is it permissible to learn Torah?

A: Certainly. This is not a blessing over performing a Mitzvah or over receiving a benefit, where it is forbidden to have an interruption between the blessing and the action, but a general blessing of praise for the kindness of sleep. It is also permissible to speak when there is a need (Mishnah Berurah 229:4).

A Person's Name

Q: If someone changes his name, does he change his Beshert?

A: No.

Drugs

Q: Where is it written that it is forbidden to take drugs?

A: Pesachim 113a. Shut Igrot Moshe, Yoreh Deah 3:35. Nishmat Avraham, Choshen Mishpat 155:2 in the name of Ha-Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach. But there is no need for a source, since it is dangerous. Rambam, Hilchot De'ot, chap. 4.

Basketball Game on Shabbat

Q: Is it permissible to ask someone the results of a basketball game in which an Israeli team played, which took place on Shabbat?

A: Certainly not. It strengthens those who violate Shabbat. The Torah writes that someone who violates Shabbat receives the death penalty. We obviously would not kill anyone, but we should not flip to the other extreme – being interested in what they do.

Withdrawals

Q: Don't withdrawals by Israel contradict the idea that the Redemption has begun?

A: No. The Redeemer is revealed, hidden and then revealed. See Ramban, end of Parashat Shemot.

Redemption

Q: Where is the source that we need to advance the Redemption and not sit passively and wait?

A: All 613 Mitzvot bring the Redemption.

Rain

Q: Is rain now, after Pesach, a curse?

A: No, there was also rain beforehand. We are happy whenever it rains and we are grateful to Hashem.

Ha-Tikvah

Q: Is it permissible to sing Ha-Tikvah? After all, it is a secular song.

A: Although it is a secular song, the content has meaning. See Rambam in his commentary to Pirkei Avot 1:17. And we should not separate ourselves from the community. Further, the complete version of the song mentions the Temple, our Forefathers, perfecting our character traits and Hashem (Am Ve-Artzo vol. 2 pp. 251-252).

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