



Text Message Q&A #26

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:

Kiruv

Q: How can we help the entire Nation of Israel repent?

A: There is no wonder drug. We ourselves must be upright people. And, by the way, our Nation is returning to tradition. Just one example: there were once 20 members of the Knesset who declared themselves anti-religious, and now there are only 3.

Direction of davening

Q: If a Shul is not facing Jerusalem, in which direction should we daven?

A: Towards the Torah ark, but obviously the Rabbi who is there should decide (Be'er Heitev 94:3. Shut Meishiv Dvar 1:10. Shut Teshuvot Ve-Hanhagot 1:79. And not like the Magen Avraham ibid. #3 and Yad Eliyahu brought in the Be'er Heitiv ibid.).

Preparing on Shabbat

Q: Is it permissible to take food out of the freezer on Shabbat in order for it to defrost for Motza'ei Shabbat?

A: No. This is preparing on Shabbat for a weekday. It is also possible that the food is Muktzeh.

Monastery

Q: Is it permissible to enter a monastery in the framework of an educational field trip?

A: No. It is a place of idol worship.

Dog

Q: Does a dog have a place in the World to Come?

A: No. Tiferet Yisrael on Pirkei Avot 3:14 – Beloved is man who was created in Hashem's image.

Pride

Q: Is it permissible to tell my grandmother that I received a good grade on a test in order to make her happy, or is this arrogance?

A: It is permissible and a Mitzvah. One's intention is the deciding factor here.

Techelet

Q: Should one put Techelet on his Tzitzit?

A: Almost none of the great Rabbis agree with the proofs brought to identify it (Shut She'eilat Shlomo 4:12-20).

Profanity

Q: Is using profanity simply not nice or is it also a transgression?

A: It is a severe transgression. Mesilat Yesharim, chapter 11.

Learning Rebbe Nachman

Q: If someone wants to learn the Torah of Rebbe Nachman of Breslov, where should he begin?

A: With other books, and first learn Mesilat Yesharim one hundred times (see Likutei Ha-Re'eiyah vol. 2 p. 262 and Chayei Ha-Re'eiyah p. 172).

Standing for an Elder

Q: If there is an elderly person and I am not sure if he is above the age of 70, should I stand?

A: Yes. It is a doubtful situation regarding a Torah Mitzvah and we are therefore strict (Shut She'eilat Shlomo 1:351).

Tzitzit on a Reflector Vest

Q: Does a reflector vest with four corners require Tzitzit?

A: No. It is not a garment (Biur Halachah, Orach Chaim 10:11).

Temple Mount

Q: What is Ha-Rav's opinion regarding going onto the Temple Mount?

A: My humble opinion does not matter. After all, the Chief Rabbinate of Israel prohibited it.

Q: And what is the opinion of the great Rabbis of Israel?

A: Almost all of them forbid it.

Tattoo

Q: If someone is a Ba'al Teshuvah and has a tattoo from his past, is he committing a transgression at every moment?

A: No. There is no transgression in leaving it. It is obviously proper to have it removed but there is no obligation to do so (Shut Minchat Yitzchak 3:11. Shut Lehorot Natan 8:72. Shut Revivot Ephraim 8:308).

Zionism

Q: How should we answer those who claim: "It would have been better to stay in Exile and remain religious than returning to our Land and becoming irreligious"?

A: Nonsense. Some researchers say that since the Holocaust another 6 million Jews have assimilated. This is known as "The Invisible Holocaust." In New York State, 56% of Jews currently intermarry. And in other States, the number reaches 85%. Our Land, however, is full of Torah.

Money for Rabbis and Full-Time Torah Learners

Q: How do Rabbis and those who learn Torah full-time receive a salary when the Rambam prohibits it?

A: The Shulchan Aruch does not rule like the Rambam in this case. It is certainly improper to learn Torah for the sake of earning money, but someone who learns with proper intent is permitted to receive money for doing so. See Kesef Mishneh on Hilchot Talmud Torah, chapter 3.

Wedding Ring

Q: What should a woman do with her wedding ring if she gets divorced – return it or sell it?

A: It belongs to her. She should sell it.

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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

