



Text Message Q&A #29

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:

Washing for a Mourner

Q: If I am sitting Shiva, and am very sweaty and uncomfortable, is it permissible to put on deodorant?

A: Certainly. It is also permissible to take a quick and lukewarm shower, since we have the law of an "Istinis" (one who is physically sensitive).

Magen David Adom Training

Q: Is it permissible for girls and boys to touch during Magen David Adom training?

A: Certainly not. By the way, not only is it forbidden, but in general males and females should keep considerable distance from one another (Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 152:8).

Kippah for Girls

Q: Why don't girls wear Kippot? Don't they also need to take upon themselves the yoke of the Heavenly Kingdom?

A: Females, in a natural manner, possess more Awe of Hashem and do not require as many Mitzvot. Derush Al Ha-Torah of the Maharal says that anything which is inclined towards something can attain it more easily.

Shehechyanu upon Being Drafted into Tzahal

Q: At what point should one recite Shehechyanu when being drafted into Tzahal?

A: When wearing one's uniform for the first time (Mi-Chayil El Chayil vol. 1 p. 320).

End of the World

Q: Is the end of the world coming in the year 6000?

A: No.

Captured Soldier

Q: Is it permissible for a captured soldier to commit suicide?

A: In principle, it is permissible if he fears that they will forcibly extract information from him which will endanger his comrades, since the law of "Rodef" (literally "pursuer" - a case in which one is permitted to kill a pursuer so that the pursued person is saved from harm) applies to him. See the article about Masada by Ha-Rav Shlomo Goren. Today, however, according to the ruling of Tzahal, one should not commit suicide.

Stolen Object

Q: Is it permissible to buy a cell phone from someone who buys from thieves?

A: No. It is placing a stumbling block before the blind. Our Sages say: The mouse is not what steals, but rather its hole - i.e. without the hole, the mouse would not steal. Likewise, without a buyer, the thief would not steal (Gittin 45a).

Reserve Duty during First Year of Marriage

Q: Is it permissible to go to reserve duty in Tzahal during one's first year of marriage?

A: Yes. We are in a "Milchemet Mitzvah" (Obligatory War in which even a groom serves). You are permitted, however, to ask for an exemption (Ha-Rav Shlomo Goren, Piskei Hilchot Tzava, pp. 91-92).

Reviewing Torah Learning

Q: How many times is one required to review his Torah learning?

A: Maran Ha-Rav Kook wrote to his brother that he was surprised to hear that he only reviews his learning 3 times and that he himself does not remember well until he reviews his learning 10 times (Igrot Ha-Re'iyah vol. 1, p. 9). A student once asked Rabbenu Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah how many times to review one's learning, and he innocently answered: "101 times, as is written in the Gemara" (see Chagiga 9b)! And in Shut Teshuvot Ve-Hanhagot (1:539), Ha-Rav Moshe Sternbuch writes that he heard in the name of the Chafetz Chaim that if one does not review his learning 4 times, he does not fulfill the Mitzvah of learning Torah (also brought in "Meir Einei Yisrael vol. 2 p. 201). And once someone asked the Chazon Ish for a blessing to remember his learning. The Chazon Ish asked: How many times do you review? He responded: 6-7. The Chazon Ish said that he does not remember after 6-7 times of reviewing, but only after 20 times. The essence is that one reviews his learning.

Grade

Q: If I received a higher grade on a test than I deserved, do I have to tell the teacher?

A: Yes. We are obligated to have integrity and not to violate "Genivat Da'at" (deception).

Palestinian State

Q: How should we relate to the suggestion of the establishment of a Palestinian State?

A: It is a religious, national and ethical sin. And this is also true from the perspective of international law, since the League of Nations decided in the year 5680 to establish a state for us that includes all of the Judea, Samaria and Gaza, as well as East Jerusalem. And this was approved by the United Nations.

Meat and Milk for a Baby

Q: Our baby only falls aside after drinking a bottle of milk. Is it permissible to give it to him after he ate meat?

A: Yes. It is a case of a double doubt: The first doubt is that perhaps the Halachah follows the opinion of the the Rashba (Yevamot 114 and Shut Ha-Rashba vol. 1 #92), that it is permissible to give a child something to eat which is forbidden by the Rabbis (although we do not hold this way in practice – see Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 343:1), and waiting between meat and milk is a Rabbinic prohibition. The second doubt is that perhaps the Halachah follows the Tosafot (Chullin 105a) that there is no obligation to wait between eating meat and milk. It is forbidden to mix them, but if I eat meat, clean the table, wash my hands and brush my teeth, it is permissible to eat milk (although we do not hold this way in practice – see Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah 89:1). Therefore, there is no problem with giving a child under bar mitzvah milk after meat when there is a pressing need to do so (Shut Yabia Omer vol. 1 Yoreh Deah #4. See Shut Be'er Moshe 8:36 and Shut Chelkat Ya'akov 2:16).

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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

