



Text Message Q&A #34

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

Night of Shiva Asar Be-Tammuz

Q: What is the law regarding the night of Shiva Asar Be-Tammuz?

A: It is included in the mourning period, just as every day begins the night before. Shut Tzitz Eliezer (10:26) and Ha-Rav Yosef Soloveitchik. And not like the opinion of Shut Igrot Moshe (Orach Chaim 1:168. 4:112 #2).

Electric Bug-Zapper on Shabbat

Q: Is it permissible to use an electric bug-zapper to kill bugs on Shabbat if it is turned on before Shabbat?

A: Yes, just as other automatic items (aside from a specific few) – may function on Shabbat.

Dairy on Shabbat

Q: If a person enjoys dairy food, may he eat a dairy meal on Shabbat?

A: Yes. The essence is that he enjoys it.

Lack of Knowledge in Blessings

Q: If I do not know the blessing over a certain food, what should I do?

A: Learn about it, or ask someone who does know.

Thieves on Shabbat

Q: If one sees thieves breaking into a car on Shabbat, is it permissible to call the police?

A: Yes. It is a danger to the community (see Amud Ha-Yemini #17).

Shomer Negi'ah

Q: Is the prohibition of boys and girls touching (Shemirat Negi'ah) in order to keep them from having relations?

A: There is a double prohibition: A. It is a prohibition in and of itself, of deriving benefit from the opposite sex outside of marriage. B. It is also preventative, to keep from succumbing to temptation.

Magic Kit

Q: It is permissible to buy a magic set for a child?

A: Yes. It is permissible to rely on the lenient opinions. It will teach him that what is called magic is not really magic, but tricks (see Chochmat Adam 89:6. Shut Yabia Omer vol. 5 Yoreh Deah #14. Shut Yechaveh Da'at 3:68. Shut Betzel Ha-Chochma 4:13).

Skirt

Q: If I am going to a bar, is it preferable for me to wear pants and not a skirt in order to avoid causing a desecration of Hashem's Name (by looking religious)?

Q: You should certainly wear a skirt. We do not tell someone who is committing a transgression to commit another transgression.

Cohain Studying Medicine

Q: Is it permissible for a Cohain to study medicine? If so, how does he deal with the impurity from a corpse?

A: One may rely on the advice of Ha-Rav Shlomo Goren: the Cohain should ask a non-Cohain to take a metal key and touch a corpse, thus making the key the highest form of impurity (Avi Avot Ha-Tum'ah). The Cohain hangs then the key around his neck, placing himself in contact with the highest form of impurity. As a result, in a pressing circumstance (as in studying to be a doctor), the Cohain can rely on the position that when one is in contact with the highest form of impurity, it is permissible for him to come in contact with other forms of impurity.

Ascending to the Temple Mount

Q: Why don't we ascend to the Temple Mount? There are great Rabbis who permit it and other great Rabbis who prohibit it, and these and those are the words of the Living G-d.

A: 1. There are different levels among Torah scholars. Those who forbid it are the greatest Rabbis of our generation 2. The Chief Rabbinate of Israel, which is the deciding body in national issues, prohibits it. 3. Our Rabbis, Maran Ha-Rav Kook and Rabbenu Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, forbid it.

Sheva Berachot

Q: Is it permissible to stop in between each of the Sheva Berachot in order to explain them?

A: No. It is an interruption. Explain before or after all of them.

Singing during Sheva Berachot

Q: Is it permissible for everyone to sing "Asher Bara" and "Kol Sason" during the Sheva Berachot?

A: This is not proper, since it is forbidden to break in the middle of a blessing for the amount of time it would take to complete the blessing. Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 62:2. If the person reciting the blessing says it along with the others, they will not hear him, and if he waits, there will be a long break. Sefer Ha-Nisu'im Ke-Hilchata, p. 266.

Women's Jewelry

Q: If the purpose of wearing jewelry is to look beautiful to my husband, then why would I wear even one piece of jewelry when I go out?

A: Indeed, you are correct. It is proper not to wear jewelry at all when one goes out.

Blessing for One's House

Q: Someone told me that the "Blessing for One's House" is from the New Testament. Is this true?

A: I believe it is from the writer Rudyard Kipling, but you still should not hang it up. We have the Mezuzah, which is according to Hashem's command.

Gemara for Women

Q: Is it permissible for women to learn Gemara?

A: No. Shulchan Aruchm Yoreh Deah 246:6. By the way, an American Rabbi once joked: It is too bad that it is not forbidden for men to learn Gemara... (so that they would have a greater desire to do so).

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



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