



Text Message Q&A #38

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From the Archives



Ha-Rav Aviner with Ha-Rav Ovadiah Yosef

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

Terrorist Attack

Q: On the day of a terrorist attack, should we still go on our family trip which we planned to rejuvenate ourselves?

A: Yes. You should continue. This is similar to removing the dead from before the bride. See Rashi on the death of Nadav and Avihu. Their bodies were removed and the inauguration of the Mishkan continued.

Lubavitcher Rebbe's Tefillin

Q: In pictures and movies of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, we see that his Tefillin are on his forehead. How can we understand this?

A: He himself was asked this question. He answered that in his youth his hair started from that spot.

Mixed Beach

Q: If a man wears glasses and has terrible vision without them, can he go to a mixed beach (with his glasses off)?

A: G-d forbid. It is a forbidden place. And he can see somewhat.

Man Whitening his Teeth

Q: Is it permissible for a man to whiten his teeth, or is it forbidden on account of "Lo Yilbash" (not dressing or acting like a woman)?

A: It is permissible. Not in order to increase beauty, but to remove an unattractive feature.

Spoils

Q: If Tzahal is going to destroy an Arab's house, and the items within the house will be destroyed in any case, is it permissible for me to take them?

A: No. Tzahal decides what to do with them.

Learning Mishnayot

Q: What commentary should one use to learn Mishnayot after Rabbi Ovadiah Mi-Bartenura?

A: Tosafot Yom Tov. Rabbi Ovadiah Mi-Bartenura is like Rashi on the Gemara, and Tosafot Yom Tov is like the Tosafot.

Immodest Clothing

Q: What should I do if my wife wears immodest clothing and it is driving me crazy?

A: Have a heart-to-heart talk with her.

Chesed

Q: I have a friend whose wedding is a far distance away. It will take me a long time to get there, and I have an important exam tomorrow and am not ready for it. I could fail. What should I do?

A: Don't go. Every act of Chesed is based on one's ability. In this case, your friend's gain is minimal while your potential loss is great.

Counting a Minor in a Minyan

Q: Is it permissible to count in a minor in a Minyan in a pressing circumstance?

A: For Ashkenazim, only in a pressing circumstance and based on an explicit ruling of a Rabbi. Sefardim do not customarily do so (Shut Mishpatei Uziel 8:7. Shut Yein Ha-Tov 1:28. Shut Yaskil Avdi 5:8. Shut Yabia Omer vol. 4 Orach Chaim #9. Shut Igrot Moshe Orach Chaim 2:18. Shut Chelkat Yaakov Orach Chaim #28. It is related in Mi-Peninei Ha-Rav, p. 27: In the early years of Yeshivat Rambam in Boston, which was established by Ha-Rav Yosef Soloveitchik, it sometimes happened that they were lacking one for a Minyan. Ha-Rav Soloveitchik would rely on the opinion of Rabbenu Tam to count a minor. People would occasionally ask him if it was worthwhile to be strict and to have the minor hold a Chumash. Ha-Rav Soloveitchik would point out that Rabbenu Tam say that this is a ridiculous Minhag. And he would add that it is better for the minor to hold a Siddur than a Chumash, so he could daven properly).

Anger at Parents

Q: During therapy, I express anger at my parents for what they did to me, but our Sages teach that one who gets angry is like one who worships idols. What should I do?

A: It is permissible during therapy, since the purpose of therapy is to liberate yourself from the anger.

Tzedakah and Smoking

Q: Should I give Tzedakah to a poor woman when there is a good chance she will buy cigarettes with the money?

A: Give her food or other essential items.

Missionary

Q: What should I do if I see a missionary operating on a bus?

A: Approach the people and explain why they should not listen to him.

Maran Ha-Rav Kook and the Arizal

Q: Is it true that Rav Kook understood the writings of the Arizal better than Rabbi Chaim Vital and the Zohar better than the Arizal?

A: This is incorrect. But Maran Ha-Rav Kook was given the power of explanation from heaven.

Killing Bugs and Mice

Q: Is it permissible to killed flies, ants, mice, etc. who are bothering you?

A: Yes. Since it is for a human need, it is permissible. And also, killing it is not included in the prohibition of "Tza'ar Ba'alei Chaim" – causing undue pain to animals (Ma'aseh Ish vol. 7, p. 163. Shut Teshuvot Ve-Hanhagot 2:726. And Ha-Rav Moshe Feinstein writes in Shut Igrot Moshe Choshen Mishpat 2:47 that if it is possible, it is proper not to kill them with your hands but with a trap. His proof is from the Wayward City- a place in which a majority of citizens worship idols and therefore has to be destroyed (Devarim 13:13-19). Hashem promises that if the Wayward City is destroyed, He will give you mercy. The Or Ha-Chaim Ha-Kadosh explains (verse 18) that this promise is made because destroying and killing causes one to be cruel. It is therefore better not to kill bugs and mice with one's bare-hands. But this is a stricture).

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