

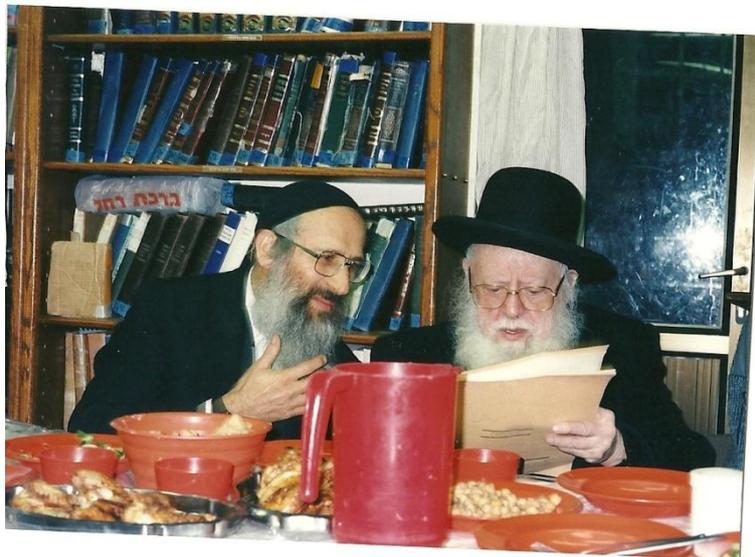
Text Message Q&A #39

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From the Archives



Ha-Rav Aviner with Ha-Rav Avraham Shapira

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

Sperm Bank

Q: Is it a Mitzvah to donate to a sperm bank?

A: It is a transgression.

Lying

Q: My wife borrowed my parents' car and scratched it a little bit. She is very embarrassed. Is it permissible for me to say that I did it?

A: Certainly. It is lying for the sake of peace.

Kissing the Mezuzah

Q: Is there a halachic obligation to kiss the Mezuzah?

A: No. But it is an expression of love for the Mitzvah, just like for all Mitzvot (Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 11:24. Birchei Yosef Yoreh Deah 285 in the name of the Arizal. See Mishnah Berurah 477:5).

Shofar during Elul

Q: Are Ashkenazim obligated to stand for the Shofar blown during Elul?

A: No, but this is the custom. Piskei Teshuvot (581:3).

Q: Does a person davening on his own blow the Shofar?

A: It was not decreed. Ibid.

Q: If a community does not have a Shofar in the morning, can they make it up?

A: At Minchah, but not Maariv. This is also to teach that we do not blow Shofar at night. Ibid.

Q: What is the law regarding one who hears the Shofar in the middle of the Shemoneh Esrei and will not have another opportunity to hear it?

A: There are those who permit him to be quiet and listen.

Q: What is the law regarding Sefardim whose Shofar blowing in the early morning during during Selichot bothers the neighbors?

A: We do not perform a Mitzvah through a transgression such as bothering others. They should therefore blow it quietly.

BS"D

Q: Should one write BS"D on an e-mail, as when writing a letter?

A: One is not even obligated to do so on a letter. But it is permissible on an e-mail as well.

Woman reciting Birkat Ha-Gomel

Q: Can women recite Birkat Ha-Gomel?

A: There are three possibilities: 1. She can recite the blessing in the Women's Section when the Gabbai quiets everyone down. 2. She can recite the blessing when 10 men are around, i.e. like before or after a class. 3. She can choose not to recite it at all because of issues of modesty (see Shut She'eilat Shlomo 2:87).

Parent's Wedding

Q: Is it permissible for child to be present at their father's or mother's wedding?

A: It is permissible. It is one's personal choice.

Ketubah

Q: If a wife unjustifiably demands a divorce, is the husband obligated to pay her the amount of the Ketubah?

A: No. But all of the property and belongings they acquired while married is divided equally.

Kippah

Q: If I say Divrei Torah to my non-religious friend, should I ask him to put on a Kippah?

A: No.

Homosexual Tendencies

Q: Is it a good idea to make a Shiduch between a man and a woman who both have homosexual tendencies?

A: It is a good idea to cure them and make them happy so that they can marry someone they love in a normal fashion. We should not bring a poor child into the world without a father and mother who love one another. This method has been tried, and ends in divorce.

5.99

Q: I am a saleswoman in a store. Is it permissible for me to write the price as 5.99 instead of 6 shekels? Or is it theft, since I will actually charge 6 shekels?

A: It is permissible since the buyer knows that he will pay 6 shekels. Besides, he can ask for an Agurah if he wants (See the Rosh at the end of Pesachim [#40] that although the Torah mentions counting 50 days of Sefirah, the Halachah is that we count 49 and although the Torah mentions giving 40 lashes, the Halachah is that we give 39. The Rosh explains that the way of the Torah is to round up when the last digit is a nine. And it is worthwhile to add the Admor of Ostrovzsa once met with Ha-Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzensky and the two spoke about the intricacies of the Halachah. Ha-Rav Caim Ozer was amazed at the words of the Admor of Ostrovzsa and declared: "You are truly a great man!" The Admor replied that this is hardly a measure of greatness. He explains by quoting the Gemara in Makkot 22b, where the Sages conclude that the meaning of forty lashes is actually only thirty-nine, and that people who rise in honor of a Torah Scroll but remain seated when a Torah scholar passes by are foolish, since the Torah states: "Forty lashes", and our Sages come to teach us that the actual meaning is thirty-nine – one lash less – then it follows that their power is indeed great. The Admor asked: Why does the Torah only teach this law in Devarim (by the lashes), rather than earlier in the book of Vayikra (by Sefirat Ha-Omer)? There it is written, in reference to the counting of the Omer: "You shall count fifty days" and our Sages explain that the meaning is actually forty-nine days. Did they not subtract a day there as well? From here we learn, said the

Admor to Ha-Rav Chaim Ozer, that the greatness of our Sages is not in that they subtracted one day from the counting of the Omer, but rather that they subtracted one lash from the punishment of the guilty – and therein lies their greatness: a great man is one who lessens the pain of his fellow man, and not one who only discovers novel interpretations of the Torah. Iturei Torah – Vayikra 23:16).

Christian Date

Q: Is it permissible to write the Christian date on a wedding invitation?

A: No. It is based on idol worship.

Q: And if it is necessary?

A: It is not clear why it would be necessary. But if it is, do not write the number of the year, since it is known. And instead of writing the number of the month, write the name of the month. And add: "According to their counting." And I saw someone write: "According to their error."

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