



Text Message Q&A #43

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Ha-Rav Aviner with Ha-Rav Shlomo Goren

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

Mom

Q: When a mother does things for her children – it is a mitzvah?

A: Certainly! A great Mitzvah! A huge Mitzvah!

Prayer for the State of Israel

Q: I heard that there are Religious-Zionist Rabbis who have stopped reciting the Prayer for the State of Israel?

A: Perhaps. But only a negligent amount (see the book Rosh Ha-Memshalah pp. 127-128).

Rav Kook's Rav

Q: Who was Rav Kook's Rav?

A: He had a few, but the main one was the Netziv.

Ma'aser Kesafim

Q: To whom should one give Ma'aser Kesafim?

A: The poor.

Q: What is the definition of a poor person?

A: Someone who is lacking essential items.

Q: Can I please have examples of essential and non-essential items?

A: Washing machine – essential, dryer – non-essential. Oven and stove – essential, microwave – non-essential. Telephone – essential, cell phone – non-essential. Bus-fare – essential, car – non-essential.

Mother's Blessing

Q: Can a mother give the children a blessing after the father on Shabbat night?

A: Certainly.

Blessing on Shul Talit by Shaliach Tzibur

Q: Does a Shaliach Tzibur recite a blessing on a Shul Talit?

A: The custom is not to do so. Piskei Teshuvot 14:7.

Order

Q: Where is it written in the Torah that one should be orderly and neat?

A: The Torah does not need to write it. After all, proper character traits precede Torah, i.e. normal humanity.

Joking with Students

Q: Is it permissible during an overnight trip with my students to jokingly take the shoes of the new students in the class, while they are sleeping, and put them outside in a field? It is not in order to cause them distress but as a joke.

A: If you are certain that they will not be distressed and they will think it is funny. If you are uncertain, and you want to joke around, then take your own shoes and put them outside in a field.

The Government of Israel

Q: Some say that since the Government is corrupt, as we saw with the expulsion from Gush Katif, we should not participate in it.

A: It is true that this was an extremely severe event, and that the Government has done many other corrupt things, continues to do them, and will do so in the future. But we must judge it by the majority of its actions. And the positive done by the Government immeasurably outweighs the negatives.

Tachanun on the Day One Made Aliyah

Q: Do I recite Tachanun on the anniversary of making Aliyah?

A: No. It is a holiday. The Rambam established a personal holiday on the day he made Aliyah.

Hugging and Kissing in Shul

Q: Is it permissible to hug and kiss a friend in Shul?

A: In general, it is forbidden (Shut Orach Mishpat #22). Although Ha-Rav Moshe Feinstein would kiss his grandchildren in the Beit Midrash of his Yeshiva "Metivta Tiferet Yerushalayim". He held that the prohibition against expressing love in Shul [Rama, Orach Chaim 98:1], which serves to "instill within one's heart that there is no love like the love for the Almighty, Blessed is He", is only during the times of prayer, since the Shulchan Aruch brings this law in the Laws of Prayer and not in the Laws of the Holiness of a Shul. Megeed Givot Olam vol. 1, p. 92. And when Ha-Rav Avraham Shapira – Rosh Yeshiva of Mercaz Ha-Rav – visited Yeshiva University, he met Ha-Rav Joseph Soloveitchik in the Beit Midrash and Ha-Rav Shapira kissed Ha-Rav Soloveitchik for all to see. Many were surprised, and asked: How could Ha-Rav Shapira kiss him when the Halachah is that it is forbidden to kiss another person in a Shul or Beit Midrash? Ha-Rav Nacham Lamm – President of the Yeshiva – explained that Ha-Rav Soloveitchik has the law of a Sefer Torah, and it is impossible to pass him without kissing him. (Rosh Devarcha, pp. 174-175. "Vayehe Binso'a Ha-Aron" – eulogy for Ha-Rav Shapira by Ha-Rav Eitan Eisman, p. 45. And see Shut Yechaveh Da'at 4:12 where Ha-Rav Ovadiah Yosef discusses the Sefardic custom to kiss the Rabbi's hand as a sign of respect, and therefore permits it in a Shul).

Extreme Left

Q: How should we relate to extreme left-wing Jews who speak with the enemies of Israel?

A: As people who are confused.

Q: Why do they want to destroy the Land their ancestors built?

A: They don't want to destroy it. They want to build it. But they mistakenly think that giving up parts of our Land will bring salvation to the Nation and the Land. By the way, among the builders of the Land were left-wingers.

Serenity Prayer

Q: Who wrote the Serenity Prayer: "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference"?

A: Karl Paul Reinhold Niebuhr, a liberal neo-orthodox, American theologian. 5652-5731.

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