



Text Message Q&A #44

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

Evil Spirits

Q: I haven't been feeling well for a long time. I went to be blessed by a Rabbi and he told me that I stepped on water from which spirits drank and disturbed them. The spirits are therefore taking revenge on me. Ever since hearing this I have been in a great panic.

A: There is no such thing. May Hashem bless you.

Doves and Jaundice

Q: Do doves cure jaundice?

A: No.

Q: But they cured my cousin.

A: One must prove that without the dove he would not have been cured.

Evangelists

Q: How do we relate to Christian Evangelists who believe that the Nation of Israel is the Chosen Nation?

A: The problem is that they also believe that the Nation of Israel will convert to Christianity. The word evangelism means the preaching or promulgation of their faith.

Shalom to a Woman

Q: Is it permissible for a boy to say Shalom to a girl or visa-versa?

A: The Gemara, Rambam, Shulchan Aruch and Kitzur Shulchan Aruch rule that it is forbidden. But if it is not in friendship but rather out of basic politeness, it is permissible.

Short-Sleeves for Shliach Tzibur

Q: Is it permissible for someone who is a Religious-Zionist to serve as Shliach Tzibur if he is wearing short-sleeves?

A: It depends on the custom of the place. But it is always proper to be strict and to have the Shliach Tzibur wear long-sleeves. And, by the way: there is no special Halachah for someone who is a Religious-Zionist (Shut She'eilat Shlomo 2:24).

Pants for Women

Q: Is it permissible for a woman to wear wide, modest pants?

A: No. This is on account of "Lo Yilbash" (the prohibition of wearing the opposite gender's clothing). But it is permissible to wear women's pants under her skirt as long as the pants are modest and not eye-fetching, and the skirt is long enough even when sitting. And this is the custom of the Yemenite Jews (Shut Minchat Yitzchak 2:108. Shut Tzitz Eliezer 11:62. Shut Shevet Ha-Levi 2:63, 6:118. Shut Yabia Omer 6 YD 14. See Vayashiv Moshe, pp. 169-170, where Ha-Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv was asked if there is reason to forbid girls from going skiing since they need to wear women's ski pants? He responded that it is permissible on condition that they wear a robe, dress or skirt which covers their knees over the pants. And, in general, this is even better and more modest than what our women usually wear).

Moshe Rabbenu

Q: What was Moshe Rabbenu called before the daughter of Pharaoh took him out of the Nile?

A: He had seven names: His father called him Chever, his mother called him Yekutiel, his sister – Yered, his brother – Avi Zani'ach, his wet-nurse – Avi Sochi, the Nation of Israel – Shemayah. Yalkut Shimoni, Shemot 167. But it is the reward of those who perform acts of loving-kindness that he is now called by the name given by Bitya, daughter of Pharaoh. Shemot Rabbah 1:26.

Power of Prayer

Q: If the Master of the Universe establishes a person's fate, what is the benefit in praying? After all, Hashem already established the outcome.

A: Hashem establishes, but it is also His will that the prayer be a part of determining what will be.

Non-Jews under the Chupah

Q: Can a convert's non-Jewish, biological parents lead him to the Chupah?

A: From the outset, they should not. If it is necessary, wisely join them to others.

Roman Numerals

Q: Is it permissible to have a clock with Roman numerals in our house?

A: Yes. The regular (Arabic) numbers also come from a non-Jewish source.

Rock-Throwing

Q: If Arabs throw rocks at me, is it permissible for me to throw rocks back in order to protect myself, in order to help conquer the Land of Israel, and in order to show them that Jews are not downtrodden?

A: For protection, yes, if it is a life-threatening situation. For the other two reasons, no – this is Tzahal's job.

Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge

Q: Do our Sages of the Talmud say that the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge was an apple?

A: No. It is a non-Jewish tradition.

Separation of Men and Women during Prayer

Q: If men daven outside, can I – a woman – stand behind them and join even though there is no Mechitza?

A: Yes, from a distance. There is no need for a Mechitza when davening outside.

Gold Menorah

Q: Is making the Golden Menorah, which stands near the Kotel, a violation of the prohibition of making copies of the Temple's implements?

A: There are various ways of doing so in a permissible way. For example, if the implement is attached to the ground. Shut Da'at Cohain. It is best to ask experts from the Temple Institute directly, since they are serious Torah scholars (There are, however, Rabbis who do forbid making the implements. Heard from Ha-Rav Herschel Schachter in the name of Ha-Rav Aharon Soloveitchik).

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