



Text Message Q&A #50

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

Kashrut of Rice

Q: I heard that we should not eat rice because it is full of worms.

A: This is a rare phenomenon. It is sufficient to check the rice well as usual.

Wedding Gift

Q: We are a poor family, and our relative is getting married. They have the custom of giving expensive wedding gifts, but we are unable to do so. The trip is also costly. What should we do?

A: Give according to your ability, and include an apology note.

Born a Non-Jew

Q: I think it would have been better for me to have been born a non-Jew, since they seem to enjoy themselves more than we do.

A: I don't know if in reality this is true. In any event, we are certainly much happier.

Earthquake

Q: Is it proper to pray for an earthquake in Turkey and Iran?

A: No. Good people would also be injured and killed. Rather we should pray for them to repent, as is written in Aleinu. And there is no need to add anything to Aleinu.

"Al Naharot Bavel"

Q: Should one say "Al Naharot Bavel" before the Birkat Ha-Mazon on weekdays?

A: It is proper to do so, but is not obligatory since it is not found in the Gemara, Rambam or Shulchan Aruch, but in the Shelah (Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, would not recite "Al Naharot Bavel" but rather "Shir Ha-Ma'alot" at each meal, because of our return to our Land. Iturei Yerushalayim #26. Although "Al Naharot Bavel", and when it is to be recited, appears in Siddur Olat Ha-Re'eiyah (vol. 1, p. 360) – a siddur with Maran Ha-Rav Kook's commentary which our Rabbi himself arranged and annotated).

Opening Umbrella Inside

Q: Is it unlucky to open an umbrella inside

A: Superstition. (but not to be done on Shabbat, as an umbrella is Muktzeh)

Tzitzit

Q: If I only have one pair of Tzitzit and I sleep in it, do I recite a blessing over it in the morning?

A: No.

Q: Which is preferable: to sleep with the Tzitzit and not recite a blessing, or to sleep without them and to recite a blessing?

A: To sleep with them, since one is fulfilling a Mitzvah by doing so.

Sleeping on the Bus

Q: Is it permissible for me to wake someone up who is taking up two seats on the bus in order to sit down, or is it considered bothering him?

A: It is permissible. He is bothering himself.

Kosher Phone

Q: Is it obligatory to use the Kosher phone (which does not contain texting or internet access)?

A: The essence is that a person does not stumble by using his phone for forbidden activities. If he stumbles, he is obligated to use the Kosher phone. If not, he is not.

Photocopying from a Book

Q: Is it permissible to photocopy a few pages from a book as a teaching tool?

A: Yes, because: 1. You are copying from the book for personal use, which is permissible according to copyright law. 2. You do not intend to buy the book, in which case it is permissible according to Halachah.

Spitting at Christianity

Q: If one sees a priest or church, is there a Halachah that one should spit?

A: No.

Student without Tzitzit

Q: If a student in my class stubbornly refuses to wear Tzitzit, should I wait patiently or demand that he put them on?

A: If he is negatively affecting others in this area, then demand it, like Shammai. If he is not, then wait patiently like Hillel. *Ain Aya, Shabbat 31.*

Anorexia

Q: What should be done with a young woman who is anorexic and refuses food and treatment?

A: There is no choice, she must eat and have treatment. This is a life-threatening situation. She must therefore be hospitalized.

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