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Text Message Q&A #51

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

Bus Fare

Q: The bus driver knows my father and did not punch my ticket. What should I do?

A: Punch it yourself.

Payment without a Receipt

Q: A man did work for me, I paid him, but he did not give me a receipt. When I asked for one, he said that he would not give me one, and if I insisted, he would return my money. What should I do?

A: Take the money, give it to Tzedakah and give him the receipt which you receive from the Tzedakah organization.

Opening the Torah Ark during the Ninth Month

Q: What is the source for the custom of a husband to open the Torah ark during the ninth month of his wife's pregnancy in order to help along the birth?

A: There is no early source. Kaf Ha-Chaim 134:12 in the name of the Chida.

Burning a Page with One's Problems

Q: Is it forbidden to write one's problems on a page and then burn the page in order to nullify them?

A: It is superstition, close to idol worship.

Prohibition against Touching Opposite Gender

Q: Does the prohibition against touching someone of the opposite gender only apply to their actual body, or does it also apply to touching them through their clothing?

A: Both are certainly forbidden! One should stay extremely far away from the opposite gender. Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 152:8-10. How the evil inclination is working overtime!

#### Lashon Ha-Ra about One's Self

Q: What is the source that it is forbidden for a person to relate Lashon Ha-Ra about himself?

A: There is no such Halachah. It is a personal decision based on the circumstance.

#### Baby Pictures

Q: Is it permissible to take pictures of our baby for an advertisement for which we will be paid? Is there a problem of the evil eye?

A: It is permissible. There is absolutely no concern.

#### Spading an Animal

Q: Is it permissible to spade an animal? Isn't it impossible to use a horse if he is not spaded?

A: It is a known problem. See Torah Temimah on Vayikra 22:24 #153. It should be performed by a non-Jew.

#### Racism

Q: Isn't it racist to say that we are the Chosen People and the non-Jews are designated to serve us?

A: No. They will serve us out of free will and will see it as a greater honor, like a disciple serving his teacher.

#### Levels among Torah Scholars

Q: How could Rabbenu Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah say that the Ba'al Ha-Tanya was not on the same level as the Vilna Gaon? Is it permissible to compare great Torah scholars?

A: Yes. Just as the comparison between Rabbi Elazar Be-Rabbi Shimon and Rebbe. Baba Metzia 84b. And as per the ruling in Shut Mahar"i Me-Beruna #190.

Special thank you to Orly Tzion for editing the Ateret Yerushalayim Parashah Sheet



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