



Text Message Q&A #56

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

Kuzari

Q: Is the story in the book "The Kuzari" true or a parable?

A: The Kuzarim really did convert, but the story and the conversation are a parable.

Becoming a Torah Scholar

Q: I have a great desire to become a Torah scholar, but I do not have intellectual talent, a good memory or a great ability to concentrate. Can I still succeed?

A: Certainly. Everything is dependent on one's effort. There are various types of Torah scholars.

Classic Music

Q: Is it permissible to listen to classical music?

A: Yes. It awakens gentle emotions.

Stealing One's Sleep (Gezel Sheinah)

Q: Is "Gezel Sheinah" a Torah prohibition?

A: "Love your fellow as yourself." By the way, even if it was a Rabbinic prohibition, it would be forbidden. Furthermore, before all else, one must act like a "Mentsch" – a person.

Mistaken Ruling by a Rabbi

Q: If the Rabbi of the place where I live erred in a halachic ruling, should I remain quiet on account of his honor or point out this particular mistake?

A: If it is a rabbinic prohibition, you should certainly remain silent, since preserving his honor is a Torah Mitzvah. Nonetheless, you should privately and respectfully point it out to him

(Ha-Rav Avraham Dov Auerbach, Av Beit Din of Tiveria, related that one time the "Eruv" was damaged, and the Rav of Tiveria ruled that the "Eruv" was kosher. There was a great Torah scholar who lived there and he bumped into the Rav of the city after Shabbat. They talked, the Torah scholar walked him home, and they sat and chatted. The Torah scholar said, "Let's learn some Torah." The Rav of the city obviously agreed. The Torah scholar took Massechet Eruvim and they learned. Suddenly, the Rav of the city said, "Oy va-voy! If so, I ruled incorrectly today!" The Torah scholar said, "It appears so." The Rav of the city asked, "Did his honor announce in his shul not to carry on Shabbat?" "No," he responded, "since carrying in this place is a rabbinic prohibition, but honoring a Torah scholar is a Torah mitzvah. I therefore did not say anything").

Tip for a Waiter

Q: Is there an obligation to give a tip to a waiter?

A: If it is the standard custom in that particular place.

Coin at the Kotel

Q: What is the status of a coin found between the stones of the Kotel that was placed there on purpose?

A: It should be placed in the Tzedakah box there.

Shoah

Q: Is an event as meaningful as the Holocaust mentioned in the Prophets?

A: Yes. The curses in Bechukotai, the curses in Ki Tavo, Ha-Azinu.

Women's Singing

Q: Where is the prohibition of men listening to women singing mention in the Halachah?

A: Berachot 24. Rambam, Isurei Bi'ah 21. Shulchan Aruch, Even Ha-Ezer 21. Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 152:8.

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