



Text Message Q&A #60

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

Picture without Permission

Q: Is it permissible to take someone's picture without his permission?

A: Certainly not. You must be sure that he agrees (Shut Mishneh Halachot 4:114. See, however, Shut Be-Tzel Ha-Chochmah 4:85. There is a famous picture of Maran Ha-Rav Kook sitting in an arm chair, which was taken without his knowledge when he was in London during the First World War. At the moment of the photograph he was waiting for a Brit Milah to take place. The photographer later came to Maran Ha-Rav, brought him the picture and said: Although I brazenly took his Honor's picture without his permission, I now request a favor from Ha-Rav: please allow me to publish this picture as a source of livelihood. Maran Ha-Rav responded with a smile on his face: Isn't it an explicit verse in the Torah [Shemot 21:16]: "One who steals a man and sells him"! Maran Ha-Rav Kook ztz"l of Ha-Rav Z.A. Rabiner, pp. 110-111).

Pe'ot

Q: Following chemotherapy all my hair will fall out. Is it permissible for me to shave my head?

A: Yes, aside from your Pe'ot.

Blessings over the Messiah

Q: What blessings do we recite over the arrival of the Messiah?

A: According to Rabbi Chaim Palagi: "Ga'al Yisrael" (Who redeemed Israel), "Shehechyanu", "She-Chalak Me-Chochmato Li-rei'av" (Who gave of His wisdom to those who fear him – blessing over a great Torah scholar) and "Chacham Ha-Razim" (Knower of Secrets – blessing when seeing 600,000 Jews together). According to Ha-Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach: "Shehechyanu", "She-Chalak Me-Chochmato Li-rei'av", "She-Chalak Michvodo Li-Rei'av" (Who shared His glory with those who fear him – blessing over a Jewish King) and "Chacham Ha-Razim".

Crying Baby

Q: When our 6-month-old baby cries at night - which he does every half hour – should we always get up to calm him?

A: If he is not sick, it is best that he gradually becomes accustomed to calming himself, so that he does not grow up pampered.

Professor Leibowitz

Q: Rabbenu Ha-Tzvi Yehudah distanced himself from Professor Yeshayahu Leibowitz. What were the reasons?

A: His teachings discussed accepting the yoke of the Mitzvot without accepting the yoke of the Heavenly Kingdom.

Messiah's Arrival during Shemoneh Esrei

Q: If I am in the middle of the Shemoneh Esrei and the Messiah arrives, what should I do?

A: Finish it with great Kavanah.

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