



Text Message Q&A #62

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

Non-Jewish Wars

Q: Is it permissible to be happy that the Arabs are at war and killing one another in Syria, since they are our enemies?

A: It is permissible to be happy that the wicked are being killed, but it is possible that there are righteous people among the fatalities.

Attention

Q: How should we deal with a child who requires a lot of attention at the expense of his other siblings?

A: You should give him more, since one must provide each child according to his needs.

Brit Milah in Shul

Q: Is it preferable to have a Brit Milah in a hall or in a Shul (which is a holy place)?

A: A hall. 1. The permission to have a Brit Milah in a Shul is not according to all opinions. 2. Even according to those who permit it, it is still forbidden to speak frivolous words in a Shul and this is extremely difficult to ensure.

Taking Counsel with a Rabbi

Q: What issues do and do not require one to take counsel with a Rabbi?

A: This is a personal decision.

Eating and Drinking in a Tank on Shabbat Night

Q: I serve in the tank division in Tzahal, and am sometimes in a tank when Shabbat begins. Is it permissible to eat and drink before Kiddush?

A: Yes, since one must be alert. It is a law of "Piku'ach Nefesh" – a life-threatening situation.

Cheap Disks

Q: A person is selling disks which are extremely cheap. Is it permissible to buy them? Maybe they are stolen? Maybe they are illegally copied?

A: Maybe yes, maybe no. Before buying, one must ascertain why they are so cheap.

Choosing a Rabbi

Q: How do I know who should be my Rabbi?

A: Someone who best increases your "Yirat Shamayim" (Awe of Hashem), proper character traits and the light of Torah (see our commentary on Pirkei Avot 1:6, 16).

Religious Bars

Q: Is the appearance of religious bars and pubs are good thing?

A: This is certainly a lowly and empty manner of entertainment, but it is less horrible than going to a place which is completely secular.

Tefillin while Laying in Ambush

Q: I am in the army and am laying in ambush, completely freezing, and don't see any possibility of putting on Tefillin.

A: If after the ambush it will be too late to put on Tefillin, then if it is permissible from the military perspective, it is enough to put them on for a few seconds.

Levi'im and Birkat Cohanim

Q: I am a Levi. Which is preferable – slowly davening Shemoneh Esrei with more Kavanah, or hurrying in order to wash the Cohanim's hands?

A: Slowly, since this is the basic law.

Diapering Daughter

Q: Is it permissible for a father to diaper his daughter?

A: Yes. There is no problem.

Change Your Place, Change Your Luck

Q: Is it true that if someone changes his place, his luck will change? How?

A: If a person goes to live in a new place, where no one knows him, and he is filled with humility, this will atone for his sins. Rambam, Hilchot Teshuvah (2:4).

Flipping a Coin

Q: Is it permissible to flip a coin to make a decision?

A: Yes, if there is no other way to decide and one believes that Hashem is the One deciding. See Talmudic Encyclopedia, section on "Goral – lots" (Sefer Chasdim #679, 701. Shut Chavot Yair #61).

Damage to a Borrowed Object

Q: While I was playing normally, I destroyed a ping-pong ball which I had borrowed from a friend. Do I have to pay?

A: No, since you were playing normally. In Halachah, this is called: "Dying during its work," i.e. borrowing an animal which then dies while being worked in the usual manner. But it is proper to pay, and to go beyond the letter of the law, since he did you a kindness by lending it to you. Strictures are not only for food.

Yemenite Pronunciation

Q: I heard that Rav Kook said that everyone should daven with the Yemenite pronunciation. Should I change to it?

A: No. Maran Ha-Rav Kook only said that the Yemenite pronunciation is the most precise. But each person should follow the custom of his ancestors. Shut Orach Mishpat (and also Maran Ha-Rav Kook's approbation to Shut Mishpatei Uziel).

Meal after Brit Milah

Q: Does the meal after the Brit Milah have to immediately follow the Brit Milah or is it possible to have it later?

A: It is possible to have it later. The essence is that it is on the same day. Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh De'ah 265:12.

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