



Text Message Q&A #69

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

Stickers in Public Domain

Q: Is it permissible to put stickers - cf. Smile, Everything is for the Best! - on public property, like a bus stop?

A: No. This is not your personal domain. It destroys public property.

Damage to a Bike

Q: I borrowed my friend's bike, and now he accuses me of damaging the tire. I don't remember damaging it, and I only rode it on a regular road?

A: If you used it in the normal manner, you are exempt from paying. But it is proper to pay as a sign of gratitude.

Strawberries

Q: How does one prepare strawberries properly to ensure that there are no bugs in them?

A: Remove the green part with a little bit of the fruit, soak in soapy water for a few minutes and rinse with a strong flow of water (Min Ha-Mutar Be-Ficha of Ha-Rav Mordechai Eliyahu, p. 29).

Buying from a Thief

Q: Is it true that one who buys from a thief is exempt?

A: Incorrect. He is only exempt from "Kefel" – paying back double (the punishment for stealing). But it is forbidden to buy from a thief. Our Sages say: The mouse is not

what steals, but rather its hole - i.e. without the hole, the mouse would not steal. Likewise, without a buyer, the thief would not steal (Gittin 45a).

Found Money in a Coffee Shop

Q: A worker in a coffee shop found money and is unable to locate the person who lost it. Does the money belong to the owner of the coffee shop or the waiter?

A: The waiter.

Breaking a Glass under the Chupah

Q: Is it permissible to break an old light bulb instead of a glass under the Chupah?

A: No. We break something of value in order to awaken our sorrow over the destruction of the Temple (see Tosafot on Berachot 31a).

40 Shir Ha-Shirim

Q: I was told that there is a great Segulah if one recites Shir Ha-Shirim 40 times. On the 41st time, one's prayers are answered. I have done this many times with great Kavana and tears, and nothing happened. Where is the fulfillment of the prayers?

A: This has no source. It is a new innovation. It is like any other prayer: it is not magic (see the words of Ha-Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv in Ha-Shakdan vol. 2, p. 109).

Bad Breath

Q: I learn with a friend who has bad breath. It really bothers me. What should I do?

A: Tell him. It is for his benefit. But it must be done gently, for example: Forgive me, but I have a problem, I am extremely sensitive to smells...

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