



Text Message Q&A #70

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

Kosher-for-Pesach Hair Spray

Q: Why do some Kashrut organizations require hair spray to be Kosher for Pesach?

A: There are two answers:

1. It is a kindness for the consumer. Not everyone knows the Halacha and some think it is required.
2. One Rabbi related that a company asked for Kosher certification for a filter. The Rabbi said that it does not require Kosher certification. They said: But we want it. He replied that it is not necessary. They nudged him and nudged him until he just gave it. The next day they advertised: The only filter in Israel with Kosher certification....

Shaving during Sefirat Ha-Omer

Q: If one shaves every day, is it permissible for him to shave during Sefirat Ha-Omer?

A: Some authorities permit it (Shut Igrot Moshe, Orach Chaim 4:102. Nefesh Ha-Rav, p. 191), but the majority forbid it (Piskei Shemuot, p. 62).

Q: And in order to honor Shabbat?

A: Some permit it. See Biur Halachah 551:3. But the basic custom is to refrain (Ve-Alehu Lo Yibol vol. 1, pp. 182-183. Emet Le-Yaakov chapter 493 note #467).

Q: Is it permissible to shave in preparation for a Shiduch in order to look good?

A: No. On the contrary, perhaps you will not look good in the eyes of a G-d-fearing young woman (Piskei Shemuot, pp. 62-63).

Haircut for Bar Mitzvah

Q: Is it permissible during Sefirat Ha-Omer for a boy to get his hair cut for his Bar Mitzvah?

A: No. Piskei Teshuvot 493:10.

Q: What if his hair is long and ugly?

A: He should have it cut before his Bar Mitzvah while he is still a minor. Ibid.

Women and Haircuts during Sefirat Ha-Omer

Q: Is it permissible for a woman to have her hair cut during Sefirat Ha-Omer?

A: Only if it is a pressing need. Piskei Teshuvah 493:7 (Igrot Moshe, Yoreh Deah 2:137).

Q: Is it permissible for a young woman to have her bangs cut if they are falling into her eyes?

A: Yes (Nitei Gavriel – Pesach, vol. 3 p. 280 #3).

Q: Is it permissible for reasons of modesty, i.e. hair coming out from a woman's hair covering?

A: Yes. Piskei Teshuvot ibid. (Shut Lehorot Natan 2:32).

Q: Is it permissible for a woman to color her hair during Sefirat Ha-Omer?

A: Yes.

Reality TV

Q: Is it worthwhile for the religious to participate in reality TV shows in order to show ourselves in a positive light?

A: These are lowly programs full of prohibitions. It is the role of the religious to act morally - not to demonstrate our piety to others (see Rambam, Yesodei Torah, chapter 5).

Picture of Jerusalem

Q: Is it permissible to place a beautiful picture of Jerusalem in the middle of the Zecher Le-Churban (a part of the wall left unplastered as a remembrance of the Destruction of the Temple)?

A: No. It is not designated for beauty but for sorrow (Shut She'eilat Shlomo 2:163. 3:151).

Minyan on a Bus

Q: Which is preferable – davening alone at home, or in a Minyan on a bus?

A: A Minyan on a bus, with the condition that it does not disturb the other travelers (Peninei Tefillah, p. 124 in the name of Ha-Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv).

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