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Text Message Q&A #73

Ask Rav Aviner: [mororly@bezeqint.net](mailto:mororly@bezeqint.net)

Prepared by Rabbi Mordechai Tzion

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

Learning on Shavuot Night

Q: Is one obligated to stay up and learn all Shavuot night?

A: No, but it is a proper custom. If one does not have the strength, he should try to learn until midnight (see Magen Avraham, Orach Chaim #494).

Q: Which is preferable – learning Torah all night and falling asleep during Shachrit or going to sleep earlier and davening properly?

A: Going to sleep earlier, since davening Shachrit without falling asleep is a basic law, while learning on the night of Shavuot is a proper custom.

Q: Which is preferable – learning at night or during the day, if one will learn more during the day?

A: During the day, since adding to learning is a basic law, while learning Torah on that particular night is a proper custom (Ha-Rav Chaim Kanievski answered that since the custom is to learn on Shavuot night, it is preferable to learn at night even if it results in learning less on the following day. Piskei Shemuot, pp. 81-82. Nonetheless, a grandson of Ha-Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv once asked him why he does not follow the custom to stay up learning all night on Shavuot, but goes to sleep and then wakes up at 2 AM, as he does every day, to learn Torah. Ha-Rav Elyashiv explained that he made a calculation regarding how much extra Torah he would learn by staying awake all night, and it turns out he would actually lose 15 minutes! For the sake of these few cherished minutes of learning, he decided that it is preferable to go to sleep at the beginning of the night as usual. Ha-Shakdan vol. 2, p. 240. And Ha-Griz Soloveitchik of Brisk was surprised that people are particular to stay awake on Shavuot night which is a custom, while on the night of the Pesach Seder – according to the basic law – one should relate the Exodus from Egypt all night until sleep overcomes him, and people are not careful to do so. And the custom of "Beit Brisk" is not to stay up learning the

entire night of Shavuot, since it is no different from any other night and there is no preference learning on that night than during the day. Uvdot Ve-Hanhagot Le-Beit Brisk vol. 2, p. 79).

Q: Are women obligated to learn all night?

A: They are not obligated, but it is certainly a proper act.

#### Ten Commandments

Q: Is there an obligation to stand during the reading of the Ten Commandments?

A: Ashkenazim and some Sefardim have the custom to stand. The majority of Sefardim sit (Shut Yechaveh Da'at 1:29. Shut Ashe Lecha Rav 6:21. Shut Igrot Moshe, Orach Chaim4:22. Shut Teshuvot Ve-Hanhagot 1:144).

Q: And if I am in a Shul where the custom is different than my custom?

A: Act like everyone else (Ha-Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv. Ashrei Ish p. 440).

#### Spring

Q: Is it permissible to enter a spring where there is a sign that says: "It is forbidden to enter the water. JNF"?

A: The answer is within the question.

#### Riding a Bike on Shabbat

Q: Why is it forbidden to ride a bike on Shabbat?

A: 1. A concern lest one fix it, which is a Torah prohibition: flat tire, adjusting the steering, raising the seat, fixing the chain, etc. 2. Lest one leave a private domain. 3. Lest one go farther than the Shabbat boundary (Techum Shabbat). 4. Weekday activity (Uvadin De-Chol).

Q: I heard that the Ben Ish Chai permitted it within an Eruv.

A: Correct. Rav Pealim vol. 1 Orach Chaim #25. But he is a lone opinion. And some say that he changed his mind (Shut Yechaveh Daat 2:48).

#### Gift from a Shidduch

Q: I was dating a man for a long time with the hopes of getting married and in the end it did not work out. During that time, he gave me a gift. Should I give it back to him?

A: It is proper if it was a significant gift.

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