



Text Message Q&A #75

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

Police Officer Returning on Shabbat

Q: Is it permissible for a police officer to return home (or to the station) in his car after answering a call?

A: Yes. There are four reasons: 1. There are those who permit him to return, even if violating a Torah prohibition, lest we cause him to refrain from going to save a life in the future, since he will be "stuck" there. Shut Yaavetz #132. Shut Chatam Sofer Orach Chaim #203, 6:99. 2. There is a concern that people will refrain from joining the police if they will lose out on having Shabbat at home. 3. There is a concern that he will neglect going if called, whether consciously or unconsciously. 4. The return trip itself with a weapon is permissible since it is considered a security detail, although not on the schedule. Some of these reasons also apply to army officers on active duty, other security personnel, doctors and nurses. But it is certainly preferable if one can remain in that place or be returned by a non-Jew. See Shut Igrot Moshe Orach Chaim 4:80, 5:25. Orchot Rabbeu vol. 1 #213 in the name of Ha-Rav Y.Y. Kanievski in the name of the Chazon Ish. Ha-Griz Mi-Brisk, brought in Asya #56, p. 64. Shut Teshuvot Ve-Hanhagot 3:105, 4:80. Amud Ha-Yemini #17.

Psychology

Q: Is it permissible to study psychology?

A: Yes. It is a Mitzvah. But one should remain in contact with a Rabbi or a G-d-fearing psychologist, since there are parts which are problematic.

Calling a Soldier – Nazi

Q: Is it permissible to appoint a person who called a soldier "Nazi" as the Shaliach Tzibur?

A: Certainly not. May Hashem have mercy on him and lead him to repent (Sichot Ha-Rav Tzi Yehudah – Shemot p. 45).

Time of Redemption

Q: I heard in the name of the Vilna Gaon's students that the time between Adam and King David is the same as between David and the Messiah. According to this, isn't it possible to know when the Messiah will arrive?

A: "Adam" is an acronym of "Adam-David-Messiah". King David is in the middle. King David was born in the year 2854, double that amount and we reach the year 5708 – the year of the establishment of the State of Israel. But one should not involve himself in calculating when the Messiah will arrive.

Beard

Q: Is there a prohibition to shorten one's beard?

A: It is permissible. It is a pious act not to cut one's beard at all (Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh 181:10. Zohar, Naso 130. Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin was asked: How is it that he fixes his beard contrary to the words of the Zohar? He said: "Look in my Zohar". In the margin of his Zohar, he wrote: "With a razor", i.e. it is forbidden to touch one's beard with a razor. Although Maran Ha-Rav Kook once said to a Torah scholar that he should not round off or fix his beard at all. Igrot Ha-Re'eiyah 2, 101).

Lenient Rabbi

Q: In theory, is it permissible for me to always search out a Rabbi who is lenient?

A: Yes. One who wants to follow Beit Shammai may do so, one who wants to follow Beit Hillel may do so. Eruvin 6b. But not leniencies which contradict one another.

Driver who Fell Asleep

Q: I have fallen asleep 15 times on the steering wheel and nothing bad has come of it. Should I recite Ha-Gomel?

A: No. But you should repent for the great sin of driving in such a state. The most essential thing is not to commit this sin again.

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