



Text Message Q&A #80

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

Prophecy

Q: Did the Lubavitcher Rebbe possess prophecy?

A: There has been no prophecy since the destruction of the Temple. Baba Batra 12.

Clothing of the Deceased

Q: Is it permissible to wear the clothing of someone who died?

A: Yes, aside from the shoes he was wearing at the time of his death (Gesher Ha-Chaim vol. 1 8:2).

Shiduch with a Woman who is Overweight

Q: An overweight woman was suggested to me as a Shiduch and it really bothers me. Should I meet her?

A: Certainly. This lacks importance. Perhaps you will like her and then won't care at all that she is overweight (See Netiv Ha-Emet of the Maharal).

Free-Choice for Klal-Yisrael

Q: Doesn't Klal-Yisrael have free-choice?

A: "Everything is in the hands of Heaven except for Fear of the Heaven" (Berachot 33b. See Pirkei Avot 3:14) is said about an individual, but just as Klal Yisrael has a covenant with Hashem for its continued existence, so too does it have a covenant that the covenant with Hashem will not be abandoned (Akeidat Yitzchak, Parashat Netzavim. Shut Mishpat Cohain #328).

Modest Clothing

Q: Is it permissible for a woman to wear an over-shirt with completely modest clothing underneath, when non-Jewish women wear this type of clothing in an immodest fashion?

A: It is permissible, since she is dressed modestly. It is also permissible to sell this type of clothing since it is possible to wear it in a modest fashion. And regarding the prohibition of "Do not place a stumbling block before the blind" (Vayikra 19:14), we are "Tolim" (literally "hanging" on the assumption) that one will wear it in a permissible manner (Mishnah Gittin 5:9). Shut Yechaveh Da'at (3:67).

Text Message Questions

Q: What type of questions can I ask Ha-Rav in a text message?

A: It is permissible to ask anything. If it is complex, I will answer that we need to speak.

Expelling Jews

Q: When I am forced to leave my house in Givat Ha-Ulpana in Beit El and take off the Mezuzot, should I recite the blessing of "Baruch Dayan Ha-Emet" (Blessed be the True Judge)?

A: Certainly. This is a bad tidings, very bad (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 222:2).

Masada

Q: Is the suicide which occurred on Masada proper according to Halachah?

A: According to Ha-Rav Shlomo Goren in the book Torat Ha-Shabbat Ve-Ha-Moed (pp. 391-404), it was proper since it was essential for preserving national honor and military courage. According to Ha-Rav Moshe Tzvi Neriya in the book Senif Melucha (pp. 196-198), it was forbidden, since in any situation a person must continue to struggle to live. By the way, some historians claim that the whole event never occurred, since the only evidence is the account of Yosef ben Matisyahu, who relates that he heard it from the testimony of only one woman. But this obviously makes no difference regarding the halachic clarification (When our Rabbi Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah was asked how we should relate to the heroes of Masada, he answered that they are holy but we should not teach to follow in their path. Gadol Shimusha, p. 80).

Blessing on the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin

Q: If I see President Putin, who is visiting Israel, should I recite the blessing of "Baruch...she-natan michvodo le-vasar ve-dam - Blessed are You...who has given of His glory to flesh and blood"? (In the Gemara in Berachot 58a, our Rabbis teach that one who sees a non-Jewish king recites this blessing. It is recorded in the Rambam, Hilchot Berachot 10:11 and Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 224:8. The Chatam Sofer, Orach Chaim #159, rules

that even if one sees the king outside of his area of "rule," one must still recite the appropriate blessing).

A: No, he does not have absolute authority. See Shut Yechaveh Da'at (2:28. Shut Teshuvot Ve-Hanhagot 2:139. Shut Be'er Moshe 2:9).

Yehoshua bin Nun

Q: Why isn't the genealogy of Yehoshua bin Nun listed, as it is for all the other kings?

A: He did not attain his position on account of his genealogy, but rather because he was a dedicated student of Moshe Rabbenu.

A Jew's Worth

Q: According to the Rambam, is a non-Jew like Aristotle, who studied Meta-physics, greater than a simple Jew?

A: No. His wisdom is considered worthless compared to Torah, Mitzvot and proper character traits. Introduction of the Rambam to the Mishnah (Our Rabbi Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah would say that when we recite the blessing "Blessed is Hashem...who has not made me a non-Jew", it is not discussing the lowest of non-Jews, but the greatest of non-Jewish thinkers. Who has not made me Schiller and who has not made me Kant. Ha-Rabbanit Tau ztz"l, Am Nolah, p. 9).

Loving Parents

Q: Why isn't there a Mitzvah in the Torah to love one's parents?

A: It is included in "Love your fellow as yourself", and one should obviously also have great gratitude.

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