



Text Message Q&A #83

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New Teaching Position

Q: I am a teacher and was offered a more important teaching position, which is a great Mitzvah, but my current position will remain vacant. Should I agree to take the new job?

A: We do not perform a new Mitzvah by destroying another Mitzvah. You should therefore only take the new position if there is a replacement for you in the old one. The replacement need not be at your level, but must be at a reasonable one (see Rambam, Bi'at Ha-Mikdash 2:6. Kesef Mishneh).

The Eastern Side of the Jordan River

Q: Is the land on the Eastern side of the Jordan River part of Eretz Yisrael? If so, why don't we settle there?

A: It is certainly part of Eretz Yisrael, which is divided into three parts: Yehudah, Ever Ha-Yarden (the Eastern Side of the Jordan River) and the Galil (see Mishnah Bikurim 1:10. Pesachim 52). But we are currently unable to settle there. The Redemption arrives slowly (Yerushalami, Berachot 1:1).

Leftover Money from Gift

Q: We collected money for a gift and there was some leftover money. What should we do with it?

A: According to the intention of the givers, i.e. spend for a similar purpose, or give to Tzedakah.

Bathing on Yom Tov

Q: Is it permissible to shower with hot water on a Yom Tov?

A: Sefardim – Yes, Ashkenazim – if they are distressed from not bathing. Piskei Teshuvot 511:4-5.

True Mekubalim (Kabbalists)

Q: How it is possible to distinguish between true Mekubalim who can heal, and charlatans?

A: There are various conditions: 1. They are great Torah scholars. 2. They do not take money. 3. They do not advise you to do anything forbidden or strange. 4. They have approbation from well-respected Torah scholars (Regarding going to Mekubalim, the Steipler Gaon said: they do more damage than good, there are no Mekubalim at all in our times, "Kabbalah" must be learned from a "Rav" and there is no one who can teach Kabbalah. They do not know anything!

And the Steipler related that a Mekubal once told a young man to perform the "Goral Ha-Gra" [literally, the lottery of the Vilna Gaon. - a method of opening the Tanach, and locating verses which answer particular questions], and it came out that he should not proceed with a Shiduch with a particular woman. Even though the young man wanted to continue with the Shiduch, it totally destroyed it – thus it is clear that they only destroy! It is forbidden to go to them. And there is no evidence that they are true based on the fact that they are sometimes correct, since they say so many things, they are bound to be right sometimes. Halichot Ve-Hanhagot of Maran Ba'al "Kehilot Yaakov", p. 41).

Maybe I Can Find Better?

Q: I have been dating a young woman for a long time. It is going well and we have decided to get married. But I ask myself: maybe I can find better?

A: No, she is the one. Believe in Divine Providence.

Electricity on Yom Tov

Q: I heard that halachic authorities permit turning on electricity on Shabbat. Is this correct?

A: No. It is forbidden. This is a lone view. Almost all halachic authorities forbid it. Piskei Teshuvot 502:2.

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