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Text Message Q&A #84

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

#### Mourning for a Non-Jew

Q: Does a person sit Shiva for a non-Jewish parent?

A: He is not obligated, but he may do so as a sign of gratitude (Shut Yechaveh Da'at 6:60. See also Shut Igrot Moshe, Yoreh Deah 2:130).

#### Skirt Length

Q: What is the necessary length of a skirt?

A: Some say it should be down to the floor, and others say 10 centimeters below the knee, so that even while sitting the knees are covered (Shut She'eilat Shlomo 1:449).

#### Honoring Rabbis

Q: Should one honor Rabbis who support learning Tanach "Be-Gova Einayim" (literally, "at the height of the eyes", meaning looking at the holy individuals of the Tanach as they do other people)?

A: Certainly. There is no question here. One should honor ALL Rabbis, even if we do not understand their words (Ma'amrei Ha-Re'eiya, p. 56).

#### Separating Terumot and Ma'asrot from Seaweed

Q: Is it required to separate Terumot and Ma'asrot from seaweed?

A: No, since it does not grow from the ground. The same applies to mushrooms (Rambam, Terumot 2:1). But one must check that they are Kosher, since they have many bugs in them.

#### Reward and Punishment

Q: Do Mitzvot and transgressions cancel each other out?

A: No. One is rewarded for the Mitzvot and one must repent for the transgressions, and then they are erased.

Optimism

Q: Isn't optimism naivety?

A: No. This is great intellect, since: 1. There is more good than bad in the world. 2. The amount of goodness slowly continues to increase (Moreh Nevuchim 3:12).

Women's Section in Shul

Q: Is it permissible for me to crochet while I [a woman] am listening to a Torah class in Shul from the Ezrat Nashim?

A: Yes. The Ezrat Nashim possesses a lower level of Kedushah than the main Shul area, and there is no frivolity in crocheting. See Chochmat Adam 86:15.

Q: Nursing?

A: Ibid. Modestly.

Guarding One's Tongue

Q: What is the benefit of trying to stop speaking Lashon Ha-Ra if I am bound to stumble?

A: Wage war in order to have as much pure speech as possible. Sefer Shemirat Ha-Lashon.

Friend's Tefillin

Q: Is it permissible for me to take my friend's Talit and Tefillin without his permission – since a person is happy when Mitzvot are performed with his possessions, as is written in Baba Metzia 29b?

A: Not in our times, since people are sensitive and particular about such things. Aruch Hashulchan, Orach Chaim 14:11. Ben Ish Chai, Lech Lecha #6.

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