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Text Message Q&A #92

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

Stipend for Learning Torah

Q: How is it permissible for a yeshiva student to receive money for learning Torah when the Rambam in Hilchot Talmud Torah 3:10 severely forbids it?

A: This Halachah does not follow him. Kesef Mishneh ibid. Beit Yosef, Yoreh Deah #246. And in our days, a person cannot learn Torah if he needs to make a living. Levush, Yoreh Deah #246.

Q: Which is preferable – receiving a stipend or working and learning less?

A: Receiving a stipend and increasing Torah for Am Yisrael. And see further in Biur Halachah #231. Booklet "Shem Olam" of the Chafetz Chaim, sha'ar "Hachazkat Ha-Torah". Letters of the Chafetz Chaim 2, 15.

Birkat Cohanim without a Talit

Q: Is it permissible for a Cohain who cannot acquire a Talit to recite Birkat Cohanim?

A: Yes. A Cohain covering himself with a Talit is only a custom so that the congregation does not look at him and become distracted. Rama, Orach Chaim 128:23. And it is not a pretext for nullifying the Mitzvah.

Brit Milah in the Afternoon

Q: Is it permissible to postpone a Brit Milah until the afternoon so that there will be more people in attendance (Be-Rov Am)?

A: It is preferable that it be done in the earliest part of the day because of the principle "The alacritous fulfill Mitzvot as early as possible" (Zerizim Makdimim Le-Mitzvot). It may be somewhat delayed, however, in order to allow close family to arrive. Aruch Ha-Shulchan,

Yoreh Deah 262:8 (The fact that Avraham Avinu performed his Brit Milah in the middle of the day was a special case. See Torah Temimah on Bereshit 17:26 #53).

#### Birkat Ha-Gomel on Near Drowning

Q: Should someone who was swimming alone in the sea and began to drown, but was suddenly saved by another person, recite Birkat Ha-Gomel?

A: Yes. And he should also seriously repent for the severe transgression of swimming in the sea without a lifeguard (Mishnah Berurah 218:30).

#### Arabs

Q: What should I do if an Arab insults me?

A: Ignore it.

#### Honoring One's Father

Q: If one's father cheated on his mother is he obligated to honor his father?

A: According to the Shulchan Aruch (Sefardi practice), one is obligated to honor one's father even if he is evil. According the Rama (Ashkenazi practice), one does not honor an evil parent. Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 240:18.

#### Minyan in a Mourner's House

Q: If it is difficult to get a Minyan together in a mourner's house, is it preferable to bother 10 people into coming or to go to Shul?

A: Go to Shul and do not become distracted from the mourning on the way (see Aleinu Le-Shabei'ach – Shmot, pp. 608-610).

#### Criticizing a Book

Q: Is it permissible for me to say that I did not enjoy a book or is this Lashon Ha-Ra?

A: It is certainly permissible for you to say that the book was not suitable for you. It is also permissible to criticize the book, but not the author.

Special thank you to Orly Tzion for editing the Ateret Yerushalayim Parashah Sheet

