



Text Message Q&A #93

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

Ma'arat Ha-Machpelah and Honoring Parents

Q: I want to daven in Ma'arat Ha-Machpelah but my mother is shaking from fear that something will happen to me? Should I give in to her?

A: Yes. Even though it is not dangerous, you should give in. If she instructed you to violate a Torah transgression, a Rabbinic transgression or even an accepted custom in Israel, you would not obey. But davening at Ma'arat Ha-Machpelah is none of these, although it is important (Sefer Chasidim #340. Brought in Beit Lechem Yehudah on Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah #240).

Soldier on Train

Q: Is it permissible for a soldier to ride the train for free (in Israel) when he is not wearing his uniform? I did and the inspector warned me that it is forbidden and the next time I must be wearing my uniform.

A: You already received an answer.

Male Lifeguard for Women

Q: Is it permissible for women to swim in a separate beach or pool where there is a male lifeguard?

A: There should obviously be a female lifeguard for women. But if there is a male lifeguard, based on the fact that it is the women's area, that the people there are in a potentially life-threatening situation, and that the lifeguard is involved in his job of keeping everyone safe (and is therefore not staring at the women), it is permissible for women to swim there. Outside of the water, a woman should wear a robe and it is proper even in the water to wear a

bathing suit which covers as much as possible. Shut Igrot Moshe, Even Ha-Ezer 4:62 (see Ya"d Moshe 29).

Overcoming One's evil inclination

Q: How great is the reward for someone who overcomes his evil inclination?

A: Very, very great.

Iranian Threat

Q: I am incredibly worried about the Iranian nuclear threat. What should I do?

A: There is nothing to fear. "The Guardian of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps" (Tehilim 121:4). "All who become angry with you will be shamed and humiliated. Those who fight with you will be like nothingness and will perish. The men who struggle with you, you will seek them but not find them. The men who fight you, they will be like nothingness and naught." Yeshayahu 41:11-12. And Hashem performs this through His loyal agent – Tzahal, who is ready for anything (A Kollel student from Elad sent a letter to Ha-Rav Chaim Kanievsky that he has the possibility to prepare British passports for his family since his parents are British citizens. His question was: Due to the Iranian threat, is it advisable to do so because of the frightening danger that is coming from the direction of the Yishmaelim? Ha-Rav Kanievsky responded: "For not just one alone has risen against us to destroy us, but in every generation they rise against us to destroy us, and the Holy One, blessed be He, saves us from their hand"! Pesach Haggadah).

Immodest Catering

Q: Is it permissible to eat at a meal where the caterers hired immodestly dressed waitresses?

A: It is certainly forbidden to use caterers such as these, and in general, there need to be waiters for men and waitresses for women. But after the fact, it is permissible to rely on Ha-Rav Moshe Feinstein and eat there, and one should not look at the waitresses. Eating in this environment is considered a benefit which comes to a person against his will (see Ya"d Moshe 26).

Fasting and Pidyon Ha-Ben

Q: Is it true that participating in a Pidyon Ha-Ben meal is equal to 84 fasts?

A: The Sdei Chemed says that this is a nice saying that people use. Ma'arechet 60 Klal 54. In Shut Emek Yehoshua, Yoreh Deah #18, he brings it in the name of the Arizal. But Ha-Rav Elazar Menachem Man Shach was once surprised at a student who missed a class in order to participate in a Pidyon Ha-Ben meal, and he explained to the student that a Torah class is also equal to 84 fasts.

Tooth that Fell Out

Q: What should one do with a tooth that fell out?

A: As you wish (See Rashbam on Berachot 5b. Shut Yabia Omer vol. 3 Yoreh Deah 321. Shut Tzitz Eliezer 10:5 #8).

Picture of Herzl

Q: Is it permissible to hang a picture in one's house of Herzl next to a picture of Ha-Rav Kook, or it is shaming Ha-Rav Kook?

A: It is totally acceptable, but they should be hung in a way to show their different levels (It is well known that along with pictures of the Netziv, the Aderet, Maran Ha-Rav Kook and others, our Rabbi Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah had a picture of Herzl hanging in his home. Three stories about the picture: 1. Rav Avraham Romer related: "The picture of Herzl once disappeared from our Rabbi's house and there was a suspicion that one of the students wanted 'to teach him a lesson.' When I suggested that perhaps the picture fell behind the desk, he permitted me to look there. When I found the picture, he was extremely happy and saw a need to comfort me because he saw that I had been distressed. He told me wondrous stories about Herzl and his position. He repeated the opinion of Reb Aharon Marcus z"l Herzl who said that Herzl was a descendant of Mahari Titzak [a famous Rabbi] and was from a Sefardic family. Gadol Shimusha, p. 54. 2. When a particular Jew from the neighborhood of Geulah would come to our Rabbi's house, he would turn over the picture of Herzl. Our Rabbi once caught him in the act and asked him: Why are you doing this? Doesn't he have all five corners of his beard [which may not be shaved according to the Torah]?! Iturei Cohanim #212. 3. A student of our Rabbi saw Herzl's picture hanging in the room where our Rabbi taught classes in his house, and it was hanging among the pictures of our great Rabbis. He asked for an explanation and our Rabbi gave an entire class on the fact that, whether we like it or not, Herzl was the agent of the Master of the Universe in returning independence to Israel in this generation. Ibid.).

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