



Text Message Q&A #98

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

Traffic Violation

Q: If I see someone violating traffic laws, such as illegal passing, crossing a solid white line, or running a red light, is it permissible or obligatory to report him?

A: It is an obligation on account of saving lives (Pikuach Nefesh). "Do not stand idly over your fellow's blood". Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Mishpat 388:12 (See the book "Netivot Chaim" by Ha-Rav Asher Zelig Morsky regarding the severe obligation to follow traffic laws).

Illness

Q: I daven and daven to Hashem to heal me from my illness but He does not. Why?

A: We do not know. But the question should be the opposite: Why when we commit our first transgression does Hashem punish us by paralyzing our limbs, as the Ramak writes in Tomer Devorah on "Mi El Kamocha"?

Rising for the Elderly

Q: If an elderly person gets on to a bus knowing that all of the seats are taken, am I obligated to give him my seat?

A: He did not act properly in bothering others, but you are nonetheless obligated to give up your place (Aleinu Le-Shabeach – Shemot, pp. 689-690. And Ha-Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv said that one should give up his seat as an act of loving-kindness. Vayishma Moshe, vol. 2 pp. 210-211).

Coffee made by a Non-Jew

Q: Is it permissible to drink coffee made by a non-Jew on an airplane?

A: Yes. There is no fear of him mixing in something forbidden and there is no issue of Bishul Akum (the prohibition of eating food cooked by a non-Jew), since it is mostly water. Shut Yechaveh Daat 4:14.

Pregnant Woman's Desire for Food

Q: Is it true that if a pregnant woman desires a certain food, one should give it to her, even it is not Kosher?

A: Incorrect. Only if one knows that if she does not receive the food then she and the fetus will be endangered, or this can be discerned on her face. Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 617.

Laws of a Doula on Shabbat

Q: Is it permissible to call a doula on Shabbat to tell her that labor has begun?

A: Yes.

Q: In what ways can a doula get to the hospital?

A: She may not drive and no additional activity may be done to pick her up. She can therefore walk, be driven by a non-Jew, or travel together with the pregnant woman from her house (This is also the ruling of Ha-Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv. Kav Ve-Naki #107).

Q: Is it permissible for her to bring items with her?

A: Yes, those that are necessary.

Q: Is it permissible for her to go home afterwards?

A: Yes, with a non-Jewish driver (see Shemirat Shabbat Ke-Hilchata 36:11).

Leftover Food from a Wedding

Q: Is it permissible for a guest to take food which remains on the table after a wedding, since it will be thrown out anyway?

A: No. It still belongs to the person who is having the Simcha. One needs permission (Kav Ve-Naki #60 in the name of Ha-Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv).

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