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Text Message Q&A #105

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

Eretz Yisrael

Q: The Arabs also claim that this Land is "theirs"!

A: It is a lie. Even the Koran says it belongs to us. The Imam of Rome also recently mentioned this fact.

Damaging a Vehicle of Tzahal

Q: Is it permissible to damage an army vehicle of Tzahal in order to prevent expulsion of Jews from their homes?

A: We do not perform a Mitzvah through a transgression by damaging Tzahal's equipment (Our Rabbi Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah said that the army's equipment is a "Machshir Mitzvah" [something which facilitates the fulfillment of a Mitzvah]. Sichot Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah – Eretz Yisrael, pp. 268-270. "Who sanctifies us with His Mitzvot"! A Sukkah is also a "Machshir Mitzvah", and there is an opinion – which is not accepted in the Halachah – that we recite a blessing when building it. Yerushalmi, Berachot 9:3. Is it permissible to damage a Sukkah for some reason?! G-d forbid! And this is true all the more so for Tzahal's equipment which is required to protect Am Yisrael, Eretz Yisrael and to sanctify Hashem's Name. Li-Netivot Yisrael, in the article "Li-Mitzvot Ha-Aretz". And doing so also distances Am Yisrael from Eretz Yisrael).

Voting during Shiva

Q: Is it permissible to vote in the Israeli elections if one is sitting Shiva?

A: Despite the fact that one sitting Shiva does not leave his home during the entire week, it is permissible to go and vote (A similar question was asked of Ha-Rav Ovadiah Yosef and he answered: "It is permissible, and they should put dirt on their feet" [when going out]).

Reb Avrum

Q: The Gemara in Berachot (13a) says that one who calls Avraham: "Avram" violates a positive and a negative Mitzvah (brought in Magen Avraham, Chapter 156). If so, how is it that Ha-Gaon Ha-Rav Avraham Shapira ztz"l – Rosh Yeshivat Mercaz Ha-Rav" was called: "Reb Avrum"?

A: This prohibition only applies to Avraham Avinu himself. Kaf Ha-Chaim 156:14. And when done so in a shameful way. Shut Minchat Yitzchak 4:30 (And see Tzalach on Berachot 13a. Torah Temimah on Bereshit 17:5 #8).

Kivrei Tzadikim (The Graves of the Righteous) outside of Eretz Yisrael

Q: What is the source in Chazal that Kivrei Tzadikim outside of Eretz Yisrael contain the holiness of Eretz Yisrael?

A: There is no source (Some testify that the Mekubal author of "Leshem Shevo Ve-Achlama" said that true Kivrei Tzadikim outside of Eretz Yisrael have the Shechinah residing on them and such places are considered like Eretz Yisrael, but this is a Chiddushim. See Shut Teshuvot Ve-Hanhagot 3:61).

Chasidei Satmar and Neturei Karta

Q: How should we relate to the Chasidei Satmar and Neturei Karta who participated in the Holocaust Denial Conference in Iran?

A: They are confused and do not represent Satmar Chasidim (One of the current Satmar Rebbes, Ha-Rav Yekutiel Yehudah Teitelbaum, said about these members of Neturei Karta who visited Iran: "These people take the pure name of Satmar in vain! Our Holy Rabbi, the 'Vayoel Moshe' [the first Satmar Rebbe, and his uncle], exaggeratedly said that they cause more damage than the Zionists themselves. We are working to cast off all these extreme sects. When these went to Iran, the Satmar Beit Din issued a harsh letter against them." Mishpachah Magazine. 29 Kislev 5773, p. 24).

Walking in the Street

Q: Am I obligated to walk in the street with my eyes facing downward?

A: It is proper, but not obligated. The essence is to keep one's eyes straight ahead, and not looking around all of the time. And if you seeing something forbidden either close your eyes or look away (Our Rabbi Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah would relate that one of the Tosafot –

perhaps the Rashbam – on account of being so strict about guarding his eyes that he once walked onto a wagon between pulled by "Kila'ei Behemah" ["Forbidden Mixture of Animals" as it says: "You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together." Devarim 22:9]. One must therefore find the proper balance between properly guarding one's eyes and overdoing it, which can lead to leniencies and even violations).

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