



Text Message Q&A #107

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Mixed Seating

Q: Ha-Rav Soloveitchik ruled that it is preferable not to hear the Shofar if the only option to do so is in a mixed seating Minyan. How is being strict on modesty more important than a Torah Mitzvah?

A: 1. It is not a stricture (See Shut Igrot Moshe, Orach Chaim 1:39). 2. It is a Mitzvah performed through a transgression. But it is best to ask Rav Soloveitchik's students directly (Rav Soloveitchik ruled in this way regarding mixed seating Minyans, since family seating began in the houses of worship of idolators, and he published the above ruling in newspapers. He explains that if one went to a mixed seating Minyan, it is correct that he would fulfill the Mitzvah of hearing the Shofar, but at the same time, he would violate the prohibition of "Do not do so to Hashem Your G-d". And if he remains at home, he would nullify the Mitzvah of Shofar, but he would not violate the negative Mitzvah. In this situation, it is therefore preferable to "Shev Ve-Al Ta'aseh" – sit and do nothing. See Eruvim 100a. Nefesh Ha-Rav, p. 232. Divrei Ha-Rav, pp. 156-157).

Awe of Hashem

Q: How do I reach the level of constantly having awe of Hashem?

A: This is an extremely high level, brought at the end of Mesilat Yesharim Chapter 25, which comes through the constant thought that the Shechinah is found in every place and one can not hide from Hashem. See there at length.

Civil Marriage

Q: Is there room to permit civil marriage in the State of Israel?

A: If both members of the couple are non-Jews.

Deception during the Elections

Q: I heard that Satmar is giving money to anyone who deposits his Teudat Zehut with them on election day so he will not vote. Is it permissible for me to take the money and vote with my passport based on the law of one who steals from a thief is exempt?

A: It is forbidden from every single perspective (See Mishnah Baba Kama 7:1. Rambam, Hilchot Geneivah 1:17. And for a response to the Satmar Rebbe's claim that it is forbidden to vote in Israeli election, see Alo Naale #37).

Lying for the Sake of Peace

Q: Is it permissible for me to lie and say that a Rabbi appeared to me in a dream and commanded me to end a conflict if it will help?

A: Yes. It is permissible to lie for the sake of peace (see Yevamot 65b. Chafetz Chaim, Hilchot Rechilut 1:8).

Friendship between a Man and Woman

Q: Is it permissible for a man and woman to be friends on condition that one's evil inclination is not involved?

A: There is no such thing. It is self-deception. It is a prohibition according to the Torah. Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 152:8. For a recent study by non-Jewish researches in America that concluded that men and women can't be just friends, see:

www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=men-and-women-cant-be-just-friends.

Eretz Yisrael

Q: We does our community emphasize Eretz Yisrael so much?

A: Our community is Am Yisrael. There is a great emphasize since it is a great Mitzvah, and – Baruch Hashem – self-sacrifice for this Mitzvah brought and brings the Redemption (Shemoneh Kevatzim 7:201).

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