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Text Message Q&A #109

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

#### Making Noise at Mention of Haman

Q: Is the Minhag to make noise during the reading of the Megillah only when Haman's name is mentioned or also for his wife and sons?

A: According to the Shevet Musar, also for his wife and sons. Piskei Teshuvot 690:9. But in general, one should only make noise for Haman for a short amount of time and one should not disrupt the reading of the Megillah. Do not turn the essential into the unessential and the unessential into the essential (Ha-Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach did not make any noise at Haman's name, not even stamping his feet. Ve-Alehu Lo Yibol, Vol. 1 p. 246. See She'eilat Shlomo 1:276).

#### Fireworks

Q: Is it permissible to shoot off fireworks on Purim?

A: It is certainly forbidden. They cause all sorts of injuries during the year, and very severe ones. In addition there is the fear they cause. Purim is a day to express the love of Israel and not a day to cause her pain.

#### Cross-Dressing for Purim

Q: Is it permissible for a man to dress as a woman for Purim?

A: Some authorities permit it, but most forbid it. Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 696:8. Mishnah Berurah #30. It is therefore proper to refrain.

Q: And a woman to dress as a man?

A: Same as above. But certainly not in the presence of men since it is eye-fetching.

Q: And children?

A: There are those who are also strict. Piskei Teshuvot ibid. #14 (Aruch Ha-Shulchan ibid. #12. Shut Yechaveh Da'at 2:50. Orchot Rabbenu 3:60. Shut She'eilat Shlomo 1:287. A close associate of the Chazon Ish entered his house on Purim with his 4-5 year old daughter wearing pants. The Chazon Ish said: This is education? Dinim Ve-Hanhagot of the Chazon Ish 22:10).

#### Honoring Torah Scholars on Purim

Q: Is it permissible to have a play on Purim which imitates Torah scholars?

A: One must be extremely cautious on Purim not to embarrass another person and all the more so to embarrass Torah scholars (Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, scolded someone who dressed up on Purim like the Chief Rabbi, Ha-Rav Shlomo Goren. Rabbenu p. 130. And it is related that Maran Ha-Rav Kook said Divrei Torah on Purim in the same style and with the same emphasis as his Rav, the Netziv, but Rav Kook knew how to do so with respect and holiness, and also did not imitate his voice. See Shut She'eilat Shlomo 1:285. 4:131).

#### Toy Gun for Children

Q: It is permissible to buy a toy gun for children for Purim?

A: It is okay. During the course of the year, this is inappropriate culture, but it is not a problem on occasion.

#### Drinking on Purim

Q: Is a person obligated to drink on Purim if it leads to stupidity?

A: No. The earlier Prophets only commanded us to rejoice in a manner that will lead us to show gratitude to Hashem, and not to behave with licentiousness and stupidity. And we do not perform a Mitzvah through a transgression, such as missing Davening. Biur Halachah 695 in the name of the Meiri and Chayei Adam. Nimukei Yosef and Meharsha on Megillah 7b. Piskei Teshuvot 695:4. And in such a case, one should merely drink a bit more than he is accustomed to (The Steipler related that one time he got drunk on Purim, and then decided to refrain from doing so again. Ashkavtei De-Rebbe Vol. 1, p. 164. See Shut She'eilat Shlomo 1:274, 286. 3:159. 4:130).

#### Insurance Money

Q: I received money for my car from my insurance company based on an estimate from the garage. The owner then gave me a discount. Does the money left over from the discount belong to me or to the insurance company?

A: It seems that it belongs to the insurance company since they compensate based on the actual payment. You should therefore inform the insurance company and they will decide (see Shulchan Aruch and Rama, Choshen Mishpat 183:6 and commentaries there).

#### Separating Terumah from Public Tree

Q: Is one obligated to separate Terumot and Maasarot from a tree grown on public property?

A: If everyone has permission to pick the fruit, it is considered ownerless and one need not separate them. Rambam, Hilchot Terumot 2:11. If permission is only given to the residents of that area, one is obligated to separate them.

#### Shidduch and Scars

Q: If a young woman has a scar on her body from surgery, does she need to tell a potential Shidduch?

A: No. It is an unimportant issue (This is also the ruling of Ha-Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv that it is only necessary if it came from a dog bite which dug deeply into the skin. Ketubot 75a. Shulchan Aruch, Even Ha-Ezer 39:4. Kav Ve-Naki #524).

#### Shabbat Elevator

Q: Is it permissible for anyone to use a Shabbat elevator or only one who is ill or suffering?

A: It is permissible for anyone. It is obviously always good to be strict. The effect of the weight of the rider is an unintended act and negligible. Shemirat Shabbat Ke-Hilchata (23:58-59 and in the notes in the name of Ha-Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach).

#### The Holocaust

Q: It is difficult for me to understand how Hashem allowed the Holocaust.

A: It is indeed difficult, but it is also difficult to understand how you are asking this question in a text message. It is too complex for a text message. See my book "Orot Me-Ofel".

#### Antidote to the Evil Inclination

Q: "I have created the Evil Inclination, and I have created Torah as its antidote" (Kiddushin 30b). Learning Torah is for men – what then is the antidote for women?

A: Modesty. The letter of the Vilna Gaon.

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