



Text Message Q&A #111

Ask Rav Aviner: mororly@bezeqint.net

Prepared by Rabbi Mordechai Tzion

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

Long Pe'ot

Q: I cannot get a job because of my long Pe'ot, but I won't shorten them for any price. This trial is ripping me apart. What should I do?

A: Gird yourself with patience. Or put them behind your ears (See Orchot Rabbenu vol. 1, p. 236 that the Chazon Ish and Steipler were particular not to put Pe'ot behind one's ears, since it appears as if one is ashamed of them).

Perfume on Pesach

Q: Does perfume require Pesach certification?

A: Yes, since it includes alcohol, which is often made from wheat. Perfume is not necessarily inedible to dogs, and can have the taste of alcohol (Shut She'eilat Shlomo 1:208 #2. 4:111).

Kitniyot

Q: Is the prohibition of eating Kitniyot on Pesach for Ashkenazim nullified in Eretz Yisrael, since there are no longer Ashkenazim, Sefardim and Yemenite Jews, rather everyone is Israeli?

A: It is certainly not nullified (see Aruch Ha-Shulchan, Orach Chaim 453:4-5)!

Sefer Torah or Shul

Q: Which is preferable – donating money to write a Torah or establishing a Shul in a secular community?

A: Establishing a Shul, since we write a Torah NOT so it can sit in the Ark but rather to fulfill what is written in it, such as Davening. The Chayei Adam (Hilchot Sefer Torah Klal 31)

similarly writes that it is preferable to donate money to those who learn Torah than to the writing of a Sefer Torah (And this is also the ruling of Ha-Rav Ovadiah Yosef that one should donate to building a Shul in a secular community).

Drinking Contact Lenses

Q: A student came into a room, took a glass from the table, filled it with water and drank. It turned out that he drank this friend's contact lenses, which were in the glass soaking in their solution. Is he obligated to pay?

A: No. He had no reason to think that contacts might be in the glass (This is also the ruling of Ha-Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv. Kav Ve-Naki #671).

Matzah which Remained

Q: Is it permissible to eat Matzah which remained from last Pesach?

A: Yes. After all, it is Kosher.

Selling Chametz on the Phone

Q: It is permissible to sell Chametz on the phone? What about making a Kinyan?

A: Yes. Appointing an agent does not require a Kinyan (Rambam, Hilchot Mechirah, end of Chapter 5). And the same applies to selling Chametz through a letter, on the internet or by a text message (The Chazon Ish and Steipler also did not require a Kinyan when appointing an agent for selling Chametz, based on the Rambam. Orchot Rabbenu Vol. 2, p. 13. But Ha-Rav Yosef Soloveitchik was particular to do so, since the Rambam mentions and explains this custom. Nefesh Ha-Rav, p. 179. Mi-Penini Ha-Rav, p. 220).

Ashkenazi eating at Sefardi's House

Q: I am Ashkenazi. Is it permissible for me to spend Seder night at the house of a Sefardi who eats Kitniyot?

A: Yes, but don't eat Kitniyot. It is permissible, however, to eat: food which touched Kitniyot, food which absorbed Kitniyot, food in which the Kitniyot are no longer recognizable and are nullified in a majority, and food cooked in Kitniyot pots and pans (Shut She'eilat Shlomo 3:141).

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