



Text Message Q&A #112

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

Redemption without Teshuvah

Q: The Rambam rules in Hilchot Teshuvah that we will not be redeemed without Teshuvah. If so, since there are still transgressions among us, isn't it clear that we're not in the Redemption?

A: 1. See Kesef Mishneh, who explains that Teshuvah brings us to Redemption. 2. It is not currently the Redemption, but Atchalta De-Geulah – the Beginning of the Redemption. 3. The Rambam writes that the Messiah himself will force all Jews to fulfill the Torah and Mitzvot. If this is so, then we will not all be righteous when he arrives. Hilchot Melachim 11:4 (see Alo Naale #24 at length).

Shidduch and Dentures

Q: Does a young woman have to tell on a Shidduch that she has dentures?

A: No. This is something which lacks importance and is not considered fraud (This is also the ruling on Ha-Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, since a Cohain whose teeth fall out is not considered blemished. Bechorot 37a. Tosafot ibid. And any blemish which invalidates a Cohain is considered a blemish in women. Ketubot 72b. Kav Ve-Naki #527).

Marriage Proposal

Q: What is the source for proposing marriage while down on one knee? Is it permissible?

A: There is no source. It is forbidden on account of "Chukot Ha-Goyim" (following non-Jewish practices).

One Shabbat Candle

Q: If a woman only has one candle to light for Shabbat, does she fulfill her obligation?

A: Yes (A woman once called Ha-Rav Pinchas Hirschprung – Chief Rabbi of Montreal – and asked: Since she only has one candle to light for Shabbat, is it possible to light it facing a mirror so it appears as two candles? He answered that if this were the case, there would be two women in the mirror, and both would have to light... The booklet "Gedulat Pinchas", p. 83).

Book of Tehillim

Q: Should one sleep with a Book of Tehillim under his pillow?

A: No, rather he should recite Tehillim. And see Rambam, Hilchot Zarah 11:12.

Evil Inclination

Q: How does one break the evil inclination?

A: Learning Torah. "If this disgusting one (the evil inclination) encounters you, drag it to the Beit Midrash. If it is stone - it will melt. If it is iron - it will shatter". Kiddushin 30b.

The Incident with Beruriah

Q: Rashi on Avodah Zarah 18b brings an incident with Beruriah and Rabbi Meir which is shocking and hard to understand. How could Rabbi Meir do such a thing? Was it permissible?

A: It is a complicated subject for a text message. See my long article on the issue in Iturei Cohanim (#223 Iyar 5763, which explains it according to the opinion that the incident actually occurred). Nonetheless, early editions of Rashi do not contain this incident. Perhaps a mistaken student put it in (Ha-Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv also explains that this incident never happened. Divrei Yaakov of Ha-Rav Yaakov Adas on the Teshuvot of Ha-Rav Elyashiv, p. 263).

Separate Seating at Wedding

Q: Must a wedding have separate seating? I heard that Ha-Rav Moshe Feinstein does not require separation and he is a great Gaon.

A: It is true that Ha-Rav Moshe Feinstein rules that a Mechitzah is only required for a public event which is out to the public, but not at a private event like a wedding. Shut Igrot Moshe 1:41. Yoreh Deah 4:24 #3. And this is how many act in America. But with all the greatness of Ha-Rav Feinstein, the Halachah does not always have to follow his rulings, and in our times, G-d-fearing Jews in Eretz Yisrael have a proper Mechitzah. See Shut Az Nedberu of Ha-Rav Zilber 12:47.

Helping My Wife

Q: My wife is pregnant, and she wants to sleep while I watch the kids. If I do this, I will not be able to Daven with a Minyan.

A: You are also obligated to take care of your children, and one who is involved in a Mitzvah is exempt from another Mitzvah – in this case, Davening with a Minyan (Sukkah 26a).

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