



Text Message Q&A #115

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

Whistling

Q: My grandmother tells me that Jews should not whistle. Is it true? Is it forbidden on account of the prohibition of follow non-Jewish customs? And if it is permissible, is it permissible on Shabbat?

A: There is no prohibition against whistling. Outside of Israel, non-Jews whistled, so Jews refrained from doing so. In sum: Don't whistle in your grandmother's presence, out of respect for her. And it is permissible on Shabbat (Shut She'eilat Shlomo 1:182. This is also the ruling of Ha-Rav Yosef Soloveitchik. Divrei Ha-Rav, pp. 197-198).

Forgot to Count Sefirat Ha-Omer

Q: If someone forgot to count Sefirat Ha-Omer for an entire day and is extremely sad and embarrassed, can he continue to count with a blessing?

A: No. Although there is an opinion which permits it. Shaarim Metzuyanim Ba-Halachah (120:7). But this is a lone view.

Driving Lessons

Q: Is a father obligated to teach his child how to drive, just as he is obligated to teach him a trade, since it is also essential?

A: 1. A father is not obligated to teach his child a trade. While it is mentioned in the Gemara, it does not appear in the Halachah. It is therefore not an obligation, but a recommendation. 2. There is also a recommendation to teach one's child how to drive, but it is much less, since driving is not as important as a trade (This is also the opinion of Ha-Rav Yosef Soloveitchik. Divrei Ha-Rav, p. 201).

New Apartment during Sefirat Ha-Omer

Q: Is it permissible to move into a new apartment or to renovate one's home during Sefirat Ha-Omer?

A: Some are strict, but the basic Halachah is that it is permissible. Shut Tzitz Eliezer 11:41 #4. Chazon Ovadiah – Yom Tov 270. Ha-Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv in Ashrei Ha-Ish, p. 431.

Q: Is it permissible to have a Chanukah Ha-Bayit?

A: Yes, without music. Chazon Ovadiah – Yom Tov 271. Ha-Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv in Ashrei Ha-Ish, p. 431.

Cutting Nails during Sefirat Ha-Omer

Q: Is it permissible to cut one's nails during Sefirat Ha-Omer?

A: Yes. Ha-Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv in Ashrei Ha-Ish, p. 431.

Brit Milah in Shul

Q: Is it preferable to have a Brit Milah in Shul, which is a holy place, or in a hall?

A: It is preferable in a hall, since a Shul is a place of prayer and learning, and not a place for the Mitzvah of Brit Milah. Furthermore, people engage in idle chatter, which is completely forbidden there (Ha-Rav Yosef Soloveitchik also rules that having a Brit Milah in a Shul is not a plus but rather a leniency in order not to burden the people to go elsewhere when the Brit Milah is after the Davening. Divrei Ha-Rav, p. 241).

Being Drafted with Long Hair

Q: If a soldier is drafted with long hair down to his shoulders, and the army demands he get a haircut, it is permissible during Sefirat Ha-Omer?

A: It is permissible and a Mitzvah since having long hair is forbidden. 1. Creating an impediment between one's head and Tefillin, and therefore causing a blessing to be recited in vain when putting on Tefillin. 2. Following the ways of the non-Jews (which includes acts of conceit and haughtiness). 3. "Lo Tilbash" (the prohibition of men dressing or appearing as women) (Shut She'eilat 1:23).

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