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Text Message Q&A #117

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

#### Failing to Pay Shul Dues

Q: If someone refuses to pay Shul dues, is it permissible for the board to not to give him an Aliyah or allow him to be a Shliach Tzibur when he is a mourner?

A: Yes. A Shul is maintained by its board, which establishes the rules. If the person does not agree with these rules, he should go to a different Shul. And if it is on account of a lack of money that he has not paid, he should request an exemption or discount. See Rama, Orach Chaim 153:16 (Shut Tzitz Eliezer 2:22).

#### Visiting Two Graves

Q: When I visit my father's grave, is it permissible for me to visit other graves as well?

A: Some are strict to refrain from doing so. Pnei Baruch 37:63. But is it permissible according to the basic Halachah.

#### Inviting a Shabbat Desecrator

Q: Is it permissible to invite someone to a Shabbat meal to bring them closer to Torah if he will drive to get there?

A: No, on account of the prohibition of strengthening those who transgress (Shut Igrot Moshe, Orach Chaim 1:98-99. Ha-Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv in Kav Naki #87. Shut She'eilat Shlomo 4:109. Ha-Rav Yosef Soloveitchik was once asked by a Rabbi: The most serious question I face in my Rabbinate is the question of inviting my congregants, who do not observe Shabbat, to eat at my home since I feel that I can have a big influence on them, but I know that they will drive to my house. Ha-Rav Soloveitchik responded immediately:

"What question is there about this, it is forbidden, and there is nothing to talk about". Divrei Ha-Rav, p. 170).

#### Food from another Kosher Certification

Q: If I am a guest at someone's home and am served food from a Kosher certification that I refrain from eating, is it permissible for me to eat it?

A: Yes. All Kosher certification is acceptable until proven otherwise. Piskei Teshuvot 170:8 (and this is how Ha-Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld and Ha-Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach acted when they attended a Simchah. They would eat food which they were strict about in their own homes, as it says in Tehillim 101:2: "I will walk with the simplicity of my heart within my house", i.e. In my simplicity, I will be strict within the confines of my home, but not when I am with others. Ve-Alehu Lo Yibol Volume 2, p. 66).

#### Bar Mitzvah in the Middle of Sefirat Ha-Omer

Q: If a young man has a Bar Mitzvah in the middle of Sefirat Ha-Omer, can he continue counting Sefirat Ha-Omer with a blessing?

A: Ashekenazim – yes. Shut Har Tzvi Orach Chaim #72. Halichot Shlomo, p. 358. Ha-Rav Yosef Shlomo Elyashiv in Ashrei Ha-Ish, p. 423 (and Shut Teshuvot Ve-Hanhagot 1:313. Ha-Rav Yitzchak Hutner and Ha-Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky. Shut Divrei Chachamim, p. 150). Sefardim – from the outset, he should count without a blessing, but if he counts with a blessing, he has on whom to rely. Chazon Ovadiah – Yom Tov, p. 221 (and see Shut Yechaveh Daat 3:29).

#### Converting in the Middle of Sefirat Ha-Omer

Q: If someone converts in the middle of Sefirat Ha-Omer, can he count from now on with a blessing?

A: Without a blessing. He is missing days. Birkei Yosef 493:20.

#### Ashkenazic Woman Counting Sefirah

Q: Can an Ashkenazic woman count Sefirah?

A: Some say she is obligated. Magen Avraham. Some say that she may do so. Ha-Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv in Ashrei Ha-Ish, p. 427. And others say that she may do so without a blessing. Mishnah Berurah 493:3 (The Steipler Gaon would remind the

women and girls in his house to count. Orchot Rabbenu Volume 2, p. 94. And Ha-Rav Moshe Feinstein said that the custom of their women is not to count, but they may do so with a blessing. He explains that perhaps since the custom is not to count, some say that they should not recite a blessing, but they may do so based on the principle of "One who is not commanded and performs the Mitzvah". Mesoret Moshe, p. 156).

#### Sefardic Woman Counting Sefirah

Q: Can a Sefardic woman count Sefirah?

A: Some say that she should not count. And others say that she may count without a blessing. Kaf Ha-Chaim 493:9. Chazon Ovadiah – Yom Tov, p. 220.

#### Yemenite Woman counting Sefirah

Q: Can a Yementie woman count Sefirah?

A: No. Shulchan Aruch Ha-Mekutzar 67.

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