



Text Message Q&A #141 Ask Rav Aviner: toratravaviner@yahoo.com
Prepared by Rabbi Mordechai Tzion Visit our blog: www.ravaviner.com

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

Good Teacher or Good Students

Q: Which is preferable – a good teacher with students who are not so G-d-fearing or a lesser teacher with G-d-Fearing students?

A: G-d-fearing students, since a person is influenced by his surroundings. Rambam, Deot 6:1-2. Yaakov Avinu therefore wanted to get out of his mother's womb when she passed the Yeshiva of Shem and Ever, even though he was learning in the womb with an angel, because he wanted to get away from Esav. Rabbi Simchah Bunem of Pesishcha. Chatam Sofer (and Ha-Rav Chaim Kanievski also gave this answer in the name of Ha-Rav Elazar Menachem Man Shach. Minchat Todah, p. 85).

Blessing over Shabbat Candles

Q: Do women recite the blessing before or after lighting the Shabbat candles?

A: Askenazi women – after (Rama, Orach Chaim 263:5), some Sefardi women do so before (Shut Yechaveh Daat 2:33) and some after (Darchei Halachah on the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch of Ha-Rav Mordechai Eliyahu 75:8). Each family should follow the practice of its forefathers.

Bringing Food into a Bathroom

Q: What is the law concerning food or medicine in my pocket which I brought into the bathroom?

A: There is no prohibition to bring food or drink into a bathroom, and all the more so medicine. Some are strict not to do so, but the food is certainly not forbidden. Regarding medicine, there is no reason to be strict. Piskei Teshuvot 171:9.

The Book "Maaneh Le-Igrot"

Q: What is Ha-Rav's opinion about the book Maaneh Le-Igrot, which disagrees with Shut Igrot Moshe?

A: It is permissible for a Torah Scholar to disagree with Ha-Rav Ha-Gaon Moshe Feinstein, but this book is written in a confrontational and brazen style against one of the greatest and most righteous Rabbis and should therefore be hidden away (In his time, the author of this work sent it to the Steipler, and then visited him. The Steipler harshly rebuked him and yelled at him for insulting Ha-Rav Feinstein, and threw him out of his house. The Steipler then told his son, Ha-Rav Chaim Kanievski, that Rav Feinstein is a great Posek and Tzadik. Orchos Rabbenu Vol. 5, p. 169. And it is written in the book Maadnei Ha-Melech (at the end in Adanei Ha-Melech, pp. 81-82 note #27) that Ha-Rav Yitzchak Yosef (the Current Chief Rabbi of Israel) said that the students of Rav Feinstein bought all of the copies of Maaneh Le-Igrot and destroyed them. And Ha-Rav Ephraim Greenblatt, the leading student of Rav Feinstein and author of Shut Revivot Ephraim, said that after this book came out, he sat down to write a Responsa to each claim and to refute them one by one. He asked for Rav Feinstein's permission to publish the Responsa. Rav Feinstein, however, took the pages, thanked him for his concern for his honor, but requested that he not to publish them. He explained that if they do not respond to that author, his memory will be forgotten on its own in a year or two, and no one will remember him. But if they answer, his name will spread. And this is indeed what happened, and he did not succeed in selling more than 50 of the 1000 books he printed (which implies that the student did not buy them and destroy them). And Ha-Rav Ovadiah Yosef said that this book should not be put in the library of Yeshivat Chazon Ovadiah since it does not follow the proper manner of disagreeing. And this despite the fact that Rav Ovadiah held that some of his opinions were correct and he mentions them in his works (Shut Yechaveh Daat 1:45, 2:22, 5:7. Shut Yabia Omer 6 OC 48, 8 OC 23, 8

OC 31 and 8 OC 38. Brought in Shulchan Ha-Maarechet of Ha-Rav Yitzchak Yosef, Vol. 2 pp. 436-437).

Further, Ha-Rav Aharon Felder relates that Rav Feinstein once told him that he actually had met the author once and the author asked him for a favor, which he granted. Reb Moshe added: "I didn't know that the kindness I did for him was so great that he paid me back with such wickedness." Reshumei Aharon Vol. 2, p. 4. And Ha-Rav Shimon Solnica, my dear friend, told me that his uncle – Ha-Rav Baruch Solnica – had a Shul in New York close to the Shteibel of the author of Maaneh Le-Igrot. Sometimes it was difficult for the Shteibel to get a Minyan and they would come to Rav Solnica's Shul to find people to come. Rav Solnica refused since he had besmirched Reb Moshe. Rav Solnica asked Reb Moshe how he should act and he said: You don't have to give him people to Daven there on a regular basis, but you should certainly give him people to help make a Minyan).

Ruach Ha-Kodesh for the Rambam

Q: Did the Rambam have Ruach Ha-Kodesh?

A: Yes, Ruach Ha-Kodesh which revealed itself through the intellect.

Memorial for First Wife

Q: My family is organizing a memorial for my first wife. Should I bring my current wife?

A: Don't go at all. You are now married anew and your former wife is not part of your world. If you go, even alone, it will cause pain to your current wife, even if she denies it (The Chatam Sofer's third wife was the widow of Rav Tzvi Charif, the author of Tiv Gittin. The Chatam Sofer once saw her lighting a candle for her first husband on his Yahrzeit, 25th of Tishrei. He was upset, since she should not have done so, but he rightfully did not say anything so as not to cause her pain. The Chatam Sofer eventually died on the same day of the year. Zichron Le-Moshe 68:1).

Cake for Desert

Q: There is a dispute among Halachic authorities if one recites a blessing over cake for desert. What should one do?

A: Recite the blessing. Rabbenu Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah did so in the name of Maran Ha-Rav Kook (see Rav Aviner's commentary on Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 43:6).

Modesty Clothing for a Wedding

Q: Is it proper to request on a wedding invitation that the guests wear modest clothing, or is it insulting?

A: It is not insulting, but it should be carefully worded.

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