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Text Message Q&A #150      Ask Rav Aviner: [toratravaviner@yahoo.com](mailto:toratravaviner@yahoo.com)  
Prepared by Rabbi Mordechai Tzion      Visit our blog: [www.ravaviner.com](http://www.ravaviner.com)

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

Error of the Court

Q: Isn't by saying that in the case of... the courts of Israel erred, we damage its authority and the authority of the State?

A: On the contrary, criticism is the guarantor of justice. Everyone can err, even the Sanhedrin, and there is a special sacrifice for them to offer if it does make a mistake. Only Christianity has as a central tenet that the Pope cannot err (the principle of "Infallibility"). Please do not transform the courts of the State of Israel into the Pope.

Ha-Rav Shimshon Refael Hirsch

Q: I understand that Ha-Rav Shimshon Refael Hirsch wasn't a great Torah scholar. Is my understanding correct?

A: Incorrect. He was a great Torah scholar. "An angel of G-d" as explained by Maran Ha-Rav Kook in Igrot Ha-Re'eiyah (1:182). He is also the great, great grandfather of my wife...

Chazak, Chazak Ve-Nitchazek

Q: What is the source for saying "Chazak, Chazak Ve-Nitchazek – Be strong, be strong and may we be strengthened" at the end of each book of the Torah during the Torah reading?

A: The Rishonim only mention saying "Chazak" at the end of each book. Brought in the Rama (Orach Chaim 139:11). "Chazak, Chazak Ve-Nitchazek" appears among the Acharonim. Aruch Ha-Shulchan (ibid. #14). And this is the practice among the Ashkenazim and some Sefardim.

Q: Is the last word pronounced "Nitzchazek" (with a "Tzerei") or "Nitzchazak" (with a "Patach")?

A: Most say "Nitzchazek" (with a "Tzerei"). And some say "Nitzchazak" (with a "Patach") as appears in the Book of Shmuel (2 10:10).

Q: Is there any importance in receiving the "Chazak, Chazak Ve-Nitchazek" Aliyah?

A: Yes. It is the completion of a Mitzvah. Maran Ha-Rav Kook preferred this Aliyah over Parashat Parah whose reading according to some is a Torah obligation.

Q: Why do we say it?

A: Yehoshua Bin Nun was commanded "Be strong and courageous" in Torah which is one of the four things which requires strength and encouragement. Berachot 32:2 (Yehoshua 1:8. And this is also the explanation of Ha-Rav Yosef Soloveitchik. Nefesh Ha-Rav, p. 164. And Rav Soloveitchik adds that perhaps this custom began because communities would read the last verse of each Chumash aloud. The Chumash had the abbreviation: CHaZ"aK, which meant: CHaZan and Kehilah, i.e. first the Torah reader says it and then the community. But perhaps people thought that they were supposed to say the word "Chazak" and did not understand that it was an abbreviation. Mi-Peneni Ha-Rav p. 70).

#### Mixed Health Club

Q: Is it permissible to exercise in a mixed health club if I am dressed appropriately? There is no separate facility where I live.

Q: No, it is a forbidden place. Exercise alone in other ways.

#### Book with Upside-Down Binding

Q: If the binding of a book is upside-down, should one put the book away with the binding or the content upside-down?

A: According to the direction of the content, with a sticker on the binding to show the correct position.

#### Mixed-Dancing

Q: What should I do if at my sister's wedding there is mixed-dancing?

A: Leaving during that time (And Ha-Rav Ovadiah Yosef said: Flee at that time. Halichot Musar – Tziniyut p. 851).

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