



From the teachings of the Rosh Yeshiva of Ateret Yerushalayim  
**Ha-Rav Shlomo Aviner Shlit"a**

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Text Message Q&A #152    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:

#### Environmental Quality

Q: Is Halachah "Green", obligating us to be concerned about environmental issues?

A: Yes. It is forbidden to cause damage to the environment. But we must always weigh the expense of protecting it against other essential expenses such as food for the poor, education and the military.

#### Friendship

Q: In which book can I learn about proper friendship?

A: Mesilat Yesharim (See also Ha-Rav's book "Vehalachta Bidrachav").

#### Yom Kippur Katan

Q: What is the source for the custom of observing Yom Kippur Katan on every Erev Rosh Chodesh? Is it obligatory?

A: Rabbi Moshe Cordovero, brought in the Mishnah Berurah Chapter #417. The custom is not obligatory, but one should fix Erev Rosh Chodesh as a day of repentance.

#### Fasting on Rosh Chodesh

Q: Is there a problem with fasting on Rosh Chodesh?

A: It is forbidden. Mishnah Ta'anit. Shulchan Aruch (Ta'anit 15. Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 418:1).

#### Torah Learning by a Mourner

Q: The Ben Ish Chai relates in his commentary on the Gemara "Ben Yehoyada" (Berachot 24b) that a great Rabbi who could not restrain himself learned Torah when he was sitting Shiva (subjects that are not permitted during this time). And there are other similar stories. Is it permissible to act in this way?

A: No. Although it is written in the Talmud Yerushalami in Moed Katan (3:5) that it is permissible for one who is impassioned about learning Torah to do so during Shiva, the Halachah does not follow this opinion (Ha-Rav Chaim Kanievski said that this story of the Ben Ish Chai is not true. Derech Sichah Vol. 1 pp. 100-101. Ha-Rav Ovadiah Yosef, however, quotes it in Shut Yabia Omer 2 YD 26. It is also told that the Rogachover Gaon would learn Torah on Tisha Be-Av (aside from the permitted subjects) since he could not restrain himself. Roah Devarcha p. 225. Derech Sichah Vol. 1 p. 487. The Lubavitcher Rebbe said the same of his boyhood teacher. Siach Sarfei Kodesh p. 178. And see Shut Ha-Meharsha"m 1:84 who notes that he wrote this Teshuvah on Tisha Be-Av. He explains that this Teshuvah involves freeing an Agunah, and it is written that one who frees an Agunah builds one of the destroyed areas of Yerushalayim. It is certainly proper to do so on Tisha Be-Av when we mourn the destruction of Yerushalayim. Aleinu Le-Shabe'ach – Devarim p. 530).

#### Maaser Kesafim

Q: Ha-Rav said that it is not permissible to give Maaser Kesafim as a wedding gift since this money is designated for the poor. What is the definition of a poor person?

A: Someone who lacks the essentials.

Q: Everyone lacks something!

A: Nice Pilpul, but Pilpul is not food for the poor.

#### Temple Mount

Q: Is it permissible today to visit the Temple Mount?

A: Since the Chief Rabbinate of Israel posted signs there saying that it is forbidden, there is not even a question. There is therefore no need for an answer.

War

Q: Why do we need a large army? Perhaps it is preferable to have a small army! Hashem will protect the few in the military, and the many in the merit of their learning Torah?

A: We do not rely on miracles. "When a camp goes out against your enemies". Devarim 23:10. We do not go out haphazard but in a well-organized manner. Sifre ibid. Malbim ibid.

Netilat Yadayim for Birkat Cohanim

Q: I am a Cohain. The doctor told me that it is forbidden for me to get my hands wet for two days. What should I do?

A: Do not go up to recite the Birkat Cohanim (See Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 128:6. Piskei Teshuvot ibid. note #90).

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**Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim** P.O.B. 1076 Jerusalem 91009 Tel.02-6284101 Fax.02-6261528

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