



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

Text Message Q&A #159 Ask Rav Aviner: toratravaviner@yahoo.com
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Ha-Rav answers hundreds of text message questions a day. Here's a sample:

Contemporary Authorities and Smoking

Q: Why don't the great Rabbis of our generation clearly and loudly forbid smoking?

A: Many do (Shut Tzitz Eliezer 17:21. Ha-Rav Ben Tzion Abba Shaul in Or Le-Tzion – Chochmah U-Musar p. 221. Ha-Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach in Shulchan Shlomo on Refiah Vol. 2 p. 222. Ha-Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv in Shut Vayishma Moshe Vol. 1 p. 436. Ha-Rav Chaim Kanievski in She'eilat Rav Vol. 1 p. 92. Ha-Rav Aharon Yehudah Leib Steinman in Yated Ne'eman and Ha-Modia – 12 Adar Alef 5660. Ha-Rav Moshe Sternbuch in Shut Teshuvot Ve-Hanhagot 4:115. Ha-Rav Nisim Karelitz in a letter at the beginning of the book Sefer Chaim Lelo Ishun. Ha-Rav Asher Weiss in a class on Parashat Ki Tzetzei 5767).

Tzedakah Box

Q: Is it permissible to take money which was put in one Tzedakah box and move it to another?

A: No. The first Tzedakah organization already acquired it since the box belongs to them. Shut Da'at #135.

Mazal Tov after Breaking the Glass at a Wedding

Q: Why do people yell out "Mazal Tov" after the breaking the glass under the Chupah?

A: This is a mistake, since breaking the glass is a remembrance of the destruction of the Temple. And the Sdei Chemed complained about this "practice" (Asifat Dinim Ma'arechet 7

Ot #12). After breaking the plate at the Tanaim, however, some explain that we do say "Mazal Tov", since the engagement is completed. Aruch Ha-Shulchan, Even Ha-Ezer 50:26. And perhaps the same is true under the Chuppah (Many now have the practice to break the glass in the middle of the wedding on account of this issue so that people will not yell out "Mazal Tov").

Army Discount

Q: As a soldier, I receive a 30% discount in some stores. Can I buy something for a friend with the discount?

A: You have to ask the army.

Aliens

Q: What does the Torah say about space aliens?

A: The Prophets did not say whether or not there are aliens. We must remember that the Torah is not a science book. The Torah does not come to tell us if there is life on other planets, but rather how to have a pure soul and to be a holy and righteous person on this planet (Maharal in Netivot Olam – Netiv Ha-Torah, Netiv 14). From a scientific perspective, by the way, there is no proof of aliens (The Satmar Rebbe – Ha-Rav Yoel Teitelbaum – exerted with total certitude that there was no life on the moon. If there was life on the moon, he reasoned, the Ponevizher Rav – Ha-Rav Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman, who was a most successful fundraiser for his yeshiva in Bnei Brak, would have gone there collecting! Builders, by Chanoch Teller, p. 352).

Name from Before the Time of Avraham

Q: Is it permissible to call a baby by the name of someone who lived before Avraham, Avinu such as Adam, Chava, Noach, Shem, Ever? I saw that the Mabit (1:276) wrote that it is not proper to do so.

A: The halachic authorities discussed this issue and ruled that it is permissible. There were a few great Rabbis who had such names. For example, Rabbi Binyamin bar Yefet (Berachot 33a), Akavya ben Mehalalel (Mishnah Eduyot 5:6. Pirkei Avot 3:1) and the teacher of the Baal Shem Tov: Adam (Shut Teshuvot Ve-Hanhagot 1:605).

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