



Text Message Q&A #165 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:

Soldier Forced to Write

Q: If a soldier is forced to write on Shabbat in order to protect lives, is it preferable to write with a pen or computer?

A: With a computer, since writing with a pen or pencil is a Torah prohibition, and writing with a computer in such a situation is a Rabbinic prohibition (see Kishrei Milchamah 3:41).

Difficulty in Concentrating during Davening

Q: Despite my best efforts, I can't concentrate during the Shemoneh Esrei. What should I do?

A: Concentrate at least during the first Blessing – "Avot" and at the conclusion of each blessing. Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 98:1. Mishnah Berurah #1.

Removing Tefillin to use the Restroom

Q: If one removes his Tefillin in order to use the restroom, does he recite another blessing when he puts them on again?

A: Ashkenazim recite a blessing. There are divergent opinions among Sefardim (Mishnah Berurah 25:47, 8:37. Biur Halachah 25:12 d.h. Ve-Yesh Omrim. Ben Ish Chai, Shana Alef, Vayera #13. Kaf Ha-Chaim 25:78).

Sichot Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah

Q: What is unique about Sichot Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah?

A: 1. It contains the essentials of Rabbenu's philosophy in a manner comprehensible to all. 2. It is based on the weekly Torah portions. 3. It does not explain individual words and sentences, rather is a meeting with the Master of the Universe.

Ha-Rav Moshe Feinstein's Opinion Regarding Smoking

Q: I heard that Ha-Rav Moshe Feinstein permits smoking.

A: This is how he ruled when the doctors said that smoking was not dangerous (Reb Moshe's son, Ha-Rav David Feinstein, also said that his father's ruling in Shut Igrot Moshe, Choshen Mishpat 2:76, allowing one to act leniently and smoke was based on the presumptions of that time that the overwhelming majority of those who smoked were not in danger. This is certainly no longer the case. Kovetz La-Torah Ve-Hora'ah 5772 p. 67).

Davening in the Wrong Direction

Q: After I finished Davening, I realized that I was not facing Yerushalayim. Do I have to Daven again?

A: You fulfilled your obligation (Be'er Heitev, Chapter 94. Shut Meishiv Davar 1:10. Shut Teshuvot Ve-Hanhagot 1:79).

Soldier Washing Uniform on Shabbat

Q: If a soldier's uniform is filthy and unbearable to wear, is it permissible to wash it on Shabbat?

A: A non-Jew may wash it for him. Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 276:2. Mishnah Berurah #25. And it is considered for the sake of a Mitzvah.

Yishmael

Q: It is permissible today to name one's son Yishmael? After all, Yishmael, the son of Avraham Avinu, repented (Baba Batra 16a. Rashi on Bereshit 25:9).

A: It is permissible. There was Rabbi Yishmael Cohain Gadol and others with that name.

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