



Text Message Q&A #166 Ask Rav Aviner: toratravaviner@yahoo.com
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Ha-Rav answers hundreds of text message questions a day. Here's a sample:

Using a Utensil without Immersion in a Mikveh

Q: I am a soldier. I have a new pot and am unable to immerse it in a Mikveh. Is it permissible to use it one time without immersion?

A: No. It is permissible to use disposal utensils without immersion (if they are used more than 3 times, many Poskim require their immersion), but a permanent utensil may not be used even once without immersion. In a pressing situation, it is permissible to give the pot as a gift to a non-Jew and then borrow it from him (since the utensil of a non-Jew does not require immersion). Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 120:16.

Q: And what if there is no non-Jew?

A: Call a military Rabbi, or the 24-hour phone line for soldiers of the Military Rabbinate 052-941-4414. They will sell the utensil to a non-Jew, or in a pressing situation, they will permit it based on the opinion that it is permissible since it is not the soldier's utensil (Kishrei Milchama of Ha-Rav Ayal Krim 3:58).

Removing Tefillin during Kaddish

Q: Is it permissible to remove Tefillin during Kaddish?

A: No, since one must have proper intention when answering "Amen, Yehei Shemei Rabbah", just as it is forbidden to remove Tefillin during the recitation of a blessing. Mishnah Berurah 25:56.

Blessing on a Shul's Talit

Q: If I used the Shul's Talit, do I recite a blessing over it?

A: One does not recite a blessing over a borrowed Talit, but a Shul's Talit is meant to be acquired by anyone who is in need of its use. One should therefore recite a blessing over it. However, if one wears the Talit to honor the community, i.e. to serve as a Shaliach Tzibur or to receive an Aliyah, then no blessing is recited. This is the ruling of the latter authorities - Achronim (Halichot Shlomo, chapter 3 #12. Shut Mishneh Halachot 9:234).

Chocolate

Q: What is the blessing on chocolate?

A: It has been decided: Shehakol (Ha-Rav Moshe Feinstein was once asked about the blessing on chocolate, and he responded that people have the long-standing custom to recite Shehakol, and now we must clarify why this is so, since it is impossible for us to say that Klal Yisrael acts improperly. Reshumei Aharon of Ha-Rav Aharon Felder [who passed away last week], p. 24. See Ve-Zot Ha-Berachah, p. 101, for a discussion of why the blessing is not "Borei Pri Ha-Eitz").

Tzitzit on the Flag

Q: If someone is wearing the flag of Israel, does he have to put Tzitzit on it?

A: No. It is not a garment nor is it intended to be a garment. It is a symbol. It is therefore exempt. Biur Halachah, Orach Chaim 10:11.

Kiddush for a Girl

Q: If a girl's parents did not have a Kiddush for her when she was born, will it impede her ability to find a match?

A: No (There was once a Kiddush in shul for a 25 year-old woman, since her parents did not have a Kiddush for her when she was born. It was said there in the name of Ha-Rav Yaakov Yisrael Kanievski, the Steipler Gaon, that she would not otherwise find a match. When this was related to his son, Ha-Rav Chaim Kanievski, he said:

Who made this up? Wouldn't I have heard this in my house? My father never said that we should made a Kiddush for the birth of a girl! Derech Sichah vol. 1 p. 33).

Witness who Smokes

Q: Can a person who smokes serve as a witness at a wedding? Doesn't he violate the prohibition against safe-guarding one's life?

A: It is permissible if he is unaware of the severity of the prohibition. Baba Metzia 5b (see Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Mishpat 32:4, 34:2. Shut Maharam Mi-Lublin #15 regarding a widespread prohibition. Shut Rabbi Akiva Eiger #96).

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