



Text Message Q&A #174 Ask Rav Aviner: toratravaviner@yahoo.com
Prepared by Rabbi Mordechai Tzion Visit our blog: www.ravaviner.com

Shut Operation Protective Edge #3

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

Protective Edge

Q: Is this war considered an obligatory war according to Halachah?

A: Certainly. According to the Rambam, one type of obligatory war is to protect Israel from its enemies. Defensive War (Hilchot Melachim 5:1). According to the Ramban, it is to conquer the Land. War of Independence (Sefer Ha-Mitzvot Le-Rambam, Additions to Positive Mitzvot #4).

Do We Need an Army?

Q: I heard a Rabbi say that we do not need an army and it is sufficient to rely on the spiritual strength of Rabbis. Is this true?

A: Moshe Rabbenu waged war, as did Yehoshua Bin Nun and King David. We need both of them: Human effort and Divine intervention. See Niddah 70b.

Torah Reading on Tisha Be-Av for Soldiers who are Not Fasting

Q: It is permissible for ten soldiers, who are forbidden to fast on Tisha Be-Av, to read the Torah?

A: Yes. According to the Chatam Sofer (Orach Chaim #157), the Torah reading is an obligation of the day itself and not dependent on whether or not the reader they are

fasting (See Piskei Teshuvot 566:4. Halachah-Medical Encyclopedia of Rabbi Prof. Steinberg Vol. 4 p. 383).

Protective Edge and Maaser

Q: Is it permissible to buy presents for wounded soldier in the hospital from Maaser?

A: Yes. They are in the category of poor.

Protective Edge and Amalek

Q: Are the Arabs Amalek? Is Hamas Amalek?

A: Hamas is similar to Amalek, but the defined is genetic but we do not presently know who they are (Ha-Rav Yosef Soloveitchik related in the name of his father, Ha-Rav Moshe - that besides the actual nation of Amalek, any nation that conspires to destroy the Nation of Israel is considered by the Halachah to be Amalek. Five Derashot. Kol Dodi Dofek note #23. Nefesh Ha-Rav p. 97. But our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, was not pleased with what Ha-Rav Soloveitchik wrote in this matter, and he said that it was only a Derashah [a homily, or inspirational discourse], and one should refrain from saying things like this. Melumdei Milchamah p. 24).

The Funeral of a Lone Soldier

Q: Is attending the funeral of a lone soldier consider a "Met Mitzvah" (a corpse which does not have anyone to bury it)?

A: No. Tzahal takes care of him. But it is a Mitzvah to accompany the deceased and honor the soldiers.

Returning to Gush Katif

Q: Hasn't the time arrived to return to Gush Katif?

A: It has always been that time. All that remains is to convince the Nation. This is true for other Mitzvot as well.

Protective Edge and Davening in Tzahal Uniform

Q: I just returned from fighting in Gaza. My uniform is dirty and I do not have time to change it. Is it permissible for me to Daven Minchah?

A: From the outset, one should not wear dirty clothing when Davening because one does not stand in this manner before a king. But in a pressing situation, it is

permissible to act from the outset (Lehatchila) in an after the fact manner (Bediava'ad) (see Sha'arim Metzuyanim Be-Halachah 116 #2 in the name of Rav Shmuel Engel). And this is true all the more so since a Tzahal uniform is like the clothing of the Kohanim (see Baal Ha-Turim on Vayikra 6:3. Niddah 13b. And Ha-Rav Eli Sedan - Head of Pre-Military Yeshiva Academy in Eli, in his talks before being drafted into Tzahal. And Rabbi Aharon Ziegler related how Ha-Rav Yosef Soloveitchik was very meticulous, among other things, in "Tikun Ha-Malbushim", proper and dignified attire, for the Davening. He was once visited by a student who served in the Israel Defense Forces who asked him the following question: I work in the tank division, cleaning and maintaining the tanks. My uniform often gets covered in oil and grime. Do I need to change clothing before Davening Mincha? He emphasized that it would be possible but quite inconvenient and difficult to do so. The Rav looked at him in amazement and said out loud, "Why would you need to change? You are wearing 'Bigdei Kodesh', holy clothes"! Published on www.torahmusings.com).

Protective Edge and Shaving

Q: I am a soldier in the tanks and in the field. The stubble, sweat and sand really bother me. Is it permissible to shave during the 3 Weeks?

A: Yes (While most Poskim forbid shaving, even for one who shaves daily, there are those who permit it. Shut Igrot Moshe 4:102, 5:24 #9. In a pressing situation, it is permissible to rely on this opinion).

Protective Edge and Bad Dream

Q: I am on the Gaza front and one soldier had a dream that another soldier was killed in action. The second soldier now fears fulfilling his mission.

A: This dream has absolutely no meaning. There is no need to worry about it. If they are worried, they can perform a "Hatarat Chalom" as found in the Siddur (Piskei Teshuvot 220:1. Shut She'eilat Shlomo 4:77-78).

Protective Edge and Killing Our Enemy

Q: I am a soldier and see hundreds of killed and wounded innocent people. Isn't our attack on Gaza unethical? Is it permissible for us to ensure our security with the blood of the Arabs of the Gaza Strip?

A: We are willing to make peace in a split second, but in that time they will murder us. We are obligated to protect the innocent citizens of Israel against the guilty. We try - far beyond any other army in the world - not to attack uninvolved civilians. I did not write innocent people but rather uninvolved civilians, since this is a defensive war against an enemy who has risen up to drive us from our Land. The "innocent" ones are our Nation and our soldiers.

Trip during Operation Protective Edge

Q: Is it permissible to take a trip while our soldiers are fighting a war?

A: Yes. Because the goal of terror is to break life and routine. On condition, of course, that it is Kosher and according to the directives of the Home Front Command (Although during the time of the Second Lebanon War, Ha-Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv said: I say to everyone that anyone who wants to go on a trip should first go to visit the wounded in the hospital and then go on the trip, i.e. afterwards we'll see if they are still able to go on a trip. Mi-Pi Ha-Ish p. 247).

Protective Edge and Killing a Terrorist

Q: I killed a Hamas terrorist. What will happen to me on Yom Kippur? Do I have to repent?

A: You performed a very great Mitzvah of saving Jews and defending Eretz Yisrael!

Protective Edge and Tefillin

Q: I am a soldier in Gaza and do not have time to put on Tefillin. What should I do?

A: It is sufficient to put them on for a few seconds. If this is not possible, then one who is performing one Mitzvah is exempt from another Mitzvah (Sukkah 26a).

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

www.ateret.org.il To subscribe, send e-mail to: mororly@bezeqint.net

