



Text Message Q&A #187 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:

Cohain whose Hands Shake

Q: Can a Cohain whose hands shake because of Parkinson's recite the Birkat Cohanim?

A: Yes, since they are covered by the Talit and will not draw attention. This is on condition that he can raise his hands. See Mishnah Berurah 128:52.

Brides Meeting

Q: Is it true that it is forbidden for two brides to meet within 40 days of the wedding, unless they exchange hair pins?

A: Superstition.

Visiting Poland

Q: Is it permissible to travel to Poland in order to remember the Holocaust?

A: It is preferable to donate the amount of money for the trip to Holocaust survivors who suffer from poverty. This is a more suitable way to remember the Holocaust.

Rabbi who Provides Kosher Supervision and is Strict on Himself

Q: Is it permissible for a Rabbi to provide Kosher supervision on a product but to be strict and not eat it himself?

A: Certainly. After all, he makes certain the food is Kosher, but has decided for himself to be strict (For example, there was an Eruv in the city of Brisk and the entire community carried on Shabbat but the Rav of the city, Ha-Rav Chaim Soloveitchik, and the Dayan, Ha-Rav Simchah Zelig, were strict not to carry. Shut Mishneh Halachot 15:130. And when Ha-Rav Yosef Soloveitchik visited Brisk in his youth, he went to check the Eruv on Erev Shabbat with Ha-Rav Simchah Zelig. Nefesh Ha-Rav p. 170. Although the Belzer Rebbe - Mahari"d - said that a Rabbi who provides supervision on a product and does not eat it at least once will not have much assistance from Heaven. And Ha-Rav Eliezer David Greenwald, author of Shut Keren Le-David and Rav and Rosh Yeshiva in Satmar, who did not carry within the Eruv on Shabbat, did so once to show that it was completely Kosher. Similarly, Ha-Rav Mendel of Vitebsk did not carry within the Eruv on Shabbat in Tzefat, but did so once on Shabbat Shuva to show that it was Kosher. And Ha-Rav Moshe Halberstam of the Eidah Ha-Chareidit in Yerushalayim related that the Admor of Pupa was in Yerushalayim and carried out a book on Shabbat in order to show that the Eruv of the Eidah Ha-Chareidit was Kosher. Commentary on Pirkei Avot 'Az Yomru' of Ha-Rav Yitzchak Aharon Goldberger, Dayan and Rosh Yeshiva for Pupa Chasidim, pp. 73, 77).

Fake Mezuzot

Q: There are many fake Mezuzot on the market. How does one know?

A: There are indeed many. In the past one could identify the fakes because their letters were unnaturally uniform. Today, however, there are more advanced processes for forgeries which alter the form of the letters throughout the Mezuzah. One therefore needs certification from a Rabbi that the Mezuzot are Kosher.

Mourning for the Holocaust

Q: Why do we mourn for the Six Million murdered in the Holocaust— wasn't this Hashem's Will?

A: It is also Hashem's will that we mourn. This, however, is a conversation which needs to take place face-to-face with a Rabbi.

Reish Lakish

Q: Is it permissible to relate to our youth that Reish Lakish was originally a bandit and then became a great Torah scholar in order to show them that everything is dependent on the choices people make in life?

A: One needs to be extremely careful since during his lifetime, it is forbidden to mention a Baal Teshuvah's past (Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Mishpat 428:4), and all the more so to a great Torah scholar. And Rabbi Yochanan was admonished for doing so to Reish Lakish (Baba Metzia 84a).

Evil Inclination

Q: I have a strong evil inclination that I cannot overcome. What should I do?

A: The evil inclination is deceiving you that you can't overcome it. You can! (see Derech Eitz Chaim of the Ramchal with Ha-Rav's commentary).

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