



Text Message Q&A #204 Ask Rav Aviner: toratravaviner@yahoo.com

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

Found Object

Q: I saw a coin on the street and went to pick it up. My friend saw what I was doing, pushed me aside and picked it up for himself. To whom does the coin belong?

A: To him. Seeing an object does not acquire it. Baba Metzia. But he violated "Love your fellow as yourself."

Wedding Ring on Credit

Q: Is it permissible for a groom to buy the bride's wedding ring on credit?

A: Most authorities permit it, but it is proper to be strict and either put some money down or, if paying in installments, to make the first payment before the wedding. Otzar Ha-Poskim #80.

Tzahal Uniform

Q: Based on the law that one must daven in clothing that one would wear when standing before a king, is it permissible to daven in a Tzahal uniform?

A: Certainly. This may be the most honorable clothing we have. And see Shut Avnei Yespeh 8:29 #5 (It is related that when Ha-Rav Shear Yashuv Cohain [current Chief

Rabbi of Haifa] was serving as a Rabbi in the Army, he came to his wedding in Yerushalayim wearing his Tzahal uniform. Some people there did not look upon this positively. Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook was surprised by their reactions, "Wearing the clothing of a Russian nobleman - this is appropriate?! But wearing the uniform of Tzeva Haganah Le-Yisrael - the Israel Defense Force - this is not appropriate?!" (Tal Chermon – Moadim, p. 135).

Reusing stamps

Q: The postal service in America crosses lines through the stamps on a letter to show that it was processed and therefore may not be reused. But sometimes there are no lines through the stamps. Can you reuse them?

A: It is certainly forbidden. Ha-Rav Menashe Klein - the Ungvarer Rav - in Shut Mishneh Halachot (6:288) wrote that a stamp is how a Government charges a person for the service provided of delivering mail. If a Government has - as does the Government of the United States - equal laws for all of its citizens, the laws of "Dina De-Malchuta Dina" (the law of the land is the law) apply. Therefore, it is certainly forbidden to reuse a stamp, as the law states that you must pay a fee for sending a letter through the post office (Ha-Rav Klein also relates that when the Chafetz Chaim sent a letter through a messenger instead of through the mail, he would rip up a stamp. Ha-Rav Klein says that there is no halachic or legal obligation to act this way, and the Chafetz Chaim did so in his great holiness and righteousness).

Beit Shammai in the Future

Q: I have heard that in the times of the Messiah, the Halachah will not follow Beit Hillel as it does now (Berachot 36b, Beitza 11b and Yevamot 9a), but will follow Beit Shammai. Why?

A: This idea is written in the works of the later Kabbalists, but it does not appear in the Gemara or in the Zohar. Nonetheless, we must understand that Beit Shammai discusses the future, in which the reality of our world will be more appropriate to the stringent positions of Beit Shammai. Beit Hillel held positions more compatible with our current world.

Radio on Shabbat

Q: What should one do if the radio accidentally turns on on Shabbat, and the neighbors can hear it?

A: Do not turn it off. Put something over it like a blanket. If it is not digital, turn the volume dial down in an unusual way.

Mayim Achronim

Q: Is there an obligation to wash "mayim achronim" (after eating)? What about women?

A: There is an obligation if one's hands are not totally clean in order to recite the blessing after eating with clean hands. The same applies for women (Shut She'eilat 1:111).

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