



Text Message Q&A #206 Ask Rav Aviner: toratravaviner@yahoo.com

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

Stolen Lulav

Q: If someone picked a Lulav from a nature reserve, is it considered stolen?

A: Yes.

Birkat Ha-Gomel over the Wash?!

Q: There was a terrorist attack 5 minutes from where I was and I was saved by a miracle. Am I required to recite Birkat Ha-Gomel?

A: No. Just as one whose pants return from the wash and he was miraculously not in them does not recite Ha-Gomel (Ha-Rav's answer in this vein is also brought in the new book "Rav Siach" of Ha-Rav Rami Brachyahu, Rav of the the Yishuv Talmon, Volume 1 p. 62. And Ha-Rav Yosef Soloveitchik similarly related that someone once walked past a spot where a wall had fallen and killed some people. He asked Ha-Rav Moshe Bick, who was a great Torah scholar in America: Am I required to recite Birkat Ha-Gomel? Ha-Rav Bick answered: Do you put your pants in the washing machine? He said: Of course. Ha-Rav Bick said: Perhaps you should recite Birkat Ha-Gomel, since you were almost in your pants when they were thrown into the wash... Ha-Rav Aharon Rakefet in the name of Ha-Rav Yosef Soloveitchik. And it

is known that when Ha-Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv was asked such a question by one who was almost in a tragedy, he would say: You are almost required to recite Ha-Gomel...).

Sleeve Gastrectomy

Q: Is it permissible to have a Sleeve Gastrectomy in which one's stomach is reduced in order to lose weight?

A: It is permissible and a Mitzvah of protecting one's health.

Is there a problem...

Q: Is there a problem to...

A: The question is not phrased correctly. One should ask whether something is permissible or forbidden, since a person was created in order to serve Hashem. The Mitzvot are not problems (Similarly, someone once came to Ha-Meir Brandsdorfer, Posek of Toldot Avraham Yitzchak and a member of the Badatz of Ha-Eidah Ha-Charedit in Yerushalayim, to asked questions about Shabbat. He asked: Is it a "problem" on Shabbat to do so-and-so? Ha-Rav Brandsdorfer said: There are no problems. And he repeated: There are no problems, Shabbat issues are not problems, things which are forbidden and permissible are equivalent, since they are both following Hashem's Will. They are not problems which need to be solved. Shut Keneh Bosem Volume 4, p. 16).

Cell Phone on Guard Duty

Q: I am an officer in Tzahal and I take the cell phones of the soldiers before they have guard duty so they don't play with them. Is it permissible to take them on Shabbat?

A: Certainly. But ask a military Rabbi or call the hotline for soldiers of the Military Rabbinate: 052-941-4414.

Tefillat Ha-Derech while Driving

Q: Is it permissible to recite Tefillat Ha-Derech while driving?

A: No. One will not concentration properly on the prayer. It is dangerous (Ha-Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach. Brought in Shut Avnei Yashpe 8:14 #8).

Rabbinate outside of Israel

Q: Is it permissible for me to become a Rabbi outside of Israel for two years in order to educate the Jews there and prevent assimilation, or is it forbidden since it helps the Jewish community remain there?

A: It is a Mitzvah to travel there and save them.

Tzitzit during Heat Wave

Q: Am I obligated to wear Tzitzit during a heat wave? It is really difficult!

A: Yes. Shut Tzitz Eliezer (8:4, 14:49). Shut Az Nidbaru (2:55). Unlike the ruling of Ha-Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv (Ashrei Ha-Ish Chapter 2 #23).

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