



Text Message Q&A #208 Ask Rav Aviner: toratravaviner@yahoo.com

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

Contradictory Rulings

Q: Ha-Rav is sometimes asked a question and gives a different ruling than appears in his books. It is rare, but it happens. How do we relate to this?

A: There are times when a question can be answered in various ways and a person is obligated to rule according to his intellectual inclination at that moment. Sefer Ha-Chaim of Rebbe Chaim ben Bezalel, brother of Ha-Maharal (A halachic question once came to Ha-Rav Moshe Feinstein and he gave a ruling which was unlike a ruling published in his Shut Igrot Moshe. His family members asked in surprised: If Ha-Rav changed his mind then why do we republish Igrot Moshe each year without changing it? Reb Moshe answered that there are two opinions, and both are the words of the Living G-d. Meged Givot Olam, p. 56).

Eretz Yisrael

Q: We does our community emphasize Eretz Yisrael so much?

A: Our community is Am Yisrael. There is a great emphasize since it is a great Mitzvah, and – Baruch Hashem – self-sacrifice for this Mitzvah brought and brings the Redemption (Shemoneh Kevatzim 7:201).

Difficult Prohibitions

Q: Why does the Torah forbid me from things which are difficult for me to uphold? I am not an angel!

A: Your soul is higher than that of an angel. Midrash Mishlei 4:25. Sanhedrin 93a. Place faith in it and you will ascend higher and higher.

Shabbat Elevator

Q: Is it permissible for anyone to use a Shabbat elevator or only one who is ill or suffering?

A: It is permissible for anyone. It is obviously always good to be strict. The effect of the weight of the rider is an unintended act and negligible. Shemirat Shabbat Ke-Hilchata (23:58-59 and in the notes in the name of Ha-Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach).

The Holocaust

Q: It is difficult for me to understand how Hashem allowed the Holocaust.

A: It is indeed difficult, but it is also difficult to understand how you are asking this question in a text message. It is too complex for a text message. See my book "Orot Me-Ofel".

Shehechyanu for Reaching 70 Years Old

Q: Should one recite Shehechyanu for reaching 70 years old?

A: This does not have a clear source (Shut Chavot Yair #70 writes that one who reaches the age of 70 should recite Shechyanu. And the Mishnat Yaakov 2:225 [brought in Piskei Teshuvot 223 note 50] writes that this was what the Chafetz Chaim did in front of his prize students). The age of 60 is mentioned in the Gemara as a holiday since one passed the time of Karet (Moed Katan 28a, and brought in Ben Ish Chai Reeh #9 and Kaf Ha-Chaim 223:29). But the age of 70 is not mentioned (Pri Megadim, Mishbetzot Zahav 444:9 and the Chatam Sofer, Orach Chaim 225:1 writes that it should be recited without mentioning Hashem's Name and Kingship). Some recommend wearing a new garment on one's 70th birthday and reciting Shehechyanu on both. This is always possible (When Ha-Rav Shlomo Goren was Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv, he recited Shehechyanu on the night of Yom Ha-Atzmaut in Shul as was his opinion. One of the people there questioned it, and Rav Goren waved his tie, as if to say that he was wearing a new tie, and so the blessing was on it. After the

davening, Rav Goren scolded the man: It is obvious to you that one says Shehechyanu on a new tie, but not on a new State?! Nonetheless, Ha-Rav Aviner did not recite Shehechyanu on his recent 70th birthday).

Cities Given Over by King Shlomo

Q: King Shlomo gave 20 cities to the King of Tzur in exchange for his help in building the Temple. Can't we learn from here that it is permissible to give away parts of Eretz Yisrael in negotiations?

A: He only gave away the produce. Rabbi Yitzchak Abrabanel.

Driver Talking on Cell Phone

Q: Should one report to the police a driver who is holding a cell phone and talking on it?

A: Certainly. It is a life-threatening situation (This is also the ruling of Ha-Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv based on Sanhedrin 72 and Ketubot 35. Kav Ve-Naki #676).

Ripped Shirt

Q: During a disagreement in school a friend grabbed my shirt and it ripped. Is he obligated to pay for the damage?

A: If he acted in a regular way during the disagreement, he is exempt. Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Mishpat 421:13. And this is all the more so if he is under the age of Bar Miztvah. Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Misphat 424:8. But you should check the school's rules in such matters.

Bill with Divrei Torah

Q: Is it permissible to bring into the bathroom a 200 shekel bill which has Divrei Torah on it?

A: Only if it is in one's pocket, since the words are legible to someone with good eyesight. See Shut Tzitz Eliezer 16:31.

Special thank you to Orly Tzion for editing the Ateret Yerushalayim Parashah Sheet