



Text Message Q&A #219 Ask Rav Aviner: toratravaviner@yahoo.com

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

Blessing of a Tzadik or Birkat Cohanim

Q: Is it worthwhile to travel to visit a Tzadik in order to receive a blessing?

A: Birkat Cohanim – which is a blessing directly from Hashem – is supremely greater than any blessing of a Tzadik (Ha-Rav Aharon Yehudah Leib Shteinman was also puzzled by the great distances people travel to receive a blessing of a Tzadik when one receives the blessing of Hashem each day in Birkat Cohanim [obviously this is in Eretz Yisrael or Sefardic Shuls outside of Israel where Birkat Cohanim is recited each day]. Be-Orchotecha Lamdenei p. 38).

Tzitzit in a Cemetery

Q: Is it permissible to leave one's Tzitzit out in a cemetery?

A: Not within 4 Amot (approximately 6 feet) of a grave. Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 23:3. Mishnah Berurah ibid.).

Texting and Ta'anit Dibur

Q: Is it permissible send a text message if I am in a Ta'anit Dibur?

A: It depends on what the person accepted upon himself. Ta'anit Dibur is a new invention and does not have specific Halachot.

Learning Talmud Yerushalami

Q: Why do we learn the Babylonian Talmud in Yeshivot today and not Talmud Yerushalami which is Torat Eretz Yisrael?

A: The Talmud Yerushalami is very condensed, not fully elucidated and with limited commentaries, and is therefore difficult to learn. We therefore first learn Babylonian Talmud.

Ben Gurion

Q: How do we relate to Ben Gurion when he accomplished great things but was also a heretic?

A: With complexity.

Segulah for Torah Growth

Q: I want to grow in Torah learning. Is there a Segulah?

A: Learn Torah and do not engage in other matters, even if they are important. Others will be involved with them. "Each person should be in his designated camp, and each person under his own flag" (Bamidbar 1:52). Even in Torah learning, do not run in all directions, but rather concentrate on the essential matters, and do not engage with extraneous Pilpulim (Regarding the importance of learning Torah in such a manner, Ha-Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv would often say: "Like the story with the Maharsham and the Shoel U-Meishiv". It once happened that Ha-Rav Yosef Shaul Nathanson, the

author of Shut Shoel U-Meishiv, was traveling and stopped in a small town. He entered the local Beit Midrash and saw two students learning intently. He entered and laid out before them a major difficulty on the commentary of the Meharsha on the Gemara Sanhedrin. He said that he would return in a few days on his way home and stop by to hear their answers. When he returned, one of the students gave a major Pilpul which resolved the difficulty. The Shoel U-Meishiv then asked the second student: And what about you? The student responded: I will tell Ha-Rav the truth. I looked into the issue, saw that there is indeed a great difficulty that would require hours to work on. I decided that it was not a good use of my time, since I wanted to continue my learning. I therefore do not have an answer. The Shoel U-Meishiv was very excited and said: I am certain that he will be a major Posek in Israel, and indeed Rabbi Shalom Mordechai Schwadron – known as the Gaon of Berezhany – author of Shut Masharsham, became one of the foremost Poskim. Rav Elyashiv added: And the other student did not amount to much, he sold nails... In the book "Mi-Pi Ha-Ish pp. 50-51).

Shabbat Meals

Q: What is preferable – eating meat at Shabbat lunch, knowing that I will then be tired and fall asleep, or eating a light meal, and then having a lot of time to learn Torah?

A: A light meal. The essence is that it is tasty, since Shabbat is for Hashem, for the soul and not just for the body. See introduction to "Zichru Torah Moshe" on Hilchot Shabbat by the author of the Chayei Adam.

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