



Text Message Q&A #224 Ask Rav Aviner: toratravaviner@yahoo.com

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

Laser Surgery for Cohain

Q: I am a Cohain. Am I allowed to have laser surgery on my eyes or is it considered creating a blemish?

A: A blemish in one's eyes which cannot be seen does not invalidate a Cohain from serving in the Beit Ha-Mikdash. On the contrary, the laser surgery will correct the "blemish".

Refusal to Discuss Ruling

Q: Why is Ha-Rav sometimes willing to give reasons for his rulings and other times unwilling to discuss them?

A: There are times when discussion gives a level of legitimacy to an opinion which has no place in Halachah (During one of Ha-Rav Aharon Kotler's visits to Vilna, Ha-Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzinski showed him a letter sent to him by a certain Rabbi with a lengthy Pilpul regarding turning on and off electric lights on Yom Tov. Rav Chaim Ozer told him that he did not respond to the letter. Rav Kotler asked: Why not? Rav

Chaim Ozer explained that if he responds, and the Rabbi writes back, and he responds a second time, the Rabbi could say: I discussed this issue from all sides with the Rav of Vilna in an exchange of letters, and I decided to permit it... But if I don't respond at all, he cannot argue that the issue has any standing and relate it to me. Aish Ha-Torah on Ha-Rav Aharon Kotler Vol. 2, pp. 240-241.

And the same principle was applied in response to a question that caused a storm amongst the Poskim during the Holocaust. The European countries claimed that Shechitah was "Tza'ar Ba'alei Chaim" (causing undue pain to animals) and made laws that an animal must be anesthetized before being slaughtered. All the great Poskim discussed whether this was permitted according to the Halachah. During that time, Ha-Rav Aryeh Tzvi Frumer, known as the Kozhiglover Gaon, wrote an ingenious Teshuvah (Shut Eretz Tzvi 2:39) regarding this issue and sent it to the Tchebiner Rav but did not receive a response. At short while later, they met one another and the Kozhiglover Gaon asked the Tchebiner Rav why he did not answer his letter. The Tchebiner answered that although the Teshuvah was a wonder and contained strong proofs, he did not understand how one can permit it anesthetizing an animal before Shechitah. He said that when anesthesia is given to a person for the purpose of surgery, we search for an expert anesthesiologist to examine the person's condition, so that the person is not injured or killed by the anesthesia, G-d forbid. And occasionally, there are errors. In our case of giving an animal anesthesia before being slaughtered, who will examine the animal's condition and how will we know if the animal did not become Treif before being slaughtered? The reason I did answer the letter is on account of the fear that if the Polish authorities saw that Rabbis were discussing this issue, some permitting it and others forbidding it, it would strengthen them to make such a decree, claiming that it is a dispute and some Rabbis permit it. I

therefore thought it best to remain quiet and not discuss the matter. Sar Ha-Torah pp. 283-284).

Nurse Returning Home on Shabbat

Q: I am a nurse. If I am working on Shabbat and my shift ends, am I permitted to drive home or take a ride from a non-Jew?

A: According to Ha-Rav Moshe Feinstein, it is permissible. According to Ha-Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, it is forbidden. Therefore, one should return home in a car driven by a non-Jew. If this is not possible, it is permitted for a Jew to drive (Shut Igrot Moshe Orach Chaim 4:80, 5:25. Shut Minchat Shlomo 1:8. Ha-Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach adds a note there that this issue was discussed in the important and famous book "Shut Igrot Moshe" by the Gaon and Tzadik, Ha-Rav Feinstein, and he only printed his Teshuvah after asking permission from Ha-Rav Feinstein. See Ha-Torah Ha-Mesamachat pp. 229-230. Other authorities who hold like Ha-Rav Feinstein include: Ha-Rav Yaakov Yisrael Kanievski in the name of the Chazon Ish. Orchot Rabbenu Vol. 1 p. 213. The Brisker Rav, Ha-Rav Velvele Soloveitchik, brought in Asiya #56 p. 64. Shut Teshuvot Ve-Hanhagot 3:105, 4:80. Shut Amud Ha-Yemini #17).

Rastafari

Q: Is Rastafarianism considered idol worship?

A: Yes. It is a type of Christianity.

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