



Text Message Q&A #147 Ask Rav Aviner: toratravaviner@yahoo.com
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Ha-Rav answers hundreds of text message questions a day! Here's a sample:

OCD

Q: I have OCD, and a Rabbi told me that Ha-Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach and Ha-Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv ruled that in such a case, one should be lenient whenever there is a doubt. What does "whenever there is a doubt" mean? That I don't need to ask a Rabbi every time?

A: No. Whenever there is a doubt means exactly that: whenever there is a doubt (and see the book "Religious Compulsions and Fears" by Dr. Avigdor Bonchek).

Rastafari

Q: Is Rastafarianism considered idol worship?

A: Yes. It is a type of Christianity.

Connections (Called "Protexia" in Israel)

Q: Is it ethical to use connections in order to receive a job or benefits?

A: On condition that you truly deserve them, but you are unable to attain them in the usual way.

Child under Talit during Birkat Cohanim

Q: During Birkat Cohanim, some have the custom for the father to put his children under his Talit. What is the source?

A: Ba'al Ha-Tanya. But one is not obligated to do so (Mentioned in Ha-Yom Yom for 15th of Tishrei that the Ba'al Ha-Tanya would take the Tzemach Tzedek before he was married under his Talit for Birkat Cohanim. It appears that this is so the children also do not look at the Cohanim. See Nesiat Capayim Ke-Hilchata 15:6).

Rabbis who Steal

Q: How do I answer a secular person who asks: Rabbis steal? Aren't they obligated to purify their character traits?

A: Answer what you answer to yourself. This is indeed a desecration of Hashem's Name. See Yoma 85 (and Eder Ha-Yakar, p. 50).

Leaving Egypt

Q: Our Rabbis tell us that 4 out of 5 Jews didn't want to leave Egypt, and even those who did leave were mired in idol worship (Rambam, Avodah Zarah, end of Chap. 1) and had sunk to the 49th gate of impurity (Zohar). What then was the difference between them?

A: They had all sunk low, but the ones who left wanted to get out of it.

Fighting to be Shaliach Tzibur

Q: On a Yahrzeit, should I battle in order to serve as Shaliach Tzibur?

A: It is a proper custom to serve as Shaliach Tzibur on a Yahrzeit, but do not argue about it, since that is a major transgression. Yielding is a greater act to help the soul of a loved one ascend (See Shut She'eilat Shlomo 1:79 #21. Hashem always rewards one who yields. When Leah saw in her prophecy that she would have a boy and Rachel would have a girl, and Rachel would thereby have fewer tribes than the maidservants, she pleaded with Hashem to switch the fetuses. And Hashem indeed did so. Berachot 60a (Leah had Dinah and Rachel had Yosef). On the face of it, Leah lost a tribe. But in the end, Leah's granddaughter, Osnat bat Dinah, married Yosef. Pirkei De-Rebbe Eliezer, Chap. 35, 37. The two sons of Yosef and Dinah each became a tribe. Leah therefore yielded and received a double reward. Heard from Ha-Rav Chaim Domb).

Davening for the Sick with His Name

Q: How should we Daven for the sick if one does not know his mother's name?

A: His father's name. And if he doesn't know that, then just his name. Hashem already knows (And the Chazon Ish also answered the same way. He also said that you can mention his city. Ma'aseh Ish Volume 5, p. 117).

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