



Text Message Q&A #151 Ask Rav Aviner: toratravaviner@yahoo.com
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Ha-Rav answers hundreds of text message questions a day! Here's a sample:

Fruit on Tu Bishvat

Q: Is there a custom to eat the fruit of Eretz Yisrael on Tu Bishvat?

A: Yes. Brought in the Mishnah Berurah in the laws of Tachanun (131:32. Shut She'eilat Shlomo 1:264).

Modesty

Q: If I see an immodestly-dressed woman and enjoy her beauty, isn't the beauty a Divine creation?

A: This is not beauty at all but a repulsive thing. In the Torah commentary "Meor Ve-Shemesh (d.h. Ve'o), he writes in the name of the book "Or Ha-Meor" (Parashat Chayei Sarah) that when Rabbi Akiva saw a beautiful woman it repulsed him so much that he needed to vomit!

Precedence in Shaliach Tzibur

Q: I am a mourner but a major disagreement began regarding who takes precedence in serving as the Shaliach Tzibur...

A: Give in. This will also give contentment to the deceased (Ha-Rav Moshe Feinstein told his son, Ha-Rav Reuven, that if there is a chance of dispute one should give up his "right" to serve as Shaliach Tzibur even if the Halachah grants him that right. Reb Moshe [in English], p. 201).

Converting without a Brit Milah

Q: If a non-Jew is a hemophiliac, may he convert since it is impossible for him to have a Brit Milah?

A: The great Rabbis of Israel already ruled that it is not possible for him to convert. Such a case was brought before Maran Ha-Rav Kook and he forbade it. Shut Da'at Cohain (#150. And also Shut Har Tzvi Yoreh Deah #220. Shut Melamed Le-Hoel #86. Shut Seder Eish 2:102-103. Shut Beer Moshe 8:126. Shut Tzitz Eliezer 14:92, 15:1. And also the Bnei Yisachar in his book Derech Pekudecha of the 613 Mitzvot 2:30, although he adds that it is permissible for a non-Jew to put his life at risk in order to convert. And Ha-Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzinski, along with all of his many responsibilities, would also fundraise for Vaad Ha-Yeshivot and distribute the money based on the number of students in each yeshiva. He once arrived at the factory of a wealthy convert. He had his conversion certification hanging on the wall, since he was proud of his conversion, and within it was a responsum of the Rabbi who converted him: Ha-Rav Yitzchak Yaakov Rabinowitz, known as Rav Yitzel Ponevitcher. He explain that the non-Jew was a hemophiliac and it would be life-threatening to give him a Brit Milah, and he permitted him to convert without it. Ha-Rav Chaim Ozer vehemently disagreed and said that the Rav erred. Brought in short in Shut Seder Eish ibid. In general, Rav Itzele Ponevitcher gave many innovative rulings, and the halachic authorities of his generation therefore said that the Halachah never follows his rulings. Heard from Ha-Rav Herschel Schachter).

Disputes

Q: Is there any halachic issue which is not a dispute among the Rabbis?

A: 99% of issues. Go through the Shulchan Aruch. But those issue which are disputes are discussed at length.

"I wanted a daughter"

Q: I am the mother of 2 boys and found out that I am pregnant with another boy and am disappointed. Is this ingratitude towards the kindness of Hashem?

A: No. It is a natural, honest feeling. But you will certainly accept the baby boy with love and gratitude.

Reform Conversion

Q: Is Reform conversion an actual conversion?

A: No. There is no Beit Din nor acceptance of the Mitzvot (Shut Igrot Moshe Yoreh Deah 1:160. 2:128. Even Ha-Ezer 3:2-3. 4:88).

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