



Text Message Q&A #252 Ask Rav Aviner: toratravaviner@yahoo.com

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

Illegal Building

Q: Is it permissible to build houses illegally in Israel? What is of higher value: the settling of Eretz Yisrael or the law of the State of Israel?

A: We do not perform a Mitzvah through a transgression.

Israeli Embassy Outside of Israel

Q: What is the halachic status of an Israeli embassy in a foreign country?

A: According to international law, it is considered the territory of the State of Israel, but according to the Halachah, it is foreign soil. And the opposite it also correct: a foreign embassy in Eretz Yisrael is Eretz Yisrael.

Blessings by Rabbis

Q: Which is preferable – going to Rabbis to receive blessings or going to Shul to receive Birkat Cohanim?

A: Birkat Cohanim, since it is not a blessing from Cohanim but a blessing from Hashem (And Ha-Rav Aharon Yehudah Leib Shteinman expressed surprise that people travel great distances to receive a blessing from a Rabbi instead of running to Shul to receive Birkat Cohanim. Be-Orchotecha Lamdeni p. 38).

Informing Others of the Police on Waze

Q: Is it permissible on Waze to inform others that there is a police trap?

A: It is certainly permissible since it immediately causes people to drive in a more cautious manner in that area, and this is what the police are interested in.

Electric Hand Dryer

Q: If one washes Netilat Yadayim before a meal, is it permissible to dry his hands with an electric hand dryer and then recite the blessing?

A: Yes, just as one may dry his hand in the sun. Pri Megadim (Mishbetzot Zahav #13. This ruling is also found in Shut Revivot Efraim 2:68 #4 and Sha'arim Metuyanim Ba-Halachah, Kuntres Acharon 40:5).

Sefer Torah which Fell

Q: When we opened the Aron Ha-Kodesh, the Sefer Torah fell out. We then fasted. How else do we do Teshuvah?

A: Maran Ha-Rav Kook said in Igrot Ha-Re'iyah (Volume 1, Igeret #10) that you should make sure that the Torah is secure in the Aron Ha-Kodesh so the Sefer Torah does not fall (Similarly, a 4-year old child once fell out of a window and a miracle occurred and she only had minor injuries. The parents asked Ha-Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach what they should do as a "Tikun" (spiritual repair) to repent for the

occurrence. He said: Put bars on your windows! Another time, a father was drinking a hot drink while holding a child, and it slipped on the child and she was badly burnt. The parents asked Ha-Rav Shlomo Zalman what they should do as a "Tikun". He answered: Do not drink hot drinks while holding a child! In the book "Ve-Alehu Lo Yibol" Volume 3, pp. 163-164).

Tzedakah of a Child

Q: If my parents give me spending money, do I need to give Maaser?

A: Only if they agree.

Eretz Yisrael Vomiting Out Sinners

Q: When the Torah writes that Eretz Yisrael vomits out sinners (Vayikra 18:25, 28), does it refer to individuals or only to Klal Yisrael?

A: It also refers to individuals. And if they appear as sinners and are nonetheless not vomited out, it is a sign that inside they are good. Chesed Le-Avraham (Ma'ayan Shelishi, Ein Ha-Aretz, Nahar 12). And see Sefer Orot p. 84 (And see at length in Shut Eretz Yisrael pp. 270-277).

Switching the Parochet

Q: Someone donated a Parochet for the Aron Ha-Kodesh in Shul. Is it permissible to take down the old one and put up the new one?

A: Yes, since a donor knows that one day someone will donate a new Parochet.

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