



Ask The Rabbi...

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This issue is dedicated in honor of

**Judy & Peter Sheldon of Chalkwell, England and Sandra & Stephen Seltzer of Roslyn Heights, New York
on the engagement of their children Ella Sheldon and Lev Seltzer**

This edition contains:

1. Do-It-Yourself Shabbat Services (sans Torah)
2. Answer to Last Week's Riddle

A reader at Tennessee State asked:

I belong to a local Orthodox shul which I drive to on Shabbat. However, about once a month, a group of us get together at a friend's house in our neighborhood for Shabbat davening. We do this in order to have a more complete Shabbat that does not involve driving to shul. At the friend's house, we set up a mechitza and we usually have a minyan.

*However, we do not have a Sefer Torah, and we have no prospects of acquiring one. My question involves the Torah service. Some of the people feel that we should say or sing the prayers that do not directly refer to a Sefer Torah, but skip the ones that do. In other words, say prayers **Eike Kamocho, Av Harachamim, B'rich Sh'mei**; but not prayers like **Vay'hi Binso'ah, Gadlu La'Shem**, etc.*

Also we all believe that it should be O.K. to chant the Haftarah. Is our view on this point O.K.?

Dear Tennessee,

First, let me commend you for taking difficult steps forward, and I wish you and your community much success.

I notice that you don't mention anything about reading the *Parshat HaShavua* (Portion of the Week) from a book. The *Chafetz Chaim* states that in a community that doesn't have a Sefer Torah the *Shaliach Tzibbur* (one who leads the prayer service) should read the Torah portion aloud before the congregation from a *Chumash* so that the law of *Kriat Hatorah* will "not be forgotten." The blessing over the Torah-reading cannot be said, however, without a Torah scroll.

Now, onto the prayer issue. Even if the prayers said during the Torah service don't actually mention the Torah the point of those prayers is lost without a Torah. The reason for saying the prayers chosen at the taking out and replacing of the Torah is that the taking out of the Torah awakens Divine love and makes that moment an auspicious one to plea for mercy.

You're right about the Haftarah, even without a Torah you can chant it, but without the blessings before and afterward. Haftarah-readings were originally instituted as a substitute for *Kriat Hatorah* during an era in which reading and learning of Torah was banned by a foreign power. Later, the Haftarah was incorporated into the Shabbat morning service as an addition to the reading from a Torah scroll. Therefore, if there is no Sefer Torah, the blessings for the Haftarah are not said.

It's no accident that the prayer services seem incomplete without a Torah. The Talmud emphasizes the great sanctity of a Torah Scroll, and the integral role it plays in the life of a community. This incomplete feeling reminds your community of the road ahead. You are right to start with what is available and do the best you can, but the purchase of a Torah should be one of your important goals.

PS: If any of our readers know of a Sefer Torah that could be lent or sold at a reasonable price to this community, please contact us via e-mail.

Sources:

- *Chafetz Chaim - Mishna Berura* 143:9.
- *Rama, Orach Chaim* 284:1.
- *Talmud - Megillah* 26a-27b.

Answer to Last Week's Riddle:

The names of the two sets of Grandfathers/Grandsons mentioned in the weekday *Shmoneh Esre* are:

1. Avraham and Yaakov—in the 1st bracha, and
2. Adam and Enosh—in the 4th bracha ("Ata Chonen").

While one can easily see the names in the 1st bracha, it is more difficult in the 4th. This is because the prayer does not actually refer to the people Adam and Enosh – rather these are two synonyms for "human beings." The *Malbim* explains that Enosh refers to Man in his basic state and Adam is Man at a higher spiritual level.

We received two interesting responses to this riddle. The first was submitted by our former *talmid*, R. Yaakov Menken, who now heads the Project Genesis On-Line Jewish Learning Network (genesis@israel.nysernet.org). He answered this riddle and posed another: "There are four names listed consecutively in the morning *Shmoneh Esrei* with only one *vav* (instead of 3) separating them. What are they?" (Answer next week)

Mike Marmor of Thornhill, Canada also answered the riddle, and then threw in a *third* pair: Oved and David Hamelech. "David is mentioned in several places. Oved is mentioned in *velamalshinim* phonetically only: *v'chol harisha k'rega t'oved*. This concealment is characteristic of the lineage of the Moshiah."

Source:

- *Malbim* – *Iyov*, ch. 25.

If you have E-Mail and a question, you can submit it to Ask The Rabbi for possible inclusion in a future edition. Just write your question using your E-Mail program, set the subject to "Ask The Rabbi" and send it to ohr@jer1.co.il. We can't include all questions submitted, but we do try to respond to everyone.

Ask The Rabbi is written by **Rabbi Yehoshua Karsh, Rabbi Benzion Bamberger**, and various other Rabbis at Ohr Somayach Institutions / Tanenbaum College, Jerusalem, Israel.

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