



Ask The Rabbi...

Researched at Ohr Somayach Institutions / Tanenbaum College
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This edition contains: 1. World Wide Wabbi
2. Answer to Yiddle Riddle

Sam Saal <saal@summit.novell.com> wrote:

While "Ask the Rabbi" is an interesting and useful service, do you think it should be relied upon as halacha? A few problems come to mind: First, there's the problem of it becoming a service through which someone could "shop" for a rabbinic opinion. Also, do you have the knowledge that a Rav must have about the details of the specific situation, some of which even the person himself may not recognize when he poses his question? For instance, your ruling may run counter to a communal standard in the questioner's community. Trivial example: Will you verify whether the questioner is of Ashkenazic or Sephardic background before answering a question about whether something is Chameitz? And what about "Asei L'cha Rav (Make for yourself a teacher)?" Once again, while this service has the potential to be very valuable, I think it should always come with a disclaimer that it is not an appropriate avenue for a p'sak (definitive halachic ruling).

Kol tuv, Sam Saal,
"Vayiptach HaShem et Peh HaAtone"

Dear Sam Saal,

Throughout the ages people have **written** their Halachic questions and mailed them to the Rav of their choice. "Ask the Rabbi" is simply a modern twist on an old practice.

Should "Ask the Rabbi" include a disclaimer that it is not an appropriate avenue for a Halachic ruling? For many people "Ask the Rabbi" is the **only** avenue, as they have **no** Rabbi in their community. And those who do have access to a Rabbi may choose to "Ask the Rabbi" for personal reasons. By the way, for each public column that is published, there are tens of personal replies sent to individuals, dealing with a great variety of issues.

As far as "shopping" for a p'sak: Someone who wants to ask different Rabbis until he gets the answer he's looking for can do so whether he asks his question in person, on the phone, or using smoke signals. If the questioner has been to another Rav before asking us, it is up to him to inform us of that.

It is the Rabbi's responsibility to investigate details of the question. If the answer to a particular question would be

different for an Ashkenazi or for a Sephardi, then clarification would be requested, and/or the difference would be included in the answer. Don't forget, e-mail is an interactive medium.

I noticed that you signed your letter with the verse "Vayiptach HaShem et Peh HaAtone (And Hashem opened the mouth of the donkey)," referring to Bilaam's donkey who was given the ability to speak. I realize that this is part of your "signature," but the idea is relevant here: Accessing "Torah information" without a personal connection to a Rabbi may lead to "talking donkey" syndrome. The Torah is not something you borrow from the library. The ideal Torah way of life includes living in an observant community, surrounded by learned people, and having personal contact with a Rabbi. "Ask the Rabbi" is by no means intended as a substitute for any of this.

Speaking of loquacious livestock, a goat rummaging through the garbage came upon a paperback novel, which he proceeded to munch with relish.

"How is it?" asked his friend.

"The movie was better," he answered.

YIDDLE RIDDLE

QUESTION:

In the Shabbat prayers we say that Hashem called Shabbat "Chemdat Yamim" — "Most coveted of days." (ArtScroll Siddur Page 468/9).

Where in the Torah is Shabbat called "Chemdat Yamim?"

Source:

- Moshe Schwartz from Costa Rica

ANSWER:

The Torah says "**Vayechal Elokim Bayom HaShvi'i — And G-d finished [Creation] on the seventh day.**" The Targum Yerushalmi translates the word **Vayechal** to mean "**He desired,**" as in the verse "**Kaltah Nafshi** (Tehillim 84:3)."

Source:

- Musaf Rashi, Bereshit 2:2.

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 Benzion Bamberger, Rabbi Reuven Subar** and various other Rabbis at Ohr Somayach Institutions / Tanenbaum College, Jerusalem, Israel.

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