



Ask The Rabbi...

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This edition contains: 1. Safed, Tsfas and Zefat
2. Kosher Kiddie Kitchen Concerns

Peter Wiik <teshuvah@ix.netcom.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi:

What is so significant about the city of Safed in Israel, and what major events took place there?

Dear Peter Wiik,

In Hebrew, the name 'Safed' relates to the word 'view' (*tzuf*): Mountaintop Safed offers a view both awe-inspiring and strategic.

On a deeper level, it is a city where a person can gain 'panoramic' insight into the Torah. Rabbi Avraham Azulai, the 17th century Kabbalist, writes that its refined air predestined Safed as the best place in Israel [excluding Jerusalem] for delving the depths of Torah.

This allure could account for the many Torah giants, *tzaddikim* and Kabbalists who settled there: Rabbi Yosef Karo (author of the Shulchan Aruch), the Arizal, Rabbi Yisrael Najara (author of Shabbat song " *Ka Ribon Olam* "), Rabbi Shlomo Alkabetz (author of the Friday Night prayer ' *Lecha Dodi* '), *Shita MeKubetzet*, Rabbi Chaim Vital and others.

During one 50 year period in the 16th century, Safed's sages reinstated ' *Smicha* ' — the official Rabbinic ordination that began with Moses and disappeared after the second Temple. Rabbi Yosef Karo and Rabbi Chaim Vital were among those who received ' *Smicha* .'

Besides its past, Safed has an illustrious future: According to the Zohar, the dead will rise and gather in Safed, there the *Mashiach* will reveal himself to the world, and together they will march to Jerusalem!

Sources:

- *Safed the Mystical City*, Dovid Rossoff pp. 22-35.

Alden Mamann <74603.3010@compuserve.com> wrote:

At what age should my wife and I start making sure our son is observing all the kashruth laws? He is just turning one and since we do keep kosher, we're starting to feel awkward about giving him his milk bottle before bed when he has just finished a dinner consisting of meat.

Dear Alden Mamann,

In general, a child who's reached the 'age of education' — somewhere between age three and six — should be trained to observe the *mitzvot* which he can understand. This doesn't mean he has to understand the philosophical meaning of the *mitzvah*; rather, he must understand that this is something that he should or should not do.

Since waiting between milk and meat is not something your average one-year-old understands, you can give him a bottle of milk after he's eaten meat. However, you should not give your son milk and meat to eat *together at the same time*, and it's good to wipe off whatever meat may be smeared on his face before giving him milk.

Once he can understand this *mitzvah* you should wait an hour before giving him milk. When he's about 6, he should fully observe your family's custom — for example, 6 hours — assuming that he's a healthy child.

Which reminds me of a joke: One morning at the breakfast table, a seven-year-old who had *never* in his life uttered a single word shocked his mother with the words: "The toast is burnt."

With tears of joy in her eyes, his mother embraced him. When she regained her composure, though, she asked him, "But why have you never said anything up until now?"

"Till now everything's been OK," he said.

Sources:

- *Children in Halacha*, Rabbi Simcha Bunim Cohen p. 35.

Yiddle Riddle

Some people once found a discarded, yet complete, Torah Scroll and wondered whether it was Kosher or not. If it was written by a competent, certified scribe it would be Kosher, but if by someone else, it would not be Kosher. They posed their question to the renowned *Noda B'Yehuda*, Rabbi Yechezkel Landau. His ingenious answer was simply " *Minhag Yisrael Torah Hi* " (which literally means "Jewish custom has the status of Torah").

What did he mean?

(Hint: There is a widespread Jewish custom concerning the writing of a Torah scroll that could indicate whether or not the scroll had been duly commissioned by a Jewish community.)

First person to submit a correct answer via E-Mail will have their name printed in the next issue!

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 Moshe Lazerus, Rabbi Benzion Bamberger, Rabbi Reuven Subar, Rabbi Avrohom Lefkowitz and other Rabbis at Ohr Somayach Institutions / Tanenbaum College, Jerusalem, Israel.

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