



Ask The Rabbi

Researched at Ohr Somayach, Jerusalem

This Issue Contains:

1. *Bentch* Like a *Mentch*
2. Two Hands are Better Than One
3. Answer to Yiddle Riddle



Sara Miriam Beck <smiriam@panix.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

I have a question. I know it is forbidden to stop in the middle of birkat hamazon [grace after meal, a.k.a. bentching] and talk to someone. Would that apply the same if I am 'talking' to someone over the computer? Many times I am eating at my computer, so I 'bentch' there. But I might be in the middle of a computer conversation (IRC) with someone when I remember that I need to 'bentch.' Do I need to stop typing in order to say Birkat Hamazon or not?

Sources

- Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 191:3
- Ibid., Mishna Berurah 5
- Leviticus 26:21

Dear Sara Miriam Beck,

Asik sdk jflp? Sloop blek kurdfurma!

OOPS! Sorry I made so many mistakes. I was talking to someone else while I was writing to you!

I'm kidding, of course. But you get the point: It's rude to write one person while talking to another. So too, it's wrong to thank Hashem for food while typing to your 'key-pal.'

During blessings and prayers your mind shouldn't wander, even to think about Torah ideas.

"If you walk with Me *casually...*" is the Torah's uncomplimentary description of casual, haphazard *mitzva* observance. Not only Birkat Hamazon, but **all** mitzvot should be done with full attention.

One way to help you focus during Birkat Hamazon is to read the words in a siddur, instead of rattling them off by heart.

In Yiddish, when you '*bentch*' someone, you give him a blessing. In Baseball, to '*bench*' someone means to take him out of the game. When you '*bentch*' Hashem' after a meal, which one do you mean?

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@virtual.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 Reuven Subar, Rabbi Avrohom Lefkowitz and other Rabbis at Ohr Somayach Institutions / Tanenbaum College, Jerusalem, Israel.

General Editor: **Rabbi Moshe Newman**

Production Design: **Lev Seltzer**

Ask The Rabbi is available from several sources:

- World Wide Web: Our address is <http://www.ohr.org.il>
- Fax and Mail in Israel and US-MAIL in America. Send us a note requesting a subscription in Israel, or call 800-431-2272 in the US for details.
- E-Mail via InterNet. To subscribe, send the message "sub ask (your full name)" to listproc@virtual.co.il

22 Shimon Hatzadik Street, POB 18103, Jerusalem Israel

972-2-581-0315

972-2-581-2890

ohr@virtual.co.il

38 East 29th Street 8th floor, New York, NY 10016, USA

1-212-213-3100

1-212-213-8717

RZCorlin@aol.com or estern@aol.com

613 Clark Avenue West, Thornhill, Ontario L4J 5V3, Canada

1-905-886-5730

1-905-886-6065

Somayach@MSN.com

©1996 Ohr Somayach International - All rights reserved

Dedication opportunities are available for Ask The Rabbi — Please contact us for details

Issue #116 - 24 August 1996 - Ki Seitzei

This publication contains words of Torah. Please treat it with due respect. Do not let this land on a garbage heap.

Elisheva Appel from Postville, Iowa
<ELISHEVA@delphi.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

Hashem tells Moses to "lay his hand" upon Joshua (27:18), then when Moses does, he puts **both** hands upon him (27:23). Rashi says he does even more than he had been commanded. Why in this case is he allowed to do more than he was commanded, as opposed to when he struck the rock, rather than just speak to it, and is then punished? Thanks!

Dear Elisheva Appel,

Here, Moses did **more** than he was told, whereas in the episode of the rock he did something **completely different**.

With one hand, Moses conveyed to Joshua political and military leadership, and with the other hand, spiritual grandeur. Hashem commanded Moses regarding the political and military leadership only. Moshe, on his own, blessed Joshua with the spiritual grandeur.

Jacob blessed his sons. Elijah blessed his student, Elisha. They weren't commanded to do so. Here too, Moses blesses Joshua with Torah greatness, though he wasn't commanded to do so. Since Moses was giving of his 'own' holiness and spiritual inspiration, he could give it as generously as he wanted.

Sources:

- Baba Kama 92, Tosafot and Maharsha

Yiddle Riddle

Last week we asked: In what non-life-threatening situation is there a positive mitzvah to eat the meat of a neveilah — i.e., something that died without sh'chita (kosher slaughter)?

Answer: Chatat Ha'of.

A bird brought as an offering in the Temple wasn't slaughtered with a knife. Rather, the bird was killed by a sharp thumbnail inserted in the back of its neck. If a non-Kohen ate it, he would be transgressing the prohibition of eating *neveilah*. Kohanim, however, were commanded to eat from this offering.

Sources:

- Rambam, Hilchot Ma'aseh Korbanot 10:1,11:9

Riddle submitted by Reuven Miller <millerr@ashur.cc.biu.ac.il>

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.

©1995 Ohr Somayach International - All rights reserved.

Dedication opportunities are available for Ask The Rabbi — Please contact us for details.

Ask The Rabbi is available on InterNet. To subscribe, send the message "sub ask {firstname} {lastname}" to tdistproc@jerusalem1.datasrv.co.il

This publication contains words of Torah. Please treat it with due respect. Do not let this land on a garbage heap.

Issue #116 -24 August 1996

Production Design: Lev Seltzer∞