



# Ask The Rabbi

Researched at Ohr Somayach, Jerusalem

## This Issue Contains:

1. Ask Any Swordfish You Happen to See
2. Flood Figures
3. Yiddle Riddle



David Notowitz <notowitz@leonardo.net> wrote:

*Is swordfish kosher? Are there differing opinions on this?*  
Dave

Nisso Khabie at <Nisso\_Khabie\_at\_H.H.M.I.@hmi.od.nih.gov> wrote:

*Hi, I had a quick kashrut question. I was wondering about swordfish, because I have heard from different people that some say it is kosher and some say it is not. I am not very familiar with the fish itself and whether or not it has fins and scales but it seems that it does. If you can give me an answer and explanation I would be very appreciative.*

Jeff Selik <hillside@ix.netcom.com> wrote:

*I would like a final ruling if in fact swordfish is kosher? There seems to be so much confusion as to it being a fish available to eat for those of us that keep Kosher. Please advise.*

Dear Dave and Nisso Khabie and Jeff Selik,

A fish is kosher only if it has scales which can be removed from the skin. If the scales are not removable, the fish is not kosher.

Take sturgeon, for example. Sturgeon is often smoked and its eggs used for caviar. But it's not kosher, because its scales can't be removed without ripping the skin.

The swordfish is highly regarded as a game-fish and for its flavor. But in the adult stage the swordfish is totally lacking in scales.

Although at birth it has scales, these scales are attached in such a manner that they are not readily removable without destroying the underlying skin.

Hence, the swordfish does not qualify as kosher. So next time you see a swordfish, be *en garde*.

Sources:

- Leviticus 11:12

Joe Schoemann <joeschoe@actcom.co.il> wrote:

*Concerning the flood of Noah, Rashi writes (Bereishit 8:4) it took four days to reduce one cubit of water because it took sixty days to go down 15 cubits. My question is, scientifically, this is not necessarily true, being that the earth is round, so as you get higher off the ground the circumference gets larger — i.e., more water per cubit of height. So how can Rashi assume that it took each cubit the same amount of time?*

Dear Joe Schoemann,

You're absolutely right! If a ball of water loses water at a constant rate, so the smaller it gets, the faster the outside layer shrinks. Why, then, does Rashi seem to assume that the water's height went down at a constant rate? That's a good question.

But let's think. How big would a ball of water be if it circled the earth? Well, it's about 4,000 miles from the earth's center to the mountaintops, so a ball of water around the earth would be 4,000 miles from center to surface.

Now, Rashi bases his calculations on a period when the water went down 15 cubits — approximately 23 feet. Compared to 4000 miles, 23 feet is about *one ten-thousandth of one percent!*

So, you're absolutely right! Rashi's figures are not exact. They are off by a miniscule amount. Now, this rough approximation could be made less rough by calculating the relative volume of water absorbed during each four-day period during the sixty days, using the formula  $V = \frac{4}{3}\pi r^3$ .

By the way:

Q: Where was Noach when the lights went out?

A: In d'ark.

## Yiddle Riddle

Yoel Aharon Weinstein <yoelahrn@ix.netcom.com> wrote:

I was reading *The Midrash Says* and came across the following as a possible Yiddle Riddle:

"On one historic Yom Kippur, the entire Jewish people ate and drank and were praised for it by Hashem." When did this occur?

*Answer Next Week...*

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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**

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22 Shimon Hatzadik Street, POB 18103, Jerusalem Israel

972-2-581-0315

972-2-581-2890

ohr@virtual.co.il

38 East 29th Street 8<sup>th</sup> 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

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