



Ask The Rabbi

Researched at Ohr Somayach, Jerusalem

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OHR SOMAYACH תנוח טאנענבאום קאלעדזש
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Parashat Toldos

Staave, New York NY <Staave@aol.com> wrote:

Is it OK to say Tehillim [Psalms] on the subway? Do I have to say the words loud enough so I can hear them?

Dear Staave,

It's a great idea to "elevate the subway" by saying *Tehillim*. By doing so, you fulfill the commandment "And you shall speak (words of Torah) as you travel along the way." Also, the merit of Torah study protects you from the many dangers of travel (especially on the NY subway). But you must make sure of two things when saying *Tehillim*:

- The area around you must be clean of any droppings, uncomfortable odors, and the like.
- You aren't facing towards anyone indecently clad.

You don't have to say them out loud, a whisper is adequate.

Burt Falkenstein <BNOHOW@aol.com> from the Bronx, NY wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

Now that Succot is over what does one do with the etrog and luvav? I noticed in my shul that the lulav is placed on top of the aron kodesh [Holy Ark]? There's also one member of our congregation who collects them to make some sort of pie, (I think). Could you kindly reply with an explanation? Thank you.

Dear Burt Falkenstein,

I've never heard of *lulav* pie! You probably mean *etrog* pie. I know people who make *etrog* jam and *etrog* liqueur. I have a jar of *etrog* jam in my fridge. (It's an acquired taste!)

Since the *lulav* and *etrog* were used for a mitzvah they should be treated with respect. Ideally, they should be used for another mitzvah. Many people save their *lulav* until Passover and then use it to burn the *chametz*. Some people

stick cloves into their *etrog* and use it as the fragrance spice at *havdallah*.

Randy Wohl <rwohl@ndc.co.il> wrote:

Quick question, I hope: Where in the Talmud does it say, "Every rule has an exception" or, equivalently, "There is no rule without an exception?" Thank you.

Dear Randy Wohl,

There's an expression in the Talmud: "*Ain lemadin min haklalot*" — "One may not draw inferences from general rules (stated in the Talmud)." This is because there *might* be exceptions to the stated rule. I don't know if this is exactly what you're looking for, but it's the closest thing I could find.

By the way, if it's a rule that "there's an exception to every rule," then it too must have an exception; i.e., there must be some rules without exceptions!

Sources:

Erubin 27a, see Massoret Hashas

[Name withheld] from Bogota, Colombia wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

Although living in a city with three or so synagogues (located in South America), I find it difficult to drag myself to shul. What would be a suitable argument to put myself to it apart from the ones that are so common (you shouldn't separate from the community, prayer is more appropriate in a minyan, etc.). I would appreciate your feedback to this point that is important to me.

Dear [Name Withheld],

Like anything you want to do but find difficult, you've got to start by 'tricking' yourself into it.

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. Or use our form at <http://www.ohr.org.il/ask/page/ask.htm>. 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 Lauffer, Rabbi Reuven Subar, Rabbi Avrohom Lefkowitz, Rabbi Mordechai Becher and other Rabbis at Ohr Somayach Institutions / Tanenbaum College, Jerusalem, Israel.

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Here's an idea I've found helpful: Find a study partner. Arrange to meet in your synagogue and study Torah together before the morning prayers (for even as little as 10 minutes). The obligation to your study partner, and the embarrassment felt for missing your appointment, will help get you there.

Become more involved in the 'technical' side of shul. Get the key to the shul and be the one responsible for opening up in the morning. Be the *gabbai* who calls people up to the Torah, or who's responsible for getting someone to lead the services. Lead the services yourself. Becoming involved will make you feel more part of and responsible to the community.

Set aside ten minutes a day to study a book that explains the prayers. Understanding the prayers will make praying a meaningful experience.

When you're in the synagogue, look at yourself as being the tenth person in the *minyan* even if there are hundreds of people present! Why? Let me explain with a story:

A town decides to have a party. In order to supply wine for the party, they place an empty barrel in the town square and ask everyone to bring a glass of wine and pour it into the barrel. One of the inhabitants decides to bring a glass of water: "After all," he thinks "will anyone be able to tell if there is one glass of water in a barrel full of wine?" On the day of the party, everyone comes to the square, dressed in their finest, ready to begin the festivities only to find that the whole barrel is full of water!

If everyone were to rely on the others to make up the *minyan*, chances are that there would be no *minyan* at all.

Kenny Broodo < BROKE@gardere.com > wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

My sister-in-law and brother-in-law and their new baby girl just made a temporary move to Tokyo to start their business careers. I would very much appreciate knowing of any Jewish resources available to them in Tokyo or elsewhere in Japan. Thank you.

Dear Kenny Broodo,

Japan? I am sending you a list of the communities that I got from Jeff Seidel's "The Jewish Traveler's Resource Guide 1997." I wish them the best of luck.

Tokyo - City Code: (3)
Jewish Community of Japan
Rabbi Jim Lebeau
8-8 Hiroo, 3 Chome, Shibuya-hu, 150
Tokyo, Japan
Phone: 3400-2559 Fax: 3400-1827
e-mail: marcia.greenman-lebeau@iac-online.com

Kobe - City Code: (78)
The Jewish Community of Kansai
No. 12/12 Kitano-cho, 4-Chome
Chuo-ku, Kobe, Japan
Phone: 221-7236, 241-3440 Fax: 242-7254

Bruce M. Benson,
Secretary of Jewish Community of Kansai
3-1-17 Kitano Cho
Chuo-Ku, Kobe-Shi F650, Japan
Phone: 222-3950, 221-6188
Mikve on premises

Yiddle Riddle

Jack Stroh, East Brunswick, NJ <jackst@erols.com> wrote:

Here is a riddle I am submitting from my father-in-law Stanley Chazan and my daughter Aviva Stroh: "Name 6 couples mentioned in Tanach whose first names start with the same letter in Hebrew."

Answer next week...

THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

Comments, quibbles, and reactions
concerning previous "Ask-the-Rabbi" features.

I thought your piece on Godzilla and Bambi was brilliant.

Jonathan Clare <jclare@actcom.co.il >

You unnecessarily put down the person who asked about the Shabbat-light covering device. I think you used unnecessary sarcasm (couldn't you find anything better than Bambi vs. Godzillah?) Although I've never heard of the device mentioned, I have heard of Shabbat elevators, etc. I think their application violates the spirit of the Torah. I know several Rabbis (very Orthodox) that agree with me. The questioner might have used the wrong word ("comic") but your reaction sounded to me much more defensive than objective.

Noe Feldman <swraza@MCI2000.com >

In reference to your article in the Ohmet about pronouncing Hashem's name whilst singing Shabbat zemirot, I would like to suggest why some people are particular to avoid saying Hashem's name. The reason is, often after beginning a tune, a parent might see a child falling off a chair, or spilling a drink, so the parent might call out "careful" or "watch it." You can use your imagination for other examples. In order to be on the safe side, some people never pronounce Hashem's name in a zemer. Sing well and Gut Shabbos!

Binyomin Freilich "M & S Schoemann"
< schoeman@netmedia.net.il >