



Ask The Rabbi

Researched at Ohr Somayach, Jerusalem

This Issue Contains:

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OHR SOMAYACH אוהר שומאך
TANENBAUM COLLEGE
27 December 1997
Issue #174
Parashat Vayigash

Ofer Gamliel <ofer647@aol.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

Why is it recommended not to read the book of Raziel the Angel?

Thank you.

Dear Ofer Gamliel,

I heard the following from known Kabbalists here in Jerusalem. There is an ancient authoritative Kabbalistic work called *Raziel HaMalach* (Raziel the Angel). This book is cited by the Zohar, but the book itself was lost over a thousand years ago.

What is known today as the book of *Raziel HaMalach* is actually a distorted version of a genuine Kabbalistic work written by one of the *Rishonim* (11th - 15th century commentators). One of the *Rishonim* wrote a Kabbalistic work, *not* called *Raziel Hamalach*. Later, probably before the time of the *Arizal* (16th century), somebody took this work, added his own ideas to it and added pieces from sources inconsistent with traditional Jewish thought. He then published it under the title *Raziel HaMalach*. This work is not studied in the Kabbalistic schools.

Jeff Levin from Lakewood, New Jersey
<jlevin0905@aol.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

Are we required to immunize our children? Since the scientific knowledge is not 100% accurate and there is ample proof that vaccines in fact damage children permanently and sometimes they can cause death ... are we allowed to vaccinate children?

Dear Jeff Levin,

Our Sages teach that in medical matters we should rely on the experts in each generation. Today, there are differences of opinion among doctors concerning which immunizations are helpful, safe or advisable to receive. Therefore, as with any medical issue, you are required to find a doctor with sufficient expertise in the subject such that his opinion may be relied upon.

There's no blanket answer concerning *all* vaccines, but certainly many childhood diseases have been practically eliminated or reduced since their introduction. Smallpox, for example, once a great killer of children, is today extremely rare. On the other hand, some vaccinations are of highly questionable value. Find a doctor whom you trust to help select the proper immunizations for your child.

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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Steven Stone from West Bloomfield, Michigan
< sjstone@oakland.edu > wrote:

*Dear Rabbi,
How can the Torah say that the rabbit chews its cud
(Leviticus 11:5-6) when science knows that it does not?*

Dear Steven Stone,

The Torah says that we should not eat "the *arnevet*, for it chews its cud but its hoof is not split." Most commentaries translate *arnevet* not as *rabbit* but as either *coney*, *rock badger* or *hyrax*, all of which do in fact chew their cud. Some point out that the rabbit is auto-coprophagous, which can be seen as a form of cud-chewing, where the cud "ferments" externally.

Sources:

- Living Torah by Aryeh Kaplan
- Encyclopedia Hamikrah, Arnevet

Victor Rodriguez from Thornhill, Canada
< yaakov@cpol.com > wrote:

*Dear Rabbi,
This question is regarding an illness that has been around me for a while, and it is not a tangible thing to treat [arthritis]. Most medical advice only relates to the fact that they say my immune system went out of control and my own immune system is attacking my own body. Can you tell how can I fix this problem? I heard that a long time ago we were able to diagnose our illnesses and cure ourselves consulting a certain book and using only herbs. Is this book still available? The name of the book is "Chizkiya Hamelech." Thanks.*

Dear Victor Rodriguez,

First of all, may G-d grant you a complete cure and recovery. The book you refer to was in the possession of Chizkiyah, King of Judea. Its cures were so effective that people began relying on the book and ceased to realize that it was in fact Hashem who was healing them. To remedy this, King Chizkiyah hid this book. The book does not exist today and so cannot help you. The best that you can do is to continue to seek competent medical advice and treatment and pray to Hashem for a complete healing.

Sources:

- Tractate Pesachim 56a

Brandon Raff < brandon@ElectroCity.com > wrote:

*Dear Rabbi,
At my shul my dad has a locker where talleisim and chocolates for children at the services are kept. This locker is locked using a combination lock. Is there any problem keying in the combination in order to open the lock on Shabbat? Thanks*

Dear Brandon Raff,

There is no prohibition against using a combination lock on Shabbat. Many people have combination locks on their front doors in places where it's forbidden to carry keys outside on Shabbat.

Yiddle Riddle

Here's a Yiddle Riddle my son Dovid is submitting:
Which person in Tanach was born before his mother ever was, died before his father, and is buried in his grandmother?"

Chaim Salenger < Chaim@ohr.israel.net >

Answer next week...

THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

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

Re: "Hungarian Bat-Mitzvah." It seems that the question about Bat-Mitzvah celebrations is not the real issue. This congregation is "adrift at sea" without a pilot. This is clearly an appeal for guidance and help on a general and permanent level. Maybe it would be possible to organize for a Rabbi to be sent to encourage and lead them with a view to their future immigration to Israel. Having lost so many of our brethren in the holocaust, every effort should be made to save the remnant of Eastern European Jewry.

Yours faithfully, David Brass

Thank you for the adorable Yiddle Riddle on the 6 Tanachic couples with the same first letter of their names. My kids were kept busy all Shabbos afternoon and we were able to sleep. The only problem is that they came up with 11 answers. Now my kids want to know what they won?

Eli & Zahava Gross < ezgross@netvision.net.il >

I imagine that with 1000 wives, at least one of Shlomo's wives must have had a name beginning with a shin.

Chaim Budnick < Chaim.Budnick@iso.mts.dec.com >