



Ask The Rabbi

Researched at Ohr Somayach, Jerusalem

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OHR SOMAYACH אוהר שומאך
TANENBAUM COLLEGE
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Parashat Tetzaveh

THE CEMETERY NEXT DOOR & HAWAIIAN PUNCH

Baruch from Shipper, New York
< bshipper@haven.ios.com > wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
Is there any halachic reason (or Jewish spook reasons) about buying a home next to a cemetery? (We are not Kohanim.) Do you know if Hawaiian Punch is kosher?

Dear Baruch,

When my mother was little she lived not far from a cemetery. One day, she and her sister brought their mother a present they had found there: A beautiful ring of flowers with a ribbon that said "Mother."

A cemetery is no place to wander about or pick flowers, especially alone at night ("Jewish spook reasons"). However, I know of no reason not to live *next to* a cemetery.

I'm not sure how to answer your question about Hawaiian Punch, but I'll take a *jab* at it. In general, processed food needs kashrut certification in order to ensure that it is kosher. For example, some "natural" flavors are made from non-kosher animals. So look on the label for the symbol of a reliable kashrut certification agency.

MOSHE'S BIRTH CERTIFICATE

Luiz Carlos Vago from Sao Paulo Brazil
< hvago@ibm.net > wrote:

Why did the daughter of Pharaoh have the zechut [merit] to give the name to Moshe Rabbeinu? Why didn't his mother Yocheved, who must have given him a name, prevail over her naming?

Darren Sevitz < darrens@introstat.co.za > wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
The Torah says: "And Amram married Yocheved, and she bore him Aharon and Moshe..." Moshe was only given his name by Pharaoh's daughter much later. Was Moshe given the same name by his parents when he was born? Or a different name, or no name at all? Thank You.

Dear Luiz Carlos Vago and Darren Sevitz,

The Midrash relates that Moshe had 10 names. His father called him Chever, his mother called him Yekutiel, his sister Miriam called him Yered, etc.

Yet the name given by Pharaoh's daughter was the one chosen by G-d. The Chumash never refers to him by any name other than Moshe. Why?

Pharaoh's daughter saved Moshe's life and adopted him and cared for him as her very own son. Therefore, she merited that her name prevailed. Moshe himself may have used this name out of gratitude to her.

Another reason the Torah calls him Moshe is the significance of the name itself. The name "Moshe" means that just as he was rescued and drawn from the water, so too he will he rescue others from hardship, and that is what he did.

Sources:

- Shemot Rabbah 1:26
- Vayikrah Rabbah 1:3

SLALOM PRAYER

Lawrence Stein < stein@voicenet.com > wrote:

I'd like to know whether it is acceptable to say daily morning prayers (introductory and psukei d'zimra only) while exercising on a Nordic Track (it's basically a cross-country ski treadmill)? Having tried it for a number of weeks, I find that this is a great way to improve both my spiritual and physical health. Because the nature of the exercise is so rhythmic and intense, I am able to concentrate as well, if not better, than during solitary prayer. Thank you.

Dear Lawrence Stein,

It sounds fun. However, it's not really appropriate to engage in other activities while praying. Praying with a congregation in a Synagogue might also help you improve concentration, although the exercise aspect will be lacking

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unless you run to services and “shuckle” a lot back and forth during the prayers.

If you want to say *additional* verses or prayers while exercising, that's fine. But personally, if you have enough wind to recite prayers and verses, I think you're not exercising hard enough.

CAVIAR KOSHER

Fran Cohen from Mountain View, California <FranPC@aol.com> wrote:

*Dear Rabbi,
Is caviar kosher?*

Dear Fran Cohen,

No, caviar is not kosher. Real caviar is the roe (eggs) of the sturgeon fish, which has no scales. I guess that's why the ultimate Jewish gastronomic experience is schmaltz herring!

There is kosher “caviar” made from salmon roe.

DESIRE TO STUDY TORAH

Name@Withheld wrote:

*Dear Rabbi,
I have strong desire for studying the Torah, specifically the Talmud. What I mean by desire is that I want to be a Talmid Chacham [Torah Scholar]. The trouble is that I do not have the energy to become a Talmid Chacham. I want Torah delivered to me on a silver platter. I desire the will to study day and night. It is not there. I want to have an ecstatic experience of learning! It comes ever so rarely. I experience a lot of frustration in my learning. The Talmud only stares at me. The letters do not dance before me. I guess what I am saying is that I pine for Ahavat HaTorah [Love of the Torah]. How does one achieve that level? What steps can be taken, if any?*

Dear Name@Withheld,

You are not alone. Every day we pray for enjoyment of Torah study when we say “Please, Hashem, sweeten the words of Torah in our mouth.” But like anything worth doing, the initial stage is often a struggle. I always tell my students: “Everyone wants to *be* a great Torah scholar, but no one wants to *become* one.”

But you can't button your shirt wearing boxing gloves. That is, you can't tap into the Torah's sweetness while steeped in physical desires. Torah's true sweetness is spiritual, so it takes a certain amount of refinement to achieve. The Sages say, “Before praying to internalize Torah wisdom, pray to *not* internalize food and drink.” That is, pray not to be overpowered by physical drives.

Enjoyment starts with clarity and discovery. If you study too fast and get confused, or too slow and get bored, then you

can't enjoy it. You need to discover the learning technique right for you.

And finally, prayer is vital to success in learning. The great Torah scholar Rabbi Yonasan Eibshitz, *zatza*, attributed all his success in Torah study to his prayer.

An encouraging point. Struggle *must* produce results. May you find success and *enjoyment* in your Torah study.

Yiddle Riddle

Last week we asked: In what situation could two people in the same place be obligated to say *Kiddush* on different nights? That is, the night the first one is obligated, the second one is not, and the night the second one is obligated, the first one is not?

Answer: The two people are in the desert, both having forgotten what day of the week it is.

Someone traveling in the desert who forgets what day it is counts seven days starting the day he realizes that he lost count. He sanctifies the seventh day by making *Kiddush* and *Havdalah*. So, if two separate travelers come to the same place in the desert, each having forgotten what day it is — *but each having realized his mistake on a different day* — they will be obligated to make *Kiddush* on different nights!

Sources:

- Tractate Shabbat 69b
- Aruch Hashulchan Orach Chaim 342

Shortly after coming up with the above riddle, we received the following question:

David A. Schiffmann <das1002@hermes.cam.ac.uk> wrote:

*Dear Rabbi,
Someone I know recently asked me the following question ... what if someone was on a boat which sunk, and he clung to a bit of debris, but became unconscious for a while, and was then washed up on a desert island. When he came to, he would not know what day it is, and he would have no way to find out. How would he know what day is Shabbat?*

Dear David A Schiffmann,

He wouldn't. If he has enough food to survive, he must refrain from forbidden labor every day, in case that day is the real Shabbat. If he has no food, then he must do only enough work each day to survive for that day. Regarding *Kiddush* and *Havdalah*, see Yiddle Riddle above.

THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

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

Re: Are There Flying Rabbis Or Are There Flying None?
(Ask the Rabbi #177)

With all due respect, a slight correction: Actually Rabbi Abuhazteria was from Tefilalet, Morocco.

*David Bitton < David Bitton
< davidbi@MICROSOFT.com >
Enterprise Account Representative
Microsoft Canada Co.*

You wrote: "Jewish tradition relates incidents of people, both righteous and wicked, who were able to fly." I presume you are referring to the Midrashic accounting (among others you mention later) of Pinchas, the tzitz (High Priest's head ornament) and Bilaam.

Mike Spinrad < Spinrad@compuserve.com >

Re: Yiddle Riddle citing story about Rashi accused of stealing a garment, and his writing "Shin Lamed Mem Hey" five times in a row: (Ask the Rabbi #178)

Shin Lamed Mem Hey spells Rashi's first name, Shlomo. It's also roshei teivot (acrostic) for Shevach l'E-I Melech Ha-olam which means "Praise to G-d King of the Universe" (Source: Roshei Teivot book). He wrote it 5 times to indicate that a thief has to pay 5 times (see Shemot 21:37 regarding theft of an ox).

David Lindsay < bg346@freenet.toronto.on.ca >

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