



Ask The Rabbi

Researched at Ohr Somayach, Jerusalem

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Parashat

Vayakhel/Pekudei

NAME CHANGE

Name@Withheld wrote,

Dear Rabbi,
Unfortunately, my wife is now seriously ill with cancer. With the guidance of our Rabbi we added a second name for her (from Pninah bat Leah to Pninah Tamar bat Leah). Would you be so kind to explain this "addition" to your readers and, if I am not imposing, offer a "Mishebrach" [prayer] for her. Thank you.

Dear Name@Withheld,

The Talmud states that four things have the power to change a person's fortune: Giving charity, praying, changing your behavior (*teshuvah*), and changing your name. The Talmud explains that only after Sarah's name was changed (from Sarai to Sarah) did she become pregnant and bear Yitzchak. The Talmud considers a fifth possibility, that of changing one's location.

Changing one's name symbolizes a powerful resolve to better one's behavior. It's like saying "I'm not the same person who used be lax about mitzvah observance." This earnest desire to improve one's ways is then counted in the person's merit.

May Hashem grant your wife, *Pninah Tamar bat Leah*, a complete and speedy recovery.

Source:

- Tractate Rosh Hashana 16b

IF YOU KNEW SUSHI...

Chuped <Chuped@aol.com>

My friend insists that sushi made from kosher fish, although raw, is kosher, and that there is a glatt kosher restaurant in New York that serves sushi. I responded that sushi cannot be kosher because the fish in its raw state contains "blood." I agree, of course, that if the fish is properly prepared and cooked that the fish would then be permissible to eat. Am I correct?

Dear Chuped,

Actually, your friend is correct. Jews have been eating raw fish ever since herring was invented. Although the Torah forbids animal and fowl blood, kosher fish are permitted without removing their blood.

Sources:

- Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 13:1

GOOD AND BETTER

Bob Glina from Birmingham, Alabama
<Bob_karen_glina@msn.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
Define and differentiate between *tzedakah* and *gemilut chassadim*.

Dear Bob Glina,

Gemilut Chassadim means bestowing kindness. *Tzedakah* means charity, referring to giving money or resources.

There are many types of *Gemilut Chassadim*. *Tzedakah* is one subcategory of *Gemilut Chassadim*. Lending money or items is an example of *Gemilut Chassadim* that is not *Tzedakah*.

The Sages say that *Gemilut Chassadim* is greater than *Tzedaka* because:

- *Tzedaka* is only performed with money, whereas *Gemilut Chassadim* can be performed either with money or with one's body.
- *Tzedaka* only helps poor people, whereas *Gemilut Chassadim* helps both rich and poor. Example: Even a wealthy bride and groom need friends to participate in their wedding (it's just not the same to hire a bunch of people to do it).
- *Tzedaka* is given only to the living, whereas *Gemilut Chassadim* is for both the living and the dead. For example: Burying the dead is an act of *Gemilut Chassadim* to the departed.

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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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Sources:

- Tractate Sukka 49b
- Talmud Yerushalmi, Peah 1

PAREVE ANSWER

Elly Goldberg from South Africa <Goldberg <goldberg@icon.co.za> wrote:

*Dear Rabbi,
"Pareve" is a very common term. Has it always been this way, and when did it originate? Also, what is the source of the word? Thank You.*

Melissa Taylor from Raleigh, North Carolina <foodsafety@ncsu.edu> wrote:

I have a company who has a labeling issue. They need to know whether the spelling for a Kosher food is parve, pareve or parave. Could you please tell me the difference if there is one?

Dear Elly Goldberg and Melissa Taylor,

Pareve comes from a Yiddish word meaning something that is neither meat nor milk. It's not clear exactly when it was introduced into the lexicon, and which from which language it originated (Yiddish is compilation of many languages). It does not appear in Shulchan Aruch. There are similar words in the Talmud, but they seem to have no connection.

Webster's dictionary spells it "pareve." "Parve" also looks O.K., and it's one letter shorter so you'll save on printing costs! But I suggest you ask the Rabbi supervising the kashrut of your product.

PAGING A NATION

Dr. Eric Chevlen from Youngstown, Ohio <Eric_Chevlen@hmis.org> wrote:

Where can I learn about the history of the Daf Yomi (the worldwide coordinated study of a page of Talmud per day). My recollection is that the "uncoordinated coordination" began about 70 years ago, but I don't know that for sure, and I don't remember the name of the Rabbi who promoted or proposed it. I assume there were scholars and laymen who were studying a page of Talmud a day before that. Were they all studying different pages then? What prompted the promoter to make his proposal? How was it first coordinated or promulgated?

Dear Dr. Eric Chevlen,

The idea of having a universal Daf Yomi was first proposed by Rabbi Meir Shapiro of Lublin. It was accepted in 1922 by the Council of Torah Sages in Eastern Europe and thus began what is today an international study scheme by which tens of thousands of Jews worldwide study the same folio page of Talmud every day.

When Rabbi Shapiro raised the idea, one of his most prominent backers was Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan, known as the Chafetz Chaim. He supported the idea because certain

portions of the Talmud were not commonly studied, "neglected" in favor of more "popular" portions. The methodical study of a page of Talmud a day ensured that the entire Talmud would be studied in the course of seven and a half years.

The first completion of the Daf Yomi cycle took place on Tu B'Shvat 1930. In honor of Rabbi Shapiro, it was celebrated in his town, Lublin. The second completion in 1938 attracted 20,000 celebrants to Lublin, indicating just how popular Daf Yomi had become over such a short period.

The third completion was in 1945. Because of the Holocaust, the largest celebrations were in Israel. The fourth completion was in 1953. The fifth celebration in 1960 was the first one attracting mass attendance in America. Amongst others, it was attended by Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, Rabbi Yaakov Kaminetzky and Rabbi Aharon Kotler.

The sixth completion in 1968 came shortly after the reunification of Jerusalem and the return of the Western Wall. At that time, celebrations were held in the USA, England, Belgium, Argentina, Mexico, Holland and France. The eighth completion in 1982 was the first to cater to large crowds in America, filling New York's Felt Forum to capacity (5,000 seats) with thousands of people standing outside. In Israel there were 20,000 participants.

In 1990, 20,000 people crowded into Madison Square Gardens to celebrate the ninth completion. The tenth and most recent completion was in 1997. In America alone there were over 70,000 participants! And tens of thousands more through out the world.

Virtually any place Jews are, there are people studying Daf Yomi. It's wonderful that a person can go almost anywhere in the world and participate in a class on the exact same section of Talmud he is currently studying. It draws Jews together in a unique way.

Yiddle Riddle

Who was the first person to study Chumash with Rashi?

Submitted by Alan Frank from Jerusalem

Answer next week...

THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

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

Re: "Current Candles" (Ask the Rabbi #173)

I wouldn't think it permitted to use an electric menorah, since one should commemorate an event by using a setup as similar as possible to the authentic case in history, and one should have the right feeling when doing so. Otherwise the next step would be to watch videos of people lighting real menorahs. Either you practice and you do it the traditional way, or you do it as you like, but if so you should realize that it is not the same practice. It is like feeding a virtual pet instead of a live pet!

*Albert Sarda From Izmir, Turkey
<asarda@service.raksnet.com.tr>*

Re: Calvin Klein vs. Label Klein (Ask the Rabbi #178)

"Ask the Rabbi" wrote:

"Something that's normally removed, like a price tag, is not considered part of your clothing. So it's forbidden to "wear" a price tag outside on Shabbat."

I recently had the same question, and looked it up in the English Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchosa (18:44). But there it says you may walk into a reshuth harabim (public domain) with labels; i.e., laundry labels, price tags, identification labels, etc.

Yossie Abramson <yossie@juno.com>

The Rabbi Responds: The source from *Shemirat Shabbat* to which you refer does not relate to tags which can be seen on the outside of the garment, but rather to hidden tags. (See chapter 18:30 and footnote 131, and 18:33. See also *Mishnah Berurah* 301:150.) Accepted practice is to be strict even regarding hidden price tags.

Re: Keeping Kosher in Kosherland (Ask the Rabbi #178)

While halachically a person might be believed for his own kashrus verification, unfortunately there have been horror stories where whole communities had to throw out their dishes because of establishments "where everyone bought." While these cases, where exposed, might be rare, there are still a lot of other problems which only a trained mashgiach can detect. It is definitely worth the proprietor the extra expense for reliable certification, as I know there are countless people who will not patronize a place without a "teudat kashrut" no matter how religious the owner might be. Keep up the great work of spreading Torah across the board.

Naftali Baum, Maalot Dafna, Jerusalem

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