



# Ask The Rabbi

Researched at Ohr Somayach, Jerusalem

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### KOSHERER THAN THOU

Avi <Email.Address@Withheld> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

Our youngest son was born with a disease known as "celiac" which imposes upon him a life-long diet restriction. He cannot ingest any form of wheat or other grains which contain gluten. If he does so, it will cause him to become very ill. We, as a family, have learned to adjust to this "inconvenience" and even when we eat out, we manage to find kosher gluten-free foods that our son can eat.

But the other day, we ran into a problem, when we decided to go out for pizza at a kosher pizza restaurant which we had not tried before. Since we had done this many times before at other pizza places, we knew the drill. My wife prepared a special pizza dough made from gluten-free flour. She laid it in a round aluminum "chalavi" (dairy) pan (we keep kosher).

In the past, we would simply request from workers at the pizza place which we were visiting to add the sauce and cheese and toppings to our pre-prepared pan with the dough, and cook it in their ovens, as normal. The pizza always turned out great, and our son could enjoy his own pizza, along with us (we always order a "normal" mishpachti-size (family) pizza for the rest of us).

But at this particular pizza restaurant, the night-shift manager refused to make the pizza for our son, because he cited "perhaps your pan is not kosher. I cannot take this chance." Now, I must tell you Rabbi, I wear a kippa (yarmulke) and was doing so at the restaurant. Yet no amount of arguments would have convinced this manager

that our pan was kosher enough for his ovens. Was his "ruling" correct? I dread to think that this is how far we are taking our kashrut laws, to the point that a person cannot eat in a commercial place, because of his illness, because that is the upshot of this whole story. Granted, it is not every day that we take our own cooking pans to a restaurant, but then again, what's wrong with finding creative solutions? Was our creative solution unkosher?

Dear Avi,

Firstly, I wish your son a complete recovery. Your solution was very creative and I applaud your "let's-find-a-solution" attitude.

In this particular instance, however, I think the pizza shop manager did the correct thing by refusing. The night manager is not necessarily a kashrut expert. And even if he were, the people who eat at the restaurant are relying not upon him but rather upon the kashrut supervisor who is sent by the kashrut agency. Therefore, the night manager should not introduce any changes in the food-making process without the express permission of the kashrut supervising agency. It's not so much a matter of kashrut as it is a matter of policy.

Perhaps if you contact the kashrut supervision agency and make an arrangement with them they will allow you to "bring your own."

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Ask The Rabbi is written by Rabbi Moshe Lazerus, Rabbi Reuven Lauffer, Rabbi Reuven Subar, Rabbi Avrohom

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## PYRAMIDS

Yosef Dovid Rosenberg < Geegooo@aol.com > wrote:

*Dear Rabbi,*

*Did the Jews build the Great Pyramids of Egypt?*

Dear Yosef Dovid Rosenberg,

According to the verse in the Torah the Jews built storage cities, Pithom and Rameses. Pithom is probably ancient Tanis, and Rameses has been identified as either Pelusium or Quantir. None of these places had pyramids, and pyramids were certainly not used for storage. They were tombs of the Pharaohs.

Sources:

- *Exodus 1:11*

## CARRYING OUT IN A HOLIDAY INN

Tev Djmal from Sao Paulo, Brazil < djmal@ibm.net > wrote:

*Dear Rabbi,*

*If I'm staying at a hotel during Shabbat, can I carry anything outside the room, or would this be a desecration of Shabbat? For example, can I leave my room and carry the key with me?*

Name@Withheld from Hebrew University, Jerusalem wrote:

*Dear Rabbi,*

*In a hotel on Shabbat, what is considered "public" and "private" domain? Is the entire hotel considered "private" domain? Is it permissible to carry objects to and from one's hotel room?*

Dear Tev Djmal and Name@Withheld,

I asked this question to Rabbi Zalman Nechemia Goldberg, *shlita*, who ruled that it is permissible to carry items inside a hotel. Since you do not own the room and the management reserves the right to enter your room to clean, plus the fact that the furnishings belong to the hotel, the hotel is considered *one* private domain.

Sources:

- See Shulchan Aruch 382:18

## CHAPTERS OF THE FATHERS

Michael Poppers from Elizabeth, NJ  
< MPoppers@KayeScholer.com > wrote:

*Dear Rabbi,*

*Pirkei Avot is commonly translated "Chapters of the Fathers." When the tractate known as Avot (indeed, when all the tractates) was redacted, was it then divided into such chapters, or were the chapters — like those of the Pentateuch — divisions made sometime afterwards?*

Dear Michael Poppers,

The chapters of the Mishna are original divisions by Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi, who compiled the Mishna (170 CE). The tractate called *Avot* meaning *Fathers* became known as "Chapters of the Fathers" because of the custom to read *one chapter* each week between Passover and Shavuot.

The chapter divisions in printed texts of the Pentateuch are of relatively recent origin, created by Christian monks in the 13th century. In the Torah scroll there are different divisions (called *parshiot petuchot* and *setumot*) signified by spaces between blocks of text. These divisions are the original divisions revealed to Moshe through prophecy. There is another ancient Jewish tradition called *sedarim* by which the Pentateuch is divided into 154 portions. This was customary when the public Torah reading took three years to complete reading the entire Torah. Today the public Torah reading is divided into 53 weekly portions and the Torah is completed once a year.

## Yiddle Riddle

This morning in *shul*, I noticed that during *chazarat hashatz* (cantor's repetition of the silent prayer) I responded "*amen*" 26 times. However, my one friend responded "*amen*" only 22 times, and my other friend only three times! Can you explain why? (By the way, we all had finished our silent prayer completely, we all paid attention during the entire repetition, and we all responded properly.)

*Riddle submitted by Rabbi Avraham Connack, Jerusalem*

# THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

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

**Re: Intermarriage (Ohrnet Emor):**

This is a response to those who wrote in about intermarriage. I am intermarried. When I initially got married I didn't think anything about my religion. I felt that as long as you were happy it was O.K. I didn't even know that intermarriage was prohibited. As the years went on and we had children some things changed. It is hard to explain, but there were different events that changed my life. Well, anyway, so it goes I became very religious. To reiterate, I didn't come from a religious background, I didn't have a Jewish education, but there were events that changed my life.

Anyway, I became kosher, I observe Sabbath (by myself all the time), I worry about Israel (by myself all the time). My daughter became very religious and is now going to a religious girls' high school. My son is not as religious but wants to go to a Hebrew High. I feel fortunate in this respect, but I am very alone in my thoughts, in my dreams; it is a lonely lifestyle. I also realize that it is harder for Jewish men because the children are not considered Jews. Some of the intermarried couples that I know have non-Jewish partners that have an anti-Semitism that comes out from time to time. It comes out in the form of remarks or innuendoes that are hurtful. Many Jews don't realize the generations that are lost though intermarriage. We need to promote Jewish education, real Jewish education. Too many souls have been lost in the Diaspora. Too many Jews don't appreciate one another. Too many of us look after the wrong values. We don't know what Torah has to offer, we don't know the jewel we have lost until it is too late. I am still married, and struggling with conflicts every day. It is hard to break up a marriage with children involved. I hope any readers considering intermarriage will use more head than heart, show some restraint and hold a moratorium for a while.

*Name&email@Withheld*

In a recent column you wrote: "By marrying a non-Jew one thereby ends over 3,000 years of Jewish

continuity, effectively cutting oneself and one's offspring off from what it means to be Jewish." Isn't this statement at best misleading? Without in any way condoning intermarriage, about half the offspring of intermarriages are halachically Jewish. When a Jewish woman intermarries, the chances of the children assimilating are clearly far greater than that in the average Jewish family (which are already very high). Yet why should we write off any Jew? I know from personal experience of years working with students at NameWithheld University of numerous cases of children of Jewish mothers and non-Jewish fathers who have discovered their roots and returned to a life of observance. Why was no mention made in your column of the fact that a child born to a Jewish mother is halachically Jewish?

*Name&email@Withheld*

**Ohrnet responds:** True, a child born to a Jewish mother is Jewish. Our point was that intermarriage, for a man or woman, generally means the end of the Jewish tradition in that family. The child of such a marriage, even when halachically Jewish, usually ends up assimilated. We too at Ohr Somayach have first-hand knowledge that there are exceptions.

**Re: Naming After Living Relatives (Ohrnet Bamidbar):**

In a recent "Ask the Rabbi" Ohr Somayach wrote: "It is the custom of Jews of European descent not to name children after living relatives." Are we now excluding Spain, Portugal, and the Balkans from Europe? The Jewish communities of these areas are Sefardim, and they, like the Sefardim of North Africa and the Middle East, do name for living relatives, as do the Jews of Italy (who do not consider themselves Sefardim because the Italian Jewish community, the oldest in Europe, long predates the Jewish communities of Spain and Portugal.) Rather, should one not say that it is the custom of Jews of Northern and Eastern European descent not to name children after living relatives? B'shalom uv'hessed,

*Rabbi Zev-Hayyim Feyer <Rebbezev@aol.com>*

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