



# Ask The Rabbi

Researched at Ohr Somayach, Jerusalem

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OHR SOMAYACH אוֹר שׁוֹמַיַח  
TANENBAUM COLLEGE

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Issue #230

Parshat Vayakhel -

Pekudei

## SKIP THE TEMPLE, PASS THE BAR

B. Apple from the U. of Baltimore  
< bapple@ubmail.ubalt.edu > wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

*I am in the middle of studying for the bar examination and am very nervous about it. I am a practicing Jew, but do not go to temple very often. I feel guilty for asking for G-d's blessing to pass the bar because of my failure to go to temple. Should I feel this way, or does the fact the L-rd is in my heart make my prayers OK?*

Dear B. Apple,

I'll let King David answer your question! King David wrote: "G-d is close to all who call Him, to all who call Him in truth." (*Psalms 145*)

G-d is close to you when you are close to Him. You don't necessarily need to go to synagogue in order to be close to G-d, because G-d is everywhere.

It's extremely meaningful to attend synagogue and pray with a "*minyan*" of ten. But even if you don't do this, there's nothing wrong or hypocritical about praying to G-d in whatever situation you find yourself.

So meditate on G-d's Unity and Omnipotence, and pray. This can be done in your own language, in your own individual way of expression known only to you and G-d.

## GOING BACK

Email@Withheld from Montreal, CA wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

*I am currently a student at McGill University in Montreal, Canada and spent the past year at a yeshiva in Jerusalem. The contrast of a religious environment and a completely secular one has proved quite difficult for me. My Torah study has faltered along with many other aspects of Jewish*

*observance. I am wondering if you can suggest a way for me to remain religious while striving socially and academically in this secular environment.*

Dear Email@Withheld,

Ever heard the old expression that "no Jew is an island," or something like that? An essential "survival technique" for any religious Jew is to be part of an observant community. If you live in the dorms, this presents a problem. It would be much better if you could board with an observant family. It's very likely that such opportunities exist in Montreal; if at all possible, this should be your first step.

Secondly, you need steady Torah study as part of your daily life. It's essential to set aside some time every day and night to study Torah, preferably with a *chavruta* study-partner. Contact Rabbi Eliyahu Finkelstein or Rabbi Nossan Kulefsky, and they will help you find a study program that fits your college schedule. I've included their address below. Wishing you success!

Ohr Somayach of Montreal

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## BAD SAMARITANS

Janet from Dallas, Texas < vanheyst@usa.net > wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

*Could you please tell me the ways in which Samaritans differed from other Jews? I am preparing a talk and would like to be able to enumerate why the Samaritans were considered different from other Jews. Thank you for your help.*

Dear Janet,

The Samaritans were non-Jews brought to Israel by the Assyrians to populate the North after the exile of the

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

General Editor: **Rabbi Moshe Newman**

Lefkowitz, Rabbi Mordechai Becher and other Rabbis at Ohr Somayach Institutions / Tanenbaum College, Jerusalem, Israel.

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Ten Tribes. They ostensibly converted to Judaism, but in reality they continued worshipping idols, save for a period when they were mistakenly considered genuine converts; hence the Samaritans were not considered Jews, neither by Jewish law nor by the Jewish people.

They did not accept the Oral Tradition, which forms the overwhelming bulk of Jewish law. They also did not accept any books of the Bible except for the Pentateuch and the book of Joshua. Today, the Samaritan version of the Torah manuscript differs from ours by about 800 letters.

The Samaritans often acted as enemies of the Jewish people. They tried to destroy the Temple and to inform against the Jews to Roman authorities. The parable of the "Good Samaritan" was actually an anti-Semitic story intended to discredit the Jews.

### **IF I WERE A RICH MAN**

Daniel Rabchinsky from Mexico City, Mexico < derej@hotmail.com > wrote:

*Dear Rabbi,*

*We are taught, "Who is rich? The one who is happy with what he has." Correct me if I'm wrong, but this phrase does not apply to every aspect of our lives, or how does it work? Let's say that in the material aspect it works, be happy with your house, car, food, etc. But what about the spiritual side? I don't think that it applies there, because if we are happy with our present knowledge, we wouldn't be looking for more and I wouldn't be asking this question! So, how do we apply the principle? Thank you so much for your time and effort. Shalom.*

Dear Daniel Rabchinsky,

Should a person be content spiritually? Yes and no. Different people have different spiritual capabilities, and a person should be thankful for whatever spiritual capabilities Hashem has given him.

However, a person should never be content with his spiritual achievements. The Talmud states that "jealousy of Sages increases wisdom." Our Sages teach us that a person should always say, "When will my actions reach the level of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob?"

Sources:

- Tractate Bava Batra 22a
- Tanna D'vey Eliyahu, 23:1

### **MILK-SOP**

Name@Withheld from Teaneck, New Jersey wrote:

*Dear Rabbi,*

*Is there some halacha about bread not allowed to be dairy? I was reading an advertisement in a store in Brooklyn and it was written on the paper something about bread not being allowed to be dairy. Is this a halacha? I have never heard of this before, but I looked around and all the bread I saw was "pareve." Maybe this halacha just never came my way.*

Dear Name@Withheld,

Yes, it's prohibited to bake bread either with milk or with meat. That is, bread must be *pareve*. This is stated in Shulchan Aruch as follows: "It is forbidden to knead dough for bread with milk, in case a person should (accidentally) eat it with meat...It is similarly forbidden to bake bread in the oven with meat fat..."

But if you mark the bread with some identifying symbol *before* baking, or if you bake it in an identifying shape so that it's clear that this bread is not *pareve*, then it is permitted to make it dairy or meaty. Since it's marked, you won't mistake it as *pareve*. (Marking it after baking doesn't help, and such bread may not be eaten.)

For example, I have heard that the *Badatz Eida Charedit* kashrut supervisory board in Jerusalem requires all dairy pastries to be either triangle or moon-shaped for this reason.

Sources:

- Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah 97
- Pitchei Teshuvah 97:3

### **SNAKE SPEAK**

Gene < HYKAEH@aol.com > wrote:

*Dear Rabbi,*

*I recall having read that in the Talmud there is a comparison between the fangs of a snake and lashon hara, slander. It states that a snake will bite with his poisonous fangs to harm someone with no benefit to itself. This analogy is likened to the person who commits the sin of evil speech. Will you be kind enough to tell me where this teaching can be found? Many thanks.*

Dear Gene,

This statement can be found in the Talmud in *Arachin 15b* and *Ta'anit 8a*.

# Yiddle Riddle

Last week we asked:

What letter from the *Aleph Beis* is missing from the *Bircat Hamazon* and why?

Answer:

"*Peh sophit*" — final *peh*. The reason being that who ever says the blessing after bread properly will be saved from "*aph, shetseph* and *ketseph*;" all of these words are expressions of Hashem's anger and they all end with the letter "*peh sophit*."

*Tashbetz Katan 366 Riddle and answer submitted by Rabbi R.Y. Eisenman, Passaic, NJ < RYE613@aol.com >*

## THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

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

Re: How Big is a Yarmulke? (Ohrnet Shemos):

Regarding the question that appeared in "Ask the Rabbi": How big must a head-covering be? My friend Rav Yacov Rappaport quoted his father (Dayan Rappaport of London) as saying that a *kippah* should be big enough to cover your *seichel* (intellect)!

*David Olesker < olesker@IsraelMail.com >*

My Favorite Rabbi:

Just a few words to let you know that this is my favorite page in the whole World Wide Web. This is my Rabbi! I love you people! My family is learning a lot too. Shalom and keep up the good work.

*Felix from South America < felixvelez@hotmail.com >*

Re: Not by Chance:

I read the letter in "Public Domain" submitted by Judith Amrani of Houston in which a "chance" reading of a name on your site led to a reunion with a long-absent friend. Many of us believe, many of us know, that these "chance" happenings are not by chance, but are guided from above, if we choose to notice. I note many, many such "coincidences" occurring in my own life, and they seem to increase the more I study, the more observant I become.

*P.I. Danzig < PIDanzig@aol.com >*

Re: Archived Yiddle Riddle:

In connection to your Yiddle Riddle there, I'd like to point out that the Dutch *minhag* (custom) is to only say the *shehecheyanu* blessing on the Megillah in the evening.

*Y. Katz, Amsterdam < sskatz@hetnet.nl >*

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