

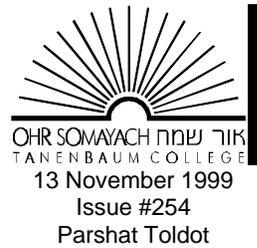


Ask The Rabbi

Researched at Ohr Somayach, Jerusalem

This Issue Contains:

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2. Frum, Ain't It?
3. Bad Mouth
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G-D'S LITTLE JOKE

Name@Withheld from Beckville, Texas wrote:

*Dear Rabbi,
Sometimes I feel like G-d put me down here as a joke. How can I fight this hopeless feeling?*

Dear Name@Withheld,

G-d is totally Benevolent. When He creates something, it is always with a positive purpose in mind.

The Talmud states that although plants and animals were created en masse, the human being was created alone in order to teach us that each person as an individual is vital to the world. We are created "in the image of G-d," meaning that we have an infinite soul, a moral capacity, and free will. If you are challenged by life, you have also been given the power and strength to overcome the challenge.

Everyone has failures and sometimes feels hopeless. But we are also given the power to recoup our strength and to carry on. I suggest reading an excellent book by Dr. Abraham Twersky, called "Let Us Make Man."

It might help you to know that your feelings are not uncommon. All great people have struggled with the riddle of existence, and everyone feels down at times.

FRUM, AIN'T IT?

Yonasan Shapiro <shapie@juno.com> wrote:

*Dear Rabbi,
What is the definition of "frum" and what determines if you ain't "frum?"*

Dear Yonasan Shapiro,

Frum is a Yiddish word. It originally meant "pious." In Europe, when all Jews were Torah-observant,

"*frum*" meant one who was exceptionally religious and righteous.

Today, when so many Jews are not Torah-observant, "*frum*" has come to mean anyone who believes in the Torah and is observant of its laws.

BAD MOUTH

Xandra from Florence, Vermont <chai@together.net> wrote:

*Dear Rabbi,
What is my obligation if I walk into or through a room where five people are engaged in lashon hara (derogatory speech) about another worker who is temporarily absent?*

Dear Xandra,

It is a Torah prohibition to listen to derogatory speech. Therefore, if you have no business in the room at the time, then it is a *mitzvah* to leave. And joining the group or expressing interest in what is being said is prohibited. If you need to be in the room for some reason, then you have to try to listen to as little as possible, and try not to accept any of it as fact.

Certain leniencies apply to listening without the intent of accepting. Mainly, if you think some benefit may come out of it for you — for example, they are speaking about someone whom you are considering for a business partner — or, alternatively, if by listening you think that you will be able to rectify some wrong, then it may be permitted to listen. Here too, you're only allowed to *suspect* that the information might be true in order to protect yourself, but you're not allowed to believe it as fact.

Sources: Sefer Chafetz Chaim, Hilchot Lashon Hara, Klal 6

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 info@ohr.org.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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Ask The Rabbi is available from several sources:

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Yiddle Riddle

In which weekly *parsha* (Torah portion) is the number of verses equal to the numerical value of the last word of the *parsha*?

Answer Next Week...

Riddle submitted by Mike Marmor, Toronto < mike.marmor@reuters.com >

THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

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

Re: Goodyear (Ohrnet Lech Lecha):

In a recent edition, you wrote about the year 5760. I wanted to add something my Grandfather, Rabbi Harold Konovitch, said about the year 5760. He foresees this year as a wonderful one for Jewish people. Why? Because when you add up the digits of the year, 5 + 7 + 6 + 0, what do you get? 18! Chai! Life!

< Levys118@aol.com >

Re: Correction (Ohrnet Rosh Hashana):

Sisera was the leader of the Canaanite army based in Hazor, not Assyrian, as you wrote.

Yitzhak Weiss < rweiss@ozemail.com.au >

Re: Rabbi Tatz's Classes

(<http://www.ohrnet.org/audio/ra/tatz/index.htm>):

To Ohr Somayach for putting Rabbi Tatz's Torah classes on the web, I'd like to thank you — his lectures are literally changing my life. Thank you again — you have a share in each person's *Olam Haba* (eternal reward) created by the personal impact of these lectures which you disseminate. *Ya'asher Koach!*

< Imloachshav@aol.com >

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