



# Ask The Rabbi...

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S. Z. Jessel from Toronto, Ontario wrote:

*According to Jewish Law, can you go 65 miles per hour in a 55 mph zone?*

Dear S. Z. Jessel,

I posed your question to Rabbi Chaim Pinchas Scheinberg, *shlita*, who said that 'speeding' is prohibited because of the concept '*Dina d'Malchuta Dina*' — '*Civil law is Halacha*.' He pointed out that this might even be considered a Torah prohibition.

However, Rabbi Scheinberg said the definition of 'speeding' depends not on what's written in the traffic codes but on how the law is enforced. If the authorities are not so strict — for instance, they won't give you a ticket for going 65 mph — then it would be *halachically* OK to go 65, although he does **not** advocate exceeding the *posted* limit. If, on the other hand, they **are** strict and **would** fine you, then it would be forbidden.

He felt that the authorities in the USA are generally not so strict about people going 65 mph in a 55 zone, and therefore it would be permitted. **This does NOT mean that if you get a ticket for going 65 you don't have to pay it!**

I am reminded of one person who did get caught going 75 in a 55 zone. "I know I was going 75, officer, but my wife is having a baby and I have to get her to the hospital as fast as possible."

"But your wife isn't in the car" said the policeman

"Zoinks! You know how you forget things when you're in a hurry!"

Ed Halper from University of Georgia's Department of Philosophy <EHALPER@uga.cc.uga.edu> wrote:

*Potifar's wife and Pharaoh's wine steward refer to Joseph as a 'Hebrew' (Bereshit 39:14, 41:12). And Joseph refers to himself as coming from the 'land of the Hebrews' (ibid 40:15). What does 'Hebrew' refer to? Jacob's family? Jacob had a small family at that point, whereas the Canaanites were an established nation. So why would the whole land of Canaan be thought of as the land of the Hebrews prior to the Exodus and the conquest of the country?*

Dear Ed Halper,

The word 'Hebrew' -- '*Ivri*' -- comes from the word '*Ever*' meaning 'the other side.' The Torah first uses this term when referring to 'Abraham the *Ivri*.' Three reasons are given for this:

1. Abraham was a stranger 'from the other side.' Born east of Canaan in Ur Kasdim, Abraham had come from the 'other side' of the Jordan River.
2. Abraham stood 'on the other side' in opposition to the entire pagan world. His recognition of the One G-d, and his adamant refusal to comply with 'modern' ideology set him at odds with the rest of humanity.
3. Abraham was a descendent of *Ever*. Ever was the great-grandson of Noah's son Shem.

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch addresses your question. He writes: "It is remarkable that already here the land is called the 'Land of the Hebrews.' His [Abraham's] family must already have been considered so important that the land where they were living was already known as *their* land."

Another possibility: Our Sages say that when Noah divided up the world among his three sons, the land of Israel fell to the portion of Shem. Later the Canaanites conquered it — but originally it was inhabited by Shem's offspring. Hence the term '*Eretz Ha-Ivriim*' -- 'the land of the Hebrews' -- named after Ever, Shem's most prominent offspring.

Sources:

- *Bereshit* 14:13.
- Rashi, *Bereshit* 12:6, based on *Torat Kohanim* 20:19.

## Answer to Yiddle Riddle:

**Question** (sent in by lilserv@attmail.com): You take two edible items, where item #1 is forbidden to cook and eat, and item #2 is permitted; put them together, wait, and after a while, item #1 is permitted to cook and eat, and item #2 is forbidden. What are the items?

**Answer:** Lawrence Myers <lmyers@cix.compulink.co.uk> sent in the first response: **Meat and salt.** Raw meat is forbidden to cook and eat because of the blood it contains, and salt of course is permitted. But, put the two together, and the salt draws out the blood. Now the meat may be cooked and eaten, while the salt becomes not kosher.

Sources: *Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh De'ah* 67:2, 69:11.

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