



Ask The Rabbi

Researched at Ohr Somayach, Jerusalem

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WHO'S BURIED IN DAVID'S TOMB?

M.G. <moish@juno.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

I have heard that there are those who claim that King David is not buried in the place in Jerusalem known as "Kever David Hamelech" (King David's Tomb). I would appreciate if you have more info on the subject.

Dear M.G.,

The Bible states that King David was buried in *Ir David*, or City of David. According to the book of Joshua, the ancient city was divided into two halves; the eastern part was then called "*Metsudat Zion*" and later "*Ir David*" and the higher part in the west which was controlled by the Jebusites was called *Har Hamoriah*. So it appears that *Zion* and *Ir David* are one and the same place, i.e., the low valley (which is nowadays called Silwan). If that is the case, the present tomb upon Mt. Zion (being that it is in the higher, western portion of the city) cannot be that of King David.

Sources:

- Kings I 2,10
- Joshua 14:8 and 18:15
- See Atlas, Da'at Mikrah, Mossad Harav Kook pp. 12,13,212,270

CAUTION! MARRIAGE!

Eddy Webber from Lansing, MI <egw@aol.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

Forgive my ignorance in what may be a simple question, but I was at a wedding last night and after the groom broke the glass and everyone danced away, I noticed the glass — which was wrapped in a

plastic bag — was lying on the floor. I picked it up so no one would get hurt, but then I thought to myself, "what do you do with it?" I was very puzzled. It didn't seem right to just throw it in the garbage as it had been used for a religious ceremony; on the other hand, it was broken glass and it seemed like you should throw it away. So what do you do with the broken glass after the wedding?

Dear Eddy Webber,

You acted very correctly by picking up the broken glass in order to avoid injury. There is no problem with throwing it away in the garbage. Although it was used in a religious ceremony, it itself is not a holy article.

I've heard that some have the custom to save the glass and make jewellery from it.

WHY JEWS DON'T COUNT

Todd from Dallas, Texas <toddl@bigfoot.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

There was a time where King David took a census of the people. One of his servants tried to talk him out of it but was unsuccessful. Then Hashem dealt severely with David and with the people of Israel. (Sorry, I'm not sure of the exact reference.) I have never understood why G-d does not like a census? What is so wrong with counting the people?

Dear Todd,

The reference is in Samuel II, Chapter 24. The reason that G-d did not approve of counting the people directly is that by counting, one is ascribing a finite value to a Jew, a number, a physical reality. In fact, the Jewish people are spiritually infinite, and should not be numbered and defined in the finite sense. Even when the Jews needed

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to be counted, such as the census described in the Book of Numbers, it was done indirectly, whereby each person contributed a coin and the coins were counted.

By the way, if you are from Dallas, may I suggest continuing your study of Judaism with the Dallas Area Torah Association. Below is a contact:

Rabbi Yerachmiel Fried, Dean

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IMMERSED IN THOUGHT

Ashley Sevitz <rsevitz@iafrica.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi

A few years ago when I was studying in yeshiva, I adopted the minhag of going to the mikveh (spiritually purifying bath) every erev Shabbat (Friday afternoon). This I have kept up all these years. A while ago I heard it mentioned that there are actually certain kavanot (holy thoughts) that a person should have each time he immerses himself, seven in total. Is this true? If so, what are they? And if it is true, how is a person allowed to have a religious kavana (thought) in the mikveh?

Dear Ashley,

Many people immerse in a mikveh Friday afternoon to honor the Shabbat. There are many different customs regarding the number of dips and regarding the kavanot which one should keep in mind. Here are seven of the main customs:

- Two dips: The first to remove the spiritual "clothing" of the weekday and the second to "wear" the spiritual clothing of Shabbat. If he is physically impure, he needs one more dip before these two. (*Arizal in Pri Etz Chaim, Sha'ar Hakavanot*)
- Three dips: The first for *nefesh* the second for *ruach* and the third for *neshama* (*nefesh, ruach* and *neshama* relate to different levels of the soul. (*Ben Ish Chai 2nd year, Lech Lecha note 16*))
- Four dips, parallel to the four-letter name of G-d, one dip for each letter. (*Yesod Veshoresh Ha'avodah*).
- Five dips corresponding the five levels of the soul: *Nefesh, ruach* and *neshama*, as mentioned above, plus the two higher levels of soul called *chayah* and *yechidah*. There are five different kavanot to have in mind when performing each of these dips: At the first

dip, purity from *keri* (physical impurity), at the 2nd, spiritual cleansing from anger, 3rd to remove spiritual "clothing" of the weekdays, 4th to remove "*ruach*" of weekdays, 5th to receive *tosefet kedusha* of Shabbat (additional sanctity of Shabbat). (*Ben Ish Chai 2nd year, Lech Lecha note 16*)

- Seven dips: Regarding the intricate kavanot, see source. (*Kaf HaChaim 260:4-6*)
- Ten dips: This was the custom of the Chatam Sofer. Regarding the intricate kavanot, see source. (*Tomer Devorah ch. 4, Kaf HaChaim 260:4-6*)
- Thirteen dips: Thirteen is the *gematria* (numerical value) of the word "*echad*" which means "one" (as in "G-d is One.") Regarding the intricate kavanot, see source. (*Kaf HaChaim 260:4-6*)

If the surroundings are clean, a person is permitted to have in mind the kavanot, even though he is in the mikveh.

LEVITES AT WORK

Bruce Blumenthal from Baltimore, MD <bblume@pol.net> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

In Parshat Naso, the levite service is described as beginning at age 25, but in Parshat Beha'alotcha it is 30. Why the discrepancy? Moreover, if the age of majority for men is 13, what was the role of the levi'im from age 13 to 25?

Dear Bruce,

Rashi explains that the levi'im went through a five year "apprentice program" from the age of 25 until 30. At age 30 they then became integral members of the Temple service roster. Between age 13 until age 25 the levi'im apparently had no special role above that of any other Jew.

Yiddle Riddle

Last week we asked: Which verse in the Torah begins and ends with the same word. (The word beginning the verse begins with a *vav* (meaning *and*), while the word ending the verse does not, but otherwise it is the same word.)

Answer: Bamidbar 32:1. The verse says: "*U'mikneh rav hiya l'vnei Reuven ... u'lavadecha mikneh*" — "*Cattle galore there was to the children of Reuven... and your servants have cattle.*"

Submitted by Rabbi Dr. Avigdor Boncheck

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

Re: Yiddle Riddle (Ohrnet Beha'alotcha):

In a recent Yiddle Riddle, you asked: "Two exactly identical people in the exact same place on the exact same day do the exact same act with the exact same intentions. However, the first one is fulfilling a Torah commandment, and the second one is transgressing a Torah prohibition." Could this refer to placing two mezzuzot on the same door post? Would this not violate "bal tosif" — the prohibition against adding to the Torah — because he tried to do a mitzvah which did not exist?

Akiva Miller <kennethgmiller@juno.com>

It is Shabbat & there is still chametz left in the house the day before Passover. One cannot burn the chametz or remove it from the property (surrounding the property is a reshut harabim, and there is no toilet or other exit from the property by which the chametz can leave.) Consequently, by eating the chametz before midday, one is performing the mitzvah of removing the chametz from one's property. A person who eats chametz after midday is performing a Biblical sin of eating chametz, as the Sages say "ach chalak." And yet it is the same day, same action.

Tuttle Norman, <TUTTLE@Sensormatic.com>

Why can't you give us a Yiddle Riddle once a week, it is a popular subject for discussion! Thanks a lot.

Ravi Shahar <ravi@jerusalem.com>

Re: Kosherer Than Thou (Ohrnet Shlach):

Regarding the person who brought his home-made dough to the Kosher Pizza store: I too suffer from the disease celiac sprue. There is no cure, except to avoid glutinous grains the rest of your life. I do not eat out very much because everything contains wheat, but if I do I usually call ahead to the owner or manager. I recommend this. Most restaurants are willing to accommodate their customers with food allergies.

Lucy Shriver <lbshri@gte.net>

My mother once purchased some prepared food at a certain kosher delicatessen. I do not remember why, but she decided to return it for a refund. She was very upset that the manager put it back in the display case to sell to someone else. This was not a packaged food, but something which might well have been on our dishes. "How do they know how kosher my kitchen is?" she demanded to know, and I don't think she ever shopped there again. Although it is proper to give people the benefit of the doubt, but that pizza shop was supervised by a rabbi, and not by the customers or managers.

In a more practical vein, I'd suggest that when the family whose son has celiac disease goes out to eat, they should prepare something which can be placed in a double-wrapped container and heated like an airline meal, which would protect the kashrut of the oven. And refuah sh'leima to their son — may Hashem show the doctors how to cure celiac disease, and soon.

Akiva Miller <kennethgmiller@juno.com>

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