



Ask The Rabbi

Researched at Ohr Somayach, Jerusalem

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Bechukosai

FOOD FIGHT

Name@Withheld from France wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

I would like your own point of view about this "anecdote." It's Friday, early in the afternoon, a son talks to his mother over the phone, telling her he won't be able to come to her place for Shabbat dinner, and asks her if he can come to pick up one challah (bread) for his Shabbat at his place where he lives with his wife and baby. The mother had baked two challahs, and the son only asks for one. She replies: "No, because I need two challahs in order to say the blessing (according to the rules)." So she won't give her son one because of this, and of course the son has no challahs at all for his Shabbat.

Question: Was she right? Would not it have been better in this situation to skip the "do it by the book" aspect, and to show her love to the son by giving him one challah? Thank you very much for your reply.

Dear Name@Withheld,

It's a mitzvah on Shabbat to say the blessing over two whole loaves of bread. Many use braided challah loaves, but any whole loaves (kosher, of course) will do. In our home, we sometimes use *matzah*. (Did you ever see braided matzah?)

Now, assuming the son had other food, it wasn't a question of his going hungry. Rather, he wanted the mitzvah of enjoying a proper Shabbat meal, and to say the blessing over one whole challah loaf, at least.

Should the mother give away her mitzvah of having two whole loaves in order that the son be able to have the mitzvah of having at least one whole loaf?

Strictly speaking, one doesn't have to give up one's own mitzvah in order to allow the other person to do a mitzvah. But bringing peace and harmony among people,

especially among family members, is a very great mitzvah, so there's a strong case to be made against the mother.

But are there any other relevant details? For example, is this the first time the son canceled out on his mother at the last minute? Does she get the feeling that he takes advantage of her goodness and love? Without hearing, first-hand, both sides of the story, it's difficult to give a definitive answer to your question.

Relationships flourish when each person focuses on his obligations to the other person. But when each person focuses on the other person's obligations to him, relationships falter.

ABOUT FACE

Jonathan from Silver Spring, MD <tetrisiz@yahoo.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

We recently received a wedding invitation and it said: "Two O'clock in the afternoon, Kabalat Panim." What is "Kabalat Panim?"

Dear Jonathan,

Kabalat Panim literally means "receiving of the faces." In plain English it means "reception." It refers to the reception before the actual *chupa* (wedding ceremony), when the bride and groom and families receive the guests.

Have a good time at the wedding!

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.

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KADDISH: ELEVEN OR TWELVE?

Gerdy Trachtman <gerdyt@erols.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

Is there any halachic basis for the kaddish (mourners' prayer) to be said 11 months for a deceased parent? Some people say it for 12 months. Please give me the textual sources for this difference. Thank you very much.

Dear Gerdy Trachtman,

The Talmudic Sages teach that the maximum that a very wicked person is punished in the afterlife in *gehinom* is 12 months. The public recitation of *kaddish* shields the departed soul from this punishment. Hence, *kaddish* is recited during the first year after a parent's passing.

However, the custom is to recite *kaddish* for 11 months only. Saying *kaddish* the entire 12 months would give the impression that the deceased was a very wicked person who needs protection the entire 12 months.

So, unless the parent specifically requested it, or unless it's known that the parent was a willful transgressor, *kaddish* is said for only 11 months.

Sources:

- Gesher HaChaim
- P'nei Baruch

JUDGING OTHERS

Beth from New Jersey wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

I have been working on my observance of *lashon hara* (negative speech) and judging others favorably, with limited results. Do you have any suggestions?

Of course the ideal would be to become spiritually wonderful (and the aversion to gossip would come by itself). But, I know that, sometimes, the action has to be forced, and the feelings come later. I just need some tips on the forcing! I have found that, sometimes, the best way to get rid of a bad habit is to sneak up on it.

If anyone has anything that they found worked, I would love to hear it! Thanks for your time!

Dear Beth,

Let's let Rabbi Akiva answer your question. Yes, it's the old "drip on the rock" theory. Rabbi Akiva realized at age forty that just as a sustained trickle of water can carve rock, so too sustained Torah study can change our heart. Solid change can be achieved with constant, daily, study. So, study works about negative speech and judging favorably every day (Examples: "The Other Side of the Story," "Courtrooms of the Mind" and "A Lesson a Day"). Even a few minutes a day will, over the course of time, create a change in you.

And don't forget to judge yourself favorably too. Be happy with any change, no matter how incremental.

If you find yourself speaking negatively with certain friends, you may need to get different friends. Avoiding people, places and situations that trigger forbidden activity is great way to change one's behavior.

Here's a stratagem to help you feel positive even towards people who annoy you: When you see someone doing something that bothers you, and you think to yourself "What an obnoxious boor," imagine the person as a little baby. Picture his mother's unqualified love for him and her joy as she holds him in her arms. Now try to feel a little bit of that love.

Yiddle Riddle

Last week we asked:

"My son is beginning to learn Hebrew, and he knows all the letters. But he makes mistakes with the vowels, and with knowing where the words begin and end. For example, the other day he was reading from the *Chumash*, and he came across a phrase that he translated into English as 'Who? Who? Who? Who? What?' What verse was he reading?"

Answer:

Exodus 13:10 states: "You shall observe this statute in its designated time '*mi'yamim yamima*' — from year to year." "*Mi'yamim yamima*," is spelled with the Hebrew letters "*mem yud mem yud mem*" and "*yud mem yud mem hey*." Breaking up this phrase incorrectly, and reading every two letters as a separate word, you get "*mem yud*" spelling "*mi*" (who) four times, followed by "*mem hey*" spelling "*mah*" (what).

Riddle courtesy of Kol Simcha 103.5 FM, Friday mornings in English from 9:30am - 1:00pm

THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

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

Yours is one of the best emails that I get. Look forward to it each week.

David Fihrer <fihrer@interlog.com>

I have no questions for you at this time; only a word of thanks. I stumbled upon your web site while looking for the words to a specific prayer and have now book-marked the site. I am greatly enjoying and learning from my perusal of the questions and answers provided, and look forward to receiving your newsletter. Many thanks for this wonderful service!

Jodi Fox, Chicago, Ill <jodi@get-shrunk.com>

Re: Anorexia (Ohrnet Tazria-Metzora):

This is in response to your letter to the parents whose daughter has anorexia. I had a daughter who had anorexia but thank G-d she is fully recovered. Anorexia is an adolescent's response to gain control over a situation where she feels out of control. While an anorexic feels hopeless to control most things in her life, the one thing she can control is the amount of food she eats and this, in a sense, gives her a sense of empowerment. Anorexics are perfectionists. The only way to end this cycle of inappropriate empowerment is with intensive psychotherapy where the anorexic can regain a sense of self worth. The other thing I want to say is that the last thing these parents should talk to their daughter about is food. Parents find it very difficult to just sit there while their child starves themselves. Yet, discussions about food just get anorexics very upset, and give them an excuse to eat less. Parents, who have daughters with this condition, must learn to give up some parental control and let the experts

deal with this condition. If you wish, you can give these parents my e-mail address. For the sake of my daughter's privacy, please do not use my name.

Name@Withheld

Please forward this message to the family who wrote about their anorexic daughter. They (and their daughter) will find the works of Rav Avraham Twersky, *shlita*, to be of enormous help. I especially suggest "Living Each Day." This is a *yoman* (daily calendar) with inspirational quotations from various Jewish works.

I am personally recovering from this debilitating disease and its closely related cousins: Compulsive overeating and bulimia.

You all do very important work. May Hashem grant you all continued success in your outreach and educational efforts.

Name@Withheld

The family responds:

Dear Rabbi,

My heart is full of "thank-yous" for your kindness in attempting to help me with my daughter's problem of anorexia. It was so nice to hear from the many kind people who wrote to you to respond to my pleas. Thank you for forwarding to me all their messages. I am in the process of answering every person who e-mailed me, and if you get any more responses it is with my permission that you give them my e-mail address so they can contact me directly. Again, Rabbi, many thanks!

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