



Ask The Rabbi

Researched at Ohr Somayach, Jerusalem

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8 January 2000

Issue #262

Parshat Vaera

MISSION CONTROL

Andrew Merrill <a@amerrill.freemove.co.uk> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

One of my work colleagues asked me yesterday why Jews do not missionize, and Christians do. To me it just seems obvious that we would not, but it is difficult to explain this intrinsic notion to him. Could you help me out?

Dear Andrew Merrill,

Jews do not missionize among non-Jews. There are two reasons for this. First of all, we believe that when a non-Jew keeps the seven Noachide laws, he merits a portion in the World-to-Come, and therefore there is no imperative for him to become Jewish. If, like many Christians and Moslems, we believed that those of other religions are condemned to damnation, then we would also desire to convert people. However, we believe that a person can be completely righteous and merit the World-to-Come without conversion, by adhering to the basic moral laws revealed to Noach. Therefore we feel no compulsion to convert others, unless they show a true desire to convert.

Secondly, since sincerity is one of the criteria for conversion, we can determine that the candidate is sincere by discouraging him from converting. If he persists and does so for the love of Judaism, we accept him with open arms.

KOSHER COSTS

<Name@Withheld> from the UK wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

How does a Jew like myself feed my disabled daughter kosher food on such a low income? The place where they sell kosher food is usually one place in a community. This is true here where I live in the UK. All kosher food is always extensively

more expensive than non-kosher food. I therefore will suffer in eternal afterlife as the greed of the people who sell kosher meat know quite well that we can only get kosher meat at their place, so they charge extra, as do their wholesalers, and the Rabbis whom charge for doubling the price of sugar at Pesach (Passover) just to say a blessing.

Dear Parent,

The price of kosher products can be frustrating, and your anger is understandable. And if one is indeed in great financial difficulty, G-d takes that into account in judging the person. A low-income, however, is not a reason to eat non-kosher food. Perhaps a reader willing to offer you some concrete help or advice could contact us via e-mail: info@ohr.org.il

The economic reality is such that in order to produce kosher food, greater care, supervision and manpower is required, as well as different and sometimes more expensive ingredients and processes.

kosher animal bones very available, and very cheap. act that is not as common and therefore more expensive. In addition, a supervisor must be paid to make sure no

Another factor is the small size of the kosher market relative to the greater market. Producing in bulk brings down costs, so unkosher products can sometimes be produced for less.

Kosher meat has its own special requirements, from the specially trained slaughterer to the inspection for *treifot* (lesions, etc.) These inspections are stricter than government s inspection cause a monetary loss. A special process is required for the removal of many parts, as well as salting to remove the blood. All these processes require salaried manpower.

Regarding Passover, the Rabbi does not bless

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everyone.

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the sugar. What actually happens is that a Rabbi or a supervisor oversees the production to ensure that no leavened products come in contact with the sugar. Or the machines at the sugar plant (which may also be used to process other substances not kosher for Passover) may need to be cleaned. Again, such supervision requires paying someone a salary to do it.

Furthermore, since Passover is only once a year, many Passover supervision jobs are short term, for only a few weeks or months, and require long hours. As such, few people want such jobs, so owners must offer higher salaries.

There are many foods that are kosher on the general market that can be bought at any supermarket and are not more expensive than regular products. For a complete list, I suggest that you contact the London Beth

available in any Jewish bookstore.

LEFTOVER TURKEY

Zev Schwartz <nurev@starpower.net> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

In a follow up to your Thanksgiving question (Ohrnet Vayeitze), one of your readers praised

from daily fear of persecution. A country where the constitution protects us with freedom of speech, press and religion. The safest country, except for Israe

What if the United States of America was an evil empire by Jewish standards? What if the USA was comparable to Rome in the days of our forefathers?

What if American foreign policy would cause the destruction of Israel, or the metamorphosis of Israel from a Jewish State into a Democratic Multiethnic Entity? What if American culture caused the loss of

generation? Would it then be permissible for Jews to lavish such praise on a country that does us such devastating harm just because it lets us worship our religion, and make a few bucks?

Dear Zev Schwartz,

Comparing the United States to ancient Rome seems a bit of a stretch of the imagination. Rome was an extremely evil empire who tortured our Rabbis to death, murdered, plundered, destroyed our country and our Temple and sent us into the exile we are still in till today.

Regarding assimilation, is the United States to blame? While it is true that many sectors of the Jewish population are sadly assimilating in America, others are thriving. For example, Torah institutions, Yeshivot, Jewish day schools and centers for outreach and Torah study have burgeoned in the US over the last 50 years. So blaming the US for those who assimilate is simply an attempt to shift the burden of guilt.

But to answer your question: Yes, you are allowed to praise even an evil country for its good acts. As an extreme example, Rabbi Yehuda B'rabbi Ilai in the Talmud praised the Romans for all their beneficial deeds, such as building roads, bridges, sanitation facilities, and markets, even though ancient Rome was an extremely evil empire.

Sources:

- Talmud Tractate Shabbat 33b

Yiddle Riddle

<Name@Withheld.com> wrote:

Someone just asked me this riddle. Question: In Hebrew, if you subtract 30 from 30 you get 60. How is this?

THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

*Comments, quibbles, and reactions
-the-*

Re: Words from the Heart: (Ohrnet Vayechi):

Chaim, answered a related question: In Parashas
but
why? In the previous Parasha we are told that the
brothers did not know that Joseph understood
Lashon Hakodesh (Hebrew) because an interpreter
was present? Therefore, Yehuda must have taken

no matter what the
language, just as the Polish official understood the
Chafetz Chaim as he pleaded from his heart on

Howard Kravitz, Skokie, IL, USA

Rabbi Berel Wein relates the following story
heard from his father-in-law, Rav Lazar Levine of
Detroit: Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan

asked to address the crowd of 5,000 people, he
m
claimed that his voice was too weak to be heard
past the first few rows of the vast assemblage.
turgeman a person to stand beside

said in an effort to convince him.

turgeman

An Ohrnet reader

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heap.