



Ask The Rabbi...

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This edition contains:

1. Order in the Court — Rosh Hashana or Yom Kippur
2. What does it mean, *Sela*?
3. Yiddle Riddle

Kevin from Johannesburg asked:

Dear Rabbi,

I understand that Rosh Hashana is the day of judgment, and Yom Kippur is the day of repentance and forgiveness. Shouldn't Yom Kippur be first? Wouldn't we be better off doing Teshuva (repentance) before Rosh Hashana, and go into Rosh Hashana to be judged, already having been forgiven?

Dear Kevin,

On Yom Kippur, Hashem showers the world with forgiveness: But just like a shower, if you want the cleansing effect, you have to get into the water!

'Getting into' Yom Kippur, however, is easier said than done. We earthlings relate to things that are tangible, i.e., french fries and phone bills. Spiritual matters — *Mitzvot*, *Olam Haba* (the world to come), repentance, etc. — are harder for us to get excited about.

Therefore, we have Rosh Hashana first. On Rosh Hashana all our physical needs are determined — Will we live or will we die? Will we have money for the phone bill? Once we begin thinking about these issues, asking Hashem for a year of health and wealth, **we can then hopefully go one step further**, asking Hashem to enlighten us, forgive us, and to help us towards *Teshuvah* (returning to the way of Torah).

Sources:

- *Kochvei Ohr*, *Ma'amar* 83.

Lars-Toralf Storstrand < laffen@vestnett.no > wrote:

There is a word in our "westernized" copies of the Tanach that seems to baffle a lot of people to the degree that they say: "We don't know what it means!" Now I am asking you: What does "Sela" (in the Psalms) mean. I've heard several theories, but I want to get this clear.

Shalom,

Dear Lars-Toralf Storstrand,

The word "*Sela*" appears not only in our "westernized" translations of *Tanach*, but in the *original Hebrew* as well.

Some commentaries maintain that the word "*Sela*" has no translation; rather it is a word used to control the meter and allow the preceding words to flow correctly. The proof for this is that the word appears only in the "poetic" Book of Psalms and one "Psalm-like" chapter in *Chavakuk*.

The Ibn Ezra translates "*Sela*" as "truth" or "so it is."

The Talmud teaches us the meaning of the word in a similar fashion: "Every time the word "*Sela*" is used, it refers to something that goes on and on without end." Hence the translation of the *Targum* — "*L'almin*" — meaning "forever."

Sources:

- Psalms 3:3, *Targum*, *Ibn Ezra*.
- Talmud, Tractate *Eruvin* 54a.

Yiddle Riddle:

One day *every* year, a Halacha of Shabbat is different than the rest of the year. What day is it?

(Hint: the answer pertains to the prohibition of "*Hotza'ah*" — transferring objects between public and private domains, or carrying *within* a public domain.)

Publication Advisory:

Due to the High Holidays, Ohr Somayach will not be distributing its publications in paper form. The publications *will be available* via Internet and Fax as usual.

Look for the return of Ohr Somayach publications early in *Sefer Bereishit*.

We wish all of our readers a *Ketiva v'Chatima Tova*.

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Ask The Rabbi is written by Rabbi Moshe Lazerus, Rabbi Benzion Bamberger, Rabbi Reuven Subar, Rabbi Avrohom Lefkowitz and other Rabbis at Ohr Somayach Institutions / Tanenbaum College, Jerusalem, Israel.

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