



Ask The Rabbi

Researched at Ohr Somayach, Jerusalem

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Parshat Korach (in Israel) /
Shlach (outside Israel)

NASDAQ KOSHER SNACK

Rafi Goldmeier <gldmeier@actcom.co.il> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

Is a Jew allowed to buy shares in a company like McDonalds? They serve milk cooked with meat, and it is prohibited for Jews to derive any benefit from milk and meat cooked together!

Dear Rafi Goldmeier,

Many major corporations have investments in restaurants, hotels and food businesses that use mixtures of meat and milk. And as you said, the Torah forbids deriving benefit from meat cooked with milk.

However, many halachic authorities maintain that since you have no rights of ownership in the actual products, rather you only have dividends from the company's investments, it is permitted to own such stocks.

Rabbi S. Z. Braun addresses a similar question about owning stocks during Passover in a company that makes *chametz*. He writes that "since the stockholder has no right to do anything at the plant on his own accord, and certainly he has no right to destroy the *chametz*, he is not in violation of owning *chametz*." The same would apply to your question, and therefore you can own McDonalds stock.

Disclaimer: Under no circumstances does the above information represent a recommendation to buy or sell stocks.

And speaking of stocks: an American financier was vacationing at the pier of a small coastal village when a small boat with a native fisherman docked. Inside were several large fish. The American asked the fisherman how long it took to catch them. "Only a little while," he replied. The American then asked why didn't he stay out longer and catch more fish? The fisherman replied, "I have enough to support my family for today."

"What do you do the rest of the time?" asked the American.

"I sleep late, play with my children, take a siesta, and stroll into the village each evening where I sip wine and play guitar."

The American scoffed, "I am a Harvard MBA and could help you. You should spend more time fishing and with the proceeds buy a bigger boat on which you could catch even more fish. Then, you could buy several boats and eventually have a fleet. Instead of selling your catch to a middleman you could sell directly to the processor, eventually opening your own cannery. You would control the product, processing and distribution. You would need to leave this small coastal fishing village and move to the big city to run your expanding enterprise."

"How long will all this take?" asked the fisherman, to which the American replied, "About 15 years."

"Then what?"

"Ha!" laughed the American, "Then you would announce an IPO and sell stock in your company to the public! You'd make millions!"

"Then what?" asked the fisherman.

"Then," said the American, "you could retire. Move to a small coastal fishing village where you could sleep late, fish a little, play with your kids, take a siesta, and stroll to the village in the evenings to sip wine and play your guitar."

Sources:

- She'arim Metzuyanim Behalacha 64:4, from Responsa Mahari Halevy 2:124

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

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FETAL OINKER

Meir Balofsky <meir_balofsky@edu.Yorku.ca> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

You recently wrote about the hypothetical case of a kosher animal genetically engineered to give birth to a non-kosher animal. I have a different question. What if a fetal pig was placed into the uterus of a cow?

Dear Meir Balofsky

Even if such a fetus came to full gestation and was born, it would be forbidden because it originated as a pig before being put into the cow. The rule that "anything originating from a kosher animal is kosher" means anything *produced* by a kosher animal. In this case, the fetus was not originally produced by a cow.

COLORED EGGS

Tamar Tessler <tamt@hotmail.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

We have a custom in our family to color eggs for Lag B'omer, and we know of others around the world that have this custom too. Yet nobody seems to know the origin or source of it. Some people I have asked suggested it is taken from a pagan custom, G-d forbid. Can anyone shed light on this please?

Dear Tamar Tessler,

I asked your question to Rabbi Eliezar Demari of Jerusalem. (His parents came to Israel from Yemen in 1949.) Rabbi Demari said that in Yemen, the Jews painted eggs in honor of Purim. They sent these eggs to friends as *mishloach manot* gifts and ate them at the festive Purim meal.

The Jewish community in Yemen was isolated for centuries, and they can trace many of their customs back to the time of the First Temple, so it's clear that they didn't adopt this practice from any other culture.

Rabbi Demari also noted that it's conceivable that egg-painting was a custom among European Jews, and that they stopped doing so when it was adopted by other religions.

We see the same concept regarding a stone altar: Although Abraham, Isaac and Jacob made stone altars, the Torah later forbade making them because the pagans had begun making stone altars for idol worship. Thus, we see that a "kosher" custom gets spoiled when it becomes a pagan custom.

FREEZING FROSTY FEBRUARY FLOWERS

Sue Remes from Grand Rapids Michigan
<abubbe@aol.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

How can I get my flowers to grow in the winter months in Grand Rapids Michigan in the winter snow? I have tried to warm them with a large blanket but that didn't work. I asked G-d to help but nothing worked. So maybe you could give me some ideas.

Dear Sue Remes,

Thanks for your confidence in my horticultural acumen. Your confidence in me in this area is misplaced, however. All wisdom is contained in the Torah, either explicitly or in hidden format, but the answer to your question I have yet to discover

I suggest you ask an expert in the field (pun intended). Check with a local flower store or nursery. If after all your outdoor efforts and prayers G-d still says "No," perhaps that means winter is your time to grow inside.

BURIAL RITE DIRECTION

Jonathan Lyons from Edgware, Middlesex, UK

<jldolly@hotmail.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

Is it true that, in countries other than Israel, graves in a cemetery should be arranged in a certain way — i.e., heads facing Jerusalem?

Dear Jonathan Lyons,

There are two main customs:

- Burial with feet facing the gate of the cemetery, to indicate belief in resurrection
- Burial with feet facing Israel, indicating belief in resurrection and also the primacy of the Land of Israel.

Ideally, both customs can be fulfilled by having the entrance to the cemetery in the direction of the Land of Israel.

Sources:

- Pitchei Teshuva 262:2 and Gesher Hachaim

Yiddle Riddle

Last week we asked:

I have before me two identical pots of milk. The pots contain identical amounts of pure, unadulterated milk from one animal. Yet, if two exactly identical pieces of meat from one animal fall, one into each pot, and accidentally get cooked, one mixture becomes forbidden to eat and to sell, while the other mixture becomes forbidden only to eat, but it remains permitted to sell. Why is this?

Answer:

A cow was milked and slaughtered, and after it was slaughtered, more milk was found in its udder. One pot contains the milk milked before the slaughter, and one pot contains the milk found in the udder after slaughter.

It is forbidden by the Torah to cook milk and meat together. And it is forbidden by the Torah to derive any benefit from milk and meat cooked together. However, milk found in the udder of a slaughtered animal is different; it does not come under the Torah prohibition of meat and milk. Rather, it is forbidden to cook it with meat by rabbinic decree only. And when the Sages made this decree, they decreed only regarding cooking, or eating that which was cooked, but they did not forbid selling or otherwise deriving benefit from such a mixture once it was cooked.

Sources:

- Shulchan Aruch Yoreh De'ah 87:6
- Rema, ibid. 87:1 (see Shach and Taz, Ibid. See also Badei Hashulchan 87:75 who cites a dispute among the authorities, citing Tiferet Lemoshe and Rabbi Akiva Eiger who forbid even benefit; he concludes, however, that it appears one may be lenient.)

THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

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

Re: How Not to Talk (Ohrnet Behar/Bechukotai):

Somebody once suggested setting aside an hour every day in which you are especially careful about not speaking *lashon harah* (forbidden negative speech). Once you have that down pat, go for two hours every day, etc. *Hatzlachah Rabbah!*

JJ and Livia Levine <jjlr@erols.com>

decreases with time, and the experiences are hopefully used to move forward.

What you do is fantastic, and a big *kiddush Hashem* (not that you need me to tell you). Thank you so much for all your research, insight and wisdom. May Hashem bless you to continue educating others.

Shoshana Greenberg <greenr06@doc.mssm.edu>

Re: Nursing in Public Domain (Ohrnet Shlach):

Re: Judge Knot (Ohrnet Shlach):

You wrote that the Talmud forbids crying too long for a loved one. You then said, "Eventually a person must get over his losses and move forward." In discussing this with my roommate, she suggested that "get over it" was not the right term. I wholeheartedly agree. I will never "get over" my mother's (*a"h*) death, but the intensity of the pain and sadness

I have a suggestion for the young mother regarding nursing in public. Dressing rooms in stores and malls are often large and comfortable enough to nurse privately. As a previous nursing mom I've discovered that the larger, more upscale stores have wonderful dressing rooms. Ask permission first.

Robin Margolin <robinmargo@att.net>

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