



Ask The Rabbi

Researched at Ohr Somayach, Jerusalem

This Issue Contains:

1. Divine Rhyme in 4/4 Time
2. O.J. on Trial
3. Answer to Acquittal Riddle



Yerachmiel Garfield <yeshiva@netmedia.net.il> :

What is the deal with the name of Hashem when singing Shabbat songs? I've noticed many don't say the actual name of Hashem, it makes me wonder what the author of the song had in mind? If we are not to say it why did they use the real names? Or maybe we should?

Dear Yerachmiel Garfield,

We should. Take for example the Shabbat song called 'Shimru Shabbtoti.' It has five stanzas, and each stanza ends in a word which rhymes with Hashem's name — 'Madanai... Mizkenai ... Kohanai ...'

Surely, the author intended that the chorus be sung using the name of Hashem that rhymes with these words. Another Shabbat song, 'Tzur MiShelo,' also works the name of Hashem into its rhyme-scheme.

The composers of the Shabbat songs were great Torah scholars, some living over 1000 years ago. They put Hashem's name in their songs, and it's perfectly appropriate to sing them as the authors intended.

True, it's prohibited to say Hashem's name in vain. This includes making a blessing by mistake or unnecessarily, or any time a person mistakenly mentions Hashem's name thinking he's obligated to do so when in fact he's not.

Shabbat songs, however, don't fall into this category. On the contrary, their melody fills the air with delight, and their lofty poetry lifts our hearts in praise of Hashem for giving us the treasured gift: Shabbat!

Every talent can be used to do a mitzva. So if you have a good voice, use it to sing Shabbat songs or lead the synagogue services. The trick, however, is to focus on the words and not try to impress your audience!

Therefore, it's best to avoid repeating Hashem's name simply because the tune requires a few extra syllables. Rather, stick to the words as written.

Sources:

- Berachot 33a
- Maimonides Hilchot Berachot 1:15
- Chavat Da'at 110
- Pele Yoetz: Shira

Sheldon Rothman <sheldon_rothman@hotmail.com> wrote:

There is a brand of orange juice here in the U.S. that is calcium enriched. The ingredients show CALCIUM LACTATE as the ingredient that is added to provide the calcium. Is that a dairy ingredient? Is the orange juice milchig?

Dear Sheldon Rothman,

Often, questions such as yours can best be answered by the *kashrut* agencies that deal with these issues on a day-to-day basis. So I forwarded your question to the Orthodox Union *kashrut* department. Here is their answer:

"Thank you for your inquiry to the OU 'Vebbe Rebbe.' In response to your question: Calcium Lactate is not a dairy ingredient.

The Vebbe Rebbe <kosherq@ou.org> "

Thank you, Vebbe Rebbe.

'Acquittal' Riddle

Last week we asked: You are one of the judges in a Jewish court in a capital case. It is your turn to state your opinion. If you say, "I find the defendant innocent," then the defendant receives the death penalty. But if you say, "I find the defendant guilty," he goes 'scot-free.' What is the case?

Answer: You are the last judge to vote, where all the other judges have already said 'guilty.'

According to Torah law, convicting someone of a capital crime requires a *Sanhedrin* of 23 judges. After hearing testimony from eye-witnesses, the judges vote. If at least thirteen of the judges vote 'guilty' the defendant is executed.

There is a surprising exception to this, however: If ALL the judges vote guilty, then the defendant is acquitted.

Here's why:

There are two ways to look at everything. There's no situation in this world without some merit or positive side. If not one judge was able to see the good side and declare the defendant innocent, something's wrong. The positive side of the case must have been missing during the presentation of the evidence. Therefore, he is acquitted.

Speaking of looking at the good side of criminals: I know of a theft that occurred in a Jerusalem yeshiva. The thief broke into the office safe which was full of cash, valuables and expensive silver ornaments used to adorn the Torah scroll. The thief stole everything in the safe except for these ornaments!

Sources:

Maimonides, *Laws of Sanhedrin* 9:1

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