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**May One Have a**

**Dog or Cat as a Pet**

**By Rabbi Moshe Elefant**



Is there an issur to feed bossur b’chalav to a pet animal? What other issues can potentially be a problem with having a dog or a cat as a pet?

There are a few separate issues in this question. The first is a kashrus issue; one is not allowed to prepare basar b’chalav nor benefit from it. The prohibition of basar b’chalav, mixing meat and milk together, is a unique prohibition. It’s not just that you’re not allowed to eat basar b’chalav, you’re also not allowed to prepare or benefit from basar b’chalav. The reason for that is that when the Torah expresses the prohibition of basar b’chalav it says “lo tevashel g’di bchelev imo”; you’re not allowed to cook an animal in its mother’s milk. There are two unique points about this pasuk:

This passuk is found 3 times in the Torah. It doesn’t say you’re not allowed to eat basar b’chalav, rather it says you’re not allowed to cook basar v’chalav. The gemara teaches us that this comes to teach us two rules. One rule it teaches us is that the prohibition of basar b’chalav is not just limited to eating meat and milk cooked together, but it also includes benefiting from meat and milk cooked together or even preparing meat and milk together.

Which means, even if you’re not going to eat the meat and milk, but you’re just going to prepare the meat and milk, it’s still prohibited. So if there’s a pet food that is made of meat and milk, one cannot benefit from it by feeding it to his animal, and one cannot prepare it for his animal. So someone who has a pet has to be very careful about the food that they’re serving their pets.

It really goes a step further. This is also relevant to Pesach where there could be chometz in the pet food. On Pesach we are not allowed to own or benefit from chometz in any way. If someone owns a pet, they have to be very careful on Pesach that aside from not having meat and milk, they have to make sure there’s no chometz in the food, as well.



The second issue is that a pet is considered muktza on Shabbos and one may not touch the animal on Shabbos for that reason. There are unique situations, for example, someone who is blind and has a seeing eye dog, that may be somewhat different. But handling animals on Shabbos is not permitted. You are allowed to feed your animals on Shabbos; you can pour the food in the fish tank or pour the food in front of the dog or cat, but you cannot handle your pet on Shabbos.

The Gemara says “assur ladam l’gadel kelev ra b’baiso.” A person is not supposed to raise a dangerous animal at home. If someone has a dangerous animal at home, that is prohibited. If it’s an animal that’s not dangerous, there’s nothing specifically halachically prohibited about owning a pet.

We used to give a hashgacah to one particular pet food company, though I don’t think that company makes pet food anymore, however, there are other supervisions that give a hechsher to pet food. When you’re serving a pet, it’s not the same as when we’re eating. The pet can eat non-kosher meat, but it can’t eat a mixture of meat and milk.

*Reprinted from the June 9, 2021 edition of the Jewish Vues. Rabbi Elefant is the Chief Operating Officer of the Orthodox Union Kosher.*

**Failure**

**By Rabbi Berel Wein**



Thomas Sowell is one of the most well-known thinkers, social commentators and economists in the United States.

He has a worldwide reputation, is an African American, a former Harvard Marxist, a man of wit and charm and of brilliant insights into life, society, and people.

He is currently 90 years old. For almost the last 70 years since his disillusionment with Marxism, he has been one of the leading thinkers and the exponents of market economics, conservative moral values, and a proponent of the minimal government interference in the private lives of its citizens.

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**Thomas Sowell**

Sowell was a leading professor at many of the prestigious universities in the United States, and today, even in the advanced stage of life, he is still a fellow of the Hoover Institute at Stanford University in Palo Alto California.

I have listened to countless hours of his lectures and interviews, and I have always come away with greater knowledge and insight as to the issues that he was discussing. Needless to say, much of the African American political community regards him as a pariah, and the liberal press and media never gives him his due*.* He, nevertheless, remains one of the true iconic thinkers in American academia.

**Testified Before Congress**

He has testified before Congress numerous times on numerous issues, and on each occasion, he has always distinguished himself in his encounters with members of that esteemed body. In short, he always has something to say and says it clearly, succinctly, and logically.

Recently, I heard an interview with him on the Internet conducted about 40 years ago. One of the subjects that was under discussion between Sowell and the interviewer was anti-Semitism.

Perhaps because of the current dangerous rise in anti-Semitism – its verbal expressions and actual physical actions –this interview somehow was again rebroadcast and appeared on YouTube.

  The interviewer asked Thomas Sowell if he thought that there was anything in the behavior in Jewish society that the Jewish people could themselves correct to mitigate anti-Semitism.

This is the typical psychological gambit, i.e., blaming the victim and ignoring the true aggressor and perpetrator of the crime. The question itself is a question that represents the subtle, genteel anti-Semitism that much of the non-Jewish world feels towards the Jewish people, its religion and, currently, the Jewish state of Israel. Surprisingly, Thomas Sowell said (40 years ago) that he would have one piece of advice for Jewish society. And that one word is “fail!”

**Failure Would Perhaps Help**

**Lessen Anti-Semitism**

He expanded this comment by saying that if only the Jewish people would prove to be failures in whatever they attempt to accomplish and achieve, then the anti-Semites would perhaps lessen the pressure against them.

However, since Jews are never a failed society and continue to succeed in their endeavors, no matter what circumstances may conspire against them, anti-Semites become loud and violent in their frustration.

**No Comparison to Other**

**Persecuted Groups**

They realize that there is no comparison between the reaction of Jewish society to prolonged persecution and discrimination and those of other minorities that have never yet been able to climb out of the hellhole of their bitter past.

It is obvious that Thomas Sowell was only using this as a metaphor and not as real advice. The Jewish world has known many instances of failure, religiously, socially, educationally, and economically. Yet, it has never allowed these failures to prevent it from forging ahead and overcoming these failures, to achieve success.

**The Jewish Story in America is Unmatched by Any Other Group**

The story of the contribution of Jews to the American scene over the past 150 years is unmatched by any other group or minority.

Another minority which suffers from great discrimination in the United States is Asian Americans. And that society has also proven to be successful against all odds. Since it, too, has not failed, it has been provoked by a flood of enemies and discrimination.

**Jewish Society Cannot**

**Afford to Fail**

The truth is that Jewish society cannot afford to fail, for to fail, even temporarily, could spell permanent disaster and even disappearance. So, the imperative of survival is what drives Jewish success in all the various endeavors that are part of American society.

That is true for the State of Israel as well. For though we have had many failures and setbacks on individual issues and circumstances, the state itself, its very essence and existence, is dependent upon the fact that it can never really fail. Perhaps that is the reason why we in Israel have a built-in immunity to the criticism and cluck-cluckingof the rest of the world towards us.

*Reprinted from this week’s website or rabbiwein.com*

**Parshas Chukas**

**Earning a Living Doesn’t**

**Have to be Difficult**

**By Rabbi Bentzion Shafier**

**Founder of TheSmuz.com**



“And HASHEM said to Moshe and Aharon, ‘Because you did not believe in Me to sanctify Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore, you will not bring this congregation to the land that I have given them.’” — Bamidbar 20:12

**The Be’er Disappeared**

**When Miriam Died**

For almost forty years while the Jews were traveling in the desert, their source of water was the be’er, a large rock that provided the water they needed to survive. The Jewish nation then consisted of about three million people. They had also taken many animals with them when they went out of Mitzrayim, so they required millions of gallons of water each day. The be’er provided all they needed and more.

When Miriam died, the rock disappeared, and the Klal Yisroel recognized that their survival was in jeopardy. HASHEM told Moshe Rabbeinu to go out into the desert, speak to the rock, and bring the water back. When Moshe and Aharon went to the rock, they spoke to it and received no response. Moshe then assumed that just as it was necessary to hit the rock when the Jews first went out into the desert, so too now. When he hit the rock, it began pouring forth water.

**Told to Speak to the Rock**

Later, HASHEM told Moshe and Aaron that they had erred. HASHEM told them to speak to the rock, and it was through the power of speech that the miracle was to come about. On some level, they were lacking in their trust in HASHEM, and this caused them to miscalculate. Had they been more complete in their trust, they would have used words alone, and the rock would have provided the water.

Rashi tells us that because of this mistake, the Jewish people lost out on a great lesson. Had Moshe only spoken to the rock, the Jews would have said to themselves, “A rock doesn’t require sustenance, yet it listens to the word of HASHEM; surely, we, who rely on HASHEM for parnassa, must listen to Him.” However, since Moshe hit the rock instead of speaking to it, that lesson was lost.

Rashi seems to be saying that if Moshe had spoken to the rock, the Jewish people would have increased their level of service to HASHEM. They would have realized that their livelihood was dependent upon their doing mitzvahs, and this would have added focus and precision in the way that they fulfilled them.

**Reward for Mitzvahs**

**Isn’t in this World**

There are two problems with understanding this Rashi. One is that the Gemara tells us that the reward for mitzvahs is not in this world. While it is true that HASHEM rewards every good a person does, the place of that reward is in the World to Come. In fact, it is considered a curse to use up your payment in this world – something that is reserved for wicked people. So it doesn’t seem to be correct that their livelihood was dependent upon listening to HASHEM.

The second problem with this Rashi is that any motivational system must be tailored to fit the audience. The people of this generation received the Torah on Har Sinai. They spent almost forty years surrounded by the Clouds of Glory, completely immersed in Torah study, and sustained by the mon. They were on the highest madreigah of any generation in history. So even if their parnassa was dependent upon their listening, how would they be motivated by something so mundane as earning their daily bread?

**Obstacles that Prevent Us**

**From Serving HASHEM**

The answer to this question is based on understanding the Rambam (in Hilchos Tshuvah, Perek 9). He explains that even though we don’t receive reward for doing mitzvahs in this world, if a person keeps the Torah properly, then HASHEM will remove all of the obstacles that normally prevent a person from keeping the mitzvahs.

Sickness, war, poverty, and hunger prevent a person from learning or fulfilling the mitzvahs. If a person is happy and dedicates himself to keeping the Torah, HASHEM will shower him with all of the requirements to better serve Him, including peace, tranquility, well-being, sustenance, and all else that a person needs to follow the Torah.

The Rambam is telling us that since HASHEM created the world in order to have man follow the Torah, when a person uses the world properly, then HASHEM allows him to have his needs met in this world without strain. This will help him better serve HASHEM.

HASHEM was telling Moshe and Aharon that this lesson would have greatly affected the generation of the desert, but it was lost. Had the people seen the rock obeying HASHEM’s command, they would have been moved to a powerful realization: “The rock doesn’t have needs, yet it listens to HASHEM. How much more so should we, who have so many needs? HASHEM has promised that if we follow in his ways, He will remove all obstacles from our path. But if we don’t listen. . .”

That was a lesson that would have affected even this generation because their very survival depended on it. While people may have many lofty motives, one of our strongest drives is self-preservation. Had that generation come to a more clear recognition that their existence was dependent upon keeping the Torah, it would have changed even their appreciation — but it was a lesson lost.

**Earning a living isn’t easy**

The concept that HASHEM takes care of our needs when we use our lives properly can be a great source of motivation. Earning a living isn’t easy. Market economies rise and fall. Entire industries come and go. Careers that are in high demand in one decade are outsourced and sent overseas the next. Financial security in an ever-changing world is fragile at best.

While our main motivation to keep the Torah is that HASHEM commanded us to do it for our benefit in the World to Come, the reality is that we live in this world. We have bills to pay, children to put through school, and many, many financial obligations. Knowing that HASHEM will remove the obstacles standing in our way, as long as we dedicate ourselves to passionately keeping the Torah, can be a great impetus to growth.

This is not to say that life will be a bed of roses. There will still be nisyonos, life tests and different settings that we need for various reasons. However, the basic starting position is that HASHEM will take care of my needs so that I can better serve Him. That understanding can aid us to focus on our true purpose in this world and allow us a much greater degree of success in all of our endeavors.

*Reprinted from this week’s website of Theshmuz.com.*

**President Rivlin Asked Prince Charles to Let Jewish Baby Girl Go to Israel for Treatment**

**By**[**David Israel**](https://www.jewishpress.com/author/di/)

**[](https://www.jewishpress.com/wp-content/uploads/President-Reuven-Rivlin-L-and-Prince-Charles-at-the-presidential-residence-January-23-2020..jpg)**

**President Reuven Rivlin (L) and Prince Charles at the presidential residence, January 23, 2020.**

President Reuven Rivlin on Tuesday appealed to Prince Charles to allow Alta Fixler, a gravely ill, two-year-old Jewish girl be brought to Israel for medical treatment after UK High Court Justice Alistair MacDonald had ruled that life-sustaining treatment can be withdrawn from her ([**UK Judge Permits Euthanasia of Jewish Baby Against her Parents’ Wishes**](https://www.jewishpress.com/news/jewish-news/uk-judge-permits-euthanasia-of-jewish-baby-against-her-parents-wishes/2021/06/02/)).

Her parents, Haredi Manchester residents, who are also Israeli citizens, who objected to euthanizing their baby girl because their Jewish faith forbids it, asked earlier to take her out of the UK, to an Israeli hospital, where their wishes would be heeded, but the judge told their lawyers that he would have to take “current hostilities in Israel and Gaza” into account when reaching a decision.

In other words, this baby should be allowed to die in England because sending her to Israel would risk her life.



**Alta Fixler**

President Rivlin wrote Prince Charles:

**I am writing to you today on a matter of grave and urgent humanitarian importance. As you may know, a recent High Court ruling in the case of two-year-old Alta Fixsler of Manchester has given doctors permission to switch off the life-support treatment that is keeping her alive.**

**It is the fervent wish of her parents, who are devoutly religious Jews and Israeli citizens, that their daughter be brought to Israel. Their religious beliefs directly oppose ceasing medical treatment that could extend her life and have made arrangements for her safe transfer and continued treatment in Israel.**

**I know that representations have been made to HM Government on this matter, but I feel that the unique circumstances warrant a personal intervention on my part to you. It would be a tragedy if these parents’ wishes could not be accommodated in a way that respects both the law and their religious beliefs.**

As Prince of Wales, Charles undertakes official duties on behalf of the Queen. He founded The Prince’s Trust in 1976, sponsors The Prince’s Charities, and is a patron, president, and member of more than 400 other charities and organizations.

Earlier in the week, Israeli Health Minister Yuli Edelstein, who reached out to his U.K. counterpart Matt Hancock to see if the baby could be transported to Israel.

*Reprinted from the June 9, 2021 website of the Jewish Press.*

# Rav Avigdor Miller on

# Shidduch Advice for a Bochur



**QUESTION:** **If I’m having trouble finding a shidduch, what advice can you give me?**

**ANSWER:** Now we have to ask a couple of questions.  First of all, do you have employment?  If you’re not making a living then you won’t find a shidduch.  If you’re a young man in the early twenties and you’re a yeshiva man, a good learner, then you’re sure to find a shidduch, no question about it. But suppose you’re not a learner – if you’re not a learner you must be an earner. And in order to earn money, you have to get some kind of parnasah training.  Everybody should train himself an umnus.  Otherwise, why should anybody marry you?   
 Secondly, ask someone to appraise your appearance.  Many times a person’s appearance is not the kind that attracts anybody. And there are ways and means of making yourself more presentable. That’s a very important point.  
 Also a certain amount of finesse of character is necessary.  When people don’t have a training in character or in derech eretz, so they’re actually repulsive to others.

Therefore, I would recommend that people should seek advice in these three areas.  First of all, is he a ba’al parnasa?  Secondly, what is his appearance?  Thirdly does he have behavior and good character?  And then there’s no question eventually the right one will come.  Otherwise, it’s a misfortune for a Jewish girl to marry a misfit; because all her life will be ruined thereby.

*Reprinted from the June 3, 2021 email of Toras Avigdor. Adapted from Tape #865*

**Never Too Crowded to Celebrate in Jerusalem**

Ten miracles were wrought for our ancestors in the Holy Temple... Nor did any man ever say to his fellow man: The place is too crowded for me to lodge overnight in Jerusalem." (5:5)

This miracle can also be understood as an expression of the unity generated by Jerusalem. The Mishna does not say that the city was not crowded. On the contrary, it is highly likely that it was, for finding lodgings for the multitude of festive pilgrims could not have been easy.

Nevertheless, the unity which the city inspired motivated both hosts and guests to be accommodating, and everyone accepted the crowded conditions willingly, without allowing the congestion to detract from their love for the holy city. *(Sichot Motzei Shabbat Parshat Re'eh, 5738)*

*Reprinted from the 5756/1996 Parshat Shelach edition of L’Chaim Weekly.*

**Proactive Prayer**

**By**[**Rabbi Moshe Meir Weiss**](https://www.jewishpress.com/author/rabbi-moshe-meir-weiss/)



to Credit: Jewish Press

When the meraglim, the spies, went to check out Eretz Yisroel, Kalev made a personal detour. He traveled to Chevron to pray at the me’oros hamachpelah, where the Avos and Imahos are buried. Rashi explains that Kalev felt it was urgent for him to ask the Patriarchs and Matriarchs to intercede on his behalf so that he should not be tempted to follow the council of the other spies.

From this behavior, we learn a fundamental lesson. It is proper and advisable to pray to Hashem to be saved from an oncoming temptation or challenge. A simple example of this would be to ask Hashem to help us not lose our temper during the pressures of erev Shabbos or erev Yom Tov. Another example is to ask Hashem that when you are packing to go to the mountains for the summer, a highly stressed time, you shouldn’t lose your cool.

**Most of Us Pray in Reaction to Difficulties**

We must realize that this is not the normal way we think. Most of us pray in reaction. If we don’t feel well, G-d forbid, we ask Hashem to heal us. If we have a business setback, we ask Hashem to aid us. If we feel depressed, we pray to Hashem to cheer us up. While this is fine, there is a more advanced type of prayer and that is to pray in anticipation.

As the friends of Iyov said to him, “Hayaroch shuacha shelo batzar – Did you arrange your prayers before your distress?” The Gemara teaches us in Masechtas Shabbos, “L’olam yivakeish adam shelo yecheleh – A person should always pray not to become sick.” Indeed, Rabbeinu Bachya says that the bracha “Refa’einu Hashem” in the Shemone Esrei is a tefillah that asks Hashem to prevent us from getting sick.

**Utilizing Our Foresight to Avoid Impending Challenges**

Kalev adds another dimension: That we should have the foresight to anticipate impending challenges and pray beforehand to succeed at overcoming them. Thus, it would be appropriate for a person to pray not to talk during davening or, when going amongst a group of people, to ask Hashem that one should not succumb to speaking or listening to lashon hara.

Moshe Rabbeinu adds yet another dimension to this approach to prayer. He prayed on behalf of someone else, namely, that Yehoshua shouldn’t succumb to a challenge. Moshe asked Hashem, “K-a hoshi’acha mei’atzas meraglim,” that Hashem should save Yehoshua from being influenced by the wiles of the spies.

We see from this that one can pray on behalf of another person. So, for example, a parent can ask Hashem that their child should be spared from the temptations of the internet, and a grandparent can implore Hashem that their grandchild should not fall in with the wrong crowd.

**An Important Teaching from the Gemora (Berachos)**

In general, Hashem is pleased when we use foresight in our prayer. As the Gemara teaches us in Masechtas Berachos, “Al zos yispallel kol chosid l’eis m’tzoh – “For this every person should pray towards the time of finding.” The Gemara explains: From a young age one should begin praying to find a worthy mate, a good chavrusa, and even as far in advance as when the time comes, to have an easy death and a respectable burial.

Chazal tell us, “Eizehu chacham? Haro’eh es hanoled – Who is wise? He or she who can see in advance.” Kalev and Moshe are teaching us to use this talent successfully in the art of prayer.

In the merit of enhancing our communication with Hashem, may He bless us with long life, good health, and everything wonderful.

*Reprinted from the June 11, 2021 website of The Jewish Press.*

**The Higher Level of Engraving and**

**The Jew’s Commitment to**

**Observing Super-Rational Mitzvot**

**From the Talks of the Lubavitcher Rebbe**

**Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, Zt”l**



The Torah portion Chukat, begins: "This is the statute (chok) of the Torah." As we immediately learn, "this" refers to the commandment of the red heifer.

The mitzva of the red heifer falls into the category of chukim -- mitzvot for which there is no rational explanation.

There are many such super-rational mitzvot, i.e., the prohibition against eating non-kosher food, or wearing shaatnez (linen and wool in the same garment). Yet the mitzva of the red heifer is the foremost example of this type of commandment, as it completely transcends human understanding.

"Chok" comes from the root word meaning "engraved."

There are two ways in which letters may be written: with ink on parchment or paper, or by inscribing them on stone. When letters are written with ink, they remain separate entities from the parchment or paper; when they are inscribed, they become an integral part of the stone itself. And yet, upon examination, we see that there are two levels of "engraving":

The first level is when the letters are engraved on only one side of the stone. This type of inscription bears a superficial resemblance to the written word on parchment.

**A Second Higher Level of Inscription**

A second, higher level of inscription is that which was found on the Tablets of the Law which contained the Ten Commandments. In a miraculous manner, these letters were equally visible from both sides, seeming to float in the stone without relation to the stone itself.

These two types of inscriptions allude to the two levels of chukim.

The first category contains those super-rational mitzvot which, although we do not understand the reason behind them, the human mind may begin to comprehend them on some level.

The higher category of super-rational mitzvot, however, is completely beyond the human ken, above and beyond our ability to understand G-d's Divine wisdom.

**A Natural Consequence of a Jew’s G-dly Soul**

A Jew, by nature, desires to fulfill G-d's will. It is the natural consequence of his possessing a G-dly soul, which exists on a plane which is higher than the intellect. This nature finds its fullest expression in the performance of super-rational commandments.

When a Jew observes a mitzva that has a rational explanation, the fact that he is doing so simply to fulfill the will of G-d is not so apparent, for his own thoughts and understanding may obscure, however slightly, his pure motivation.

Thus it is precisely in the observance of chukim, "letters which are inscribed from both sides," that the Jew's innate desire to obey G-d's command is most obviously expressed.

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