

The aim of our learning program is twofold: to enhance our Shabbat meals with divrei torah and to study together as a community. The weekly sheet contains a real-life practical question with a halachik response, as well as parsha questions on the reverse side for adults and children to review.

#### Scenario and Discussion

*(Courtesy of the Business Halacha Institute  
[www.businesshalacha.com](http://www.businesshalacha.com))*

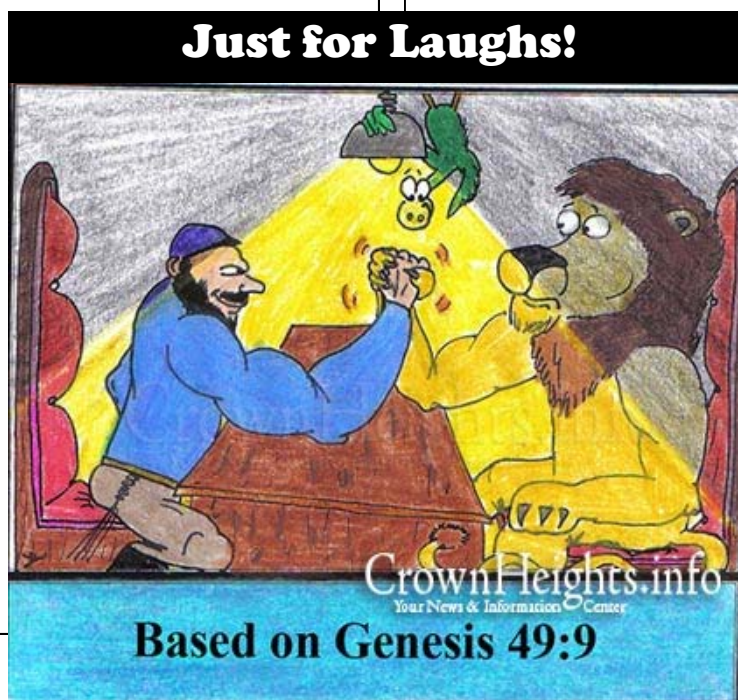
My tefillin were lost a few years ago. I obtained a loaner pair from a local sofer, but they were not the halachic quality that I prefer. One day, a fellow walked into shul with a pair of tefillin to sell. They seemed to be of the quality that I preferred, but looking at the fellow, I was suspicious that they may have been stolen. I inquired about their origin and he told me that they were part of his deceased grandparents' estate. As I couldn't convince him to just hold on to them, we negotiated a price and I bought them. Although he oddly avoided sharing any personal details, I really wanted the tefillin and ignored my concern that they were stolen. I did not research their origin any further. A while later, I became aware that it is quite common for thieves to trade stolen tefillin. I now strongly suspect that the seller indeed sold me stolen goods.

**Q:** At this point, what is my obligation?

**A:** Shulchan Aruch (C. M. 356:1) states that one may not purchase stolen merchandise from a thief. If a thief cannot find someone to purchase his loot, he would not continue to steal; consequently, buying stolen property is considered a form of assistance for the thief.

Taz, in his comments on Choshen Mishpat (ibid.), cites Rivash who maintains that one may not purchase property from a suspected] seller of stolen goods. For this reason, one should avoid purchasing items from street salesmen when it is likely that their merchandise was stolen. In your case, you already have possession of the tefillin, so the relevant question is whether you are permitted to keep them. Shulchan Aruch (C. M. 353:3) rules that if stolen property is acquired by another person after the owner abandoned hope of retrieving his property (yei'ush v'shinui reshus), the merchandise is considered the property of the new owner. One may sometimes assume that the owner abandoned hope to retrieve his stolen goods (Aruch Hashulchan 361:80, Rema 236:11), and even if the owner is identified, the stolen object does not have to be returned. However, it is the accepted minhag to return stolen goods that the owner identified by simanim and to publicize any stolen goods in your possession

(Shulchan Aruch harav gezeila 11). If possible, publicize that stolen tefillin are in your possession and that you will return it by simanim. If the owner identifies them, he should reimburse the monies you paid for them (ibid). Whether you may recite a beracha on those tefillin or not is subject to debate (Mishnah Berurah 25:54). It is therefore correct not to recite the beracha.



# Parsha Questions

*Courtesy of the Pardes Institute for Jewish Studies*

*All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary, unless otherwise stated.*

1. How old was Yaakov when he came down to Egypt? How long did he live in Egypt?
2. Describe the events of Yaakov's blessing of Manasseh and Ephraim. Why did he bless Ephraim first?
3. What are two possible meanings of the following statement of Yaakov to Yosef: "And now your two sons, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to Egypt, are mine."
4. When Yaacov gave prophecy to his sons, he said that Re'uven was unstable as water and would not excel. Why did Yaacov say this?
5. How did Yaacov describe Shimon and Levi and why?
6. Describe the relationship between Zevulun and Issachar.
7. What was Yaacov's prophecy for Dan?
8. Which brothers are compared to animals and which animals?
9. After Yaacov died, what lie did Yosef's brothers tell?
10. How old was Yosef when he died and what was his last request?

1. 130; 17 years
2. Joseph put Yaakov's right hand toward Manasse's forehead and his left hand toward Ephraim's. When Yaakov switched his hands, placing his right hand which should be for the eldest on the youngest, Joseph protested but Yaakov explained that the younger would be greater and from his seed would become a great nation.
3. (1) "And so Joseph brought them out from between his knees" (Yaakov's). This was the symbol of adoption. Yaakov adopted the two boys and they each received an equal portion of Yaakov's estate and (2) they are sons of Canaan like Yaakov, not sons of Egypt.
4. Because Re'uven went to his father's bed with Bilhah and defiled it.
5. As weapons of violence, because they slaughtered Sechem who had raped Dinah, plus all of the men of his tribe.
6. Zevulun was a seaman and merchant and Issachar was a student. Zevulun financed Issachar's Torah study and both benefited thereby.
7. That he would judge (and defend) his people as one of the tribes of Israel.
8. Yehuda = lion; Issachar = large-boned donkey; Dan = snake; Naphtali = deer; Benyamin = wolf
9. They said that Yaakov had commanded Yosef to forgive his brothers for their transgressions and the evil they had done him.
10. 110; that his bones be buried in Canaan

Parsha Answers