

Ask the Rabbi!

Here's a confession that won't surprise those of you who know me best. I love questions; I live for questions; my path to Judaism was through asking questions and I love being asked questions. Most of all, I love answering your questions whether they are simple or require some serious research.

In this vein, it has surprised me that in my "vast" experience (almost three years now) of being a rabbi, how often I find out that people are reluctant or even afraid to ask me questions. More than one congregant worried about whether I would officiate at a loved one's funeral if it included a cremation (I would) or if they were buried in non-Jewish cemetery (again, I would). I sometime find out that people are reluctant to ask me about possible options concerning Bar/Bat Mitzvah, conversion, the wedding ceremony and on and on.

Please, please, please! Don't be afraid to ask. Don't assume that your question is foolish or insulting or silly or stupid. As long as your don't mean to be insulting, your question will never be treated as anything less than the honest inquiry that it is. Often it will give us both an opportunity to learn something new, unique and special about our heritage. In almost every case, I am able to use the flexibility and creativity inherent in our Reform Jewish heritage to accommodate reasonable requests concerning lifecycle ceremonies.

I am writing this after attending two Passover Seders. Can anyone doubt that the underlying purpose of the Seder is to honor questions and questioning. From the traditional Four Questions, to the commentaries about the Four Children culminating in the One Who Does Not Know How to Ask, to the song "Who Knows One?", the Seder is designed to stimulate questions – questions about the symbols, about the foods and about the customs.

So I beg you – please don't ever hesitate to ask me about what is troubling or puzzling you. Drop by my office, leave a question in my box, send an e-mail (to [Lotker@aol.com](mailto:Lotker@aol.com)) or catch me after services. I won't promise to have every answer immediately available but I promise to give your questions the thought and research they deserve.