

# GOOD QUESTION

*by Rabbi Raymond Beyda*

Would you consider an inquisitive person as a bright, intelligent prospect for your team at the office? Of course, some people are just nosy and meddle in other people's affairs. The question concerns an individual who asks a lot of questions in a meeting or planning session. There are many who become impressed with a person's mental capacities and make conclusions about a person's ability to perform based on the number of questions that he or she asks.

A question can be an attempt to learn and clarify -- a point that moves a meeting further along towards a productive conclusion. One who asks that type of inquiry is a good addition to a managerial staff or learning group. Others, however, ask questions that have nothing to do with adding to the conversation or clarifying the analysis. Some people ask questions that are "attention grabbers". The question, usually neither brief nor to the point, is actually a person stating, "Look at me -- I am important -- aren't I?"

The next time you participate in group discussions, business meetings or a Torah class and you get the urge to ask a question - pause and ask yourself "Is there a purpose to my inquiry or am I feeling that no one is paying proper attention to my presence?" It won't take long to make the choice. The decision to ask or not to ask will clarify to others whether you are a worthy participant or a fool.

## DID YOU KNOW THAT

If a man is reading the "Korbanot" section of the morning prayers, and he recites the first verse of the Shema Yisrael, which is part of that section of our siddur, he need not wear tefillin. In spite of the fact that the Gemara says, "One who reads Keriya Shema without tefillin is like one who testifies that he is a liar (because the Shema contains the verses that command that one wear tefillin), There are several reasons why this edict does not apply to the verse recited in the Korbanot. First, since one recites only the first verse one does not recite the command to wear tefillin. Second, the person is going to subsequently put on his tefillin. Also, the fact that the person is not wearing the tefillin at that time is not intended to free himself of the yoke of Heaven, h'v. In fact, even if one reads the entire Shema without tefillin in order to recite it before the time for Shema passes he is permitted to do so. [Source Yabia Omer, volume 1, O'H Siman 4]

## CONSIDER THIS FOR A MINUTE

*Rebbi Meir said: Limit your business activities and engage in Torah studies..." [Abot 4:12]*

The Gemara says that the phrase "It (Torah) is not across the sea..." teaches that Torah is not to be found amongst international business travelers. Even in ancient times the concerns and pressures of the business world were a strong deterrent to Torah study. In today's light- speed, hi-tech, Blackberry, wireless, 24/7 environment the wisdom of the sages is even more appropriate. The Mishnah advises that a person should minimize the physical in order to successfully pursue the spiritual.

Rav Hayim Volozhin said the Mishna uses the term "limit" to teach us it is not possible to switch from the world of business to a life of Torah all at once. One must wean oneself off of the money trail and slowly build the Torah life. Rabenu Yonah said that one should minimize commercial activity in order to have the free time and the energy to make Torah study his major occupation.

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