

YeshivahAI

Asking a Rabbi in a Monetary Dispute

Research edition · Sources, arguments and
the full inquiry

A rabbi who is not the judge
One account · The limits of guidance

Revised edition 3
12 Tishrei 5787

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01 · The question and the answer

Reuven wants to act honestly. He and Shimon disagree about money, so he asks a rabbi: must I pay, return the money, or wait? The account sounds coherent, but Shimon is not in the room. May the rabbi guide Reuven on that account alone, or must he try to hear Shimon too?

That is this booklet's question. The rabbi **is not the judge in the dispute and will not become its judge**. The parties might later appear before another rabbinic court. Our concern includes private oral guidance, not just a written ruling.

Permission to ask does not by itself determine what the rabbi may answer. Sections 04–06 explain that separate question.

The central answer: a person may ask a rabbi how to handle money properly. Permission to hear the question does not automatically permit deciding the dispute on one account. Rema expressly restricts a written ruling or opinion supplied to one party, even conditionally. Alongside that restriction, sources recognize forms of guidance and exceptions whose scope differs. This inquiry has not established a general duty requiring every advising rabbi personally to contact the other party.

The need for adequate inquiry before deciding is different from a duty to take responsibility for conducting the dispute. The rabbi may explain the law, identify missing information, decline to decide, or refer the matter for appropriate inquiry. Which response is permitted in a particular case is itself a halakhic question; calling the encounter “just a consultation” does not settle it.

YeshivahAI is a framework for study, comparison and critical discussion assisted by AI under human direction. The work is conducted under rabbinic supervision. This is a general inquiry, not a ruling in an individual dispute. The reader edition is self-contained; the companion research edition records the evidence, research rounds, objections and remaining gaps.

02 · Ten points to orient the reader

1. Asking how to deal honestly with money is legitimate and important.
2. Hearing a question and deciding a dispute are different acts.
3. A rabbi who is not the judge still faces limits on giving an opinion.
4. “If the facts are correct” does not automatically permit a written opinion.
5. “May not write” does not prove that every oral answer is permitted.
6. A sincere wish to avoid theft matters but does not establish the facts.
7. “Liability permitted; exemption forbidden” is not an adequate universal rule.
8. Sources recognize exceptions to prevent harm, conflict and oppression.
9. A need for inquiry does not establish that this rabbi must initiate it.
10. A defined disagreement and clear limits of proof are valid research outcomes.

03 · Ask—and give a complete account

Mishnah Berurah, in the laws of the eve of Yom Kippur, directs a person holding money to which another may have a claim to consult a rabbi, presenting the matter fully and truthfully. Its source is Chayei Adam, part II, rule 144, paragraph 6. The warning against relying on “his own ruling” concerns self-authorization. Chayei Adam explicitly continues: ask a halakhic authority to show the Torah’s path. [S07]

Personal questions about money therefore have a recognized place. Not every preliminary inquiry must become a lawsuit. Yet the passage addresses the questioner; it does not declare one account sufficient for every answer. An honest person may not know which detail matters.

A useful presentation includes inconvenient facts, complete documents and the other party's position as far as it is known. Distinguish personal observation, hearsay and inference. This is practical guidance for presenting a question, not a newly invented set of halakhic conditions.

04 • What does Rema restrict?

In Choshen Mishpat 17:5, after discussing a judge hearing one party, Rema also addresses “any scholar.” He restricts writing a ruling or opinion for a litigant before hearing both parties. This includes writing “if so”: on the premise that the questioner's factual account is true. It also includes “his opinion without a ruling.” [S01]

Two concerns are stated: the questioner may learn how to reshape his claims, and the other party may present a different account requiring the scholar to reverse himself. Calling the document an “opinion” rather than a “ruling,” or adding a disclaimer, does not by itself remove the restriction.

The wording also has limits: Rema says “write.” Later authorities discuss oral answers. Neither automatically extending every rule about writing to every conversation nor assuming that all oral answers are permitted is justified.

Rivash 179 illustrates the concern. Initially he understood that the writer was seeking the law after hearing the parties, and answered on that premise. Later he learned that the writer was himself a party and received a different account; he compared the accounts and answered the other party too. That continuation is not blanket permission for an initial one-sided answer. [S03]

05 • Why good intentions may not suffice

Rivash 175 contains a particularly close case: the questioner says that if the law requires returning money already received, he will return it because he wants no theft. Nevertheless, once a dispute over the account emerged, Rivash did not treat that initial request as sufficient; he required further clarification. [S02]

This does not prove that an honest person may never receive an answer. It proves something narrower: “I want the truth” does not convert disputed facts into established facts. “May I withhold payment?” may therefore ask for a decision at the very heart of the dispute.

Conversely, these sources do not establish that a rabbi may only impose liability and may never clarify an exemption. The questioner’s property also deserves protection. Declaring a legal obligation differs from proposing a voluntary concession or settlement. The basis and setting of the guidance matter, not only who benefits.

06 • Oral guidance and exceptions

Pitchei Teshuvah 17:11 collects distinctions involving law independent of contested claims, a brief oral answer, a religious need, and a questioner whose sincerity the scholar knows. It also records objections to leniencies. Its collection must not be read as agreement by every authority with every exception. [S04]

Shevut Yaakov worries that even an oral answer may lead a questioner to evade a Torah proceeding after learning that he will lose, especially where attendance cannot effectively be compelled. The concern is not limited to a document shown to others. [S05]

Aruch HaShulchan states a broad restriction, yet adds that when the scholar sees that silence will cause harm or conflict, or leave an oppressed person without help, answering for the sake of Heaven is a mitzvah. The paragraph does not expressly confine this exception to oral or temporary guidance. A questioner’s assertion of oppression does not, however, establish the situation the paragraph describes. [S06]

The result is neither unrestricted permission nor a ban on every piece of advice. Consider the kind of question, the factual inquiry, the answer's purpose and its possible use in the dispute. This is an interpretive synthesis, not a single test quoted from one authority.

The more permissive strand also deserves recognition. Quoted passages from Maharshdam YD 153 distinguish scholarly instruction from judging; Rashbash 230 describes an answer premised on the stated facts, with local judges examining and applying it. Knesset HaGedolah entry 19 is cited among lenient opinions, but his own conclusion has not been verified in the original. These are quotations, not independent readings of those books. Be'er Esek, as quoted by later authorities, permits a brief oral statement of the law; Shevut Yaakov remains concerned in the circumstances he describes. These permissions must not be merged into a test accepted by every author. [S09; S10; S11; S13]

07 · Must the rabbi contact Shimon?

Once the limits of answering Reuven are clear, a further question arises: must the rabbi initiate contact with Shimon?

The sources examined have not established an independent general duty for every advising rabbi to initiate contact with Shimon. That is not a claim that no duty to inquire or act could ever arise. Aruch HaShulchan itself recognizes circumstances requiring an answer. [S06]

The firmer conclusion concerns the limits of deciding: where both sides' positions are needed, one must not present a decision as though the matter has already been established. It is therefore reasonable to infer that the rabbi may decline to decide

and refer the matter, without taking over the dispute. This is an inference from the sources, not an express universal exemption from initiative.

The method of inquiry is not necessarily uniform. Rivash 175 contemplates a question organized by a judge who has heard both sides; Rema in Choshen Mishpat 13:3 permits written pleadings with both parties' consent. Neither authorizes relying on one letter alone, but these passages defeat a blanket requirement that every consulting scholar personally meet both parties together. [S02; S08]

Shimon's failure to answer a private rabbi is not by itself an admission. Declining a private conversation differs from refusing a valid summons issued by a rabbinic court.

08 • Cases that test the boundary

Money already held. A genuine doubt about returning it may be put to a rabbi. No advance promise should be made that every answer can be given without further inquiry; Rivash 175 illustrates precisely this tension.

Withholding wages after an alleged breach. The answer may depend on whether a breach occurred and on the other party's claims. First-person phrasing does not remove that difficulty. For wages, the payment deadline and the rules against delayed payment in CM 339 must also be examined; withholding is not neutral. Distinguishing withholding from extracting money does not authorize setoff or delay on an unverified allegation. Wage law has conditions and details not resolved in this booklet. [S08]

A signed letter to show the other party. This directly raises Rema's concerns. A condition that the account be true is not automatic permission.

An abstract question or agreed facts. Competing factual accounts may be less relevant, but one must still check that no additional claim matters. Pitchei Teshuvah records a legal question independent of the parties' claims. [S04]

Seizure and setoff. Hearsay does not establish a debt, and there is no blanket permission to seize. Conversely, Choshen Mishpat 4 recognizes self-help under conditions and disagreements, so one cannot say every action always requires a prior ruling. This booklet does not determine all the conditions of seizure. [S08]

Oppression or threatened harm. An answer may be appropriate or required, but the scholar's actual knowledge matters. A request for help is not proof that the other person is guilty. [S06]

09 · The answer this inquiry supports

A person may ask a rabbi how to act in a monetary dispute and should present the account honestly and fully. But the rabbi cannot be expected to endorse that person's position merely because he is their rabbi or will not serve as judge.

Under Rema, a written ruling or opinion in the setting described in Choshen Mishpat 17:5 is restricted even when conditional. Personal oral guidance requires attention to later authorities' distinctions and reservations; neither absolute permission nor absolute prohibition has been established as a universal consensus.

We have no proof of a general duty requiring this rabbi personally to contact Shimon. We do have a firm basis for not deciding beyond what has been established and for referral to appropriate inquiry. That distinction keeps personal guidance available without turning a one-sided consultation into an automatic substitute for resolving the dispute.

For the differing approaches, textual variants and rejected arguments, consult the research edition.

10 · Research question, scope and levels of certainty

The original question asks whether a rabbi approached by Reuven about a monetary dispute may hear only Reuven and then “rule” how he should act, or must try to hear Shimon as well. The question expressly excludes a rabbi who might later judge the dispute and chiefly requests a direct source.

The inquiry is not limited to permission to listen. It separates listening, believing an account, explaining law, advice, personal guidance, a document for use in the dispute and adjudication. Each may raise a different issue. Removing the judge-specific prohibition does not remove every other restriction; conversely, judicial procedure cannot simply be imported into consultation without evidence.

Source identifiers S01–S18 are stable. **V** means the relevant passage was read directly in a transcript during this production; it does not mean a printed scan was inspected. **Q** identifies a quotation in a source read or in a supplied report, without direct access to the original; the route is stated. **U** means an unverified reference. Conclusions are classified separately: express, inference, disagreement or unresolved. Round numbers follow the supplied inquiry, not invented dates.

This is an expanded analytical edition of the available research paths, not a verbatim reproduction of the conversation. Repeated copies in the handoff have been consolidated, while conflicting claims and corrections are retained. A model’s V label is not treated as evidence that this editor opened that source.

11 · R1: three answers and two overgeneralizations

ChatGPT's first answer set out three anchors: Rema and Rivash for limiting a scholar's answer, Knesset HaGedolah for avoiding transgression, and Rashbash for conditional responses. It correctly did not stop at excluding the judge. Its weakness was reliance on secondary quotations for some sources, leaving the boundary between personal duty and resolving the dispute rather general.

Grok R1 opened with no strict duty to hear the other party, treating abstention chiefly as custom or piety. It introduced Maharshdam, Knesset HaGedolah and Aruch HaShulchan's exceptions. Its suggestion that "on your account" could suffice exceeded Rema's wording that it also quoted. Nevertheless, identifying a view that calls abstention pious conduct was a real contribution, not a point to erase.

Claude R1 developed Rema, improper assistance to litigants and harmful-speech law, and added an unsuccessful search for a directly relevant Chabad source. Its principal mistakes were inferring permission for conditional answers from Rema after quoting his restriction, and extending a passage about rumor and indications into a blanket prohibition on self-help.

The interim synthesis did not vote among models. It requested focused verification of Knesset HaGedolah 15 and 19, Maharshdam YD 153, Rashbash 230, Pitchei Teshuvah and Shevut Yaakov. Mishnah Berurah 606 was added, and "what should I do?" was recognized as insufficient to define a permitted category. The methodological advance was to compare evidence rather than count answers.

12 · Design of R2 and the independent track

The handoff contains two families of R2 prompts and repeated copies. Grok was assigned primary-source verification and a map of views; Claude, attribution and inference criticism; Gemini, independent boundary testing; and Grok Bot, a separate source-based track. The later version gave that track the question and source map without the others' conclusions. This is relative interpretive independence, not fully blind research.

The prompts required distinctions between writing and speech, brief and reasoned answers, abstract questions and live disputes, agreed facts and contested claims, and personal duty versus tools for action against another. They demanded the continuation of Rivash, the “my/his view” wording, and the limits of Mishnah Berurah as evidence.

Tests covered returning money, withholding payment, a conditional document, a short oral reply, seizure based on rumor versus personal knowledge, harm or oppression, and an anonymous question about a live dispute. Expanded versions added refusal by the other party, written pleadings and documents. All are treated here.

Reviewers were instructed not to decide by model consensus, multiply secondary references as independent evidence, equate search results with reading a book, or invent scans or teams. Grok reported team assistance. That is retained as its report only; this production did not inspect the other team's tool logs or treat them as independent evidence.

13 · Core texts—wording, context and limits

The following passages are taken from the transcripts read. They are selected units, not complete reproductions of the lengthy responsa. Omissions are marked; editorial interpretation

remains outside quotation. English renderings are our translations of the Hebrew, not quotations from an official English edition.

Rema: even a conditional written opinion

“No scholar should write a ruling for one of the litigants in the form of “if so” (assuming the stated facts are true), or write his opinion without a ruling, before hearing both parties: they may learn from his words to lie; moreover, the other may later argue differently, requiring the scholar to write the opposite, to his discredit.”

This is the scholar-specific restriction in CM 17:5. It is not limited to a judge. The gloss’s earlier discussion of a possible judge is a separate unit. The two concerns explain why a changed title or a condition is insufficient. [S01]

Rivash 175: a properly organized inquiry

“Once there is disagreement about the matter, it is not proper to answer one group without hearing the opposing group’s claims, unless the question comes from the presiding judge, who has heard both groups and sets out both their claims in the question.”

The continuation restricts conditional answers to a party and mentions communal leaders confirming the facts. Later the question is described as follows:

“If the law requires returning their payment for all the time their children were idle, you will return it, for you desire neither theft nor robbery.”

The latter describes the questioner’s request in Rivash’s words; it is not a ruling that repayment is due. Together the passages show sincerity that does not remove the need for clarification. [S02]

Rivash 179: opening and continuation together

“Had I known he was a party, I would not have answered him.”

“Just as I answered him according to his claims, so I shall answer you according to yours.”

Between these statements stands a detailed change in the scholar’s knowledge. Omitting it produces either an artificial contradiction or excessive permission. The dedicated discussion reconstructs the sequence. [S03]

Aruch HaShulchan: rule and exception in one unit

“No scholar should answer a questioner in monetary law unless the questioner is a judge; he should not answer a litigant or the litigant’s relative or friend. Even an answer that is not definitive, but says that if the matter is so the law is such, and if otherwise the law is otherwise, is forbidden [...] But if the scholar sees that withholding his answer will cause harm—for example, if the questioner seeks to sever engagement arrangements and will do so unless told that this is forbidden—or will cause conflict, or that his answer will rescue an oppressed person from the oppressor, answering is a mitzvah, since his intention is for the sake of Heaven.”

Only the intervening rationales—learning to lie and discredit to the scholar—are omitted here. Oral-only, temporary-only and irreversible-harm conditions must not be inserted into the quotation. [S06]

Chayei Adam: whose self-ruling is rejected?

“In any event, he should set out the matter before a rabbi and halakhic authority fully and truthfully, without falsehood; otherwise he merely deceives the Most High. He should ask how to act. In monetary matters he should not rely on his own

ruling, for the evil inclination has many excuses. Rather, he should ask an authority to direct him according to Torah, so that he does not wrongfully retain another's money."

This is the relevant latter part of paragraph 6. Its opening concerns money subject to another's claim and informing that person. Personal inquiry is recognized; the adviser's every duty is not specified. [S07]

Shevut Yaakov: a concern beyond writing

"Especially in these generations, when we lack the power to compel a proceeding under Jewish law, there is reason to fear that if he is told the law even orally and sees that he will not prevail, he will evade a Torah proceeding. Therefore one who is fearful and careful should refrain from answering the questioner alone; silence is fitting."

This is from the transcript's conclusion. The preceding my/his-view wording is not resolved here. The closing concern is not limited to a signed letter, but neither should its language be relabeled a Torah prohibition without argument. [S05]

Rashbash 230 — quoted, original not opened

"They do not decree that the law is so; rather, they say: if the matter is so, the law is such, and the local judges will see whether the question is true."

Q: quoted in Rabbi Moshe Perkovitz's article identified in the source register. The passage shows both the response and local inquiry; the original Rashbash was not opened. [S11]

Maharshdam YD 153 — quoted, original not opened

"Nevertheless, when it concerns money between one person and another, abstaining from answering is pious conduct, and there is a substantial reason for it."

Q: the same quotation distinguishes asking a scholar from the prohibition applying to an accepted judge. The full original context remains unverified; this does not authorize every one-sided action. [S09]

14 · Rivash 179: who approached him, and when

The opening alone can mislead. Rivash 179 concerns houses, a widow and her heirs, and conditions of sale. R. Makhluf ben Hanin initially presented the dispute as involving other people. Knowing his communal position, Rivash thought the matter had come before him and that he had heard both sides. Rivash noticed the question favored the heir, but thought the writer a friend or supporter rather than the litigant himself. [S03]

A later inquiry revealed major differences about acquisition, conditions, consent and the tearing of a will. Against that background Rivash says he would not have answered had he known the first writer was a party, citing both an altered factual picture and the teaching of useful claims.

He then sends the first response to the second questioner to expose the differences and answers that questioner's account too. This continuation must not be omitted, but it is not straightforward permission for any initial one-sided answer: he now knew two conflicting versions and expressly compared them.

Nor does the episode prove all written submissions invalid. The exchange itself uses written inquiries. Its significance concerns unrecognized one-sidedness and comparative clarification; it is neither a complete procedural code nor unrestricted permission for separate hearings.

15 · Rivash 175: sincerity within a live dispute

Rivash 175 is more than a parallel to 179. It supplies a particularly important limit on the proposed permission. R. Shmuel Halaio's letter was carried by R. Moshe ben Tzedek. When Rivash read it before him, the messenger disputed the account and identified himself as a party. Rivash then withheld an answer pending clarification, mentioning a question submitted by the presiding judge who had heard and organized both positions, or confirmation of the facts by two or three communal leaders. [S02]

The subsequent account concerns teaching fees and stipulated terms. The questioner stresses that if the law favors him, he already holds the money; if it requires repayment, he will repay, wanting no theft. Thus a sincere inquiry about one's own duty overlaps with a live dispute and a competing account.

This defeats a test based solely on professed sincerity. It does not prove that Rivash rejects every form of personal guidance. He specifies clarification for this question and the risk of teaching claims. The tension between the questioner's purpose and factual inquiry is central; neither side should be erased.

Earlier reports gave this detail too little weight. Claude contributed 175, but the continuation about willingness to return money requires a sharper conclusion: "litigant" and "sincere questioner" are not mutually exclusive categories.

Review note: willingness to repay if legally required is not an admission of an existing debt. Asking what follows from admitted facts also differs from a ruling based on a valid admission of a defined obligation. This discussion does not determine every rule governing a litigant's admission; that concept must not silently reinstate the rejected liability-versus-exemption rule.

16 · The more permissive strand: evidence and gaps

Three references supported the more permissive strand: Maharshdam YD 153, Knesset HaGedolah's Tur glosses to CM 17:15 and 19, and Rashbash 230. Their verification level must not be equated with Rema's directly opened text.

The Maharshdam quotation read in the article "Giving an opinion to one side" distinguishes scholarly response from the judge's prohibition and describes abstention in monetary matters as pious conduct. The continuation concerning avoidance of transgression was supplied in reports but not verified here in the original responsum. This supports a strand of interpretation, not unrestricted action on one account. [S09]

The Rashbash quotation describes a conditional answer whose factual truth and application are examined by local judges. It should not automatically be limited to questions originally sent by judges: the quotation also mentions individuals asking and bringing responses to judges. Equally, the local inquiry and implementation cannot be removed. [S11]

Is this a disagreement with Rema? There is real tension over supplying a conditional response to a party; forced harmonization is unwarranted. Yet the overlap depends on the recipient, use and local inquiry. A sweeping disagreement over all guidance should await full direct reading of the outstanding originals.

Knesset HaGedolah needs additional caution because of the textual discrepancy discussed next. Neither blanket permission nor a final prohibition should be attributed to him from an uncertain transcript.

Article identification: Rabbi Moshe Perkovitz, “Giving an opinion to one side,” Psakim, record 1998, reopened 23 September 2026. This differs from Rabbi Yeshua Ratabi’s Mitzpe Yericho article. A computer display line number is not a citation within the original responsum. [S09; S11]

17 · My view or his view: a correction reopened

In R2, Grok and Gemini attributed a prohibitive conclusion to Knesset HaGedolah on the wording “his view is to forbid” in the Shevut Yaakov quotation. The later ChatGPT synthesis corrected this to “my view,” treating it as Shevut Yaakov’s own conclusion. That sounded decisive—but this production opened two transcripts and found a discrepancy.

The Pitchei Teshuvah 17:11 transcript read here has “my view is to forbid”; the Shevut Yaakov I:64 transcript has “his view is to forbid.” A secondary article also inserts Knesset HaGedolah in explanatory brackets. Those brackets are the article writer’s interpretation, not independent text from Knesset HaGedolah. [S04; S05; S10]

No printed scan resolving the discrepancy was inspected. We cannot call these two distinct printed traditions: a transcription or recognition error may explain it. The verified finding is a difference between the online text witnesses actually read.

What remains clear? Shevut Yaakov himself proceeds to a restrictive conclusion and recommends avoiding even oral answers in his circumstances. What remains open? Whether this sentence attributes prohibition to Knesset HaGedolah too, and what the latter says in his own text. The current correction does not restore the earlier attribution; it returns it to unresolved status.

A model's correction is not immune from criticism. All three stages—attribution, correction and newly observed variant—must remain visible, rather than replacing history with a seamless final narrative.

Recheck after booklet review: two distinct pages within the same corpus were reopened—Pitchei Teshuvah/CM/17 and Shevut Yaakov/I/64. The former reads “my view,” the latter “his view.” Sharing a website does not make them the same page. This is a discrepancy between transcripts of works, not proof of two independent printed witnesses. A report quoting otherwise does not override the opened text; transcription, reading error or a page change remain possible. A scan is still needed.

18 · Pitchei Teshuvah as a map of distinctions

Paragraph 11 is not merely a quotation from Shevut Yaakov. It begins with Rema's responsum 112 on an inheritance question dependent on law rather than competing claims. It later reports Be'er Esek 100 permitting a brief oral reply, followed by Shevut Yaakov's concern about evasion of a Torah proceeding. These are different positions, not one agreed permission. [S04; S05]

Other discussions involve identifying the proper forum, a mitzvah-related need and answering a known questioner. The quotation from Me'il Tzedakah 53 first questions leniencies and then records senior scholars answering people known to them who seek to know whether the truth is on their side. Neither the doubts nor the reported practice should be omitted. [S12]

Knowing a person's honesty can affect concern about misuse; it is not equivalent to knowing every fact of a transaction. This is a possible explanation of part of the tension with Rivash 175, not an express quotation from Me'il Tzedakah.

A question independent of competing claims also needs a real definition. Reuven's assertion that the facts are agreed does not necessarily establish agreement. Conversely, a genuinely agreed factual basis and a legal question weaken a central concern. Protecting fair inquiry does not require suppressing legal study. The source register distinguishes V for Pitchei Teshuvah from Q for the works it quotes. Reading a quotation establishes what the later work reports; it does not verify the full original context.

19 • Harmful speech, advice and self-help

Harmful-speech law adds a distinction between listening for a useful purpose and accepting another person's misconduct as fact. Reports cited Chafetz Chaim, rules 6 and 7:12 with Be'er Mayim Chayim. These remain control references not reopened in their original text during this production. Another report's V label is not a new verification here. [S15]

Avoiding a declaration of Shimon's guilt on Reuven's account is a useful conclusion. The claim that every self-help action requires a prior judgment does not follow. Shulchan Aruch CM 4 expressly recognizes self-help under conditions, with differing views in the gloss concerning a specific object, a debt and seizure. [S08]

"Personal knowledge" also requires care: the questioner's knowledge is not the rabbi's knowledge, and establishing ownership does not authorize every collection method. A sweeping prohibition must not be replaced by sweeping permission.

For improper assistance to litigants, reports cited Avot 1:8, Ketubot 52b and 85b, and discussions of truthful advice by a non-judge. This edition does not reverify that entire field. The relevant point remains: even legally correct advice can teach

someone which claims would help; permission for truthful advice does not itself cancel the specific restriction on a scholar's response. [S16]

Conversely, every explanation of law should not be called improper advocacy. The inquiry remains focused on the direct monetary-dispute question, rather than attempting a complete treatment of representation, harmful speech or seizure.

20 · Degrees of duty and stress tests

Six levels must be separated: (a) permission to listen; (b) permission to explain law; (c) permission for a conditional answer within a defined setting; (d) no decision without necessary inquiry; (e) a duty to try to hear the other party; (f) a duty for this rabbi personally to conduct that inquiry. Evidence for (d) does not automatically prove (e) or (f); lack of evidence for them does not conclusively negate them.

Sincere repayment inquiry: Mishnah Berurah and Chayei Adam support consultation; Rivash 175 prevents sincerity replacing clarification. **Withholding payment:** personal-duty wording is insufficient; the alleged breach matters. This rules neither every withholding forbidden nor every withholding permitted. Wages also require examining the payment deadline and delayed-payment rules; an allegation of damage is not automatic permission to withhold. [S08] **A document for presentation:** Rema is the strongest restrictive anchor; a disclaimer alone does not permit it.

A brief oral reply: Be'er Esek as quoted stands against Shevut Yaakov's restrictive approach; no universal agreement is established. **Seizure:** entitlement and the means of enforcement are separate questions, not resolved by hearsay. **Harm and oppression:** Aruch HaShulchan recognizes a need to answer; application requires the scholar's assessment, not an emergency label supplied by the questioner.

Anonymity: changing names does not make a live dispute abstract. **Agreed facts:** verified agreement supports a legal distinction; Reuven's assertion alone does not establish it. **Shimon's refusal:** not automatic proof for Reuven. **A written response:** may assist inquiry; it is neither always invalid nor always a complete substitute for proper proceedings.

These are research applications, not judgments in actual cases. They test whether a proposed rule exceeds its source, rather than replacing examination of contracts, evidence and authority in a concrete dispute.

21 · Map of approaches—without forced agreement

Source	Setting	Established point	Limit
Rema 17:5	Writing to a party	Conditions and informal opinions are included	Wording alone does not settle speech
Rivash 175–179	Dispute and accounts	A one-sided picture is insufficient	Sequence of inquiries matters
Maharshdam 153	Scholarly response	Permissive strand and pious abstention in quotation	Q; full original context unread
Rashbash 230	Conditional reply and local inquiry	Permission and teaching duty in quotation	Q; local judges cannot be omitted
Kneset HaGedolah, CM 17:19	Cited among lenient views	A lenient attribution is recorded	Q/U; entries unread and own conclusion unresolved
Be'er Esek 100	Brief oral law	Leniency reported by later works	Q; not Shevut Yaakov's conclusion
Shevut Yaakov I: 64	Risk of evasion	Abstention even orally in its setting	Do not invent a technical category
Aruch HaShulchan 17:8	Rule and exceptions	Answering may prevent harm	No express oral-only limit
Chayei Adam / Mishnah Berurah	Questioner's duty	Ask fully and truthfully	No blanket waiver of inquiry

This table describes settings; it does not divide all authorities into two uniform camps. Permission for writing subject to local inquiry is not necessarily permission for immediate action; caution about oral answers does not necessarily prohibit general explanation. Chronology alone does not settle the halakhic result.

22 · Claim register and corrections

T01 · No judge—everything permitted

Grok R1; tested throughout R2

Removing the judge-specific prohibition does not remove Rema's restriction on any scholar. Rejected as a generalization; retained for the distinction about listening. S01.

T02 · Only pious conduct

Grok R1–R2

The Maharshdam quotation supports this description within its setting. It cannot classify every authority, nor does a reputational rationale make a rule nonbinding. Blanket classification rejected; specific attribution Q. S09.

T03 · A disclaimer permits

Claude R1; Grok R1

Rema includes conditional wording and an opinion without a formal ruling. “On your facts” is no automatic solution. This does not negate conditions within another permitted setting. Express for writing. S01.

T04 · Renaming the document

ChatGPT R1; R2 criticism

Calling it an opinion rather than a judgment does not escape the restriction when it conveys the scholar's view to one party. Substance and use matter more than the title. Substantially express. S01.

T05 · Only writing is restricted

Possibility raised in R1; R2

The word “write” prevents automatic extension, but Shevut Yaakov also worries about speech. Rema’s silence does not permit every conversation. Disagreement and differences of setting. S04–S05.

T06 · A brief unreasoned reply

Be’er Esek as quoted in R2

Pitchei Teshuvah and Shevut Yaakov report permission for a brief oral statement. Shevut Yaakov does not find it sufficient where evasion is feared. Original Q; quotation V. S04–S05; S13.

T07 · Advice not binding Shimon

Claude R1; R2 prompts

Lack of coercive force does not remove coaching, pressure through a document, or factual error. Rejected as independent permission; useful in distinguishing advice from enforceable judgment. S01; S03.

T08 · My own duty as a category

All R1 reports; ChatGPT criticism

“Do I owe?” may be the same dispute as “Is the other entitled?” First-person grammar is not a legal test. A substantive distinction must include the factual basis. S02; S07.

T09 · Sincerity alone

Claude and Grok R2; current refinement

Rivash 175 describes willingness to repay yet requires clarification when a competing account appears. Sincerity matters but is not always sufficient. This materially refines the previous critique. S02.

T10 · Liability allowed, exemption forbidden

Gemini R2

Chayei Adam and Mishnah Berurah do not expressly limit guidance to imposing liability. The questioner's property also matters. Rejected as an exhaustive test, without permitting every one-sided exemption. S07; S12.

T11 · Avoiding sin permits everything

Concern raised in R2 prompts

Almost every monetary dispute can be framed as avoiding theft, so the label cannot suffice. No uniform boundary for all authorities is established; Maharshdam's original context remains to be completed. S09.

T12 · Do not rely on his ruling

Claude R2; corrected in later synthesis

The ruling is the questioner's own, not the consulted rabbi's. Chayei Adam's continuation clarifies this. Claude's interpretation as distrust of the rabbi's answer is rejected. S07.

T13 · Chayei Adam numbering

Gemini R2

The passage read is part II, rule 144, paragraph 6, not 4. Correcting the reference does not validate Gemini's interpretive expansions. S07.

T14 · Mishnah Berurah waives inquiry

Possibility tested in R1-R2

The source recognizes consultation and truthful presentation. It does not specify when the rabbi must contact another person. Silence is no express exemption from inquiry. Overbroad inference rejected. S07.

T15 · Aruch HaShulchan as mere advice

Grok R1 versus synthesis

The paragraph explicitly restricts even a nondefinitive answer and adds exceptions. Neither half should be read alone. No unstated technical category of prohibition needs to be invented. S06.

T16 · Exception only oral and temporary

Gemini R2

These limits are not stated in Aruch HaShulchan 17:8. Neither irreversible harm nor extreme urgency is an express condition there. Rejected as attribution; practical caution must be separately labeled. S06.

T17 · Saying I am oppressed suffices

Shared R2 test

Aruch HaShulchan describes what the scholar sees. An allegation alone does not prove oppression. No precise evidentiary threshold is invented; assessment of the situation is a supported inference. S06.

T18 · Duty to initiate contact

Original question; all rounds

No express source for a general duty on every advising rabbi was found. That does not prove no duty can arise. Distinct from inquiry as a condition of deciding. Absolute negation is not established.

T19 · The rabbi must conduct the dispute

Gemini and R2 prompts

The approach alone is not shown to impose case management. Declining and referring is a reasonable inference; claiming a private rabbi lacks all authority to inquire by consent is excessive. S01–S03.

T20 · Always physically together

Gemini R2

Rivash's wording cannot be extended to every consultation. Section 175 allows a judge's organized question; 179 uses correspondence. A blanket requirement that the scholar personally meet both parties is rejected. S02–S03.

T21 · Written claims always invalid

Gemini R2

Rema CM 13:3 permits writing with both parties' consent. This does not authorize every one-sided document review, but defeats an absolute ban on written claims. S08.

T22 · Shimon's refusal is an admission

Test in the later prompt

No basis was found. Avoiding a private conversation is not refusal of a valid court summons. Nonresponse alone yields no permission for monetary action. A limited application, not a complete law of refusal.

T23 · Anonymity permits

Claude R1–R2; all prompts

Fictitious names do not change the dispute's substance. Rivash 179 concerns concealing one's status as a party. It is not proved that anonymity always removes reputational concerns. S03.

T24 · Rivash contradicts himself

R1 concern; R2 analysis

The opening and continuation of 179 reflect different stages of knowledge. The later answer follows exposure of conflicting accounts. Contradiction is not necessary, nor is general permission proved. S03.

T25 · Rashbash answers only judges

Grok R2; current refinement

The quotation includes individuals taking an answer to judges. The initial recipient cannot be limited to judges, though local inquiry is material. Original not opened; Q. S11.

T26 · Knesset HaGedolah forbids

Grok and Gemini R2

Attribution relied on “his view.” The correction to “my view” now meets conflicting transcripts. His own conclusion remains unresolved; original paragraphs and a scan are needed. S04–S05; S10.

T27 · Avoidance of sin means repayment only

Gemini R2

This restriction was not established by the texts read. The reported “liable or not” wording and Me’il Tzedakah require caution before imposing it. No blanket permission is thereby verified. S09; S12.

T28 · Withholding is extraction and certain theft

Gemini R2

This assumes the dispute’s outcome. Possession, setoff and contractual terms are not settled in advance. Rejected, without granting practical permission to withhold. S08 as a control source. Wages also raise a separate delayed-payment question; this correction does not authorize withholding or setting off an alleged loss. [S08]

T29 · Every seizure needs prior judgment

Claude R1; retested R2

CM 4 recognizes conditioned and disputed self-help. A restriction on acting upon suspicion does not erase it. Blanket rule rejected; entitlement and enforcement still need examination. S08; S15.

T30 · Personal knowledge always suffices

R2 tests

Even if the questioner knows, the rabbi may not; reclaiming an object is not permission to take security for every debt. CM 4's conditions remain. A limiting inference, not a ruling on every view. S08.

T31 · Truthful advice always permitted

Claude R1; advocacy sources

Even a correct legal answer can teach a claim that is misused. Permission for advice does not bypass Rema; conversely not every explanation is forbidden. A substantive distinction, not a universal consensus. S01; S16.

T32 · Future disqualification answers the question

Claude R1-R2

Prior commitment potentially disqualifying a later judge concerns the future judging expressly excluded here. It is background, not the direct source restricting advice itself. S01.

T33 · Shach and Be'er Heitev

Claude R2; later correction

On the combined page read: Shach 9 treats the preceding issue; Shach 10 refers to Be'er Sheva; Be'er Heitev 6 quotes Shach. Proximity on a webpage is not attribution. S01.

T34 · Be'er Sheva instead of Be'er Esek

Claude R2

These are different works in different references. Be'er Esek 100 concerns a brief oral reply; Be'er Sheva appears in Shach. Similar names do not justify substitution. S01; S13–S14.

T35 · CM 2 invalidates YD 153

Claude R2

Shach's reference to Maharshdam on one issue does not invalidate another responsum. A communal-dispute opening does not prove the answer irrelevant. S09 remains Q, not disproved.

T36 · General Chabad material

Claude R1

Reluctance to rule and a marital-peace letter are not direct sources for this duty in monetary disputes. Not reverified or used as proof. The search path is retained without claiming no source exists. S17.

T37 · Unlocated sources do not exist

Claude R1 lists

Failure to locate sources in the named modern responsa is not proof of absence. Retained only as an incomplete search, without supplying section numbers from memory. S18.

T38 · Model agreement as evidence

R2 rules and synthesis

Several reports can repeat the same quotation and error. Agreement count is not evidence. Report evaluation is separate from legal analysis; an external V does not become internal verification.

T39 · Absolute closure

Gemini R2

Declaring everything settled conflicts with that report's own disagreements and gaps. A principled answer can close while some attributions remain open. Certainty rejected, not the possibility of ending research.

T40 · The editor need not be corrected

Current editorial self-criticism

ChatGPT initially relied on quotations and later treated “my view” as settled too quickly. The conflicting witnesses are now recorded. Editorial responsibility includes preserving one's own corrections, not merely criticizing others.

T41 · Facts genuinely agreed

Prompts; Pitchei Teshuvah

A legal question independent of claims is distinguished in the quotation of Rema 112. This neither validates one party's assertion of agreement nor proves no other relevant claim exists. S04.

T42 · The adviser must hear personally

R2 syntheses; later correction

Rivash 175 recognizes an organized question from the presiding judge. Needing both positions is not necessarily personal hearing by every additional scholar. Limits of reliance in every case are not determined here. S02.

23 · Evaluation of the reports and their development

Scores are editorial assessments of the supplied reports, not general model benchmarks. External tool logs are unavailable; assessment concerns the accuracy, transparency and reasoning of the available text. Criteria and weights: accuracy 15%; attribution and context 15%; proof versus hypothesis 15%; source discovery 10%; verification transparency 10%; logic 10%; consistent correction 10%; peer criticism 5%; clarity 5%; limits of conclusions 5%. Missing data is a dash, with remaining weights normalized, not zero. Scores cannot decide halakhah.

Scores primarily address the available closing report; the profiles also describe development from R1 to R2. ChatGPT’s assessment is explicitly self-assessment. Reporting more sources as read does not automatically earn a higher score, and admitting an access failure does not earn zero.

Criterion · weight	Grok	Claude	Grok Bot	Gemini	ChatGPT*
Accuracy · 15%	7	6	7	4	8
Attribution / context · 15%	6	5	7	4	7
Proof / hypothesis · 15%	7	7	8	3	8
Source discovery · 10%	8	8	8	6	8
Verification · 10%	8	8	8	4	8
Logic · 10%	7	7	7	4	8
Consistent correction · 10%	7	6	—	—	7
Peer criticism · 5%	7	8	7	5	8
Clarity · 5%	8	7	7	8	8
Conclusion limits · 5%	7	6	6	3	8

Grok · 7.1/10

Development moved from a broad permissive opening in R1 to a more qualified R2 map. Contributions include the permissive strand and writing/speech distinction, with Q/U disclosure.

Closing weaknesses: Knesset HaGedolah attribution from “his view,” labeling absence of a duty source express, and narrowing Rashbash to opinions for judges. Transparency scoring does not verify team reports.

Claude · 6.7/10

Added Rivash 175 and candidly listed inaccessible originals. Its disclaimer criticism improved over R1. However, it misread “his ruling” in Mishnah Berurah, confused commentary attribution and Be’er Sheva/Esek, and raised an unwarranted bibliographic objection to Maharshdam. Some applications were labeled express though inferential.

Grok Bot · 7.3/10

The separately retained report drew attention to the full Pitchei Teshuvah discussion and Me’il Tzedakah, preserving several limits of proof. Its conclusion on operative guidance sometimes exceeds its analysis; calling the writing restriction unanimous conflicts with the Rashbash strand it reports. Insufficient documented sequence to score correction, so that criterion is missing.

Gemini · 4.3/10

Provided a clear presentation and identified Chayei Adam, but certainty exceeded evidence. The liability/exemption rule, added Aruch HaShulchan conditions, rejection of writing and separate inquiry, and inference from absence all need material correction. Mixed V/Q labels without adequate documentation do not close verification. No later correction response is documented, so that score is missing.

The syntheses usefully separated consultation, decision and initiative, correcting major generalizations. Initial verification was partial, and the my/his-view correction was overstated before checking both transcripts. This edition also adds the continuation of Rivash 175. The score is editorial self-assessment, not external approval or a general model ranking.

24 · Closure decision and remaining checks

The principled answer can be closed: approaching a non-judging rabbi is not itself prohibited; one-sided adjudication is not automatically permitted; conditional wording is no universal solution; and a need for inquiry does not establish a general duty for this rabbi to initiate contact.

Not every attribution can be closed. Knesset HaGedolah 15 and 19, Maharshdam YD 153, Rashbash 230 and Me'il Tzedakah 53 have not been read here in full. A scan comparison of Shevut Yaakov I:64 and Pitchei Teshuvah is needed for “my/his view.” These are identified gaps, not a request for another unfocused round of surveys.

Research may end with a map of views. If a detailed ruling according to a particular authority is wanted, the missing texts may affect that attribution. They do not prevent rejection of already unsupported generalizations: disclaimers always suffice; only imposing liability is allowed; every inquiry requires a joint meeting; and absence of a source proves absence of a duty.

This production adds two material checks: Rivash 175's express willingness to repay, and the discrepancy between two transcripts on “my/his view.” Accordingly, this is more than a designed reprint of the previous synthesis. It also does not adopt Gemini's declaration that every part of the inquiry is complete.

The accompanying next round is a booklet review: first content and sources, then explanation and design. Reviewers must submit written proposals with locations and evidence, without independently editing files. The user and editor will decide which changes to implement.

Booklet review and edition 2

The Gemini, Claude, Grok and independent-track reviews were checked against the text and PDFs. Accepted changes name the permissive strand in the reader edition, complete Rivash 179's sequence, explicitly include an opinion without a ruling, identify the Yom Kippur context, narrow two overstatements, identify the secondary article, add Q quotations and a Knesset HaGedolah table row, and clarify wage withholding.

Claims of a reversed contents page, reversed methods-table columns, centered page numbers or widespread missing T identifiers were not confirmed by the inspected images. Generic link labels were poor wording, but active URLs existed beneath them. The actual Shach 9–10 and Be'er Heitev 6 passages were also reread.

The my/his-view discrepancy was again found on two different pages in one corpus; that does not establish independent printed witnesses. Gemini's proposed final lenient attribution to Knesset HaGedolah and blanket admission-based permission were not adopted without the needed sources. Admission rules differ from professed sincerity. Scores now appear under named criteria; the earlier R1/R2 scores were not changed on the strength of this review. The package contains the full editorial decision log.

25 · Source register and verification levels

S01 · Shulchan Aruch and Rema, CM 17:5

V · Shulchan Aruch and Rema 17:5 read in transcript. Edition 2 rechecked the actual contents of Shach 9–10 and Be’er Heitev 6 displayed under paragraph 5: Shach 9 addresses hearing and possible interest after writing; Shach 10 cites Be’er Sheva 115b; Be’er Heitev 6 quotes Shach. No scan or definitive Rashba identification.

S02 · Rivash 175

V · Opening and case through the questioner’s willingness to repay read. R. Moshe ben Tzedek supplies a competing account. Confirmation of facts and a question from the presiding judge are explicit. The substantive teaching-fee ruling is not adjudicated here.

S03 · Rivash 179

V · Question, opening, comparative continuation and discussion of the conditions read in transcript. Sequence of knowledge matters. No scan. The earlier response is identified there as 145 and was not separately opened.

S04 · Pitchei Teshuvah, CM 17:11

V · Entire subsection 11 read in transcript. Rema 112, Be’er Esek 100, Me’il Tzedakah 53, Avodat HaGershuni and other quoted works remain Q for their originals. This transcript has “my view”; it does not settle the original wording without a scan.

S05 · Shevut Yaakov I:64

V · Responsum read in transcript through its conclusion. Context: interest with monetary consequences. Be’er Esek’s leniency is quoted before a restrictive conclusion. This transcript has “his view”; no printed scan was obtained.

S06 · Aruch HaShulchan, CM 17:8

V · Entire paragraph 8 read. Includes relatives, friends and a nondefinitive answer. No express oral-only, temporary-only or irreversible-harm condition. Rule and exception are read together.

S07 · Chayei Adam II 144:6; Mishnah Berurah 606:1

V · Both relevant paragraphs read in transcripts. Additional link: Mishnah Berurah 606 . Context: preparation for Yom Kippur. Neither an express liability-only limit nor universal waiver of inquiry is stated.

S08 · Shulchan Aruch and Rema, CM 4; 13:3

V · CM 4 and its glosses, and 13:3 with relevant commentary read. Additional link: Shulchan Aruch CM 13:3 . No ruling on all seizure disputes. The written-pleadings reference corrects an earlier erroneous citation to 17:6. Edition 2 check: CM 339:8–10 read on payment timing and the conditions of delayed wages; this does not decide damage setoffs against wages. Shulchan Aruch CM 339

S09 · Maharshdam, YD 153

Q · The quotation attributed in the article to Maharshdam YD 153 was read; original not obtained. Supports the instruction/judging distinction and pious abstention in monetary matters. The avoidance-of-transgression continuation rests here on supplied reports, not direct verification. Quotation checked in Rabbi Moshe Perkovitz, “Giving an opinion to one side,” Psakim, record 1998, reopened 23 September 2026. No publication date is displayed.

S10 · Kneset HaGedolah, CM 17, Tur glosses 15 and 19

Q/U · Reference to 19 checked in quotations; originals and printed numbering of both entries not opened. Do not substitute Beit Yosef glosses. Attribution of the author’s conclusion remains unresolved because of the my/his-view discrepancy.

S11 · Rashbash 230

Q · Long quotation in the article read, not the original book. Conditionality and local judges’ review belong to the setting. Rashbash is distinct from Rashba and Rivash. No immediate permission for every self-help action follows. Quotation checked in Rabbi Moshe Perkovitz, “Giving an opinion to one side,” Psakim, record 1998, reopened 23 September 2026. No publication date is displayed.

S12 · Me’il Tzedakah 53

Q · Read as quoted in Pitchei Teshuvah 11. Doubts about leniencies and senior scholars’ practice with a known questioner coexist. Original not opened; the practice is not a sole universal test.

S13 · Be’er Esek 100; Rema responsa 112

Q · Checked as quotations in Shevut Yaakov and Pitchei Teshuvah: brief oral law, and a legal question independent of claims, respectively. The quotations are not independent readings of both originals.

S14 · Rashba in Rema’s reference; Be’er Sheva

U/Q · Rema cites Rashba; a secondary article suggests III:98 for coaching concerns, but the original identification was not verified. Shach 10 points to Be’er Sheva 115b; not opened. These are research leads.

S15 · Chafetz Chaim, harmful speech rules 6; 7:12 and commentary

Q · Supplied in R1–R2 reports, not reopened in this production. Useful control topics: beneficial listening and action upon rumor or indications. This does not validate the reports’ expansions about personal sight or every seizure.

S16 · Assistance to litigants and research aids

Q/U · Avot 1:8; Ketubot 52b/85b; Lechem Shamayim; Daskal record 2509; Aharon Bar, Ratabi, Bareli and the Din discussion dated 29 April 2010 are retained as leads from the dossier. Only Perkovitz’s article, record 1998, was opened in this production; this is not full verification of all aids.

S17 · Chabad references mentioned in R1

U · General practices, Torat Menachem references and a marital-peace letter were not reverified and are not direct evidence here. No ruling on this question is attributed on their basis.

S18 · Seder HaDin and additional leads

U · “Seder HaDin” 13:8–12: author, edition and numbering type unverified. R1’s unlocated modern responsa do not prove absence. Avodat HaGershuni, Shevut Yaakov III:99 and other Pitchei Teshuvah references remain quotations, not independently opened originals.

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Package contents and completeness boundary

- Four booklets as PDF, HTML and TXT; editing data and rendering code; series rules; unified dossier; original Grok Bot report; source records; prompts, editorial decisions and QA report.
- This is an analytical edition of the available material. It preserves claim groups, differences, rejected arguments and review requirements, while merging duplicates. It is not a verbatim export of every model conversation or tool log. Missing text was not reconstructed from memory. The independent report is retained separately as received.
- Historical dates and reports of team activity are not this edition’s verification. They do not prove that every claimed source was opened. A complete verbatim archive requires the original exports. That documented gap cannot be removed by labeling a package “everything.”