

## Halacha Challenge

☞ that if a person writes one large letter (that occupies a space where two small letters could be written), he did not transgress Shabbos (*m'deoraisa*), because in the construction of the Mishkan only writing two letters had meaning. One letter was written on one *keresh* (beam) and the 2<sup>nd</sup> matching letter was written on the adjacent *keresh* in order to facilitate assembly / disassembly of the Mishkan. Then, the Braisa states that if a person erases one large letter (in order to write two small letters in its place; see *peirush* Rashi there) he has transgressed Shabbos (*m'deoraisa*).] The Maharam concluded, however, that eating these cakes is prohibited *m'derabbanan*. Based on this *shaila* and answer, the Rema<sup>3</sup> rules that one is not permitted to break a cake that has letters written on it, even if he is breaking the cake in order to eat it.

Rav Yechezkel Landau (a 16<sup>th</sup> century *posek* from Poland, author of Nodah B'Yehuda) disagrees with the Rema<sup>4</sup> and writes in his sefer Dodul MeRevava that due to a combination of certain halachic factors (see inside the sefer for the elaboration), we can rule leniently in a case where the letters on top of the pastry are erased *b'eino miskaven* (a person does not have a specific intention to erase the letters written on the pastry). R' Yechezkel Landau points out that the *shaila* which was presented in front of Maharam of Rotenburg was regarding a case of eating "children's cakes". Those cakes had special writing on them so that children could eat those cakes as a *segula* to get smarter (i.e. the erasing of the writing was done *b'miskaven*). [As an interesting side note, we find sources for such practice. Sefer HaAruch<sup>5</sup> (from the early Rishonim) brings that the famous poet, R. Eliezer HaKalir (who lived in the 7<sup>th</sup> century), was given the name "HaKalir" because once he ate a small cake that had special writing on it (with Kabbalistic meaning) which caused R. Eliezer to become very wise.]

The Mishna Berura<sup>6</sup> rules that we can rely on the leniency of the Dodul MeRevava when a person breaks the letters with his mouth when eating the pastry. The Shemiras Shabbos Kehilchosa<sup>7</sup> similarly concludes, based on the *poskim*, that one can break the letters while eating the pastry. ♦

1. מרדכי פרק כלל גדול סימן שסט 2. שבת עה: 3. רמ"א סי' ש"מ סעיף ג 4. דגול מרובה סי' ש"מ 5. ספר הערוך ערך קלר (פירוש ג') 6. מ"ב סי' ש"מ ס"ק יז 7. ששכ"ה פרק יא אות ז

## Kids Ask, Zeidy Answers

Zeidy, we learned in this week's parsha that there were 12 Lechem HaPonim on the *shulchan* of the Mishkan. Why 12?



Deep question, kids. The bread symbolizes the physical world. 12 breads correspond to the 12 months of the lunar year (i.e. the 12 *mazalos*). I'll tell you even more. The total volume of flour was 24 *esronim*, which corresponds to the 24 hours in a day. Each *ma'aracha* of the *shulchan* had 6 breads, which correspond to the 6 days of creation. And the lesson is that the entire physical world is sustained through the *z'chus* of Bnei Yisroel who serve Hashem, Who created all of it. [Based on *peirush* Ba'al Haturim]

## Wonders of Creation

### The Pilot Fish is Shark's friend by Alex Isaacson



Some aspects of life are true whether we believe them or not. A good case is the relationship between the pilot fish and the oceanic whitetip shark. These two polar opposite aquatic species would ordinarily have nothing to do with one another, but for the fact that they themselves are not ordinary. The whitetip shark's life depends on the life of the pilot fish. The pilot fish eats parasites that live and feed inside and on the shark, helping to avoid it becoming sick and dying. In addition, smaller pilot fish are frequently observed swimming into sharks' mouths to clean away fragments of food from between their teeth. In return, the shark protects the fish from predators. Also, the fish isn't shy about eating the leftovers from the shark's meals. Hashem enjoined these two animals with a behavior known as "close companionship," which is an even stronger tie than a "mutualistic" bond.

Pilot fish are also known to travel great distances on the backs of these sharks. They will stay beside the same acquaintance for many miles, swimming and helping one another. Their bond is so great that on many occasions, sailors have seen pilot fish following ships, which had captured "their" whitetip shark, for up to six weeks. This is almost a behavior indicative of mourning. While pilot fish can be seen with all manner of sharks, they prefer accompanying the whitetip shark in particular. ♦

## Riddles & Parsha Qs

### Riddle

- Ya'akov, you're sitting too high!"

- But it's not Tisha B'Av, and I am also not a mourner, r"l.

- "Even so. You're sitting too high."

What is Ya'akov's situation?

### Answer to last issue's Riddle:

(Riddle: ...there is one case (not related to the rain season), where it is better to forget to say something in Shmonei Esrei than to remember it! What's that case?)

One missed (באונס) Mincha on Shabbos, and therefore, he had to daven *ma'ariv* twice. If he forgot to say *havdala* in the 1st Shmonei Esrei and said it in the 2nd Shmonei Esrei, he now needs to daven yet another 3rd Shmonei Esrei. However, if he would have skipped *havdala* in the 2nd Shmonei Esrei as well, then he would not need to daven that 3rd Shmonei Esrei. [See Shulchan Aruch O.C. 108:10 for what's proper to do l'chatchila. See Mishna Berura there for explanation of these laws. Also, see there regarding the halacha if a person had a specific thought that the 1st Shmonei Esrei will be for *ma'ariv* and the 2nd one for *tashlumin*.]

## Hitching A Ride

Special thanks to revach.net for the story

A talmid chacham in Bnei Brak was preparing to publish a sefer, and he scheduled an urgent meeting related to the publication in Yerushalayim. The man he was meeting firmly told him that he could meet no later than 7:00 P.M. The talmid chacham who was a Rosh Kollel in Gush Dan usually finished his studies at 5:30 P.M., and returned to Bnei Brak by 6:00. From Bnei Brak, he could catch the bus to Yerushalayim, which was approximately an hour's trip to the central bus station. He considered leaving kollel early that day to insure his promptness at the meeting. However, as the Rosh Kollel, he was hesitant to leave early. In addition, the avreichim would miss out on the shiur he normally gave during that time. He decided to remain in kollel until the end of seder, and trust in Hashem that He would help him arrive at his urgent meeting on time.

The Rosh Kollel proceeded as planned, but the yetzer hara was hard at work, trying to make him regret his good intentions. First, the ride to Bnei Brak from Gush Dan was delayed because of a traffic jam. When he arrived at the bus stop in Bnei Brak, he was dismayed to see that the bus to Yerushalayim had just left the bus stop. He had missed it, and the next bus was not until 6:20, which would not bring him to Yerushalayim in time for his meeting. In fact, he would have to take a second bus to the meeting's location once he arrived at the central bus station in Yerushalayim.

As the talmid chacham stood at the bus stop, contemplating his dilemma, an expensive looking official car pulled up to the bus stop. The driver opened his window and said to the Rav, "If you would like to join me on the trip to Yerushalayim, you're invited." The Rav, who clearly saw the Yad of Hashem in this incident, entered the car. Once inside, he realized that the car belonged to the American Foreign Minister, James Baker, who was currently visiting Israel. The man who sat behind the steering wheel was one of the top aides of the minister, who coincidentally was also a Jew. When he saw a talmid chacham standing at the bus stop, he decided to offer him a ride. The car, which had a blue revolving light usually reserved for police cars, was able to drive to Yerushalayim at a speedy pace. In addition, the Jewish driver brought the talmid chacham directly to the location of the meeting. ♦

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## Halacha Challenge

### Eating a Mazal Tov Cookie

compiled by Shlomo Epshteyn



*At the bar-mitzva Kiddush in shul, the kids' table was filled with yummy treats. Among those treats were delicious cookies with "Mazal Tov" written with chocolate cream on top of each cookie.*

*Having learned last Shabbos that breaking a cookie that has writing on top of it creates a potential problem with the melacha of Mochek (erasing), the Shuster kids were hesitant to eat those delicious cookies. "If we eat them, we'll be erasing the "Mazal Tov" that's written on top of the cookies!" they said to each other.*

### Question

Can the kids eat these "Mazal Tov" cookies?

### Answer

Yes, it's ok to eat these cookies. However, the cookies shouldn't be broken up by hand in a way that the letters will get broken.

### Explanation

The sefer Mordechai<sup>1</sup> cites a *shaila* that was sent to Maharam of Rotenburg regarding eating on Shabbos small cakes that have writing on top of them. The Maharam answered that *m'deoraisa* it's permitted, because the *melacha* of *Mochek* (erasing) is only an issue when a person erases in order to do *Kosev* (writing). [A Braisa, cited in *masechet* Shabbos<sup>2</sup>, states



This week's issue is dedicated

Anonymously