

Stories, Biographies & Wonders

Sea Otter

by Alex Isaacson

The Sea Otter is indigenous to the northern and eastern coasts of the North Pacific Ocean. Adult sea otters typically weigh between 30 and 100 lbs. This means that they are the heaviest members of the weasel family. However, they're some of the smallest of marine mammals.



Unlike most marine mammals, the sea otter's primary form of insulation is an exceptionally thick coat of fur. It's the densest such covering in the animal kingdom. The Sea Otter has brown fur on its body, while its head is a very light brown, almost grey color. It can walk on land, although it mostly lives in the ocean.

What's most interesting about this mammal are its peculiar and ingenious eating habits. While it preys mostly on marine invertebrates such as sea urchins, various mollusks, crustaceans, and some species of fish, it has a unique means of exposing its prey: it uses rocks to dislodge shells and open them up! This makes it one of the few mammal species to use tools.

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◆ Please, don't read me during tefilla, kadish, etc. ◆

Menucha

A Shabbos table companion for the whole family

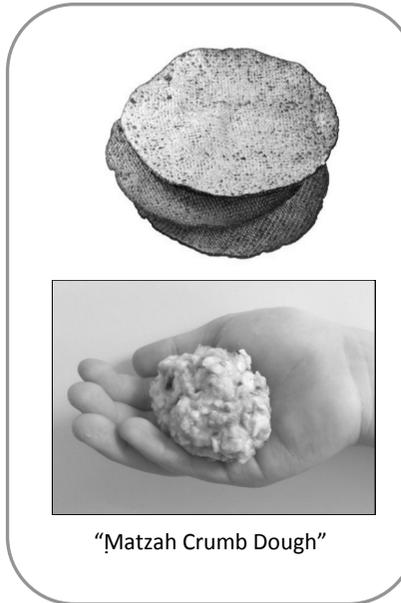
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מצורע

5776

Halacha Challenge

Preparing Matzah for an Elderly Person



"Matzah Crumb Dough"

"Oh dear," sighed the grandfather when everyone went to wash hands for *Motzi Matza*. "In my youth I could easily eat a *k'zayis* of matzah within two minutes. But now, I don't think I'll be able to chew this matzah at all." His son, R' Shmuel, tried to think of a solution. It was a real challenge since the first day of Pesach fell on Shabbos. "Breaking up the matzah into little pieces could be the מלאכה of טוחן (grinding). And mixing the little pieces matza with water could be the מלאכה of לש (kneading)."

Q. Can you help R. Shmuel come up with a good solution?

DEDICATIONS

◆ By **Rabbi Moshe and Sarah Stern** in honor of their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren who all follow the way of the Torah.



*Special thanks to kehillas **Beis Tefillah Yonah Avraham***

◆ requires geniza ◆

Help: What will help us solve the problem is the following important Tossefta: “*Rabbi Dostai Bar Rabbi Yonai said in the name of Rabbi Eliezer: we may [perform the action of] מלילה upon something that is already מלול and [perform the action of] מציעה upon something that is already מוצע and we may bake something that was already baked, and we may cook something that was already cooked.*” The Vilna Gaon² explains that this rule applies to other מלאכות as well. In other words, the lesson of this Tossefta is that once any מלאכה was performed upon an item, that item is no longer subject to that מלאכה. For example, if dough was baked into bread, the Torah permits baking that bread once again.

Menucha’s answer*: R’ Shmuel can break the matzah into little pieces over a plate and add water to it*. After that, however, he may not make the “Matzah Crumb Dough” (e.g., by repeatedly stirring the little pieces of matzah inside warm water—see the image on p.1).^{2a} | *Note: Since the *mitzva* is to eat the *matzah* plain, one should not add water to the pieces of *matzah* if the person is able to chew crumbled *matza* dry. | **Explanation:** Just as the Tossefta (see the “Help” section above) taught us that the Torah permits doing a מלאכה if the same מלאכה was already performed upon the item previously, the *Rishonim*³ apply this principle to the מלאכה of טוחן and say that אין טוחן אחר טוחן - one is not performing the *melacha* of “grinding” if “grinding” was already done to the item. As such, in the *Shulchan Aruch*⁴, the *Rama* writes the following *p’sak*: “*It is permitted to crumble bread in front of chickens. Since it [i.e., the wheat] was already ground, we are not concerned [i.e., it is not prohibited], because אין טוחן אחר טוחן.*”

The מלאכה of לש (kneading), on the other hand, has unique nuances regarding this principle. The source for this is the following teaching in the *Gemorah Yerushalmi*⁵: הלש - והמקטף והעורך כולהו משום לש - *If one does kneading, or if one does smoothing the surface of the dough with water, or if one does forming the dough into a shape - all of them are performing the מלאכה of Kneading.* The *Beur Halacha*⁶ points out that עריכה (forming the dough into a shape) is done to the already-made dough, and yet we don’t say in this case אין לש אחר לש. The *Chazon Ish*⁷ explains that this *Gemorah* is teaching the following important principle with regard to the principle of “אין לש אחר לש”: It applies only in a case where the dough was merely kneaded again. However, if the second action of kneading was of a new type in relation to the first one, then the principle of אין לש אחר לש does not apply. Hence, in our case, since stirring the pieces of *matza* inside the water to form “Matza Crumb Dough” is very different than the first action of kneading (i.e., mixing water and flour), it is, in fact, considered לש.

Now, we see from the *Gemorah Shabbos*⁸, that just adding water to an item can sometimes be considered לש—i.e., adding water to black powder to create ink. However, in our case – explains the *Chazon Ish*⁹ - this is not an issue, because when the pieces of matzah are merely added to water (without mixing them thoroughly), the water breaks up the pieces even further. This is opposite of לש, since לש is a מלאכה where the items become attached to each other and form one substance.

[1] תוספתא שבת פרק יד הלכה טו. [2] ביאור הגר"א א"ח סי' שכא סעי' יב ד"ה ודווקא. [2a] עיין בשמירת שבת כהלכתה (מהדורה חדשה) פרק ה אות כו. [3] עיין במרדכי פרק כלל גדול סי' ששה, בר"ן דף לב. ד"ה אמר רב פפא. [4] א"ח סי' שכא סעי' יב. [5] ירושלמי שבת פרק ז הלכה ב דף סא. [6] באור הלכה סי' שכא סעי' יד ד"ה אין מגבילין [7] חזון איש סימן נח ס"ק ה ד"ה ומשמע [8] שבת יז. [9] חזון איש שם ס"ק ז

Riddles



Reb Dan and Reb Levi are sitting at the *Seder*, eating matzah. Reb Dan is leaning while Reb Levi isn't. Suddenly, Reb Dan turns his head to Reb Levi and says: “I have a secret to reveal now. Levi, I am your father!” Upon hearing this, Reb Levi immediately starts to lean and continues eating his matzah.

Can you figure out why Reb Levi began to lean?

Answer to the last riddle RIDDLE: Mr. Feinberg is a good father. He teaches his children well how to perform *mitzvos* so that they'll be ready to do them when they reach Bar / Bat Mitzva. Today – on a beautiful day in the month of Nissan, Mr. Feinberg's friends overheard him saying to his son Moishy: “Moishy - I am doing this *mitzvah* today, and you should not. But, when you'll reach Bar Mitzva, you will do it on this day, and I will not.” Which *mitzvah* was Mr. Feinberg talking about?

ANSWER: The fast of the *Bechor* on *erev* Pesach. Until the firstborn son is able to fast, the father fasts for him on *erev* Pesach.

Kids Ask, Zeidy Answers



Zeidy – where does matzah get its name from?



Interesting question, kids. Rav Shimon Schwab explains that it means “a fight”. In fact, we see the word matzah in this pasuk in Mishlei (13:13) -

רק בְּזָדוֹן יִתֵּן מִצְדָּה וְאֵת גּוֹעֲצִים תִּקְחָהּ.

Only with a sin does one cause a **fight**, but there is wisdom with those who take counsel.

Now, what do you think, kids: who is fighting who, and what is the fight all about?