

Stories, Biographies & Wonders

**Wondrous Hamsters**

By Shlomo Epshteyn

Why were hamsters given that name? The name comes from the German word “*hamstern*,” which means “to hoard” – i.e., to amass, hide or store away things for later use. Even pet hamsters will hoard food, despite the fact that they don’t need to. With this skill, for example, Golden hamsters store fruit in the summer and live off it during the winter months. There is, though, a concern with this. By the time those hamsters get to eat it, the fruit has fermented (i.e., formed alcohol)! However, this does not create a problem for these hamsters. Hashem created the Golden hamsters with large livers that allow them to metabolize alcohol quickly.



Did you ever wonder why hamsters are most active specifically during twilight hours? Hashem made it so due to the fact that during twilight is when the bugs - that are a natural part of their diet - are most active. And it’s a perfect time for the hamsters to run around in the wild, because the light during twilight is low and thus, they’re less likely to get caught by predators.

Why do hamsters have such large whiskers? Hamsters are nearsighted and colorblind. In order to compensate, Hashem gave them large whiskers which they use to navigate their way around. Coupled with a good sense of smell, they find what they need.

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◆ requires *geniza* ◆

Menucha

A Shabbos table companion for the whole family

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בהעלותך

5776

Halacha Challenge

**Feeding a Friend’s Hamster**



“Hello. Miriam?”

“Hi, Rivky.”

“I need to ask you for a favor.” said Rivky. “We’re going for a trip to visit our grandparents. We’ll be back in a week. Could you please feed my hamster while I am away?”

“It will be my pleasure!” said Miriam. “But wait a second. I don’t think I can feed an animal that’s not mine.”

“So what should we do?” asked Rivky?

“I have a solution!” said Miriam. “Give your hamster to me as a present. While you’re away I’ll be feeding my hamster! When you’ll return, I’ll give it back to you.”

**Q.** Is it necessary for Miriam to own Rivky’s hamster in order to feed it?

**THANK YOU !**

**Menucha expresses gratitude and sends a blessing to the following people for their contribution to Menucha :**

- ◆ *Anonymously, in honor of his kehilla*
- ◆ *Anonymously, leilui nishmas Yerachmiel Meir ben Nissim Avraham*



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

Help

In the previous issue, we saw the following teaching of a mishna [Shabbos 24:3]:

...אבל נותנין לפני דבורים...אבל נותנין לפני אווזין ותרנגולים... - *And we don't put water in front of bees...But we may put [it] in front of geese and chickens...*

Based on the Gemora's [Shabbos 155b] explanation, the lesson of that mishna is that a person is permitted to feed animals for which he is responsible (i.e., to provide their food). Conversely, one may not feed animals for which he has no responsibility as far as feeding them. As we saw in the last article, this is not a separate *g'zeira derebbanan*, but rather, it is under a general prohibition of "*Tircha*" (lit. effort). One of the definitions of "*Tircha*" is doing unnecessary labor. Hence, feeding animals that don't depend on us for their food is prohibited on Shabbos, since feeding them is "unnecessary labor." [Tosafos Shabbos 19a].

Menucha's Answer\*

It best to own the pet that a person is feeding. However, since there are *poskim* who permit feeding a pet that belongs to another Jewish person, in case of a need, one should consult with a *halachic* authority.

Explanation

The discussion on this question is found in Beur Halacha's section of the Mishna Berura (1). There, the Beur Halacha brings the opinion of Eliya Rabba who rules that one may feed only his own animals. The Beur Halacha, however, says that it's not clear that such is the halacha, because since an animal is owned by a Jewish person, and the animal is not eating from *hefrek*, anyone should be allowed to feed it. Based on this Beur Halacha and the lenient ruling of Tehilla L'Dovid, the Piskei Teshuva (2) writes that anyone can feed an animal that's owned by a Jewish person.

(1) Beur Halacha 324:11 vyonei bayasos (2) Piskei Teshuva 324:3

\* Note: Menucha's answer is for Torah learning purposes only and not as a *halachic* ruling. To know laws of Shabbos on a practical level, the reader is encouraged to study them in depth, find out the *minhagim* of his/her family and community, and consult with a *halachic* authority. (The opinions of the sources cited in the article may not necessary reflect rulings of other *halachic* authorities.)

Short & Sweet

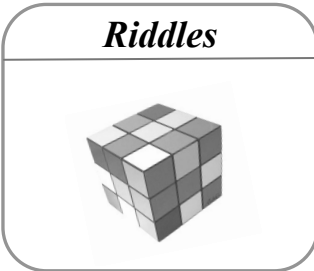


Tomer Devorah

We often ask ourselves "can I say this on Shabbos or not?" Usually, it is a question regarding something that we are not supposed to talk about on Shabbos. Besides being careful not to talk about things that are forbidden to say on Shabbos, Tomer Devorah teaches that on Shabbos, speech in general should be of a very positive nature. Positive speech is part of *Middos Hakeser*. Tomer Devora explains one of the times when *Middos Hakeser*

should be used is on Shabbos.

What is "positive speech" in this context? Tomer Devora explains (chapter 2): "*His mouth should say only good. His spoken word should be constantly Torah and the fulfillment of good will. He should never allow an ugly thing nor a curse nor anger nor frivolous talk escape from his mouth....He should, therefore, speak well of all and constantly make of his words goodness and blessing.*"



Riddles

We are seven friends. Six of us stay together, but one of us is often on his own. In *peirush* Rashi on *parshas* B'ha'alozecha you will find us. Who are we?

**Last week's Riddle:** After Pesach, Reuven and Shimon traveled from Eretz Yisroel to Australia. When they got there, Reuven said to Shimon: "I can no longer count the *Sefira* with a *bracha*." Shimon said back to Reuven: "I don't have that problem. I can

still count with a *bracha*." *Why do they differ?* **Answer:** Reuven travelled westward from Eretz Yisroel through Los Angeles to Australia. As he crossed the international dateline, he jumped forward 24 hours. He needed to count as soon as he crossed the dateline, so as not to lose a day of counting. Since he did not, he lost the opportunity to count with a *bracha* the next night. Shimon on the other hand travelled eastward from Eretz Yisroel through Hong Kong to Australia and never crossed the dateline so he never lost a day of counting *sefira*. Therefore, he could continue to count with a *bracha* the next night. [Source: The Date Line in Halacha by Zalman Tropper based on the sefer, Taarich Yisroel by Rabbi Yisroel Taplin.]