

Stories, Biographies & Wonders

The Polar Bear

By Alex Isaacson

The title for the world’s largest land carnivore goes to the polar bear. This Arctic animal weighs up to 1,500lbs and while it may be a land animal, it oddly spends more of its time at sea. Polar bears can hunt their preferred food (seals) from the edge of sea ice, often living off fat reserves when no sea ice is present. But how does this massive mammal exist in such frigid temperatures, much less hunt in the freezing cold ocean?



Hashem gave them a special coat of fur, consisting of a layer of dense under-fur and an outer layer of guard hairs, which appear white or tan but are in actuality transparent. This unique hair can measure up to six inches long atop the skin of a polar bear. This bear’s skin is not white like many people assume, it is black. They have plenty of insulation - up to 4 inches of blubber.

The polar bears are magnificent hunters. This is due to their supreme senses: the polar bear has an extremely well developed sense of smell, being able to detect seals almost a mile away and buried under three feet of snow. Lastly, the polar bear happens to be an excellent swimmer, with individuals having seen them in open Arctic waters as far as 200 miles from land. All of these astounding abilities make sense for their survival in the harsh and unforgiving conditions of the Arctic.

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Menucha

A Shabbos table companion for the whole family

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שלה

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Halacha Challenge

Pillow Fight



“Let’s play pillow fight!” said Moishy on a Shabbos morning as he threw his pillow gently at his brother Levi.

“Hey! You did not give me a warning!” complained Levi.

So Levi also took his pillow and tossed it in Moishy’s direction.

“Got you!” cheered Levi.

“You did,” replied Moishy. “But look what happened to your pillow!”

Levi looked and saw that the pillow’s stitch broke and many feathers fell out from the pillow.

“Oh no! What am I going to sleep on during my Shabbos afternoon nap?”

Q. Can Levi put the feathers back into the pillow for his Shabbos nap?

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- ◆ By **the Labinsky family**. “Mazel Tov to **Meira Labinsky** on her graduation – may it only be the start of many wonderful things.”



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

Help: The source that will give away the answer is the following Braisa (Shabbos 48a):

אין נותנין את המוכין לא לתוך הכר ולא לתוך הכסת ביום טוב, ואין צריך לומר בשבת. נשרו - מהזירין אותן בשבת, ואין צריך לומר ביום טוב.

We don't put soft things (i.e., stuffing) not inside a pillow and not inside a blanket on Yom Tov, and no need to mention [that we don't do it] on Shabbos. If it (i.e., the stuffing) fell out, we [may] return them on Shabbos, and no need to mention [that we may return them] on Yom Tov.

Parallel to this Braisa is the teaching of Rav Chisda (ibid.):

רב חסדא שרא לאהדורי אודרא לבי סדיא בשבתא

Rav Chisda permitted returning soft things (i.e., stuffing) into a pillow.

Menucha's Answer*: Yes - Chani can put the stuffing back into the pillow.

Explanation: The Shulchan Aruch (OC 340:5) rules based on the statement of Rav Chisda (see above). Looking back at the Braisa above, we see that putting new stuffing into a pillow is forbidden. What is the reason for this prohibition? Rashi (ibid.) explains: דהשתא עביד ליה מנא - *"Because now he is creating a new vessel."* The Mishna Berura (OC 340 § 32) explains that according to Rashi, putting new stuffing into a pillow is a Torah prohibition.

The Rambam (Laws of Shabbos ch.22 § 23), however, explains that putting new stuffing into a pillow is a rabbinical prohibition due to the concern that a person may come to stitch up the pillow after putting in the stuffing.

According to Rashi's explanation, do you think putting new stuffing into a pillow is a melacha of Boneh or Makeh Bepatish? And if returning the stuffing back into its pillow is permitted (i.e., there is no melacha of Boneh or Makeh Bepatish), would that mean that, in general, on Shabbos it is permitted to re-assemble things that came apart? Don't jump to quick conclusions!

According to the Rambam explanation, why do you think there is no concern that a person may come to stitch up a pillow after returning the stuffing back into it?

Based on Rashi and Rambam's explanations, what do you think is the answer to the following question: Once a pillow was created and its stuffing fell out, is it permitted to put only the stuffing that fell out from it, or may other stuffing be put in there as well?

* 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

Parsha Gem



In *parshas* Beha'alo-secha, people complained that the *mann* would not have a taste of certain vegetables such as leeks and garlic (Bamidbar 11:5). Rashi comments (ibid.): "R. Simeon says: Why did the [taste] of *mann* change into everything except these? Because they are difficult for nursing mothers." People looked at the fact. The taste of *mann* did not change into those vegetables. They did not take the next step – to search for the good in it.

Similar lesson we find in *parshas* Shelach. The word אִתְּךָ appears twice in the *parsha*. Once in the beginning of the *parsha* (ibid. 13:18) when the spies were instructed to 'look' at Eretz Yisroel, and once at the end, in the *parsha* of *tzitzis* (ibid. 15:39) where the Torah tells us to 'look' at *tzitzis* to remember all of the *mitzvos* of Hashem.

In the beginning of the *parsha*, the spies came to the Land and looked at the fact: people of Canaan are dying. The spies did not take the next step – to search for the good in it. The Midrash tells us that, in fact, Hashem arranged it that multiple funerals would take place at the time of the spying mission, so that the people of Canaan would not notice the spies. At the end of the *parsha* (in the chapter of *tzitzis*), the Torah tells us that our job is not to just look at mere facts. The fact is that a string of *tzitzis* is just a string. But our job is to take the next step – to look and remember Hashem's *mitzvos*.

We learn from this a fundamental lesson: Many things in life look purposeless, mundane, or negative. But that's only when a person looks at them with a superficial look. The *avoda* of a Jewish person is to take the next step – to look and see the purpose, to look and see holiness, to look and see the blessing.

Riddles



Baker Bob saw that people like *mezonos* rolls. So baker Bob made the most delicious *mezonos* rolls. Loyal customers of baker Bob's bakery bought the *mezonos* rolls and brought them home. But when they were about to eat them, they were surprised to see a label on the rolls that said: "*Mezonos* rolls. *Bracha rishona: Mezonos. Bracha achrona: Boreh nefashos.*" Can you explain why Baker Bob wrote that on the labels?

Last week's Riddle: 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'alo-secha you will find us. Who are we? **Answer:** The seven clouds that were with Klal Yisroel in the desert. Six clouds surrounded them from six sides (up, down, and from four directions), and one cloud would go ahead of the camp and make the terrain easy for walking.