

Who Is The Better Person?

Special thanks to revach.net for the story

R' Isser Zalman Meltzer, the Rosh Yeshivah of Slutzk and of Etz Chaim in Yerushalayim, and the author of Even Haezal, was once on his way to his yeshivah to give over a shiur, accompanied by his talmid. On the way, he was approached by a beggar, and R' Meltzer gave him a generous donation.

The beggar was not satisfied and pleaded for more. R' Meltzer handed him an additional coin. This beggar was particularly audacious, and he complained once again that R' Melzer's donation was not satisfactory. R' Meltzer gave him another coin and proceeded on his way.

His talmid was shocked at what had occurred and asked R' Meltzer why he felt obligated to increase his donation to such a brazen person. R' Meltzer answered, "What's the problem? Do you think I'm better than him? Why am I better? Because I've learned a lot of Torah? Because I'm a Rosh Yeshivah and I give over shiurim? You should know that I'm no better than him. It's the circumstances of life that has led me to be what I am, and has led him to become a beggar. And since I'm not superior to him in any way, I feel obligated to do as he asks." ♦

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Halacha Challenge



Magen David Cookies—part 1

by Shlomo Epshteyn

Mr. Jacobs loves going to the bakery after Yom Ha'atzmaut, due to the big sale on Magen David cookies. Each cookie had a Magen David star drawn on top of it. By the time Shabbos came, there was only one cookie left over at the Jacobs home. Five year-old Yona thought of a great idea: "Let each kid (out of the six kids) break off a corner from the six-star cookie, and Mommy and Totty will split the middle part!"

Question

Can the cookie be broken up like Yona suggested?

Answer

No. However, each person can take a bite from the cookie.

Explanation

To review from last week's issue, the Mordechai¹ 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 *Mocheh* (erasing) is applicable where the erasing is done for the sake of writing. The Maharam concluded, however, that eating these cakes is prohibited *m'derabbanan*.



This week's issue is dedicated

by David and Tanya Stein, *l'iluy nishmas* Mattisyahu ben Azlan haKohen, anonymously in honor of R. and Rebbetzin Kornfeld for their *chesed* to the community

Halacha Challenge



Based on this *shaila* and answer, the Rema² 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. The Dodul MeRevava³ disagrees with the Rema and writes that due to a combination of certain halachic factors we can rule leniently in a case where the letters on top of the pastry are erased *b'eino miskaven* (if a person does not have a specific intention to erase the letters written on the pastry). The Dodul MeRevava 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*).

The Mishna Berura⁴ 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 Kehilchosa⁵ similarly concludes, based on the poskim, that one can break the letters while eating the pastry.

Is there a difference between erasing letters and erasing an image drawn on a pastry? The Gemora Yerushalmi⁶ states that if someone drew an image on Shabbos, by etching it on a surface (e.g., on a wall), has performed the Melacha of Kosev (writing) and is obligated to bring *korban Chatas*. The Rambam⁷ rules according to this Yerushalmi. Since Mochek is directly related to Kosev, the Rambam adds that erasing that etched image, is also a violation of Shabbos. The Mishna Berura⁸ rules according to this Rambam. Hence, in our scenario since an image of Magen David is drawn on top of a cookie, the halachos that apply to a cookie that has writing on top of it, apply similarly here – it is permitted to eat it, but not permitted to break it by hands. ♦

1. מרדכי פרק כלל גדול סימן שסט 2. רמ"א סי' ש"מ סעיף ג 3. דגול מרובה סי' ש"מ סעיף ג
4. מ"ב סי' ש"מ ס"ק יז 5. ששכ"ה פרק יא אות ז (במהדורה חדשה) 6. ירושלמי פ' כלל גדול
- הל' ב 7. רמב"ם פ' יא מהלכות שבת הל' יז 8. מ"ב סי' ש"מ ס"ק כב

Kids Ask, Zeidy Answers



Zeidy,
how do
we
know
that
the rain of this month
(Iyar) brings refuah
from Hashem?



Good question, kids. The source which tells us that Hashem is our healer is the pasuk "...Ani Hashem Rof'echa" - "I am Hashem—your healer". The first letter of Ani is Aleph, the first letter of Hashem is Yud, the first letter of Rof'echa is Reish. Put Aleph, Yud and Reish together and you get Iyar.

Wonders of Creation

The Honey Badger

by Alex Isaacson



The Honey Badger does not resemble other badger species; instead, it bears more anatomical similarities to weasels. It has a fairly long body, but is distinctly thick-set and broad across the back. The sides of the heads and lower body are pure black with a white stripe extending from head to tail on their backs. Its skin is very loose, and allows it to turn and twist freely. The skin around the neck is 1/4in thick and is adapted to situations in which the Honey Badger needs to fight off predators. Adults

only measure up to 2 & ½ft in length and weigh a mere 25lbs on average.

What's most remarkable about this creature is not its small size, but its intelligence, ferocity and total lack of fear. They are well known for savagely and fearlessly attacking almost any kind of animal when escape is impossible, reportedly even repelling much larger predators such as lions.

Bee stings, porcupine quills, and animal bites rarely penetrate the skin of the Honey Badger because it's so thick. If horses, cattle, or Cape buffaloes intrude the Honey Badger's burrow, it will attack them. It's virtually tireless in combat and can wear out much larger animals during battle. All of this from an animal that's smaller than a medium sized dog! ♦



Riddles & Parsha Qs



Riddle

I have fulfilled a Rabbinical commandment when I was not yet commanded to fulfill a Torah commandment. Therefore, I can no longer fulfill the Torah commandment when I am commanded to fulfill it. How is this possible?

Hint: it has something to do with the month of Iyar

Answer to last issue's Riddle:

(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?

He is visiting someone sick. The Shechina rests above the head of a sick person. As such, a person is not permitted to sit too high when he is sitting next to a sick person.