

Stories, Biographies & Wonders

Amazing Octopus

By Alex Isaacson

The Giant Pacific Octopus can be found in the coastal North Pacific, usually at a depth of around 215 ft. It can, however, live in much shallower or much deeper waters. It is arguably the largest octopus species, reaching up to 156lbs with an arm-span of up to 14ft. The lifespan of this creature is only 3-5 years. It makes up for this by laying up to 100,000 eggs which are intensely cared for by the female, who will die protecting the eggs.



This massive and alluring species of octopus commonly preys upon shrimp, crabs, scallops, abalone, clams, and fish. Food is procured with its suckers and then crushed using its tough "beak" of chitin. It has been observed in captivity catching spiny dogfish up to four feet in length.

Hashem gave this creature a gift: an ability to hide from dangerous enemies lurking in the ocean dark. The mantle (or cloak) of the octopus is spherical in shape and contains most of the animal's major organs. By contracting or expanding tiny pigment-containing granules known as chromatophores which consist of complex multi cellular organs, it is able to rapidly change its color. The octopus can do so in order to enable itself to blend in with the environment. It thus disguises itself from its predators.

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Menucha

A Shabbos table companion for the whole family

Volume V, Issue No. 36

קרח

5776

Halacha Challenge

Pillow Fight - Double Strike



Moishy and Mendy had fun playing pillow fight on a Shabbos morning. At some point, they threw their pillows at the same time. As the pillows met each other in the air, both of them opened up and their feathers fell out. Moishy and Mendy ran with excitement to the middle of room, looked down and saw one big pile of feathers on the floor.

"Hmm..." wondered Moishy. "I wonder if we can put the feathers into our pillows now."

"I hope we can," sighed Mandy. "I need my pillow for a Shabbos nap."

"I am just not sure if that's allowed on Shabbos," continued Moishy. "I know it's okay to put back the feathers that came out from a pillow. But the feathers from the two of our pillows got mixed up with each other!"

Q: Can Moishy and Mendy put the mixed up feathers into their pillows?

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Help: In the last issue we saw the following statement of Rav Chisda (Shabbos 48a): *Rav Chisda permitted returning soft things (i.e., stuffing) into a pillow.* The Gemora (ibid.) specifies that Rav Chisda was only referring to a case where one is simply putting back the filling that fell out from a pillow. However, one is not permitted to put new filling into a pillow. The Shulchan Aruch [OC 340:5] rules based on that Gemora.

To solve the challenge the following needs to be considered: On one hand, Moishy and Mendy will not be putting new filling into the pillows. On the other hand, since the feathers got mixed up, some of the filling that would go into each pillow will be 'new' relative to that pillow.

Menucha's Answer: No – they should not put the mixed feathers into the pillows.

Explanation: It is true that it is permitted to return the filling that came out from a pillow. However, that's only true if a person is putting back the exact filling that came out from that pillow. This is clear from Rashi's *peirush*. Commenting on the statement of Rav Chisda, Rashi [1] says: [It is permitted to] return [the filling] into **this** pillow from which it fell out. Hence, what Rashi is teaching us is that if the filling is 'new' relative to that pillow, putting it inside is considered as creating a new vessel – even if that pillow had other filling previously. It appears that based on this *peirush* of Rashi, the Mishna Berura [OC 340:32] writes: "It is permitted to return them (the filling) into **that** blanket [from which the filling fell out]."

Further thoughts: We saw in the last article that according to Rashi, putting new filling into a pillow is a Torah prohibition, because a person is creating a new vessel. (Rashi ibid., Mishna Berura OC 340 § 32). Which *melacha* is being performed here? Let's explore if the *melacha* of *Boneh* (building) is being performed here. One may say that, of course, it's not possible that *melacha* of *Boneh* is performed here, due to the rule of "*ein binyan b'kelim*" – *melacha* of *Boneh* does not apply to vessels – i.e., this *melacha* applies only to structures that are on the ground [The source of the rule is found in Gemora Beitza 22a].

There is, however, a fundamental teaching of the Ran [Shabbos ch.12 (p. 37a)] about this rule that sheds new light on our understanding of the *melacha* of *Boneh*. The Ran explains that *ein binyan b'kelim* is referring to those cases when a person is assembling a vessel that came apart. Furthermore, this is true only when the vessel came apart mere to an extent where a non-skilled person can put it back together (e.g., the parts easily fit into each other). In other words, when a vessel came apart and one can easily put it back together, the object did not lose its status of a *k'li*. (A good example of this is our case: returning a filling into a pillow.) In such a case, Chazal teach - *ein binyan b'kelim* – i.e., the *melacha* of *Boneh* is not being performed when a person is putting together parts which **already** have status of "vessels". However, when a person is making a new vessel (or when strength or a skill is required to put back the parts of a vessel that came apart), then the *melacha* of *Boneh* is, in fact, being performed. Such an action is not called "*binyan b'kelim*" – building within a vessel, but rather, it is called "*oseh keli*" (creating a vessel). Based on this, the *melacha* of *Boneh* is being performed when new filling is put into a pillow.

* Note: Menucha's answer is for Torah learning purposes only and not as a *halachic* ruling.

Short & Sweet

Riddles



Baker Dan saw that people like to eat rolls.

So baker Dan made the most delicious, sweet and tender rolls.

Loyal customers of baker Dan's bakery bought the rolls and brought them home.

But when the loyal customers were about to eat them, they were surprised to see a label on the rolls that said: "*Baker Dan's rolls. Bracha rishona: HaMotzi. Bracha achrona: Borei minei mezonos.*"

Can you explain why Baker Dan wrote that on the labels?



Last week's Riddle

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 the loyal customers 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?

Answer

The rolls were made from rice flour. The Shulchan Aruch [OC 208:7] rules that on bread made from rice flour a person makes a bracha *borei minei mezonos*, and *boreh nefashos* as the *bracha achrona*.