



# Ask The Rabbi

Researched at Ohr Somayach, Jerusalem

## This Issue Contains:

1. A Light Meal
2. Birthdays
3. Answer to the Yiddle Riddle



Ken Rosenberg <rosenber@oswego.Oswego.EDU> writes:

You wrote recently [Ask the Rabbi #82] about eating food cooked on Shabbat. I have a related question: Just prior to a recent Shabbat lunch, my son, the cook, realized that he had forgotten to disable the oven light before Shabbat so it wouldn't come on when he opened the oven the next day to get the cholent. I tried to slip a knife in the crack to hold the switch closed as he got out the cholent, but, alas, I slipped and the light came on. He refused to eat the cholent, but did eat it after Shabbat was over. What is the status of the cholent in the event of such an occurrence? Can it be eaten on Shabbat?

Dear Ken,

In general, food cooked on Shabbat by mistake — *shogeg* — cannot be eaten — e.g., someone who forgot it was Shabbat and baked a cake, the cake is forbidden until after Shabbat.

In your case, however, this doesn't apply. Turning on the light had no effect on the *cholent* whatsoever. When the oven light went on, the *cholent* was already hot and fully cooked. So eating it is not considered benefiting from a Shabbat prohibition.

Furthermore, the knife slipping was **totally** unintentional and falls into the category of '*Mitasek*' — a category even less severe than '*shogeg*.'

On top of all this, it sounds like your son had **already opened** the door when the knife slipped. If, when the knife slipped, the door was already open enough so that it was no longer holding in the button, it's 'the knife's fault,' not 'the door's fault.' The light going on is **unrelated** to the opening of the door — therefore, the *cholent* is certainly permitted.

I'm glad that your son 'the cook' is sincere about mitzvah observance, but I'm sorry that he missed out on a delicious *cholent*. I have two suggestions:

- 1) Study the laws of Shabbat with your son.
- 2) Practice sticking the knife in the door and holding down the button (during the week)!

Sources: 

- *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* 818:1.
- *Shmirat Shabbat Kehilchata* 10:16 (44).

Martin Appel <mappel@stat.uiowa.edu> wrote:

What is the Jewish perspective on birthday celebrations? The Torah refers explicitly to only one such celebration, that of Pharaoh. Do we have a tradition for birthday celebrations and if so, what is it?

Dear M.J. Appel,

The Talmud Yerushalmi relates that when the Amalekites attacked the Jewish people, they chose soldiers whose birthday fell out on the day of the battle. They perceived that a person's birthday is a lucky day for him, and therefore he will be successful in battle.

The Ben Ish Chai (Rabbi Yosef Chaim of Baghdad) writes that some people celebrate their birthday because the day is a good sign for that person. He personally celebrated birthdays in his home. Rabbi Yisrael Lifshitz (Author of Tiferet Yisrael, commentary on the Mishna) instructed his children that when one of them has a birthday the others should visit and bless him. Similarly, distinguished members of Jerusalem's Jewish community used to visit Rabbi Shmuel Salant on his birthday and offer him their blessings.

Others emphasize the more serious side of birthdays. Rabbi Avraham Binyamin Sofer (Author of *Ktav Sofer* responsa) used to sequester himself on his birthday and 'soul-search.' The day a person is born he receives the most precious gift of all — Life! Therefore, it is a day for introspection, a day for asking, "Am I using this gift to its utmost potential?"

Sources:

- *Ben Ish Chai, Parshat Re'eh* 17.
- *Talmud Yerushalmi, Rosh Hashana* 3:8.
- *Iggeret Tiferet Yisrael* 6, *Sefer Mayim HaHalacha*
- *Sefer Chut HaMeshulash*

## Yiddle Riddle

### Last week we asked:

Caterers get a vacation during the 'Counting of the Omer' and the days leading up to Tisha B'Av — times when there are no weddings. When do they take an entire month vacation from: 1) Bar Mitzvahs (but not Bat Mitzvahs)? 2) Bat Mitzvahs (but not Bar Mitzvahs)? 3) Bar and Bat Mitzvahs?

**Answer:** (first sent in by Joel Eisenman <Joel@telaviv.dddf.com>) In the Jewish Calendar, a 'leap year' has an added month — Adar II. Someone born in Adar of a **regular (non-leap)** year, celebrates his birthday in Adar II during a 'leap year.' Therefore, a boy born in Adar of a regular year, and 13 years later (the year of his *Bar Mitzvah*) is a 'leap year', his *Bar Mitzvah* is in Adar II — while Adar I will have **no Bar Mitzvahs!** Likewise, a girl born in Adar of a 'regular' year, and 12 years later (the year of her *Bat Mitzvah*) is a 'leap year', her *Bat Mitzvah* will be in Adar II. Adar I will have **no Bat Mitzvahs!** Last year, 5755, Adar I had no Bar or Bat Mitzvahs, since 12 **and** 13 years prior to 5755 were regular years! (*Shulchan Aruch O. C.* 55:10)

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Issue #86 - 9 December 1995

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