



Ask The Rabbi

Researched at Ohr Somayach, Jerusalem



This Issue Contains:

1. By the Light of the Slavery (yes, slavery) Moon
2. Cookie Bar Exam
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Rebecca

Mark <becky@mail.snunit.k12.il> wrote:

My son David would like to know why one says "Shalom Aleichem...Aleichem Shalom" in the Kiddush Levana (sanctification-blessing at the time of the new moon)? Thank you for the answer.

Dear Rebecca Mark,

Your son David asked a good question. I've often wondered the same thing myself: During the monthly blessing on the moon, we greet each other by saying "Shalom Aleichem" — "Peace unto you." Why do we do that? I used to think it was to make sure that even grouchy people greet their friends at least once a month. But after some research into your son's question, I found the following explanation:

In the course of *Kiddush Levanah*, we pray for the downfall of the enemies of the Jewish People. In particular, we quote the verse from the 'Song at the Red Sea:' "May dread and fear befall them, they should be silent like stone...." Since this verse does not specify who "them" refers to, we therefore turn to the people standing nearby and say "Shalom Aleichem" to show that they are not included among those whose downfall we seek.

Here's another explanation: After you say a blessing on an apple, you take a bite of the apple. So too, after blessing Hashem for the moon and its light, you partake of the moon's light by using it to recognize your friends and wish them well.

Sources:

- Rema, Orach Chaim 426:2
- Magen Avraham 426:11
- Megilla 3a and Tosafot d.h. "Chayshinan"

Brian Hyman from Jerusalem <bhyman@ohr.israel.net> wrote:

We are somewhat perplexed here: What blessing is said before eating a Hershey's Cookie Mint chocolate bar? Is it a 'mezonot' (the blessing on food made from flour) or a 'shehakol' (the blessing on chocolate and various other food)? Are the cookie pieces there for taste or to give consistency?

Dear Brian Hyman

In general, the majority of a food determines its blessing. For instance, if a chocolate bar has only a few peanuts in it, the chocolate determines the blessing, not the peanuts.

Flour — wheat, barley, oats, rye or spelt — is an exception. Even a little bit of flour, added in order to give flavor, determines a food's blessing.

However, this is true only if flour is added for flavor. But if the flour is added as a 'glue,' just to hold the food together, then it's not the determining factor.

So, Brian, I ask you: What does the Hershey's 'Cookie Mint' bar taste like? Does its taste bespeak a dash of 'cookie'? I assume so, because it seems quite obvious from the name "Cookie Mint" that the flour is added for taste.

Therefore, the blessing is *mezonot*.

Do you remember the 'Marathon' candy bar? It was about a foot of chewy, chocolate-covered caramel, called 'Marathon' because it took two hours 27 minutes to eat one. I'll never forget the day my fourth grade Hebrew school teacher, Mrs. Goldberg, caught the kid next to me trying to sneak one during class. In order to avoid having it confiscated, Philip (that was his name) set a new world's record by stuffing an entire Marathon bar into his mouth all at once. That is something you should never do.

By the way always check for a reliable kashrut certification before eating anything.

Sources:

- Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 208:2

Yiddle Riddle

Good is no good	Is no less forbidding.
Whenever I'm near.	Have you guessed the nature
As his I'm mistaken	Of my little 'con' game?
When taken by ear.	If you're right then I'm not.
'Thou shalt' by my side	Now what is my 'name'?
Is an order for quitting.	
And spelling me backwards	

Answer next week...
Riddle by Reuven Subar

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