

MOTHER GOOSE RELATES how little Jack Horner left his lavishly set table to sit in a dark and dusty corner. He left all the delicacies at the table untouched, save for his birthday pie. (Is this *muchrach*?) In Little Jack's mind his birthday pie was a delicacy to be enjoyed only by the royalty. It seemed to him that this pie was the most mouth-watering pie ever to be baked. However, to Little Jack's great consternation, there was no silverware to be found on the entire table. Presumably, there was silverware to be found in the adjacent room, but that would waste precious moments. No, Jack would not get silverware. Feeling embarrassed to eat like a wastrel, he wanted to find an obscure location to consume his pie. Desperately looking around the room, his eyes focused on the edge of the wall. There appeared to be a dark and quiet spot adjacent to another wall where he could enjoy his pastry unobserved. Not wanting to postpone his indulgence for a moment, he hastily made his way to this niche by the wall and plunged his thumb into the round, fruit-filled pastry. Upon retrieving his finger from the pie, he noticed that a plum was firmly lodged on his thumb. After performing this uncultivated and unrefined act, Jack said to himself "What a good boy am I."

Little Jack knew that eating his pie in a coarse manner was not proper for a man of his stature. (After all, he *was* little.) Knowing this, he first searched for tableware. When his search turned out to be fruitless, he decided to eat his pie in an unrefined manner, in an obscure corner. He realized that he was about to perform a sinful act and he was embarrassed. Presumably there was silverware in the next room. Couldn't Little Jack Horner suppress his desires for a moment? Since Jack was nimble and quick, he could have picked up silverware on his way over the candlestick. It was a matter of seconds. Moreover, the pie was fat-free (and didn't taste good anyway), since Jack could eat no fat. Didn't Jack realize that for generations to come everyone will learn how he ate his food like a slattern? Now his reputation will be tarnished forever. Were those fleeting moments really worth it?

Furthermore, Jack's reaction to the situation is intriguing. After reclaiming his thumb from being submerged in his delicacy, he said "What a good boy am I". Earlier, he knew he made a mistake, which is why he hid in the corner. Why now after performing his shameful act did he not only think he was right, but he even thought he was a good boy for doing so!?

Man was Divinely fashioned with an alert and perceptive mind. However, within man there is a destructive power *taavah* that can interfere with the mind. The normal thought processes that are usually in control, can lose their ability to function. A Man's temptation can reign supreme. Despite Jack's cognizance of all the great benefits of eating like a mentch, Jack's craving for the pie obstructed his otherwise keen insight and perceptiveness. Even though eating the pie in an uncivilized manner will tarnish his reputation, it did not make a difference. His desire for the pie, literally steamrolled everything in its path, including his logic. Even a mind like Jack's, that could stand up to a giant and steal his golden harp (and make it safely down the beanstalk) can still be overpowered. Thus Jack fell prey to his desires and thrust his thumb into his pie.

It might be mentioned that there are those who say, Jack did not use a fork because he didn't want to *treif* up his fork on *non-yoshon*. This is hardly understandable as the Yeshiva didn't *kasher* their ovens after switching to a *yoshon* only policy!

The question still remains, Jack's temptations only overwhelmed him before he ate. Why after submerging his thumb, did he say "What a good boy am I?" At this point his logic was fully restored. He already gave into his temptations. Now his logic should reign supreme.

It seems there was a new temptation working here, a temptation for *kavod*, honor. It would be a shameful embarrassment for Jack to admit the gross error he made. His conscience would not permit him to do so. His logic perverted his thought process. Once again he was affected by his temptations.

These mechanisms happening within the heart and mind of Jack are in reality natural human reactions which readily occur within our very own lives. We may succumb to the most meager physical pleasure which can prevent our ability to see the truth. Then, on a subconscious level, our physical desires can influence and pervert the intellect, to accept lame excuses and false justifications, to feel that what we did was actually right.