

A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



THE REMOTE VILLAGE

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Parsha talks about the death of Aharon's sons. The Torah says that Aharon was silent. (Vayikra 10,3) Our Sages teach us that this is an allusion to the mitzvah of Tziduk Hadin, of accepting Hashem's judgment when someone passes away.

This leads us to the following true story.

Ronen was a successful businessman. His company needed some rare chemicals from a remote area of China. It was not an easy trip and the chemicals were potentially poisonous. Ronen hired Moshe to travel to China to purchase the chemicals and have

HOW VALUABLE IS MONEY?

As we are currently in the interim between Pesach and Shavuot we find ourselves counting the Omer from day one moving up to day 49 after which we celebrate Shavuot. The idea of counting every day reflects our anticipation for the great day on which HaShem will give us the Torah. Although normally one counts down to the day of great anticipation we count up. The reason for this is parallel to the counting that the chosson and kallah count towards their wedding day. Before the couple counts down to the wedding day there are prerequisites that need to be put in order. They need a venue, a caterer, a band, a florist, a photographer, a videographer and so on. Only after those needs are in order can they begin to count down. So we can actually call the days preceding the countdown as the count up where they collect all the necessary components to make the wedding.

Once we left Egypt we were on target to receive the Torah from HaShem. However, before we could receive the Torah there were 48 necessary requirements. Those are the 48 qualities that are enumerated in Pirkei Avos which are required to acquire Torah.

The function of the counting the 49 days before Shavuot is not the count down but rather the count up. Every day reflects achieving another quality so that after all these days have passed we will then be ready to receive HaShem's Torah.

The Maharal asks why are there 49 days if there are only 48 qualities to collect? The answer he offers opens up a window into appreciating the perspective of the Jew on life and its value.

them shipped to Ronen.

Moshe was concerned about the hazard of the chemicals. Ronen promised Moshe and Moshe's family that if anything would happen to Moshe because of the dangerous chemicals that he would be dealing with, Ronen would take care of the family for the rest of their lives. He also wrote this guarantee in writing.

Moshe traveled to this remote area in China and stayed in a remote, rural village. Sadly, while in the village he got sick and passed away shortly after. It was never clear what caused him to get sick. Was it the chemicals or was it the conditions of the village?

Ronen was very saddened to hear the news. He then wondered if he had an obligation to support Moshe's family.

On one hand, the only reason why Moshe went to China was because of Ronen's business venture. But on the other hand, it was not at all clear what caused Moshe's death. Perhaps it was not related to the chemicals.

This question was brought to Rav Zilberstein, What do you think?

See Chashukei Chemed Bava Basra Page 561



“Money is interesting;
Without it
you cannot live,
But the one who loves it
is doomed.”

-Reb Yaakov Kamenetsky

The mishna in Pirkei Avos teaches us that if there is no bread there is no Torah. Before we can begin to start our collection of qualities with which to acquire Torah we must first have bread. The first day of the count is the second day of Pesach on which we bring the Omer offering. Only after the Omer offering is presented may we eat from the new produce. The first day of the Omer count reflects this very important lesson; we must have a source of livelihood in order to acquire Torah.

The Mahral continues his thought with the following question. Why are we not permitted to eat from the new produce before Pesach? Why must we wait for Pesach to occur and only then begin using the new produce?

That same mishna in Pirkei Avos teaches us that if there is no Torah there is no bread. If the acquisition of Torah is not possible

then there is no need for bread. In other words, there is no point in living without the ability of acquiring Torah. Without Torah life is meaningless so who needs bread?

Until we experience the exodus from Egypt and we are finally able to free ourselves from the shackles of slavery to begin thinking about becoming the carriers of the Torah, there is no purpose for bread. Therefore, immediately upon our exodus, on the very next day we open up the storehouses of the new produce to begin eating and living for the purpose of becoming the bearers of the Torah.

Hence, the Torah's perspective on money is that it is absolutely necessary for one to pursue earning a livelihood but only for the purpose of living a Torah life. If life becomes devoid of Torah, money has no value.

My grandfather, Reb Yaakov Kamenetsky, once told me that our relationship to money can be captured with this understanding; Without money one cannot live but the one who loves it is doomed.

Have a very wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

COFFEE

In the Pesach edition, we explored some of the wonders of wine and how it affects the body and mind. This week, let's explore together another drink that has a profound impact on our brains, and which also has an interesting Pesach connection. Let's take a deeper look at coffee, one of the most popular drinks in the world.

Is coffee really a bean (legume)? When was coffee invented? Why does it make us alert? And why do we get a headache if we don't drink coffee when our body expects it?

Coffee is a brewed drink prepared from roasted coffee beans. Coffee beans are not really beans. Rather, they are the seeds of berries from certain *Coffea* species. As an example, imagine a cherry. It is a fruit with a seed inside. If coffee would be made from cherries, the cherry seed would be the coffee bean. When coffee berries turn from green to bright red in color – indicating ripeness – they are picked, processed, and dried. Dried coffee seeds (referred to as "beans") are roasted to varying degrees, depending on the desired flavor.

The coffee tree is really an evergreen shrub that may grow as tall as 15 ft when unpruned.

The earliest evidence of coffee drinking as the modern beverage appears in modern-day Yemen in southern Arabia in the middle of the 15th century. In Sufi Moslem shrines coffee seeds were roasted and brewed in a manner similar to how it is now prepared for drinking. It was used by Sufi circles to stay awake for their religious rituals. Where did the Yemenis get the coffee? The Yemenis procured the coffee beans from the Ethiopian Highlands via coastal Somali intermediaries, and began cultivation.

The word coffee entered the English language from the Arabic word *Kahvah* which was a type of wine that suppressed an appetite. Coffee was given this same name because of its appetite suppressant qualities.

By the 16th century the drink had reached the rest of the Middle East and North Africa. By 1600 it spread to Italy and then to the rest of Europe, Indonesia, and the Americas.

How are coffee berries turned into the roasted coffee beans that we are familiar with? They are first sorted by ripeness and color and the flesh of the berry is removed, usually by machine. The seeds are fermented to remove the slimy layer of mucilage still present on the seed. When the fermentation is finished, the seeds are washed with large quantities of fresh water to remove the fermentation residue. Finally, the seeds are dried.

How does coffee and caffeine affect our brain? Caffeine acts as a

central nervous system stimulant. When it reaches your brain, the most noticeable effect is alertness. You'll feel more awake and less tired. Caffeine affects the central nervous system in several ways and the effects are mainly believed to stem from the way caffeine interacts with adenosine receptors

Adenosine is a neurotransmitter in the brain that promotes sleep. Neurons in your brain have specific receptors that adenosine can attach to. When it binds to those receptors, it inhibits the tendency of neurons to fire. This slows neural activity. Adenosine normally builds up during the day and eventually makes you drowsy when it's time to go to sleep. Caffeine and adenosine have a similar molecular structure. So when caffeine is present in the brain, it competes with adenosine to bind to the same receptors. Essentially caffeine imitates adenosine and blocks adenosine from binding to its receptors. Caffeine prevents adenosine from slowing you down. This makes you feel alert.

Caffeine also stimulates the central nervous system by promoting the release of other neurotransmitters, including noradrenaline, dopamine and serotonin. Caffeine also builds up the adrenaline supply, which increases heart rate, gets the blood pumping, and opens up airways. And finally caffeine prevents dopamine from getting reabsorbed into your system, leaving the feel-good chemical hanging around in your brain longer. This dopamine effect is also what makes coffee so addictive.

But like most foods, overindulging can cause side effects. For example, too much caffeine can give you headaches. This is primarily linked to caffeine withdrawal. The blood vessels in your brain become used to caffeine's effects so if you suddenly stop consuming caffeine, it can cause a headache. For those of us who regularly drink coffee in copious amounts, our brains develop more adenosine receptors, so it takes more coffee to keep us awake.

Caffeine increases the amount of acid in your stomach and may cause heartburn or upset stomach. Extra caffeine doesn't get stored in your body either. It's processed in the liver and exits through your urine. This is why you might have an increase in urination shortly after having caffeine. Caffeine at high doses, typically greater than 300 mg, can both cause and worsen anxiety.

How is coffee related to Pesach? For a time, a question existed in the Jewish community over whether the coffee bean was a legume - and therefore prohibited as *Kitniyus*. After being petitioned by coffeemaker Maxwell House, Rabbi Hersch Kohn in 1923 classified the coffee seed as a berry rather than as a seed, and therefore kosher for Pesach.

THANK THE EIBISHTER THAT HE MADE YOU A HUMAN BEING AND HE DIDN'T MAKE YOU A FROG OR A TREE OR A CHALOPTCHES!

Rav Dovid Trenk Zt"l was renowned as a master educator.

One Shabbos, a young boy in Camp Munk, the child of one of the division heads, mistakenly turned off a light on Shabbos. The eight-year-old was inconsolable, crying bitter tears at the chillul Shabbos.

His parents tried to reassure him that it had been an accident, and he was just a child, it was okay. But the boy was not consoled.

Finally, they suggested that they go together to Rabbi Trenk and tell him what happened. Yes, the child agreed, he wanted to do that. He himself told Rabbi Trenk of his "aveirah," how he had accidentally clicked the light switch. "What should I do?" he asked tearfully.

"What should you do?" Rabbi Trenk looked down at him. "Kalman," he cried out, "what you should do is you should thank the Eibishter that He made you a human being and He didn't make you a frog or a tree or a chaloptches (stuffed cabbage) - He made you a human being and human beings make mistakes!

Say 'Thank you, Hashem, for making me a human being!' "The boy wiped away his tears, pleased with the answer. Later on, the child looked up at his father, his eyes brimming with clarity and honesty. "Tatty," he said, "I hope I never forget what Rabbi Trenk told me."

(From Just Love Them, The Life and Legacy of Rabbi Dovid Trenk, By Rabbi Yisroel Besser, Published By Artscroll Mesorah. Reprinted with permission from the copyright holders.)



THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the perfume, Rav Dovid Heber answered that it was not necessary to notify the purchaser and no money was owed.

This week's TableTalk is dedicated as an iluy for the neshama of
Rabbi Aria Leib Newman
הרב אריה לייב בן ר' מתתיהו
נפטר כ"ח ניסן
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