

A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



WEIGHT LOSS SURGERY

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

On Succos we enjoy delicious foods in honor of Yom Tov. It is not uncommon that after Yom Tov, people try to lose some of the weight that was gained. This leads us to the following true story

Yaakov was overweight and he tried his very best to lose weight and keep it off permanently. He tried dieting, calorie counting, and intermittent fasting, but to no avail. He lost weight but he quickly gained it back.

A friend of his told him to ask his doctor about bariatric surgery. This is a category of several types of procedures that involves changing the size of the stomach or changing its ability to absorb calories.



THE ANATOMY OF JOY

Gleaned from Rav Yitzchak Hutner (Pictured) in Pachad Yitzchok

Our Sages have named Succos the Time of our Simcha. Simcha is translated as joy or happiness. Evidently, the holiday of Succos has within her the key to happiness. Let us attempt to identify the secret sauce of Succos which brings us to this state.

Reb Yaakov Weinberg zt"l, the Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivas Ner Yisroel explained that all pleasures that Man can experience share a common thread. That thread is the sensation of existence. In other words, when considering the many forms of pleasure that Man enjoys you will discover that they all include an element of the sensation of existence.

I once asked a 10 year old child what her greatest pleasure was. She told me that it was her friends. Others like bungy jumping and others get a thrill when a magazine features an article about them. The common thread of these pleasures is that they give the person a sense of existence. Friendship is perhaps the greatest example of existence. When another human being recognizes you, there is no greater validation of your existence.

The converse is also true. Solitary confinement causes many emotional and even physical diseases. This is because Man has a need to feel that he exists. During COVID suicides increased because this need was not being experienced.

We know that HaShem created the Universe. He brought it into existence. Prior to that moment of creation there was no space and no time. Nothing at all existed except, of course, HaShem. We therefore recognize HaShem as the sole Being that truly exists, everything else in the Universe including the spiritual world of the angels and other spiritual entities were only creations created by HaShem. In this world there is no true existence. The only absolute existence is HaShem.

If we could somehow cross the divide that separates Man, a creation of HaShem, and Ha-

Yaakov thought it was a good idea to look into and made an appointment with his doctor to discuss it.

Yaakov met with the doctor. His doctor weighed him at 210 pounds. The doctor said that Yaakov's insurance would cover the surgery if he weighed over 230 pounds. Because he was not close to that weight, the surgery would cost Yaakov thousand and thousands of dollars.

Yaakov went home disappointed. But on his way home, he had an idea. All he had to do was gain another 20 pounds and his insurance would cover the surgery for free. He would simply load up on carbs and pasta for a few weeks and he could gain that extra 20 pounds in no time.

But then he hesitated. Was it permitted for him to purposely gain 20 pounds in order to become eligible for the surgery? It was likely that the directors of the insurance company would not cover the surgery if they knew that he purposely gained weight in order to get the surgery.

Yaakov decided to send this question to Rav Yitzchak Zilbersten. Was he permitted to purposely add the 20 pounds in order to reach the threshold where the insurance would cover all of the costs? When Rav Zilberstein got this question, he asked it to his father-in-law Rav Yosef Elyashiv.

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Shem to become in some way connected to Him, we would have achieved the absolute greatest pleasure. We would have experienced a taste of true existence.

The Torah teaches us the Thirteen Attributes of HaShem which we recite on fast days and on holidays. The first two Attributes are the Name of HaShem. Why two times the same Name?

The two Names that are expressed are the Name which indicates HaShem as the One Who brings about existence. The reason the Name is doubled is because when HaShem brought the world into existence, that existence terminated when Man sinned. That first creation is not able to tolerate any imperfection. So when Man sinned, the world could no longer exist. The second Name however, brought about the creation of the world which is able to tolerate imperfection. That second Name occurs when Man does teshuvah. With teshuvah Man brings about the post-teshuvah creation of the world.

The world's current existence, which is the post-teshuvah existence, is a function of the second Name and in that creation Man is a partner though his teshuvah.

In other words, the original world, before Adam and Chava ate from the Tree, was a direct creation of HaShem with no input whatsoever from Man. In fact, there was no Man before that creation. It therefore follows that Man should not be able to connect with his Creator. However, after Man sins and he does teshuvah he activates HaShem's new creation of the post-teshuvah creation. The second Name of HaShem brings about the new creation. In this second creation Man actually partners with HaShem and he becomes inextricably connected to that Name.

Behold! Through our teshuvah process and with mercifulness of HaShem, we become partners in the existence of this world. There is no greater connection to HaShem than this process.

It is no wonder that after we have achieved atonement on Yom Kippur we are given the mitzvah to build a succah and leave the comforts of this transient world. HaShem wants us to be able to bask in the true existence we have achieved and not be distracted by any pleasure this transient world might offer.

May HaShem grant us the absolute joy that this holiday of Succos affords us.

Have a wonderful Shabbos and a joyous Yom Tov.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

AROMATHERAPY, BESAMIM, CLOVES, AND MERTYL

During Succos, we use Hadassim, myrtle as one of the four species. What should we do with the Hadassim after Succos? The Mishna Berura in 297 writes that it is ideal to use the hadassim from succos for besamim after Havdala. This is because if it has been used for one mitzvah, it would be best to continue to use it for another mitzvah and not simply throw it away.

Let's go back a bit. Why do we smell besamim during Havdala after Shabbos is over? The Mishna Berura writes that we smell besamim after Shabbos because our Nefesh is pained and saddened after Shabbos leaves. We smell the besamim to cheer us up and uplift us. Many use Hadasim mixed with cloves as besamim.

We can ask, how exactly does smelling besamim, smelling Hadasim and cloves alleviate our saddened souls?

The truth is on a physical level, based on the principles of aromatherapy, smelling these spices can actually have a direct effect on our mood and state of mind.

Let's learn a bit about the discipline of aromatherapy.

Aromatherapy is based on the usage of aromatic materials, including essential oils and other aroma compounds, to help improve psychological or even physical well-being. The use of essential oils for therapeutic, spiritual, hygienic, and ritualistic purposes goes back to ancient civilizations, including the Indians, Chinese, Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, who used them in cosmetics, perfumes, and drugs. Oils were used for aesthetic pleasure and in the beauty industry.

While there is no solid medical evidence that aromatherapy can either prevent, treat, or cure any disease, (because placebo-controlled trials are difficult to design, as the point of aromatherapy is the smell of the products) some studies have

come to the conclusion that it does improve the patient's mood. According to Healthline, Aromatherapy has an array of benefits, such as reducing stress, agitation, and anxiety and improving sleep quality.

Healthline writes that according to a review on aromatherapy and depression, essential oils were shown to be an effective option for the relief of depressive symptoms.

Experts aren't sure how aromatherapy works. The Mayo Clinic suggests that chemicals in essential oils might trigger smell receptors in your nose that send messages to the part of your brain that controls your mood. Other scientists suggest that certain essential oils can have an anxiolytic or anxiety-reducing effect, which increases the production of serotonin. Serotonin is the neurotransmitter responsible for mood, sleep, and other important body functions.

So we see that smelling certain smells does have the effect of physiologically changing our brain to reduce sadness.

What is really interesting is that both Cloves and Myrtle, Hadassim, are known specifically to help with sadness.

Experts in aromatherapy have written that Clove essential oil has been shown to lower anxiety to help you remain relaxed, patient and trusting. It is described as having a warming, stimulating scent that can help manage anxious energy and enhance concentration.

Hadassim, Myrtle has been described in a similar way. Myrtle can calm anxiety and tension and improve self-confidence. It relaxes and sedates the body and provides relief from tension, stress, annoyance, anger, distress, and depression.

This sounds almost exactly like what Mishna Berura wrote! So the next time you smell besamim after Shabbos, take a deep breath. It might just change your mood.

“IF A SOLDIER IS TOLD TO SING AND TO REJOICE, HE DOES THAT. AND HE DOES IT WITH ENTHUSIASM.”

The Yeshiva of Slabodka was founded by Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel, the Alter of Slabodka. For Shmini Atzeres and Simchas Torah the bachurim were in the yeshiva. The Simchas Torah celebrations began with all the Bnei Yeshiva gathered together before the Alter joined them. They would begin with singing joyous songs reflecting the festive mood of Simchas Torah. After a short while the Alter would join them and with his arrival they would halt their singing. Once it became quiet, the Alter would speak, sharing his thoughts and then the singing would continue.

Rav Moshe Reuven Finkel, the son of the Alter, who married the daughter of Rav Moshe Mordechai Epstein, the Rosh Yeshiva of Slabodka had moved to Eretz Yisroel to join the yeshiva in Chevron. In 5676 (1925) word had reached Slabodka before Succos that Rav Moshe Reuven was very ill. By Shmini Atzeres there was a rumor that a telegram had arrived from Eretz Yisroel that Rav Moshe Finkel was niftar.

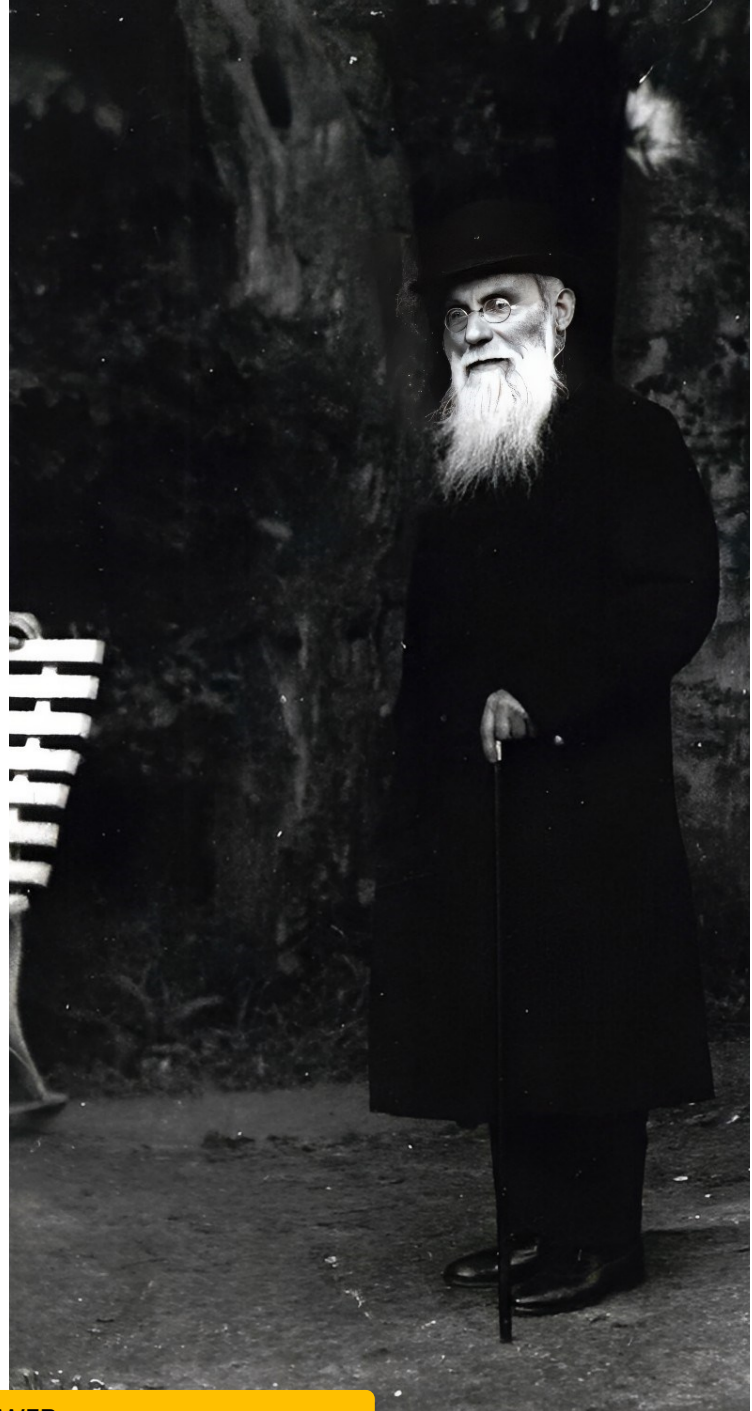
That Simchas Torah when the bnei yeshiva gathered together in anticipation for the Alter's arrival they decided that they would not sing, out of deference to the tragedy of the Alter's son's passing. When the Alter arrived he realized that the festive mood was absent. He got up and presented the following thought.

The gemara in Eruchin tells how the angels ask HaShem why His people do not recite hallel on Rosh Hashana. HaShem responds to them that on the day when the books of life and death are open they need not recite hallel before Me. Tosfos, the commentary, points out that evidently, the angels do recite Hallel even though they, too, are being judged. If they do not recite hallel because of the judgment, how can they expect the Jewish people to recite Hallel. Tosfos, therefore concludes that the prayers of our Rosh Hashana davening should reflect that the angels recite hallel.

The Alter then asked the bachurim; “In our yeshiva, however, the Rosh Hashana prayers reflect that the angels do not recite hallel. If so, how can the angels expect that we should recite hallel when they do not? Just as they do not recite because of the books of life and death, so it is a day of judgment for the Jewish people as well.” The Alter then told the bachurim; “The answer is that although the angels cannot be expected to recite hallel on their day of judgment, but the Jewish people are HaShem's soldiers. If a soldier is told to sing and to rejoice, he does that. And he does it with enthusiasm. Therefore the angels ask why are the Jewish people not reciting hallel, are they not your soldiers? To this HaShem responds that since I am in the mode of judging it is not necessary for there to be singing and rejoicing.” And then the Alter concluded “Although my son passed away, today is a day for us to rejoice with HaShem's Torah. A soldier sings and dances when it is appropriate. Today is appropriate to rejoice, so let us rejoice.”

As told by Reb Yaakov Kamenetsky zt'l to Paysach Diskind

Pictured: The Alter Of Slabodka



THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the Rav who davened for both sides of a din torah (court case), Rav Zilberstein wrote that it is permitted to daven that both balei din (both litigants), have hatzlacha (success). One will win the money that belongs to him and one will win by not violating the severe prohibition of theft.

This week's TableTalk is dedicated in memory of

שמואל בן ישראל

whose yartzeit is **י"ט תשרי**

By Reb Reuven and Naomi Miller

It is also dedicated in honor of the Vilna Goan's yartzeit **זכותו יגן עלינו**

