

## A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



### THE SHAWARMA INCENTIVE

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

In this week's Parsha, the Torah talks about the mitzva to eat the Korban Pesach, which was roasted lamb, along with matza, unleavened bread, and maror, bitter herbs. This holy mitzvah was to eat a wrap filled with roast lamb and herbs. This holy wrap leads us to the following story.

Ari was the owner of a large and successful kosher supermarket in Israel. Over the years, he tried many different incentive programs to increase customer loyalty. He tried giving out gift cards after people spent a certain amount of money. He tried a program where money was donated to a cause of their choice after they spent a certain amount. He tried giving out frequent flyer miles. However all of these incentive programs were not nearly as successful as Ari had hoped.

One day Ari had an idea. He set up a falafel and shawarma stand in the front of the store. A large sign announced that everyone who spent 200 shekels would get a free falafel or shawarma with unlimited toppings and salads. The smell filled the store and the area outside



### DON'T WEAR YOUR FIRST PAIR OF TZITZIS

Gleaned from the thoughts of the Alter of Kelm

Everything in this world has a good side and another side. This even includes childhood education. Naturally, it is good and critically important. It is a major component that guarantees the continuity of our people. Nevertheless, it comes with a pitfall which if left unattended can become counterproductive. Things that we learn as children become part of our worldview. If these perspectives that enter our mind as children are left alone and not revisited, our worldview becomes influenced by childish conceptions. The important basics of Yiddishkeit taught to a child become embedded in that child's view and as he matures, those childish views become his basis for Judaism. We can appreciate that the foundations of Judaism are sophisticated ideas and highly nuanced. It would therefore be no wonder if a child who received a proper Jewish education grows up thinking that Judaism is based on childish conceptions.

Just as the child who receives his first pair of tzitzis at the age of three continues to get larger and larger tzitzis as he continues to grow, so should the lessons he learned at the age of three must to continue to grow as his mind develops.

Let us consider the following example.

The teaching of our Sages that the world was created for the honor of HaShem is a primary concept in understanding who we are as a people. This notion defines our national mission and gives purpose to everything we do. A first or second grader learning this basic concept has a picture in their mind that HaShem wants to receive honor from mortal beings. This child probably thinks that we

the store.

To Ari's delight, the incentive program was a huge success. It brought more sales than ever before. He was delighted at the huge surge in sales.

But his joy was tempered with feelings of doubt.

Ari understood why this particular campaign was successful. In fact, that was the reason he thought of it.

People were spending so much more with this campaign because they were coming to the store with the intention of eating lunch or dinner after they shopped. They were shopping on an empty stomach with the intention of eating the delicious shawarma or falafel right after.

He was familiar with a 2015 study by the University of Minnesota's Carlson School of Management, cited by Forbes Magazine, that when people shopped when they were hungry, they tended to spend much more.

The whole purpose of offering the large meal incentive was to ensure that people came to shop hungry. And because of that, people were unwittingly spending much more.

Ari was not sure if this incentive was Glatt Yosher, perfectly ethical.

On the one hand, he was not telling them to spend the extra money; they were spending money of their own free volition. Also, any store can do it, so it was not necessarily unfair competition.

But on the other hand, he was subtly tricking people into spending more. Perhaps that was wrong.

Ari had this question sent to Rav Zilberstein. What do you think? According to the Torah, is this incentive program permitted?

See Upiryo Matok Shemos Page 130



“Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase.”



are to laud HaShem with praises and say how great He is because everybody likes to hear how wonderful they are; so HaShem is no different. We can appreciate how this child may grow up with a sense of disdain for Yiddishkeit.

Let us attempt to correct this childish conception. Our Sages say that this world was to bring 'kovod' to HaShem, or alternatively, we are to fill the world with His 'kovod'. Kovod could be translated as honor. However, in this context let us translate it as gravitas or grandeur.

A short frail elderly man enters the study hall of a yeshiva that is filled with 1000 yeshiva students. The entire hall becomes hushed and all stand up and you can hear a pin drop. Any person witnessing this scene is filled with awe. He will take a gasp and in a quiet tone ask the fellow next to him "Who is this person?" It is impossible to witness this scene without being overcome with a feeling of 'kovod'.

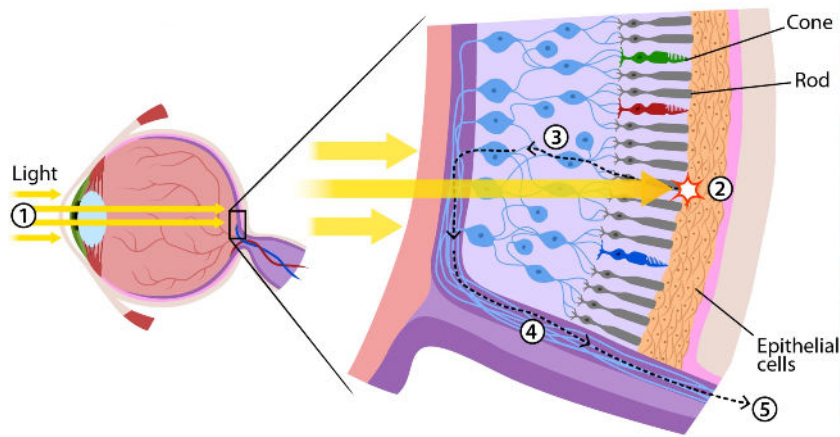
HaShem created a world in which He placed Man to give Man the opportunity to recognize Him. When Man recognizes HaShem for Who He is, he will be overcome with the 'kovod' of HaShem. HaShem's kovod is always ready to appear if we are only ready to acknowledge it. HaShem made a world and filled it with incredible infinite wisdom and presented it to Man for Man to gasp and exclaim "WOW!". When that happens we have brought kovod to His Name.

Before taking us out of Egypt to become His own people HaShem brought a year of plagues upon Egypt. They were not merely to punish the Egyptians. HaShem wanted to "WOW!" us. With every plague against the Egyptians He embedded an acute awareness within every Jew of His Existence.

Our purpose as the people of HaShem is to make that realization of HaShem's Existence a reality. We will continue doing so until the world will be filled with His awareness as water fills the ocean.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

**Paysach Diskind**



## SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

### EYE-MAZING!

In this week's Parsha, the Egyptians could not see during the plague of darkness. So let us learn a bit about some fascinating aspects of the power of sight and our eyes.

Our body has many different organs. The most complex organ is our brain. The second most complex organ is the eye. Each eye is made up of over 2 million working parts. Sight is so complex that scientists say that half of the human brain is devoted to processing our vision. Imagine a computer where half of the computer's memory was used for just one application. That is how complex our sight is.

The truth is that we actually see with our brains, not our eyes. Our eyes function like a camera, capturing light and sending data back to the brain. We see after our brain processes what the eyes capture. Interestingly, we see things upside down because the cornea bends the light entering the eye - it is our brain which turns the image right side up.

What are all these complicated parts of our eyes? The back of the eye is lined with a thin layer called the retina. This is where the photoreceptors are located. Photoreceptors are special cells in the eye's retina that are responsible for converting light into signals that are sent to the brain. If you think of the eye as a camera, the retina would be the film. The retina also contains the nerves that tell the brain what the photoreceptors are "seeing."

There are two types of photoreceptors involved in sight: cells shaped like rods and cells shaped like cones.

Rods are sensitive to light levels and help give us good vision in low light. Rods are 500 to 1,000 times more sensitive to light than cones. Because of the rods, our eyes can detect even a tiny amount of light - as low as a single photon. In addition, in the right conditions and lighting, humans can see the light of a candle from 1.6 miles away. The retina has approximately 120 million rods.

Cones give us our color vision. There are six million cones. What is fascinating is that the cones allow us to see just three colors Red, Green, and Blue. But the brain mixes these three colors to allow us to distinguish between 10 million different colors. Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch makes the following fascinating observation. The Torah only mentions three colors, Adom, Yarov, and Kachol, Red, Green, and Blue. (He says argaman is not a color but a type of purple-dyed wool). This is because all colors are based on these three.

Our eyes have extremely high resolution. To appreciate this, let's look at a camera. Megapixels (MP), which translates to "one million pixels," dictate how much detail your camera's sensor can capture. The higher the megapixel number, the more potential detail can be captured within an image. As of 2023, the best cameras in the world have around 100 megapixels. But

if one of our eyes were a digital camera, it would have 576 megapixels. This means that our eyes have 500 percent more resolution than the greatest camera. All of this detail is processed by our eyes which weigh just under one ounce. In contrast, the world's lightest camera weighs a bit more than 16 ounces.

The eye is the fastest-moving muscle. Hence, the phrase: "In the blink of an eye." It can contract in less than 1/100th of a second. Our eyes are also the most active muscles in our body.

We know that our blood transports oxygen to all the parts of our body. But for the eyes, there is a problem. It is especially important that there be no blood in the front parts. The parts at the front of the eye need to be transparent in order to let the light shine into the eye, thus enabling vision. However, blood is an opaque red color. If blood flowed directly to the front parts of the eye, we would be blinded. So Hashem solved the problem by making the cornea, the front of the eye, the only part of the body that receives its oxygen directly from the air, not the lungs. The front of the eyes does not need blood to receive oxygen.

Tears produced by the lacrimal gland keep eyes moist and provide a protective shield against dirt and dust. We have to blink to cleanse and moisten the eye. Each time the eyelids close, salty secretions from the tear glands are swept over the surface of the eye, flushing away small dust particles and lubricating the exposed portion of the eyeball. On average, the human eye blinks 12 to 20 times every minute. (I bet you just blinked!).

It's impossible to sneeze with your eyes open. There's no definitive clinical data to explain why we close our eyes when we sneeze. Some researchers think that it could be to protect the eyes from irritants that are being expelled by our bodies with a sneeze.

Although eyes may look the same, no two are exactly alike. This is why our eyes, like fingerprints, can be used to identify us.

Because the eyes are so important for us to be able to process what is happening around us, Hashem made it so that eyes often heal very quickly. An eye scratch may heal faster than a cut on your skin would. A scratch on the eye usually heals within 48 hours. What's very interesting is that there are NO pain nerves inside the eye. You could have serious eye conditions, like glaucoma and macular degeneration, and not know it.

Let's close with a fascinating fact. Brown eyes are blue underneath. Consequently, a person can receive surgery in order to make their brown eyes blue.

Thank you Hashem for the gift of Eyes!

## “TAAVAH CANNOT BE MEHADRIN”

We know that Pride of The Farm makes delicious ice cream. But did you know that there is a fascinating backstory to this?

Pride of The Farm was established by Rabbi Yosef Tendler, whose commitment to Cholov Yisroel was encouraged by Rabbi Aharon Kotler of Beth Medrash Govoha in Lakewood, NJ, a town that, at that time, faced challenges in procuring Cholov Yisroel milk. When Rabbi Tendler relocated to Baltimore in the early 1960s, he remained devoted to the stringencies of Cholov Yisroel. His firsthand experience compelled him to establish the Foundation for the Preservation and Perpetuation of Torah Laws and Customs, Inc., more commonly known as Pride of the Farm.

His mission was lofty. He sought only to help others by distributing high-quality dairy products with uncompromising kashrus standards to areas lacking reliable Cholov Yisroel. All proceeds of Pride of the Farm sales, after covering the costs, were allocated to promote the advancement of Torah education and practice.

At the request of a close family member, Rav Tendler made a special run of Cholov Yisroel ice cream as a one-time project. Others heard about this, and asked that he start mass-producing ice cream for the public. Rav Tendler felt that he should not do this, since his aim was to supply the community with Cholov Yisroel as a halachic stringency. Ice cream is simply taavah (pursuit of materialism) and didn't fit into the Milk Fund's mission. However Rabbi Moshe Heinemann advised Rav Tendler that if he didn't supply the ice cream, people would not be careful to use Cholov Yisroel in any other products either. Rav Tendler accepted this argument. Although Rav Tendler agreed to produce the ice cream, he printed, "See Tosafos Kesubos daf kuf daled amud aleph, which says pray that Torah should penetrate your innards, and pray that delicacies should not penetrate your innards." He had to eventually drop those words, since people were apprehensive, taking them to mean, "Kosher - but!" Nevertheless, he was careful to print only the word kosher, not mehadrin, since, as he said "taavah (pursuit of pleasure) cannot be mehadrin."

Meir Perlmutter tells about the time, around 1990, that Rav Tendler came to Ner Yisrael with a recently purchased used car. But a few days later Rav Tendler was back to his old station wagon. When questioned, Rav Tendler admitted that he had thought he had a handle on gashmius (materialism), but when he realized that he was having too much enjoyment from the new car, he returned it.

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### THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about giving a friend a heads up that he is being observed by a potential father in law, Rav Zilberstein answered as follows. If the young man is able to put on his best behavior, that means he has the potential to act that way. Therefore it is permitted to tell him that he is being observed. It would be best to add, "I hope that you have the good middos that the man is looking for."

This week's TableTalk is dedicated in honor of my wife  
**Bonnie**  
for all the wonderful work she does for the community.

By Joey Pollak

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