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# GROWTH

## At The SHABBAT TABLE

BS"D  
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### PARSHAT KEDOSHIM

#### Even You

I heard a powerful idea from R' Shlomo Farhi. If you had to guess, what do you think would be the top reason that people stumble into sin?

While there can be many answers and explanations, one undeniable truth is that so often, especially today, people can grow despondent and feel, "What does it matter, anyway? Maybe for the big rabbi or for the big tzaddik it makes a difference, but I'm just a regular person..."

To dispel this notion, Hashem has Moshe gather the entire Jewish nation for them to all hear the following opening phrase: "You shall be holy, for I, Hashem, your G-d, am holy" (19:2). Hashem is essentially conveying a timeless message for every Jew in every generation to carry. There is no such thing as just a "regular Jew;" each of us can live with purity and holiness. Every soul is a spark of the Divine, and no matter what, Hashem is always inside every one of us. Would anyone in their right mind disgrace a *Sefer Torah*? It's not even a question. Never forget that a soul is much holier than a scroll, and we are never to despair or waste away our unlimited potential.

#### What's for Breakfast?

"You shall not eat upon the blood" (Vayikra 19:26).

This *pasuk* can't be understood just as prohibiting the consumption of blood, since the Torah already wrote that clearly in last week's parsha. Chazal have many ways of expounding and understanding the halachic ramifications of this verse, one of which is brought down in Berachot 10b: *The aforementioned pasuk comes to teach that one should not eat in the morning before having prayed "upon his blood,"* i.e. before having prayed over his wellbeing.

Many of us are just used to starting off the day in *shul* and only eating afterwards, but why exactly is it a requirement to postpone breakfast until after *shacharit*?

Perhaps we can suggest the following, a thought that I find to be profound. To introduce, why is it that we have three *tefillot* every day, spread throughout the day? Wouldn't once a day suffice? Consider the following: why do you have to eat three meals a day (along with occasional snacks)? The answer is simple: the body needs food to break down into usable energy in order to function, and one meal just isn't enough to fuel the incredibly complex organism for the whole day. In a similar vein, prayer is the same way from a spiritual perspective. We were sent down to this world to be Hashem's messengers, each of us through our own talents and situations, but sometimes life can become distracting or overwhelming. The first and foremost priority is to connect to our Creator and fortify a deep and meaningful relationship with Him, and conversing with G-d in *tefillah* is vital for that bond. Talking to Hashem is nutrition for the soul; without it, the *neshamah* begins to starve and long for that sublime attachment. Understanding this, Chazal instituted prayers to be set for every morning, afternoon, and evening – so every Jew can spiritually recharge and boost authenticity and positivity throughout every day.

As Jews, we live an artful balance between the physical and spiritual, the body and the soul. It is interesting to note that the wording of the *pasuk* wasn't "*do not eat before praying*," but rather "*do not eat upon the blood*." In Jewish thought, blood represents the physical realm. Perhaps the reason we place a strong emphasis on praying before eating in the morning is to start the day with a symbolic highlight of our main focus in the world – our spiritual ambitions. By holding off on the bagel for a bit, we display that as much as we value the physical world and the importance of everything it offers, we choose to tune in to what really matters most and satiate the core of our true essence first.

*This week, try challenging yourself to make your personal tefillah experience a more momentous and uplifting one. Maybe it can be to commit (bli neder) to focusing more kavanah on a specific passage in the siddur, maybe it can be to thank Hashem for 10 detailed areas in your life before starting to pray, or maybe to ask for different things between shacharit, mincha, and arvit so as to avoid falling into habitual lip-service. Try taking a small step in the right direction, and see how it enhances your day and makes your breakfast a much more enjoyable and gratifying one.*

Le'iluy Nishmat: Shmuel Ben Chana

**Refuah Sheleimah, b'toch she'ar cholei Yisrael:**

Ariel Ben Frida    Frida Bat Yaffa    Rahamim Ben Shifra    Chana Bat Malka  
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Chana Malka Bat Rivka Sima    Yisrael Meir Ben Daphne Bruria

**"When it comes to gratitude, there is no expiration date."**

(R' Yaniv Meirov quoting R' David Yosef)