

Good Shabbos Everyone. Reb Mordechai Dov Twersky, known as Reb Mottel Hornisteipler was a holy man who was known to eat very little. Once, however, when Reb Mottel stopped at an inn for a meal while traveling, the holy man tasted his soup and then ate the entire bowlful. To the further surprise of his Chassidim, Reb Mottel asked the innkeeper if there was any more soup.

The innkeeper was delighted that the distinguished Rebbe was enjoying the soup so much, and so the host hurried to serve Reb Mottel another bowl. When that bowl was finished, Reb Mottel asked if he could have more, and after the next serving was finished, Reb Mottel asked if perhaps there was any more soup to be had. Finally, the innkeeper returned from the kitchen and apologetically told the Rebbe that the pot was empty.

When the Rebbe and his Chassidim resumed their travels, the Rebbe explained how he had suddenly developed such a hearty appetite. "When I tasted the soup, I realized that they [the kitchen staff] had mistakenly put kerosene (a fluid for burning) in the pot! I knew that if the innkeeper would have tasted it and realized that they had served such soup to me, the innkeeper would have been very angry with the cook. I did not want her [the cook] to be distressed on my account..."(Gut Voch, Rabbi A. Barash p.50)

From this amazing story, we see how the righteous eat for the right reasons. As the verse in Proverbs states "A righteous person eats to satisfy his soul..."(Mishlei 13:25) Reb Mottel ate not because he loved the taste of the soup. Reb Mottel ate in order to save someone from embarrassment. Reb Mottel ate with the pure intent of doing a mitzvah and serving Hashem.

In our Torah portion this week Bereishis, we read about the importance of eating for the right reasons. The Torah tells us "*Hashem G-d took the man and placed him in the Garden of Eden, to work it and to guard it. And Hashem G-d commanded the man saying: Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Bad, you must not eat thereof; for on the day you eat of it you shall surely die.*" (Bereishis 2:15-17) Hashem had given Odom and Chava plenty to eat in the Garden of Eden, as Hashem said "*Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat.*" (2:16) Chava, however, took the forbidden fruit because it looked tasty, as the verse states, "*And the woman saw that the tree was good for eating and that it was a delight to the eyes...*"(3:6) Odom and Chava did not eat because they wanted to serve Hashem. Hashem had specifically told them not to eat from that tree. Odom and Chava ate because the food looked good. Eating of the forbidden fruit brought bad into the world. Therefore we see that Hashem punished mankind because Odom and Chava ate for the wrong the reasons.

Hashem surely wants us to eat from his creation. However, we must eat for the right reasons. Reb Menachem Nuchem of Chernoble writes in his commentary "Maor Eynayim" that after Odom and Chava ate from the forbidden fruit, good and evil become mixed up in the world. The "Maor Eynayim" tells us that by eating with the proper intent, we have the power to separate good from evil in the world. He explains that food and drink contain sparks of goodness and holiness. When we make a blessing over food and we eat the food with the proper intent of wanting to have strength to serve Hashem, we are able to absorb the sparks of holiness from the food. These sparks feed our souls and give us strength, while the waste product which is pure evil, is released from our bodies. ("Maor Eynayim" Parshas Matos) We see that eating for the right reasons thus has a tremendous power to elevate the soul.

Our lesson for this week is therefore the following: We have the power to correct the mistake of Odom and Chava. Odom and Chava brought evil to the world through eating for the wrong reasons. We, on the other hand, can unite the sparks of holiness in world by eating for the proper intent. Therefore, our goal in eating should be for spiritual elevation, rather than pure physical pleasure.

On Shabbos, it is a mitzvah to eat special foods, in order to honor the holy day. We gather around the table with family and guests to share in good wine, challah, fish, chicken soup, chicken and potato kugel, etc. As we mentioned, the "Maor Eynayim" explains that the taste of food is actually the sparks of holiness being released. Therefore on Shabbos, we can raise ourselves spiritually even more by eating tasty food with the proper intent.

In order to get the most out of life, we should view eating as a way to grow spiritually, rather than just a source of pleasure. Our challenge is to eat for the right reasons. Odom and Chava brought bad to the world by eating for the wrong reasons. Let us elevate ourselves and unite the sparks of holiness in the world by eating for the right reasons. **Good Shabbos Everyone.**