

Good Shabbos Everyone. In 1945, after World War II, the Vizhnitzer Rebbe came to Budapest Hungary, to comfort the countless Jews who had lost their families, friends, and possessions as the result of the horrible war. As the Rebbe made his way around the city, a group of young Holocaust survivors approached him.

With great sincerity and heartache, the Jewish men told the Rebbe that they felt guilty for having eaten non-kosher food throughout their time in the camps. *"Perhaps we should have been stronger,"* said one of the young men with remorse. *"Perhaps we could have survived without eating the food from their kitchens. What should we do to repent for our sins?"*

The Rebbe was touched by their sincerity. He was quiet for a few moments and then he began to cry. He took the hand of one of the young men and clasped it warmly in his own hands. *"The only reason you and your friends ate the treifah (non-kosher) food was so that you should survive, is that not so?"* The young man nodded yes.

"Surely the reason you felt you had to eat the food was because of the commandment "And you shall live by them [the commandments] (Leviticus 18:5)," said the Rebbe. Again the young man nodded. (The Torah commands us to violate all but three types of mitzvahs in order to save a life.)

"The Germans did not give anyone a morsel of food more than what they needed for survival," said the Rebbe. *"Thus in fulfilling the commandment [of saving your lives], you fulfilled it to the exact specifications required in Halachah (Jewish Law). In Heaven you will be rewarded in full measure for your observance of this sacred mitzvah."* "I only wish," cried the Rebbe, *"that the eating and drinking that I do for the purposes of a mitzvah (such as eating matzoh on Pesach) should be as perfect and as holy as your eating was!"* (R. P. Krohn)

We read about the importance of kosher eating in our Torah portion this week *Shmini*. The Torah describes in great detail the animals and the types of fish and birds we may and may not eat. Rashi explains that Hashem prescribed a special diet of kosher food for the Jews, so that we maintain our holy status. Non-kosher food clogs the spiritual arteries of a Jew, making it difficult for holiness to circulate. We are the Special Nation, so we have a special diet.

The following amazing true story illustrates the power of kosher food to open up our hearts to spiritual growth and happiness. The Weinberg family lives in Nevada, where although there are many Jews, most of them have not yet been introduced to traditional Judaism. Like their neighbors, the Weinberg family had little connection with Torah true Judaism. All of this changed as the result of an incredible twist of circumstances.

Several years ago, the Weinbergs had a baby boy. Early on, the Weinbergs noticed that the boy often had trouble breathing. After the condition continued, the Weinbergs brought their boy to a doctor. The doctor was perplexed; he did not know what to prescribe for the boy. The parents turned to specialists. After a battery of tests they too were dumbfounded. Several treatments were tried but none worked. The Weinbergs never gave up hope, however, that their son would somehow fully recover and be a normal healthy boy.

After several thousands of dollars and many tears, the Weinbergs realized that they had exhausted all traditional avenues of medical treatment. With nowhere else to turn and nothing to lose, the Weinbergs turned to alternative medicine. As the name suggests, alternative medicine is an approach in medicine, which uses non-traditional ways to treat and cure illnesses.

The Weinbergs had no idea what they were in for when they brought their boy in for treatment by an alternative medicine practitioner. The clinic suggested a very unusual treatment, a treatment which the Weinbergs had never expected: The Weinbergs should feed their boy kosher meat! The Weinbergs had never kept kosher before, and they had never seen the importance of eating kosher meat. Yet, they had tried everything else, so they were willing to try kosher meat.

The Weinbergs were instructed to buy real kosher meat; Hebrew National would not do. Where would the Weinbergs find kosher meat in the middle of the desert? Enter Chabad Lubavitch... The Weinbergs turned to Chabad to ask them where they could find kosher meat.

Soon after, the Weinbergs began giving their son only kosher meat. The results were miraculous! The condition in the lungs of the boy cleared up! The doctors called it a medical miracle. They had never seen such success.

The Weinbergs were overjoyed by the newfound good health of their boy. They were very grateful to Chabad for helping them buy kosher meat. The Lubavitcher Chassidim had been so friendly and supportive during the trauma that the Weinbergs experienced. Little by little, the Weinbergs found themselves pulled to traditional Judaism. Led by Mrs. Weinberg, the Weinberg family began to learn about the beauty of Shabbos, kosher eating, Torah learning and spirituality. In order to be closer to the Chabad shul so that they could walk to shul on Shabbos, the Weinbergs sold their home and bought a new home closer to the shul. As we read these words, the Weinbergs are growing more and more in their Torah observance. Today they recognize that it was the kosher meat which opened up their hearts and souls to be able to feel the holiness of traditional Judaism. (as heard from R. Wolfberg, names and some details have been changed)

Although we really do not know the reason why we must eat kosher, our souls definitely feel the difference. Hashem created the Universe and all that is in it. He gave the Jews the unique job of maintaining the spiritual guard over the world. In order best to be able to carry out our Holy mission in life, we must eat the right foods. Kosher eating is the special diet for the Special Nation. **Good Shabbos Everyone.**