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Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim

IN THE HEART OF THE OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM

Ha-Rav Shlomo Aviner on...

28 Shevat 5768

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Be Slim!

Be slim! I'm not worried about beauty, for there is no arguing about appearances. Rather, I am arguing about health and life itself. Obesity causes all sorts of malevolent illnesses, amongst them heart disease, the leading cause of death in the world. So please, take off weight! Get off that fat! With every gram you take off, you add several hours to your life. That's right. I'm not exaggerating. So please run away from tasty fast foods, full of salt, sugar and fat. They're poison! They steal a lot of hours of life from you. Also don't believe in wonder diets. They're nonsense and a waste of money. Rather take off a bit of weight each day. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shines more and more unto the perfect day" (Mishlei 4:18). In the end, you will be slim.

Please keep a daily chart. Eat normally, and only at meal time. Avoid between-meal snacks, but water is good to drink. Drink at least eight cups of water every day. The best food in the world is fresh vegetables with peels. Eat a lot of delicious salad. Fruits are also something wonderful. Fresh fruit with a peel, dried fruits, prunes, carob and raisins -- but not a lot because of the sugar. Altogether, even healthy food should be consumed in moderation, apart from vegetables, which are unlimited. "On all other nights we eat all the other vegetables." Grains are important. In other words, whole wheat bread, spelt, oats, brown rice, millet, whole wheat crackers. Yet one should not eat white-flour products like bread, noodles, macaroni, cake, cookies, and all sorts of sweet and salted baked items. The meaning of "not" is "not at all", or very little, and the less the better. Milk products - certainly, but milk, yoghurt and leben should be low fat, as well as white cheese and yellow cheese. The

“meat and fish and every delicacy” of the Shabbat refers to lean meat, like poultry, and lean fish, but not fatty meat, organ meat, sausage or eggs.

There’s a story of a good-hearted soul who saw someone stranded with his car alongside a road, and made a great effort to extricate him from his plight. “I am very grateful,” said the driver, and took out a large sum of money from his wallet. “Perish the thought,” said the goodhearted soul. “In that case,” said the driver, “I’ll give you something worth more than money. I own a sausage factory, and I’ve got some advice for you: Never eat sausage if you want to live.”

You can get the fat you need from vegetables, such as soy, sunflower seeds and techina, but do so in moderation, because they have so many calories. Water! Drink lots! A quart or two per day. Stay especially far away from candies, chocolate, sweet drinks, cakes and snack foods. Don’t cry. I haven’t decreed that you must be an ascetic. I’ve left you a great many very tasty foods. And altogether, being slim is a delicious feeling.

Obviously, don’t smoke! It goes against the Torah, and it’s just plain poison. Do a lot of physical exercise. If your destination isn’t too far off, get there by walking fast on foot. Take the stairs rather than the elevator or escalator. Keep daily tabs. Search your soul, and watch over your body. The two go together. “The soul is yours; the body is your handiwork.”

[Be-Ahavah U-Be-Emunah – Parashat Bereshit 5767]