

LIKE CHEESE CAKE

by Rabbi Label Lam

Shevuos is almost here and cheese cake production is in high gear. It's a time to associate the Torah with something sweet and rich with good flavor. What flavor does the Torah have?

Rabbi Shimon Schwab ztl. reported having heard the Chofetz Chaim ask rhetorically that if the Manna tasted just like whatever the individual thought it tasted like then what flavor was the Manna if someone had no thought? The Chofetz Chaim posited that if one does not think then there is no taste. Most probably that applies to Torah and life and marriage and lots of things in general. The flavor of a thing depends upon the thought of the receiver

Just to add some spice to life it may be worthwhile to cogitate on the words of the Chovos HaLevavos in Shaar Cheshbon HaNefesh, the Gates of Introspection where he provides a suggested list of 30 things a person could and should contemplate regularly. Here is #5:

To bring oneself to an accounting for delaying coming to understand the book of G-d's Torah, and his being contented not to grasp its matters. And one would not do this for a book that was sent to him from a king. If he had a doubt as to its meaning due to its unclear handwriting or words, or due to the depth of its matter, or its subtlety, or confusing mix of subjects or its enigmatic words. Rather, he would apply his whole heart and mind to understand its meaning, and would greatly pain himself until he understood its intent.

(Marpe Lenefesh commentary: The book Orchos Tzadikim (Shaar Zechira) ends off: "Without a doubt, if there was in his city even the lowest of the lowest person who knew how to explain the part of the letter he did not understand, he would hurry to go to him and would not be embarrassed.

If he does this to understand the words of a weak, mortal man like himself, how much is it his duty to do many times more than this until he understands the book of G-d, which is his life and his salvation (from eternal death), as written "For it is your life and the length of your days" (Devarim 30:20). How did you permit yourself, my brother, to hide from it, and to content yourself from it with that which is readily familiar of its matter and revealed of its surface meaning, and you were lenient with (knowing) the rest.

Rabbi Mendel Kaplan ztl. who taught in Chicago for many years but who later left a lasting imprint from his long and colorful career as a Rebbe in Philadelphia Yeshiva, once stood before his class and in his hand he held a Sefer, Razi'el HaMalach. He told his students, "You see this Sefer!? It was

written by a Malach- an angel!"They sat in stunned silence!" Then he lifted up a Chumash and said, "You see this Sefer!? It was written by HASHEM!" If one approaches the Yom Tov of Shevuos with that simple awareness, then the reception of the Torah will certainly be more delectable just **like cheese cake**. DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and [Torah.org](https://torah.org).