



WE'VE ALL BEEN DUPED!

BRACHA GOETZ

WE'VE ALL BEEN DUPED! We thought we were eating food when we really weren't. According to Google, food is defined as "any nutritious substance that people or animals eat or drink or plants absorb in order to maintain life and growth." Typical American snack food like chips, soda, and donuts, for instance, don't maintain life or growth. I take that back. They do make people grow in certain ways, but not exactly helpful ones.

It's easier and quicker to see the harmful effects of soda, for example, on a plant than on an animal or human. Ever try watering a plant with soda? Give this experiment a try some time on a plant you don't like. Maybe an annoying weed you don't want around? See how long it takes before it's gone.

The stats are shocking. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than 42% of adults in the U.S. are obese. Including those who are obese, over 73% of Americans are considered to be overweight. And these stats were from *before* the pandemic, *before* many stayed home for months, eating endless snack "food."

There has been a huge surge in Type II diabetes which can result from being overweight. Other consequences include

high blood pressure, high cholesterol, heart disease, stroke, osteoarthritis, several types of cancer, breathing problems, and depression—which can all lead to increased mortality. A new book, *Hooked: Food, Free Will, and How the Food Giants Exploit Our Addictions*, by former *NY Times* investigative reporter Michael Moss documents how the food industry has purposely sought to turn us into overweight food addicts for their own steady profit. He explains in the book how the Standard American Diet (SAD) is designed by chemical researchers in the food and beverage industry to be addictive.

As with tobacco and cocaine, which are also very addictive substances, highly processed food is derived from naturally occurring plants but stripped of the components such as water, fiber, and protein that slow its absorption into the bloodstream. The most addictive “food” generally has large amounts of trans and sat fat combined with an excess of refined carbohydrates. This concentrated combination is not found in nature, where natural food may be quite sweet or fatty, but not both at once. This triggers an abnormal spike in the pleasure center of the brain which can lead to cravings to overeat, similar to the spike that results from addictive substances like tobacco and opioids. According to food and health writer Susan McQuillan, MS, RDN, “The addictive nature of other substances, such as tobacco and opioids, was denied for decades for some of the same reasons, and these products were heavily promoted to consumers, just like processed foods.”

The American Psychiatric Association defines an addiction as “the compulsive use of a substance or behavior despite its harmful consequences.” When we discover that two thirds of all grocery items currently have added sugar in them,

we can begin to understand how we are being set up to develop food addictions.

According to the CDC, 40% of all cancers are now attributable to obesity—that is, 13 types, including colorectal, pancreatic, liver and kidney cancers. As Dr. Jason Fung, best-selling author of *The Obesity Code*, explains, “Cancer exists in our bodies all the time, but the immune system keeps it in check. Cancer is always trying to grow and spread, and the best defense we have is a healthy diet.” I also read that our immune cells have receptors (which can be imagined as being similar to parking spots) for the vital nutrients we need, and they only function at full capacity when there is a daily supply of these nutrients.

The good news for bad habits, though, is that even those that became ingrained during childhood can still be rewired! It takes about 400 repetitions to form new synapses in the brain that create new habit patterns. When done *playfully*, however, according to research conducted by Dr. Karyn Purvis, it takes only 10-20 repetitions to form these new and improved circuits. Therefore, what’s the quickest way to make positive changes? *Joyfully!*

My newest book for young children, *Let’s Stay Healthy, JOYFULLY* explains why it is important to eat food that is both delicious and nutritious—instead of those that are chemically manipulated to be delicious and addictive. An orange is a gift from G-d that was designed with infinite intelligence and beneficence, while an orange-flavored Tangy Taffy provides nothing good for us besides the immediate sensation. This new book also makes clear why exercise, basic hygiene, and getting enough sleep all help us to stay healthy too—through simple language and bright illustrations that young children

cheerfully digest.

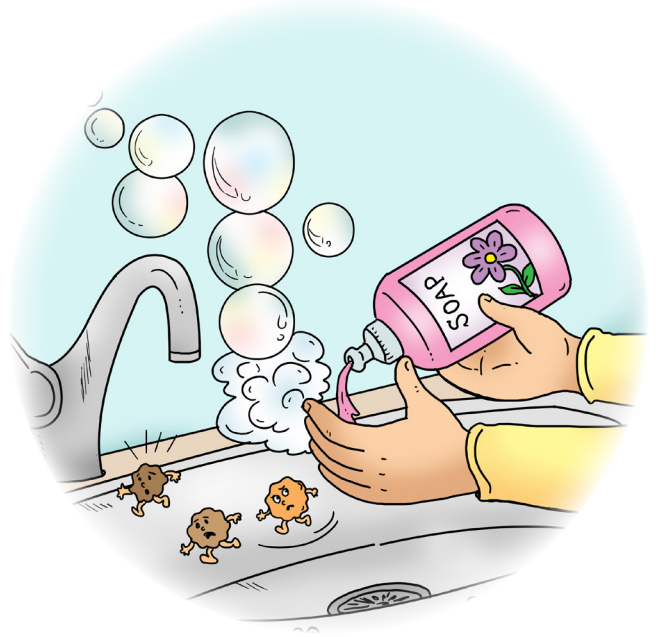
When young people are given the chance to joyfully learn the skills needed to keep the immune system strong from a very early age, we are doing what is within our power to help them lead healthy, happy, and long lives, with which to serve Hashem!

Yes, we were duped, but not any more. We can now become more knowledgeable about how to nourish our Divine essence as well as the priceless vessel in which it is housed. ❧



Bracha Goetz reading to her grandchildren.

Bracha Goetz currently lives in Baltimore with her husband, Rabbi Aryeh Goetz, and they are blessed with wonderful children and grandchildren. Bracha is the author of 40 books that help children’s souls shine, including her newest picture book, *Let’s Stay Healthy*, available at goetzbookshop.com, on Amazon, and in Jewish bookstores. She is also the author of one book for adults, a candid memoir documenting her wondrous journey to become Torah observant and overcome food addictions, *Searching for G-d in the Garbage*. For more on sugar addiction, visit nsheichabadnewsletter.com/archives, searchword: sugar. For more on healthy eating, visit nsheichabadnewsletter.com/archives, searchword: Plant-based.



EXCERPTS FROM LET'S STAY HEALTHY

I try to eat food that comes straight from Hashem,
 'Cause the vitamins and minerals I need are in them.
 Hashem knows exactly how to make things best.
 Hashem's food is better than all the rest!

Sitting around too much isn't great.
 Maybe do some jumping jacks before it's too late!
 Want to do a push-up? How about a squat?
 Hashem made our bodies so they could move a lot.

It's not that I'm trying to make a fuss,
 But I learned that our bodies are on loan to us.
 So it's my job to take good care
 Of the body my *neshamah* gets to wear!

