

OVERINDULGENCE AND GLUTTONY ARE “NISHT” JEWISH VALUES

The Yiddish word for “overweight” is “ibervog.”

A “gourmand” is a “fresser.”

A “zaftikeh moyd” is a full-bodied, sexy girl

“Er est leykekh in der vokh” means “He eats cake on weekdays.”

“Fet vi ah khazer” means “fat like a pig.”

“Men ken makhn fun eynem tswey.” (One can make two out of one. To a big, obese person.)

“Ah langer drong” (A tall, skinny person)

by

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Orson Welles said, “My doctor told me to stop having intimate dinners for four. Unless there are three other people.” And Totie Fields said, “I’ve been on a diet for two weeks and all I’ve lost is two weeks.”

Gluttony means to gulp down or swallow (“shlingen”), over-indulgence and over-consumption of food, drink, or wealth (“raykhkayt”). In Judaism, according to the list of 613 commandments that Jews must keep according to Rambam, gluttony or excessive eating and drinking is prohibited. We’re NOT to eat or drink like a glutton or a drunkard (“shiker”).

In Yiddish we might say, “Men ken kayn khazer nisht zayn” (One cannot be a pig. One has to limit himself in his desires.)

In some Christian denominations, gluttony is considered one of the seven deadly sins. According to a sermon by David Krueger of the First Baptist Church of Linn, Missouri [March 2011], “it is a sin we obviously don’t hear much preaching about these days. Maybe because too many American preachers are chicken...It is a sin that strikes a little too close to home, and most preachers like preaching on their own!”

Krueger continues, "Gluttony is one of those sins we assume other ("anderer") people--big people, I mean really obese ("zaftik") people--are guilty of. It's always easy to find someone heavier than we are and think to ourselves, "See, I'm not that fat" and assume we don't have gluttony. And let's be honest--compared to the other six deadly sins we've look at, how sinful is it really if we eat more than we probably should?" Krueger discusses the big-gulp cups, super-sized burgers and fries and all-you-can-eat buffets.

There are many definitions of gluttony Krueger says, "A glutton is the person who takes the piece of pastry ("dos gebeks") YOU wanted."

Krueger's test to determine if you are guilty of gluttony:

Have you ever said: "Whew I ate too much!" "If I take one more bite, I'll bust." If you've used these phrases, then maybe you are.

In an e-mail to "Conversation Starters," a person wrote, "My pastor preaches against smoking and drinking. He preaches against gossip and divorce. But he stands in the pulpit weighing in at too-much-to-guess. How can a minister (or a rabbi) who can't keep his weight under control condemn anyone else?" Does a minister or rabbi have the right to condemn ("fardamen") anyone who can't keep his weight under control when HE can't keep HIS weight under control?"

The answer: Rabbis and ministers are not infallible and they get caught up in the same societal ills as everyone else. Lenore Skenazy's News Quiz in The Forward, reported that Orthodox Jews, Ralph and Peggy Bergstein now run a weight-loss spa for overweight rabbis.

According to the FDA, the average ("durkhshnit") person needs 2,000 - 3,000 calories a day for maximum health. But the vast majority of Americans are eating nearly double that amount.

The late Allan Sherman stood 5' 6" and at the height of his fame in the early 1960s, he already weighed 225 lbs. By 1973, his obesity had become so awful ("shreklekh") that he could no longer squeeze ("kvetshn") into the driver's seat of a car. Friends had to "schlep" him everywhere ("umetum"). He died at age 49.

Sherman's 45 rpm. single, "Hello Muddah, Hello Fadduh," earned him a Grammy. He mocked, "There Is Nothin' Like a Dame" from Rodgers and Hammerstein's South Pacific:

"We got herring, sweet and sour/ We got pickles, old and young/ We got corned beef and salami and a lot of tasty tongue. / We got Philadelphia Cream Cheese in a little wooden box / What ain't we got? / We ain't got lox!"

And, The Daily Mail reported that a Japanese clothing company, "Fatyo," has replaced the usual sizes (S, M, L, XL) with ones that MAY boost shoppers' self-esteem.

BLACK / TITCH ("titch" is a noun meaning "a small amount, a small or short person")

BLACK / SKINNY

BLACK / FAT

WHITE / SKINNY

WHITE / FAT

WHITE / JUMBO / X

FATYO says they're just trying to make the word fat "cool." But JUMBO? FATYO is not the first Japanese brand to create unusual garment sizes. Perhaps FATYO is reminding the Japanese not to get too hefty--too "zofftic."

BTW, the Japanese are the slimmest people in the developed world. Japanese lawmakers were so concerned about weight gain that in 2009 they set maximum waistline sizes for citizens over 40:

33.5 inches for men and 35.4 inches for women

Per Japanese health coverage, employees get the waistlines checked annually and are sent to health counseling if the scales tip too far.

Marjorie Wolfe's favorite Yiddish expressions:

"Er est vi nukh a krenk." (He is eating like after an illness.) This refers to somebody's voracious appetite.

"Er ken esn far drayen." (He can eat for three.) This refers to a glutton.

"Dar vi a titshkeh." (Skinny, like a bean-pole.)