

How Do You Think It Tastes?

By Ariel Bar Tzadok

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Once upon a time... I recently acquired a very special, delicious food item. It really looks very very tasty and sublime. Its level of kashrut is the highest.

As we were sitting around, we began to debate as to what exactly it was going to taste like. One said he was sure that it was going to have a cherry flavor. Another was equally certain that it was going to have a strawberry flavor. A third said that because it is minty, the fruit flavor will be subdued, and one will not be able to discern which fruit flavor it is, but he was certain that the fruit flavor was grape.

A fourth spoke up saying that there was no proof of there being a minty taste, and he was certain that the food had a strong taste of chocolate. The others agreed that there was no proof of mint, but they also all agreed that it was crazy to think that it would taste like chocolate. They were so offended by the chocolate idea that they were ready to throw him away from the table, and deny him a portion of the food.

Then others started to chime in, each with their own opinions, as to what the food was going to taste like. Some tried to prove their opinions correct by reading from the list of ingredients. Others were looking at the picture on the package. There were yet others who read written reviews by those who claimed to have already tried the food. I couldn't get anyone to agree! Everyone was convinced that their idea was the only right one, and that everyone else was totally crazy.

Then I chimed in with an idea. I said, why don't we stop all the talk and argument, open the package and each take a taste. This way, we would be able to see for ourselves.

Now, that brought consensus to the group! Everyone thought that my idea was the craziest, and that not only was I dead wrong, but what I said was also considered dangerous. They all agreed and said, how can one taste for oneself, and expect that his personal opinion and experience be trusted? They all believed that no one could taste the food for themselves because that would be sacrilege.

I was dumbfounded. How can tasting the food be sacrilege? Isn't food meant to be eaten? Food and eating go together like hand in glove, no? They all looked at me with disgust. I was told that I was primitive, stupid and unsophisticated. They told me that I did not understand the nature of the discussion. They said that, in the end, they would all agree and decide how the food would taste, and that their decision would be the binding one. The food would taste as they would declare it to taste.

Then, I asked, in what I thought was innocence, what if I or someone else tastes the food and discovers that it really doesn't taste like you think it should?

I was assured that such an outcome could never happen. And to protect people from being tempted to pursue such sacrilege action, they all agreed, in unison, to not only not taste the

food at all, but that the official, approved taste would be decided upon based on the rule of the majority, even though not one of them has ever tasted the food.

I shook my head in disbelief. No one wanted to taste the food and the enjoy it. Instead, all everyone wanted to do was to argue and fight about that which no one had direct experience or knowledge. I walked away in disbelief, how those who proclaim themselves so smart, were in fact, so very seriously lacking in wisdom and void of the most common sense.

So, what did I do? I went to the store. I bought the food for myself. I didn't pay attention to the package or what was written on it. I prepared it as was appropriate. I recited the proper blessing, and then I indulged. Wow! It was (and is) amazing! I can tell you exactly how it tastes. But, when I went to tell them that they could stop all their arguments, that I could tell them how the food tastes from personal experience, again, in unison, I was told to shut-up and mind my own business.

Again, in unison they told me that direct experience is no way to ascertain what the real taste of the food is. After all, my taste buds could be defective, or maybe I would not describe my sensations accurately, or it is even possible, they tell me, that I might deceive them, and tell them that the food tastes one way, when in fact it tastes another. My personal experiences were for them nothing and meaningless.

I was stunned into silence. No one wanted to listen to me, no one cared. So, I just walked away in silence, went home and prepared myself another portion of the most delicious food I have ever had. I can't believe that those guys are still sitting over there fighting and arguing over what it tastes like. One thing I know for sure, they'll never get it right. They'll never guess it. As long as they do not partake, they will never know what it is like to partake.

So, what more can I say? Those who want to fight and argue, I guess that is what they will continue to do. It doesn't matter whose is right or who is wrong. What matters to them is that they can continue their debate, and so their debate continues.

As for me, I am having guests over for dinner for the best meal any of us are going to have. You're invited too, if you'd like to come. There's only one condition, you have to shut-up and eat, without debate and argument. See for yourself how sweet it is!

Eating can be compared to art. Beauty (and taste) are in the eye (or mouth) of the beholder (eater). No one can say whether or not they like a work of art until they see it. No one can tell what something tastes like until they taste it.

No one should be telling you something that you need to find out for yourself! You can find out for yourself! All you have to do is shut up and eat. Eating requires biting, chewing, swallowing and digesting. 1-2-3-4. Experience, not talk!

Everyone is invited for diner! But if you come, be ready to eat. You can't eat and talk at the same time. Silence your tongue from speech, and open your mouth to eat. See for yourself how sweet it is. God is Art and His Living Word tastes great!