

## Parshat Mishpatim Mysticism of Meat and Milk

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Mrs. Shira Smiles  
Summary by Channie Koplowitz-Stein

The Torah cites the prohibition of eating milk and meat together three times, including once in Parshat Mishpatim. "The *bikurim*/choicest first fruit of your land shall you bring ... you shall not cook a kid in its mother's milk." Let us gain some insight both in the wording of the law and by its pairing with the law of *bikurim*.

This law of *kashruth* is so much a bedrock of our religion that the Midrash uses it as a basis for *Bnei Yisroel* meriting to receive the *Torah*. Man, like the angels, has a godly calling. In animals, all energy is directed toward physical goals. Man, however, is called upon to direct his energies to a higher calling, to make a distinction between that which is absolutely required for sustenance from the actions dedicated to a higher service. Therefore, these two are not to be cooked together.

In this context, Rabbi Nevenzahl discusses why eating meat and milk together, and by extension eating non-kosher food, is so stringent. While all other transgressions remain external to us, food is absorbed into our being. The Torah declares, "The blood is the soul." When we eat that which is forbidden, we are absorbing the negative characteristics into our souls and character. Even Moshe Rabbenu's soul understood this and as an infant he already refused to nurse from a non-Jewish nursemaid. *Targum* translates *tamei* as *satum*/closed off. By ingesting that which is *tamei*, we are blocking godly light from entering our godly soul.

Eating also has the ability to elevate a person, notes Rabbi Nevenzahl. In addition to observing the laws of *kashrut*, eating properly includes self-control and subduing the *yetzer horo*. Unlike an animal who eats instinctively, man must delay his gratification and connect with Hashem before he eats. This brings blessing to the crops, a blessing we bear witness to when we bring the first produce of the land to Hashem's house.

Just as one brings the *bikurim* to the *Beit Hamikdash* but may not bring anything impure into it, so too man brings pure food into his body, his personal *Beit Hamikdash* and must be careful not to defile it says *Letitcha Elyon*. The *Shvilei Pinchas*, citing the *Ben Ish Chai*, explains why we wait after eating meat before eating dairy, yet we wait much less in reverse. Milk represents *chesed*, and meat represents *din*. The Talmud discusses a situation wherein hot food falls on cold food, one being meat, and one being milk, which of the two dominates? We follow the position of Shemuel that the bottom one is the key factor. Hence, if one eats milk, and then meat, the one eaten first, in this case, milk, *chesed*, will become the dominant force. However, if one eats meat, one has to wait until the meat is digested, to allow the 'din' to be totally mitigated before eating milk, *chesed*.

According to our Sages, Adam was meant to be a vegetarian, consuming only milk from the animal kingdom. Through the milk itself, Man would find those sparks of holiness in animals and elevate them. After Adam sinned, he could

no longer elevate the sparks from the milk alone. To eat milk and meat together, would bring 'embarrassment' to the meat, that it needs more steps through *shechita*, and other process to be able to 'raise the sparks.' Just the consumption of milk, achieves this same purpose, and is far less cumbersome. Eating the meat, *din*, is a reminder of the fall of Adam, and the need to elevate the sparks. Thus the ultimate purpose of eating is to sanctify it and herein lies the connection between *bikurim* and *kashrut*. We are commanded to bring gifts of produce to the *kohanim*, and he is to lift it up and wave it, an elevation to sanctity reserved for the *kohein*. But the ordinary person can also elevate the mundane food by separating the meat from the milk and sanctifying the food with *brachot*.

The Tosher Rebbe explains that the kid represents the outer negative forces. Don't let those overpower you. You can maintain your positive control with the way you begin, with your *reishit*, like the first fruit. When you wake up each morning, acknowledge Hashem, recite *Modeh Ani* with the intention that you will be dedicating this day to Hashem. But, adds Rabbi Pincus, note that you are beginning with gratitude, not with *Ani!*

The Ben Melech quotes the Rambam that cooking meat and milk was a hallmark of *avodah zoro!* and is the antithesis of our belief. By taking the fruit of their toil and bringing it to Hashem, *Bnei Yisroel* declared that it was ultimately all from above.

## Rachel Finds Her Voice

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Dr. Esther Shkop

Of all the four matriarchs, Rachel stands out. Perhaps because she was buried alone which may have appeared as if she was spurned, but in fact made it hallowed and revered resting place. In fact, Chazal tell us that she was buried on the way because that would be the route the exiles of Zion would take on the way to Bavel and they would stop there and pray. Rachel would cry for her children and

Hashem would respond only to her and not to the avot and Moshe and Aharon.

The Torah first mentions Rachel when Yaakov arrives in Charan after fleeing from his brother Esav. He approaches the well which evokes an image of femininity, the source of life. The Torah tells us that it was stopped up, foretelling that Rachel would be barren. Three times, the

Chumash mentions that Rachel was the daughter of Lavan, the brother of Yaakov's mother. Rav Hirsh explains that this highlights the familial resemblance. When Yaakov saw Rachel he immediately noted the striking resemblance to his mother and this drew him. Then he raised his voice and cried. Rashi says he saw with prophetic vision that she wouldn't be buried within him.

Continued on page 2



## Rachel Finds Her Voice

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Dr. Esther Shkop  
Continued from page 1

Lavan goes out to greet Yaakov and hugs him and invites him into his home. Yet it was all highly conditional and he essentially turned Yaakov into an indentured servant. The Torah tells us that Rachel was a *yifat toar* and a *yifat mareh*. In all of *Bereishit*, no one is described with both of these expressions except her son Yosef. Rav Hirsh tells us that *yifat toar* indicates external beauty and *yifat mareh* signifies charm, someone who seems to elicit from others their affection and who always sees the best in others. We read how Yaakov worked for seven years for Rachel and how it was, "like a few days in his eyes." Frankly if you want something really badly seven years would seem like seven millennia not days. This teaches us that it was not physical passion that demanded immediate gratifica-

tion but rather love that stemmed from incredible esteem for her.

At the end of the seven years, the *Torah* recounts how Lavan tricked Yaakov and gave him Leah. Initially Yaakov made up with Rachel and gave her special signs, but Rachel gave the signs over to Leah. Why? If Yaakov would have found out that it was Leah, he could have sent her away and she would have been brought to shame. In the culture of those years her father or brothers would have killed her. Rachel couldn't stand by and let this happen.

Leah had children but Rachel was barren. We read how she confronts her husband in a very dramatic way and demands that he bring her children and if not, "I am dead." Rashi draws

the conclusion that one who has no children is considered dead. Yaakov replies, "Am I instead of Hashem?" The Akeidas Yitzchak justifies Yaakov's anger. Rachel deems herself worthless because she has no children but in fact a woman has value regardless of whether she can bear offspring or not. *Peru u'revu* is only one of 613 mitzvot and was given to men. The commentators say that when Rachel saw Yaakov would not do anything, she turned fully to Hashem and prayed from the depths of her heart. When her servant, Bilha, had her second child. Rachel named him Naftali. She declared, "I wrestled and prevailed." She managed to emerge and ascend to a higher state. Then we are told that Hashem remembered Rachel and she was blessed with children.

## Traveling the Journey of Life Tehilim 17 Part III

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Leah Kohn

Most people don't think *loshon hara* is so terrible- "I just said something. I didn't do anything." But *chazal* say it's worse than the three cardinal sins. The first *Bet Hamikdash* was destroyed because of these sins and the exile was 70 years. The second *Bet Hamikdash* was destroyed because of baseless hatred which is expressed through *loshon hara* and the exile is close to 2000 years and still hasn't ended. This is clear evidence that it's not so easy to correct the sin of *loshon hara*.

If we look back at Jewish history we can see that *loshon hara* was the root cause of all our troubles. The sin of first man was *loshon hara*. The snake spoke evil against Hashem and when Adam and Chava listened and ate from the tree of knowledge, reality changed from living in *Gan Eden* to struggling in exile. When the Jewish people worshipped the golden calf after *Matan Torah* there was still a possibility that they would enter Israel and complete the rectification needed before the times of *Mashiach*. But the sin of the spies when they

spoke evil against the land of Israel, spurred all the suffering of exile and delayed the coming of *Mashiach*.

The prohibition of false testimony and speaking *loshon hara* are connected to the power of speech which indicates that speech has both positive and negative powers. Speech can create and destroy worlds. Shlomo Hamelech said, "Death and life are in the hands of the tongue." The sin of first man was caused by *loshon hara* and brought death to the world and the power of speech can also bring life to the world. *Chazal* say the ten commandments correspond to the ten sayings with which the world was created. If we work on our power of speech and perfect it, we can bring back eternal life to mankind. We see this in the process of *galut* and *yetziat Mitzrayim*. In *Mitzrayim*, the power of speech was corrupted. The *Midrash* indicates this when it speaks about the story of Moshe killing the Egyptian through uttering the divine name of Hashem. We see how the power of speech can take away life. The next day Moshe saw

two Jews fighting and he rebuked them. The man then asked him whether he would kill him as he had killed the Egyptian. To which Moshe responded, "Now it is known to me." *Chazal* say he meant to say, I see why they are suffering in Egypt because they speak evil of others.

The commentators teach that up to the point of redemption the Jewish people's speech was in exile; they spoke *loshon hara*. In order to accept the Ten Commandments and commit themselves to *Torah*, the power of speech had to be redeemed. And that happened on the night of Pesach. *Pe sach* stands for a mouth that is capable of speaking and this is the way their redemption is described. At *Har Sinai*, when they said, "We will do and listen," they overcame the decree of death. If not for the sin of the golden calf, they would have lived forever. They reverted to the state of Adam before the sin. We see that when the power of speech is used properly it brings eternal life.