

Parshat Teruma Generating Giving and Getting Gifts

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 Rabbeinu'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 *Letitche 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 zora* 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.

Searching for Hashem in All Aspects of Life

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller

"A lovely deer and a graceful mountain goat..." *Mishlei* tells us that the grace and beauty of a female deer which is real and tangible and something easily envisioned, is what life could be like with the spouse of one's youth. This hints to the relationship between *Bnei Yisrael* and Hashem. Hashem is the chassan and we are His *kallah* and what bonds us together is the *Torah*. The beloved deer evokes the image of the grace and

beauty of a *Torah* life.

"Her breasts will satisfy you..." This refers to the nurturing power of *Torah* which can quench a person at all times. What most people want in life is achievement, connection, and love. What you love about a person is their spiritual traits, the image of Hashem within them. It follows that all human love is an expression of love of Hashem. We have a map which is the

Torah that tells us how to love and be beloved and teaches us what true connection really is.

Malbim brings the famous Gemara that when the deer gives birth, its womb is narrow and at the very last moment a snake emerges, bites her so that she cries out, and then she gives birth. Higher wisdom is compared to this. We search for solutions, we want to understand and find the meaning of life, and when we

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finally give birth after a lot of pain, we reach a level of comprehension. The *Likutei Moharan* describes the feeling of being under pressure whether its due to financial issues, illness, or emotional problems. Your pulse will force the blood up to your heart which is typically described as overflowing with emotion. And then there's the moment when you can just release it all and everything is different. Before a woman gives birth, there's that overwhelming desperation and pressure and then suddenly the baby is ready to come out. During this time, the woman's legs get cold. This tells you that on a spiritual level, when pressure rises you seek relief. Your legs are symbolic of all the things that normally hold you up. But now you must use your mind

which isn't overwhelmed by energy to find solutions and that's where the Torah could speak to you. You have to be able to stand back and ask, "What is it telling me?"

Here's a concrete example. I traveled with my husband to the desert in *Mitzpe Rimon*.

There's someone who does this astronomer tour and he was explaining the stars to us. He was talking to us about how other people look at stars. You could look at it from several angles. Some people will just turn it into something totally external and scientific. They'll measure how many light years away it is and how big it is. The ancients thought the stars actually had power because they were so vast and so awesome. As Jews we could look at the stars, marvel at all that life force and

energy, and see Hashem there. When we recognize how He's running the world and how small we are, there's nothing for us to lose ourselves over. The grace and beauty of *Torah* tells us there's a master of the world and that saves us from being overwhelmed by life and gives us *chizuk*.

Psychology talks about the lack mentality as opposed to the mentality of having. It's not subjective. The mentality of lack is the awareness of an empty space which people try to fill through relationships, money, and status. But in the end the empty space resists being filled with temporal things. What fills it authentically is *Torah*.

Traveling the Journey of Life Tehilim 17 Part IV

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Leah Kohn

Man is described in the *Torah* as a *medaber*. His power of speech distinguishes him from the rest of creation. Although it is a physical ability and if a person's vocal cords are damaged he will not be able to speak, it has a divine aspect. When a child is born, although he possesses the tools to speak, he cannot form words yet as his brain isn't fully developed. We see that the power of speech is the point at which the abstract and physical in man meet. That is why when the *Torah* describes the creation of man, it says- "Hashem formed man from earth," that is the physical aspect of man. "And he blew into him a living soul," that is the divine aspect. "And Adam became a living being," says Rashi quoting *Targum -ruach mimalela*, he turned into a speaking being. The human is the only creature on earth that is a combination of the physical and spiritual. Inanimate objects, vegetation, and animals are purely physical while angels are solely spiritual. Only man is a combination of the two exemplified by speech which makes him unique and the purpose of creation.

In order to speak man needs both physical tools and intelligence to express thought and emotion. Speech has the power to draw us towards physicality or spirituality or ideally create the proper harmony between the two. Words have tremendous power to cause pain and joy and to build and destroy worlds. Therefore, the *Torah* puts great emphasis on using the power of speech in the proper way. It's not easy. Learning the laws and consequences of *loshon hara* can help, but is not enough. We have to bring Hashem into the picture. And the key to avoiding *loshon hara* is to train ourselves to give every Jew the benefit of the doubt. If we are judgmental, it will affect us emotionally and cause us to speak evil against others.

Giving the benefit of the doubt all the time sounds artificial. It's difficult to stretch our imagination to try to find reasons for every seemingly negative behavior. What can help us is something I learned in my teaching career. As a young teacher I was nervous about PTA. I wasn't very comfortable pointing out the failings of my students. So, I started the conversation with positive talk and then

transitioned over to constructive criticism. I saw the parents get a little tense and then they immediately responded with, "Yes, but..." And then came a long explanation as to why their daughter acted the way she did. This taught me how to avoid *loshon hara*. If it's my daughter, no matter what you tell me, I'll find a positive spin on it. Every Jew is a child of Hashem. We are all sisters and brothers. If someone tells me something negative about my sister, she might be right, but I'll find something positive to say.

The more we focus on bringing *kavod shamayim* into this world and understanding that the value of life is not feeding our ego, but submerging it in order to open ourselves up to Hashem and His glory, the easier it will become. On a superficial level, living up to these standard seems very demanding. In truth, it's the key to a peaceful, happy life. Seeing the good in everyone around us eliminates feelings of jealousy and deprivation and engenders the feeling that we are all one family working together to do the will of Hashem.