



Adapted from the sefer חמין במוצאי שבת and חדוותא דזעיר אנפין collections of  
maamarim  
given by the Tolner Rebbe shlita at Seuda Shlishis and Melave Malka

### *Melave Malka Parshas Shemini 5764*

*Parshas Shemini* begins with the establishment of the *Mishkan* and concludes with the *halachos* of *maachalos asuros* - forbidden foods.

We can identify the common denominator of these two topics in light of the famous *peirush* of the *Alshich Hakadosh* (שמות כ"ה:ח) on the *pasuk*.

וְעָשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ וְשִׁכְנָתִי בְּתוֹכָם - and they will build for me a *Mikdash* and I will dwell among them.

בתוכו לא נאמר, אלא בתוכם, בתוך כל אחד ואחד מישראל  
“The *pasuk* doesn’t say וְשִׁכְנָתִי בְּתוֹכָם - I will dwell in it, referring to the *Mishkan* but rather וְשִׁכְנָתִי בְּתוֹכָם - I will dwell among them, within each and every Jew.”

The *Alshich Hakadosh* teaches us that any Jew can sanctify himself to the extent that he will become a *Mishkan* of Hashem, and Hashem’s *shechina* will dwell within him. The basis of a Jew’s body is the food that he eats. Therefore, when *Bnei Yisrael* are *mekadesh* themselves by eating only food that is certified kosher by a *hechsher mehudar*, their bodies will be sustained with *kedusha*. This will enable them to be a *Mishkan* for the *Shechina*.

This concept links the completion of the *Mishkan* to the *halachos* of *kashrus*.



[1]

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When the Torah commands us to refrain from eating non-kosher animals, it uses the language:

אל תשקצו את נפשותיכם בכל השרץ השרץ ולא תטמאו בהם ונטמתם בהם  
(ויקרא י"א:מ"ג)

You should not abominate your souls (by eating) any creeping creature that creeps. You should not defile yourselves with them so that you will become *tamei* (by eating) them.

In *Maseches Yoma* (ל"ט), Chazal focus on the word ונטמתם .

“It was learned in the Yeshiva of R. Yishmael, *aveira* obstructs the heart for the *pasuk* says ונטמתם...ולא תטמאו, don't read it as ונטמתם (referring to *tumah*), but rather as ונטמטם which refers to *timtum* - obstruction of the heart.”

The *Degel Machane Ephraim*, comments on the *pasuk* (דברים י"ט"ז):  
ומלתם את ערלת לבבכם וערפכם לא תקשו עוד - and you shall remove that which covers your heart and you will no longer harden the back of your necks.

“Why does the Torah mention both the heart and the back of the neck in one *pasuk*? What does one have to do with the other?

This can be explained by something that I head from my grandfather (the *Baal Shem Tov zy"ra*). Jews from a certain country wrote to the Rambam asking him to provide them with a source for *techiyas ha'meisim* from the Torah. The Rambam told his student Rav Shmuel Ibn Tibon to answer them.

At one point in his response, Rav Shmuel explains that the way one eats and drinks influences his spirituality.

“According to nature, food and drink are digested and form the blood. If one refrains from excessive eating, and from forbidden or *tamei* foods, his blood will be clear and pure. Therefore, his heart, mind, and life



[2]

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force will be pure. This will enable him to comprehend the source of all life, the G-dliness that gives life to all.

One who takes even greater care to ensure to sanctify his eating according to the ways of Hashem and his Torah, will develop *sechel* that will serve as a foundation that will then sanctify and purify every limb in his body.

The opposite is also true. The person will then develop a polluted and decaying *sechel* consisting of foreign ideas. His *chiyus* takes on the aspect of death, and becomes a primary source of *tumah* that will infiltrate every limb of his body.

Therefore, the *sechel* of Tanaim, *Amoraim*, and masters of *Midos* and the *Chachmei Ha'Mishna* who took care that their *nefesh* shouldn't be contaminated by the bread and wine of the *Yetzer Hara* illuminated the world. *Ruach Ha'kodesh* rested upon them, enabling them to comprehend every difficult statement in the holy Torah."

This is the aspect of **וּמִלֵּתֶם אֶת עֶרְלַת לִבְבְּכֶם וְעֶרְפְּכֶם לֹא תִקְשׁוּ עוֹד** - and the wise will understand this."

In other words, by refraining from eating and drinking in a way that would cause the heart to be obstructed, a person will be free of the stubborn resistance to Hashem's will as represented by the hardening of the *oref* - the back of the neck.

I saw a letter of the Lubavitcher Rebbe zy"va from the year תשי"ב. It was a response to a letter sent by one of his *chasidim* who was serving as a *shaliach*. The Rebbe pointed out that in his letter, the *chasid* didn't formulate his question with the wisdom that was evident in previous letters. Because of this discrepancy, the Rebbe felt that the *chasid* should investigate the *kashrus* of the food in his community.



[3]

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The *chasid* was understandably shaken by the Rebbe's letter and immediately began to investigate the local *kashrus* situation. Initially, he failed to identify any problems. Everything seemed fine. Nonetheless, he persisted in his investigation until he discovered that one manufacturer was lax in implementing a certain stringency.

As we learned above, non-kosher food leads to *timtum ha'lev*, obstruction of the heart. This story teaches us that even laxity in one *chumra* affects the food produced, and the one who eats it, to the extent that the Lubavitcher Rebbe *zy"ta* sensed the influence that laxity in the way his *chasid* formulated a question.

I would like to add that even though today there are *hechsheirim mehudarim* on so many foods, there is another aspect of eating that much be done in the most kosher way. We must learn to control the quantity and frequency of our eating. A person must take care not to eat more than is necessary and to eat at set times.

We find in *Tana D'vei Eliyahu* (רבה כ"ו:ז) "If a person isn't *zoche* to *daven* for mercy so that *divrei Torah* will penetrate his intestines, he should still *daven* for mercy that excessive food and drink shouldn't enter his intestines."

The Rambam (הלכות דעות א-ב) *paskens*,

"Since it is from the ways of Hashem that a person's body be healthy and whole, for it is impossible for a person to understand or know anything about his Creator while he is sick. Therefore, a person must distance himself from anything that damages the body, and habituate himself to eating in ways that strengthen and heal the body.... A person should eat only when he is hungry... A person shouldn't eat until his stomach is entirely full, but only up to three-quarters full...." (עיין שם)



[4]

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Therefore, just as we take care to refrain from eating anything that isn't entirely kosher, we must take care not to consume excessive amounts of food and drink, and to eat at set times.

וכאשר נזהר בזה כל צרכנו, נזכה אי"ה לבנות משכן בלבבנו להשראת השכינה אכי"ר



[5]

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