



Adapted from the sefer חמין במוצאי שבת a collection of maamarim on  
תנא דבי אליהו given by the Tolner Rebbe shlita at Melave Malka

### Melave Malka Parshas Korach 5763

In our Parsha, the Torah says that kodshim (e.g. the meat of korbanos) of Bnei Yisroel are given to the kohanim, "למשחה". The Gemara (זבחים צא.), explains that, "The kohanim are able to eat them in various ways, roasted, stewed, or cooked, and they can add spice, whether chulin or truma... for the Torah says - למשחה, with grandeur, in the manner of kings." In Maseches Sotah, (ט"ו.), Chazal learn from the same posuk that kohanim can eat the שירי המנחה, (their portion of the flour based offerings), by mixing it with wine, oil, and honey.

This halacha teaches all of us how to approach Avodas Hashem. The mitzva of eating kodshim is an avoda, one of many performed by the kohanim. Without the Torah's guidance, many would assume that when the kohen performs the avoda of eating kodshim, he shouldn't mix the kodshim with unsanctified, "chulin", herbs and spices. They wouldn't imagine that he could season the meat of kodshim to enhance its flavor. Isn't this a holy avoda that should be performed with kedusha and prishus, without any thought of worldly desires or pleasures?

Our holy Torah teaches us that the opposite is true. The kohanim are commanded to cook and season the kodshim, in order to eat them with appetite and pleasure.

In Maseches Chulin, Rav Chisda teaches, "the Matnos Kehuna should only be eaten roasted, and with mustard, for the Torah says, למשחה לגדולה. כדרך שהמלכים אוכלים. If a kohen decides to approach the avoda of eating kodshim with asceticism, preparing the meat without spices or flavor, he may imagine that he is eating with kedusha and tahara. How wrong he



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would be! Not only would he not fulfill the mitzva, but he would actually commit an aveira.

This is the appropriate way of life for every Jew. This is the way of the chasidishe communities who follow the teachings of my ancestor, the Baal Shem Tov Hakadosh זי"ע. He taught that we must serve Hashem through our interactions with Olam Hazei. The goal is not to refrain from everything, but rather to elevate every physical item and involvement to levels of kedusha, by doing everything לשם שמים, for the sake of Heaven.

In Tehillim, Dovid Hamelech instructs us, "בכל דרכיך דעהו", to know and connect with Hashem in all our endeavors. The kohanim were commanded to eat kodshim as kings eat their royal dinner, in order to elevate our human desire for culinary pleasure, and connect that desire to its true source.

This is why Gedolei Hachasidus זי"ע warned us not to undertake fasting or self-affliction. In a well-known letter, the Baal Shem Tov זי"ע, writing to his great talmid, the Toldos Yaakov Yosef זי"ע, emphasizes this approach.

"I see from the first two lines of your letter, that your honor feels that he must fast. This caused me great distress. I decree ... with צירוף קודשא that you must not involve yourself with this practice. It is an act of depression and sadness, and the Shechina rests, not in a place of sadness, but in a place of simcha shel mitzva. My opinion is known to your honor, for I have taught you this lesson many times. והיו הדברים that these words should be on your heart."

The Me'or Va'shemesh (דברים הפטרת שבת שובה), writes. "In our generations, The Admor, Harav Ha'eloki Hakadosh my master R. Elimelech of Lizensk זי"ע, commanded us not to undertake additional fasting beyond the fast days mandated by Chazal. We no longer have the strength to bear fasting and affliction, and it isn't possible to reach shleimus through fasting."



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Often, the urge to fast comes from the Yetzer Hora, who wants to ensnare us by weakening our physical strength. In our weakened state, we won't be able to withstand his assaults and deceptions. This is why the tzadikim instruct us to eat and drink as necessary. In fact, the main avoda of a Jew is performed while eating, drinking, and taking care of his physical needs. We must elevate those actions by performing them l'shem shamayim, fulfilling the precept, קדש עצמך במותר לך, (sanctify yourself with those actions that are permissible).

Another danger lies in the path of one who fasts and afflicts himself. The Yetzer Hora may encourage these practices, hoping that they will lead to arrogance and haughtiness. He hopes that his victim will imagine that fasting has made him better, and closer to Hashem, than other Jews. A Jew who falls victim to arrogance is in grave danger of total self-destruction.

Once, R. Elazar of Poltusk, one of the "lions", in the chasidus of Pshischa and Kotzk, (and the son in law of the Gaon, R. Yaakov of Lisa zt"l, author of Nesivos Hamishpat), met a "porush" who sat in the Beis Medrash and fasted from Shabbos to Shabbos. He learned Torah in poverty and deprivation. Sometimes, he would undertake "gulus", (wandering from place to place) and other afflictions that would weaken his physical strength. R. Elazar, with his finely-honed sense of truth, detected that the man's intentions were not truly l'shem shamayim.

R. Elazar sat down next to a man in the Beis Medrash, and remarked, "Did you know that the "porush" over there fasts every Monday and Thursday?" The "porush" overheard this comment, and immediately interrupted his avoda to rebuke R. Elazar. "Do you think I only fast Mondays and Thursdays? I fast from Shabbos to Shabbos!" This reaction clearly revealed the shameful truth. His self-affliction was not l'shem shamayim. He had fallen into the trap of arrogance.



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Someone who tries serve Hashem inappropriately, with fasting and self-affliction, will surely fail. Chazal teach that היושב בתענית נקרא חוטא (one who fasts frequently, is called a sinner). He will also fall victim to arrogance, the worst, and most destructive, of all midos.

Each of us has to learn from this parsha, to serve Hashem through all of our interactions with Olam Hazei. We must eat proper, satisfying meals, with the kavana, that eating and drinking will strengthen us to serve Hashem. Our avodas Hashem will not take the form of fasting and self-affliction, but rather קדש עצמך במותר לך, sanctifying that which is permissible. This will enable us to serve Hashem enthusiastically with our heart and soul, every day of our lives. אכי"ר



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