

KASHRUT BULLETIN # 53

WHOEVER GUARD HIS MOUTH AND HIS TONGUE, GUARDS
AS WELL HIS SOUL FROM SUFFERING (Mishle 21:23)

There is no sin so severe as forbidden foods, since entire Jewish communities were lost and turned to evil ways because of eating treifos and neveilos.

(Divrei Chayim-Yoreh Deah)

THE PROBLEMS IN THE FIELD OF NIKKUR (PURGING ANIMAL MEAT FROM FORBIDDEN FATS)

Blessed be the Creator and extolled be He who formed all worlds, through whose help we approach the task of writing these few pages aimed to save our brethren Israel of the great pitfall upon which they stumble inadvertently every day: eating Chelev, the severity of which is explicit in the Holy Torah, and which any beginner, when he starts to learn Leviticus, reads with fear and trepidation the explicit verse in the portion of TZAV (LEVITICUS) which reads: "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: Any fat of an ox, sheep, or a goat, you shall not eat ... for whoever eats fat from an animal from which you may sacrifice an offering to the L-rd, the soul of the eater shall be cut off from its people."

WE RELY ON UNSCRUPULOUS RABBIS WHO ARE LEADING US TO GEHINOMM

This verse is well-known and every small child understands it, but its practical application is unknown to many great rabbis in many places, and especially in the United States, even in the most Orthodox Circles, beginning with the simple laymen even to the greatest Torah scholars, and because of our many sins, the innocent G-d-fearing follow them blindly with implicit faith to buy meat upon which a large seal is affixed, bearing the legend, "Glatt Kosher meat, kosher for the most observant," without giving thought to the severity of the pitfall into which they are being dragged into and without understanding how to save themselves from the snare spread out at their feet through the fault of butchers, meat sellers and those who stand by their right hand to support and defend them. For this reason, we arouse the serious attention of the public and to shout to all our brethren

with an unending heart rendering appeal, "Wake up, you sleepers, from your lethargy!!! Stand up now! and extinguish the fire that burns all the way up into the high Heavens. Gird yourselves to fight against the enemy who wishes to destroy the surviving remnant, G-d forbid, by feeding them forbidden food in general and particularly through eating Chelev, for eating Chelev warrants greater severe penalty than all other forbidden foods, it being of equal stringency as eating Chametz on Passover and eating on Yom Kippur.

Why blaspheme those in the meat business? Are not they fathers and they have families to feed? Why should you Jeopardize their Parnassa (livelihood)?

Concerning the punishment of one who feeds people forbidden foods, we find that the Rabbis were unusually harsh with unprecedented stringencies. We find in Chullin 93b that if an amount of forbidden fat [which consumption carries the penalty of Karet] the size of barleycorn is found on a piece of meat sold by a butcher, that butcher is disqualified. If it is the size of an olive, he is subjected to lashes.

These rulings speak for themselves. Concentrate a little on the sanctity of these words. It is apparent from the expression, as indeed it appears in the works of the poskim, that the Talmud refers to a butcher who inadvertently neglected to remove a piece of fat, and the penalties mentioned are because of the carelessness of the menakker (he who cleans the forbidden fats from edible meats), who neglected to do his work faithfully. It is also apparent that there are many excuses for a menakker, e.g. "The Torah was not given to the ministering angels"; "Mistakes who will understand?" "The Torah exonerated the unpreventable," and the like. Even though these excuses are sometimes acceptable, in the field of kashrut of meats the Rabbis adopted the greatest stringencies. Since the power of temptation is much greater in this field, it was necessary to strengthen the power of sanctity and to support those engaged in doing their work with greater effort and exactitude than the average, in order to weaken the forces of evil that encompass the butchers.

For this reason, they disqualified any excuse or benefit of the doubt that can be given to a butcher, and they neither spared nor pitied the butcher nor his family, who are dependent upon him for sustenance, and

punished him by disqualifying him from practicing. And for what? For a minute particle of fat, no larger than a barleycorn, that is barely visible. And why? Because in the case of feeding Jews forbidden foods no considerations are allowed, and we neither spare nor show clemency to any person.

If you look deeper, you will find that the Rabbis penalized the menakker [He who purges forbidden fats from meat] even though nobody stumbled because of his deeds, and nobody ate yet from the chelev [forbidden fat] he left on the meat. He merely left it there in a place and in a situation in which it was possible for people to eat forbidden foods, even though it is not yet clear that someone would eat of the meat. For instance, the meat may spoil before being eaten; the buyer may notice it before eating it and throw it away, and perhaps it will be cooked in a manner that there are sixty times as much permissible food as the chelev.

None of these doubts will avail the butcher to vindicate him in his judgment in the case of a possibility of a pitfall for the public, if the public was placed in a position that there was danger of their falling into sin, and in such cases, we show no clemency in judgment. Even though in laws of jurisprudence concerning damages inflicted on property or person, the perpetrator would be vindicated since he was only indirectly responsible for the damage, in this case, Jewish souls stand higher than everything, and they are measured with a different yardstick; their measure is more sensitive than the measure of person and property.

Moreover, despite the stringency of the Sages in regard to a danger of the public falling into sin, the Rishonim added even more stringencies, as we will illustrate with the following examples:

HOW STRINGENT ARE THE SAGES ON BUTCHERS WHO FEED JEWS FORBIDDEN FOODS

In Rosh, Chullin 7:16 at the end in the gloss concerning a butcher after whom a barleycorn of chelev was found: It seems to me that it should be announced in the synagogue on Monday, Thursday and the following Monday, "Such and such a butcher was disqualified from his profession because a barleycorn of chelev was found after him." He must refrain from practicing his profession for a full month. After a month, he must come to the scholar of his city or the neighboring city, and say, I did such and such a thing, and I sinned. I regret my first deeds." The judge shall sentence him according to his discretion. Then they should announce in the synagogue,

"The butcher who was disqualified because of the fat that was found after him, has regretted this evil deed and has accepted what the scholars have ordered him." Before this announcement is heard in the synagogue, no one may rely on him and no one may buy meat from him.

When they found an amount the size of an olive, the rishonim added many stringent rulings on the butcher. This is the Rosh (ibid.):

And if an olive-sized piece was found, they would lash him in public, in the synagogue, and after the lashes, he himself would announce, I, so and so, received lashes because an olive-sized piece of chelev was found in the meat I sold."

This alone was not enough, but they were even more stringent regarding a willful offender, as is delineated in the Talmud (San. 25b), concerning a butcher who sold a treifah animal and performed certain acts indicative of his repentance. Nevertheless, Rava refused to reinstate him because of the possibility that he was merely pretending repentance. The final conclusion is that he has no way of being reinstated unless he goes to a place where he is unknown, dresses in black, enwraps himself in black, and returns a lost article of considerable value, or reimburses someone for a treifah which costs a considerable amount.

Rambam cites this law in numerous places (hilchos edus, ch. 12: hilchos shechitah, ch. 10; hilchos maachalos asuros, 8:9; hilchos Talmud Torah 6:14).

The requirement to wear black clothing and to enwrap oneself in black is cited by the three main poskim, Rif, Rosh, and Rambam. This requirement is found nowhere in the Talmud except in the chapter entitled "Haroeh," that if someone finds that his temptations is overpowering him, he should don black and enwrap himself in black and go ... This problem has already been discussed by SeMa in Choshen Mishpot 34:34, who concludes that the Rabbis were more stringent with a butcher because he caused the public to sin. He must, therefore, bring himself to humility, for black induces humility.

WHOSOEVER EATS FORBIDDEN FOODS IS NO LONGER RELIABLE

We find, too, in Yoreh Deah 119:1, that if one is suspected of eating non-kosher food, we may not rely upon him. This includes not only one who has been seen definitely eating non-kosher foods, but even if there is a suspicion or a doubt that he infringed the law, he is no longer trust worthy in these matters. This is explained in Beis Shlomo by Maharash Hason,

Yoreh Deah 17; Responsa Chikrei Lev, vol. 1, Yoreh Deah 167 from Rashba, Rashbash, Rivash, Maharashdam; also Aruch Hashulchan par. 20). This stringency is found nowhere else.

Studying the Shulcan Aruch itself reveals innumerable stringent rulings in these matters as well as in doubts of these matters, such as we find nowhere else. In fact, when the reader opens his eyes, he finds in the works of the tzaddikim the harm this sin inflicts upon the one who stumbles upon it, until he stops wondering why the rabbis were so strict in this field, for according to the damage and the harm, it is fit to strengthen the fences and safeguards and by strengthening the safeguards, the harm will be avoided.

We see that even saints as great as these could not easily bring a great Jewish community to righteous behavior, that the shoctim and the butchers should prepare properly kosher meat. If so, what can we, who are in a much lower level, answer to this question? We are really orphans, strong arm men and liars have the upper hand, and no one investigates. We are left desolate of even the merit of the living saints, that they should protect us from the pitfalls. See Tiferes Israel, San. ch. 8, on the Mishnah, "Death to the righteous is bad for them and bad for the world," that the good the righteous bestow upon the world is not only their good deeds, but also their merit and the power of their sanctity that protects the generation.

We find a similar statement in the book entitled, "Zos Zikkaron," by the holy rabbi of Lublic o.b.m., that if a righteous man sits in his room and serves the Creator whole heartedly, the power of his sanctity penetrates and spreads throughout the entire world, and from him the world draws its sanctity. In our times, because of our many sins, we have become devoid of such tzaddikim, and we have none to rely on except our Father in Heaven that He fulfill what He promised us, "For My sake, for My sake, I will do. "

PITY YOUR SOULS AND NOT THE SHOCHET'S JOB

In Responsa Divrei Chaim, yoreh Deah 7, concerning a shochet who spoiled an animal, we read: Therefore, surely this abominable creature must be disqualified, and if you have pity on his life and the life of his family, give them some support, since you are an affluent society, but why should you cover up for this abominable creature, to allow him to feed trefos? Why don't you pity your precious soul that it should not become defiled with his loathsome broth. It is well-known that there is no sin like the sin of eating

forbidden foods, that clog the heart of the Jew, and because of our many sins, countless communities have virtually left the Jewish faith. Therefore, my friends, beware of pitying this abominable creature, and do not show any compassion for this one who feeds treifos, for I feel that you were not informed about the entire matter as it is.

THE MOST UPRIGHT BUTCHER IS A PARTNER OF AMALEK

See further the last chapter of Kiddushin (82a): "The most upright butcher is a partner of Amalek." Rashi explains that many cases of questionable kashrut come to his hand, and in trying to save money, declares them kosher, and - sell them as such. We can see to what extent the Rabbis evaluate the pitfalls resulting from the butchers, that they did not hesitate to use the sharpest epithet when referring to them. The expression, "partner of Amalek," is, by far, the sharpest epithet used in the Talmud. One's hair can stand on end when one thinks about how far this matter extends. For a question of doubtful kashrut the Rabbis called him such a name, and not only a usual butcher, but "the most upright butcher " so that no one can be confident in himself and say that since he appointed a reliable butcher, no pitfalls can result from him, and it is accepted that a Torah scholar does not allow any pitfall to result from his doings, especially if the butcher is really learned, since the Rabbis say that a Torah scholar will commit a minor infraction in order to prevent an ignorant person from committing a major infraction.

EXCERPTS FROM THE SEFER SHEVET MUSSAR CHAPTER 36 THE SHOCHATIM KILL THE ANIMALS WITHOUT MERCY LIKE A MURDERER WOULD

And now my son, listen to what the Shochatim do: They grab the knife with an elevated hand, and they stand next to the animal in an arrogant posture, and the animal is paralyzed and cries and gives its life, because there is no strength in her, and that tyrant [The Shochet] does not focus on the movements of the animal [In order to cut with the knife in the precise spot] but he focuses instead on the women and the townsfolk when he says: "Look what a great Rabbi I am, I am like SAMA-EL in that I also take souls" And when he sees the portions he receives he is happy and his wife receives them with joy and brags about it around the neighborhood and she says: "Look at our high level and the great level of the Rabbi SAMA-EL. In this

fashion they will live and prolong their days, unless their actions bring them to be slaughtered as well.

EVEN RABBENU HA KADOSH SUFFERED FOR HE SHOWED NO MERCY TO A CALF

For come and see how great was the level of Rabbenu ha Kaddosh (Rabbi Yehuda ha Nassi) and when he didn't show compassion to that calf (Baba Metzia 85a) and he said to the calf: "For this you were created" He was then made to suffer great tribulations and His Torah did not protect him from this.

DO YOU KNOW WHO THE SHOCHATIM WHO SLAUGHTER THE ANIMALS THAT YOU EAT MEAT FROM ARE? DO YOU IF THEY ARE G-D FEARING? WOULD YOU TRUST THEM WITH YOUR MONEY? NO? THEN WHY DO YOU TRUST THEM WITH YOUR SOULS AND THAT OF YOUR WIFE AND CHILDREN? WHY DO YOU TRUST THEM WITH YOUR SHARE IN THE LIFE OF THE WORLD TO COME?

NOWADAYS YOU ALSO NEED TO TRUST THE OWNER OF THE FACTORY WHERE THE ANIMALS ARE SLAUGHTERED AND YOU ALSO NEED TO TRUST THE BUTCHER WHO SELLS THE MEAT TO YOU

ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT TO RELY ON THESE PEOPLE?

The Cause of Increasing Daily Catastrophes

We read in Sefer Imrei Tzaddikim, (Divrei Geonim p 5): Where the shochet is honest, the shechitah is good and Elijah the prophet is in town. But, if the shochet feeds the people neveilos and trefos, he causes the Angel of Death to come to town [And Jews suffer tragic deaths, G-d save us]

From the aforementioned books we see that all catastrophes that befall us today are caused by shoachim who feed Nevelot (see also Shabbos 33b, Or Hachaim Shmini 11:43, Warnings of Mahartza, Mikdash Melech, Zivchei Shelamim, Darchei Teshuvah 60:5).

In the story of Purim we are told that Hamman (A descendant of Amalek) got the strength to issue the decree to annihilate all Jews from the

fact that Jews sinned when they enjoyed forbidden foods in the banquet of Achashverosh. I am sure that the reason there are shechitah gezeros (Jews being slaughtered by the Goyim) in our times is because we did not keep our eyes on the schochtim as we should. (Tiyul bapardes, concerning shechitah, by Shamlauer Rav)

WHO CAN CONTRADICT THE WORDS OF THE PELE YOETZ?

It is extremely difficult to find meat that is kosher according to all views. I, therefore, derive much pleasure from the pious that are careful not to eat meat. (Pele Yoetz, taref).

Whoever wishes to avoid all risks, should be smart to eat only fowl (poultry) and not bovine meats - because the pitfalls are all too common and numerous with them. [And for eating the forbidden fat of bovine meat we become liable to the punishment of karet and this punishment does not apply to the consumption of poultry] (Shulchan Hatahor, Rabbi Aaron Roth o.b.m. (author of Shomer Emunim, Tohoras HaKodesh, etc)

ARE YOU REALLY WILLING TO RISK YOUR LIFE BY CONSUMING FOODS THAT ARE NOT KOSHER ACCORDING TO ALL OPINIONS, AND ARE BASED ON ALL POSSIBLE LENIENCIES IN KASHRUT LAWS USED BY THOSE WHO MANUFACTURE THEM? DID YOU KNOW THAT THE RABBIS OF THE EREV RAV ARE IMMERSSED IN THE BUSINESS OF ISSUING KASHRUT CERTIFICATES TO ALL KINDS OF FOODS? DO YOU KNOW THAT A LOT OF MONEY AND CORRUPTION EXISTS IN THE FIELD OF KASHRUT? PURE AND SIMPLE JEWS HAVE FALLEN PREY TOO MANY TIMES TO THE WRONGDOINGS OF THE EREV RAV! SAVE YOUR SOULS AND WATCH WHAT YOU EAT SO THAT YOUR EMUNA IN HASHEM WILL BE LEFT PURE AND NOT BE CONFUSED BY FOOLISH NOTIONS THAT ARE TOO PREVALENT IN OUR TIMES. MAY HASHEM GIVE US THE STRENGTH TO AVOID ALL THE DAMAGE THAT THE RABBANIM OF THE EREV RAV TRY TO INFLICT ON THE JEWISH PEOPLE, AMEN