



From the desk of
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Office of the Rabbinate of Elad, Rosh HaAyin and Herzelia

Religious Court of Elad * Batei Hora'ah * Religious Services * Marriage Licensing * Kashrut * Mikvaot * Eiruvim

TORAT

Parashat Shmini

HAMELECH

Kosher or Not

This week's *Parashah* speaks of *kashrut* symbols on kosher animals. For an animal to be kosher it must have split hooves and it must chew its cud. In addition to telling us these two identifying factors, the Torah proceeds to list four distinct animals, each of which has one kosher feature but not the other. The first three – camel, rabbit and hare – chew their cud but do not have split hooves. The last one – the swine – has split hooves but does not chew its cud.

Interestingly enough, when the Torah wishes to explain why each is forbidden, instead of starting with its non-kosher sign, the verse opens with a mention of its kosher feature. For example, "This you may not eat... the swine because its foot is split... and it does not chew the cud; it is forbidden for you." (11: 4, 7)

One or None

Which is worse: an animal with just one kosher sign, or one with none at all? You may have thought that an animal with one kosher sign is better; at least he's "half-kosher"; isn't he? That's why the *pasuk* makes a point of singling out those four creatures: so that we do not get fooled. We are to understand that "half-kosher" is "not kosher at all." In a way, it's worse, as it could be deceiving.

These four animals represent the four world empires, respectively. The final one, the swine,

represents Edom, the offspring of Eisav. Indeed, Eisav himself is compared to a swine, in this very aspect of trying to give an impression of being kosher, while inwardly being as rotten as can be. Just as the swine, the epitome of lack of *kashrut*, projects his feet displaying his kosher symbol; so too did Eisav and his followers. Eisav was anything but moral, especially when it came to respecting the concept of marriage. Nonetheless, he made a whole to-do of his wedding at age 40 announcing that he is just like his holy father Yitzchok who also wed at that age. Eisav pretended to have had nothing to with married women before that age, although he really was a professional adulterer. (See Kli Yakar Vayikra 11:4 and Rashi Bereishit 26:34)

All or Partial

In next week's *parashah*, we are taught about the spiritual contamination known as *tsora'at*. One interesting aspect of *tsora'at* is that while a person who has even one small bean-size *tsora'at* mark is *tamei*, if his entire body is covered with the affliction, he is *tahor*.

What is the meaning of this anomaly? Sefer Ohel Moshe explains that one lesson being taught is that half-clean is worse than fully afflicted. Someone fully afflicted is easy to identify and to steer clear from him. Someone who is only partially afflicted can conceal his malady and sport his healthy flesh, giving the impression that he is fine.



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Don't Judge by its Cover

The prophet Yirmiyahu (9:7) berates those who outwardly appear to be friendly, simultaneously conniving and plotting evil.

There are three types of people whom Hashem despises, one of whom is the two-faced individual. (Pesachim 113b, see also Hafetz Hayim, Sefat Tamim, chap. 1). And in Sotah 22b we find King Yanai exhorting his household to beware of those who act like Zimri (the prototype adulterer) and seek to be rewarded like Pinchus (the righteous zealot).

Can You Trust a *Talit* and *Tefillin*?

Sefer Kav Hayashar (chap. 52) tells a story of a rich man (we'll call him Reuven) who wanted to settle in Eretz Yisrael. He sold his estate and many of his belongings and began the trek with his wife.

On the way, he came upon a city with a Jewish community. Reb Reuven went to the local shul to daven and he saw there a man, Mr. Alexander, who spent his day in the shul, wrapped in *talit* and *tefillin*. Mr. Alexander davened a long *shemoneh esrei* and gave the impression of being a real *tsaddik*. So Reb Reuven decided to approach him and ask if he would agree to watch his money and valuables until he would return. Mr. Alexander agreed.

Reb Reuven came to Eretz Yisroel and decided to settle in Hevron. Then he returned to pick up his wealth, but Mr. Alexander said, "I don't know

what you are talking about. I never met you before."

Reb Reuven said, "Stop playing jokes. Return the money."

Mr. Alexander began cursing him and scaring him off.

Reb Reuven went to the *shul* to pour out his heart to Hashem. He prayed, "Hashem, I only trusted him because of his apparent dedication to *talit*, *tefillin* and *tefillah*. So I trusted him because of Your *mitsvot*. So I ask of you to help me get my money back."

At this, Eliyahu Hanavi came to Reb Reuven and said, "Don't worry. Go to his wife and tell her, 'Your husband said to give me back my money. He sent a message – to know that it is really him – that both of you ate *chometz* last Pesach and he also had a hearty breakfast before going to *shul* on Yom Kippur!'"

Reb Reuven told this secret information to Mrs. Alexander and she returned all the money.

Mr. Alexander returned home and they realized that the secret was out. So he and his wife gave up the façade and no longer pretended to be religious.

The Real Thief

Kav Hayashar tells another story of a man (we'll call him Mr. Zahir) whose father's parting words to him were: Beware of fakers. Those people who act extra-religious, they could really be sub-



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religious. So he kept this piece of advice in his pocket and it came in handy years later.

One night, Mr. Zahir was locked out of his home, so he slept outdoors. That night, the king's treasury was broken into, and many valuables were stolen. The police were given an order to find the thief, or else.

They came upon Mr. Zahir and chose him for a scapegoat. The police brought him to the palace and said that they found the thief. Without much investigation, he was given the death penalty. As was their custom, just before being hanged, they had a priest approach the "criminal" for a "confession." The priest began walking towards Mr. Zahir and then noticed a small insect on the ground. The priest exclaimed, "I cannot step upon that innocent being for, 'His compassion is upon all creatures.'"

The priest's excessive "piety" struck a chord in Mr. Zahir's memory. He remembered his father's admonition: Watch out for excessive piety. Immediately, Mr. Zahir declared, "This priest is the real culprit!"

The police went to the priest's home and discovered the king's valuables.

Here, too, we see that someone who puts on a show may be concealing his own rotten character.

Proper Prayer

The Baba Sali did not approve of displaying piety in public. Here are a few stories which prove it.

On Chol Hamoed Sukkot 1967, a number of people were visiting the Baba Sali in his *Suka*. It came time for *mincha*, so they made a *minyán* in the *Suka*. One particular man requested to be *shaliah tsibur*. Apparently he wished to show off his "piety." He said the *korbonot* and *Ashrei* with a bit much precision in enunciation. Then, in his silent *Amidah*, he was shaking frantically like a *lulav*.

The Baba Sali asked a different person to lead the continuation of the services.

After *mincha*, the original *shaliah tsibur* asked why he was replaced.

Baba Sali answered, "You move around too much when you pray. You must realize that when you pray, you are standing before the King. Do not try to make any impressions upon any humans."

A Meeting of the Minds

On a different occasion, there was a certain *yahrzeit seuda* – "*Hilula*" – to which only a select few were invited. As the meat came to the table, one of the participants whispered something to Baba Sali's son-in-law.

Baba Sali asked, "What is it that you're saying there?"

At first, the man was silent.

But the Baba insisted, "Nu, tell me what you said."

With no choice, he replied, "I told him that I do not eat meat."



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"And why don't you eat meat?" Baba inquired.

"Well, you know," he stammered, "you can never trust the *kashrut* that everything was done just right."

At that, Baba ordered that the man stand up and, in front of everyone, he alone eat all of the meat that was brought to the table! Baba explained, "There are plenty of people greater than you sitting at this table, and you question the *kashrut*?!"

Honor or Not?

A certain Rosh Yeshiva would visit Baba Sali regularly. Each time, he brought a different group of young students from the institution he headed. On each occasion, the Rosh Yeshiva would go all out displaying extreme forms of respect for the Baba. He would kiss the Baba's hands tens of times and not stop singing his praises.

Baba told one of his confidants, "Do you think that he really wants to show me respect?! Not at all! He just wants to show his students how they should respect him!"

The next time that Rosh Yeshiva came, Baba told him, "It is really not worth your *bitul Torah* to come here so often. Better you should sit and learn."

Learn When to Learn

A young Yeshiva student once joined the Baba Sali for a *seuda*. At a certain point, the student

apparently got bored and took out a *sefer* from which to learn.

The Baba Sali did not approve. He remarked, "Did you find no better time to learn than right now? When you eat, you eat and when you learn, you learn."

The Baba continued to deliver a half-hour lecture on the severity of *bitul Torah* (to show the *bochur* that *bitul Torah* was not light in his eyes). Nonetheless, he concluded, "Quite often, the *yetzer horah* gets a person to learn only when others are looking, particularly *rabbonim* and *chachamim*."

When Baba Sali would see men of Torah scholarship who seemed to have fallen prey to the *yetzer* of *ga'avah* (conceit), he would send them a certain *sefer* which discussed at length the punishment in Heaven, hoping that reading such a *sefer* would humble them.

Purity of Heart

We see that a person must be careful not to just "put on a show" in public. The person he is tricking most of all is only himself.

A real *Yarei Shomayim* has his priorities straight. He does not show unusual precision and caution regarding Rabbinic enactments or customs, simultaneously transgressing Torah prohibitions.

May Hashem help us all be honest with ourselves and serve Him genuinely with a pure heart.

Fondly,
Mordechai Malka