

## ***Why is Kosher Meat So Salty?***

The laws, customs & deeper meaning of the prohibition against consuming blood

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### **1. The Torah mentions the prohibition against eating blood three times**

- A. Lev. 7:26-27: *You shall not eat any blood in any of the places that you live, whether from birds or animals. If a person eats any blood, that soul will be cut off from its people.*
- B. Lev. 17:10-14: *If any man from the house of Israel, or from the converts who live among them, eats any blood, I will devote My face to the soul who eats the blood and I will cut him off from among his people. Because the soul of the flesh is in the blood, that is why I assigned it to you upon the altar - to atone for your souls, for it is the blood that atones for the soul. Therefore I said to the children of Israel: none of you shall eat blood, the convert who lives among you shall not eat blood. Any man from the children of Israel, or from the converts who live among them, who traps a wild animal or bird that may be eaten and sheds its blood, he should cover it with earth. I said to the children of Israel: you shall not eat the blood of any body for the soul of every body is in its blood, anyone who eats shall be cut off.*
- C. Deut. 12:23: *However, be strong not to eat the blood, for the blood is the soul, and you may not eat the soul with the flesh.*

### **2. What is the deeper reason that blood is prohibited?**

- A. Rambam: To steer people away from foolish idolatrous pursuits – Chaldeans ate blood to get in touch with evil spirits (*Guide*)
- B. Ramban: Because of the digestive differences between eating meat and consuming blood, blood bestows animalistic characteristics upon the person – brings the person down to the level of the animal. (*Commentary to Lev 17*)
- C. Chinuch: In addition to the negativity associated with forbidden foods, eating blood has the added dimension of cruelty (soul of the flesh).
- D. Orach Chaim: The blood is meant to atone on the altar – the soul of the animal is manifest in the blood. (*Commentary to Lev 17*)
- E. The Rebbe: Meat eating came later in history. Since the body-soul construct of the animal is similar to that of the human, limits were placed on the consumption of meat. For Noachides – Ever Min Hachai – tearing a limb off a live animal. For Jews – Blood. (*Comments on Lev 17*)

### **3. The Nature of the Prohibition**

- A. Only blood that is “the blood of the soul” is punishable by excision.
- B. Blood that is in the rest of the body is forbidden but punishable by lashes.
- C. The non-essential blood is only prohibited if it moves from its place in the limb (raw meat is permitted if there isn't a gathering of blood in an area)
- D. Only blood of animals and fowl is forbidden under this prohibition
- E. Blood from Kosher fish and locust is permitted
- F. Human blood is prohibited for other reasons (two opinions)
- G. Punishment is not incurred unless one consumes a “Kazayit”
- H. Eggs with blood spot are prohibited (differences between yoke and white)

### **4. Extracting the Blood**

- A. Roasting - on a spit over the fire dripping down away from the meat
- B. Salting - Three steps
  - Soaking - must be soaked in cold water for ½ hour - no longer than 12 hours - to remove the outer blood and to soften the meat
  - Salting - must be salted from all sides on a downward slanted board with holes for 1 hour (18 minutes minimum in a tough situation) using medium size salt granules
  - Rinsing - must be rinsed three times with cold water inside and out
- C. Broiling - The liver must be broiled before it is eaten. The heart must be opened and the blood emptied out before it is prepared for salting.
- D. After “koshering” the meat properly, whatever red liquid is left does not have the Halachic status of blood.

### **5. Covering the Blood after Shechitah**

- A. Practical Law: Non-domestic animals and all fowl must have their Shechitah blood covered with dirt. Cattle, sheep and goats need not have their blood covered.
- B. Spiritual Dimension: Species whose blood is brought upon the altar do not need covering. Other species do. Blood represents the passion of life. Blood on the altar symbolizes passion for holiness. Other blood symbolizes passion for the mundane. Covering it in dirt represents introducing humility to tame the passion. (*Lekutei Sichos Vol 37*)