

The Feminine Dimension

Part Three: Challah, Kashrus, Elevating the Physical

Kashrus

I. The signs are signs for animals and the animal within us (animal soul)
(see attached Sicha)

- Two signs of kosher animal
- Head and feet
- Split hooves
- Chewing cud
- Slaughtering animals
- Kashering flesh

II. Impact of keeping kosher

1. Food becomes one's flesh and blood - physical health and spiritual health are affected
 - G-d asked us to
 - Character traits
 - Ability to connect to Torah
 - Need to be "like this and no other way"
2. Need to have pushka in kitchen, nailed to the wall
(see attached)

III. The coming of Moshiach and Kashrus

- The Jews in the desert compared to the time of exile, entering Israel compared to the redemption.
- Last "stop" (of 42) was making sure vessels, etc., were kosher, so too now.

General

A decree from G-d. We do it because G-d asked us to.

Leviticus - 11:1-23

"And G-d said to Moshe and to Aharon to say to them:

Speak to the Children of Israel saying: this is the type of animal that you can eat ... among the mammals, you may eat (any one) that has true hooves that are clean and that brings up its cud ... This is what you may eat of all that is in the water and you may eat any creature that lives in the water whether in seas or rivers, as long as it has fins and scales... These are the flying animals you must avoid ... Every flying insect that uses four legs for walking shall be avoided by you. The only flying insects with four walking legs that you may eat are those with knees extending above their feet to hop on the ground."

Exodus 23: 24

Deuteronomy 14

"You may not cook a kid in its mother's milk"

Meat and Dairy

- May not be cooked together
- May not be eaten together
- May not derive benefit from a combination of meat and dairy

Therefore, one needs separate utensils for cooking, eating, washing, etc. meat and dairy. Plates, pots, pans, silverware, dish towels, dish racks, dish sponges, tablecloths, placemats, counters, sinks, salt shakers, spices, appliances, dishwashers, etc. Color schemes are helpful.

There is also a waiting period between eating the two.

- From meat to dairy: 6 hours
- From dairy to meat: 1 hour (Chabad custom) or at least wash out mouth and eat parve food

Pareve

- May be eaten and cooked with wither meat or dairy.
- It takes on the property of the food it is cooked with.

Exceptions to that rule:

Any sharp or spicy parve food (onions, lemons, pickles) take on the status of the utensil used to cut it.

Utensils

- All new and/or koshered utensils need to be immersed in a Mikvah before use.
- This needs to be done after the koshering process.

Different Food Types

Meat

- Type of animal - split hooves AND chews its cud
- Slaughtered halachikly, by a G-d fearing Jew, with inspection afterward
- Fowl are considered meat, and kosher fowl types have been handed down orally.
- Meat must be soaked and salted within 72 hours of slaughtering (liver needs to be broiled)
- Be careful of giblet inside of chickens
- Check for broken bones and bruises on a chicken

Dairy

- Needs to come from a kosher animal
- Chalav Israel

Parve

1. Fish - require fins and scales

- - once it's processed, it needs a kosher symbol
- - meat and fish may not be eaten together (some also do not eat fish and milk together)
- - when buying a kosher fish from a regular supermarket, bring one's own knives, boards, etc.

2. Eggs - only from a kosher animal

- - need to be checked for blood spots on yoke. If there are, discard egg
- - no less than 3 eggs together at a time

3. Fresh Vegetables, Fruits, and Grains (in America)

- are all kosher in natural state
- if they are processed, they need kashrus supervision
- canned and frozen
- must be checked for insects

4. Wine and Grape Products

- any handling must be done by Jews
- boiled wine may come into contact with a non-Jew
- any grape flavoring is included (care must be taken: cleaning ladies, grape drinks, jelly cream of tartar, etc.)

5. Baked Goods

- must have certification for kashrus
- some have custom of eating only bread baked by a Jew ("Pas Israel")
- we take "Challah" from bread before baking
- Flour from one of the five grains (wheat, rye, oat, spelt, barley)
- Needs some water
- Measurements:
 - less than 2 lbs. 11 oz. - no Challah is taken
 - between 2 lbs. 11 oz. And 3 lbs. 11 oz. - take Challah, no blessing
 - over 3 lbs. 11 oz. - take Challah with a blessing
- Thick dough - take before baking
 - Thin dough - can take after baking (outside of Israel)
 - Burn separated Challah by itself

6. Cooked Food

- If it is fit for a king's table and inedible while raw, then it needs to be cooked by a Jew

Kashrus Supervision

- Letters are not enough (K) (TM)
- Reading labels is not enough
- Restaurants, hotels, etc, need supervision ("vegetarian" is not necessarily kosher)

In the Kitchen

- Counter tops
- Sinks
- Oven(s), microwave, toaster, convection
- Stove tops
- Refrigerator
- Grills

Miscellaneous

- Airline meals
- Vitamins
- In Israel
- Blessings: before and after) see attached sheet
- Tzedaka box in the kitchen (see attached sheet)
- Pesach

Excerpts from a Sicha of the Lubavitcher Rebbe to N'Shei uBnos Yisroel — 24th Day of Elul, 5748

At this gathering of Jewish women and girls we should draw a special lesson pertaining to Jewish women. Every teaching must be brought into deed and this lesson, too, should be practical and continuing, for Torah is eternal.

In your homes there is one room in which the Jewish woman finds her role more pertinent and more regular than in any other: the kitchen. So let us discuss an important lesson that applies to the kitchen of a Jewish home.

The kitchen carries special significance and responsibilities, even though the dining-room, living room or the rooms reserved for study and prayer may have greater importance.

The kitchen, however, attains its significance in that in the kitchen the kosher meals are prepared for the family. According to various scholarly explanations which suggest a logical reason for the laws of *kashrus*, one of the reasons for the restrictions of *kashrus* is to bring refinement and purification to the Jewish people. The Jewish People were endowed with the nature of being “shy, merciful and kind.” If a person eats non-kosher foods, e.g. a bird of prey or a carnivorous animal, it will influence the eater with aggressive attributes. When a Jew eats only kosher food his nature will be refined and his mental ability will be enhanced to understand Torah properly and to find the truth in Torah.

Kosher food also imparts a strong influence in raising children. For education is not the sole domain of the schools — Bais Rivkah, Bais Sarah or Bais Yaakov — but it also is influenced by diet. When children eat kosher food they can be educated properly and they will bring pride, joy and Jewish nachas to their parents. They will also grow up strong and healthy and it will show on their faces. They develop to be healthy and beautiful; and the beauty will encompass many things.

We may now comprehend the enormous responsibility that rests on the Jewish woman, to be careful that the food in her kitchen is kosher — glatt kosher — and that she must cook and prepare her meals in accordance with the rules of the Torah (e.g. separation of utensils, etc.)

There is another fundamental point that emerges from the rules of the Jewish kitchen and the laws of kashrus. Here we see the power of the Jewish woman and how much trust is placed in her.

Generally speaking, in other areas of Torah we have the rule “a matter is verified only upon the testimony of two witnesses.” To establish a true fact you must bring two adult male witnesses to testify. Here, in the laws of the kosher kitchen one Jewish woman is trusted and believed.

Remember, a Jewish wife need not be a great scholar. In the olden days women did not even receive a formal Jewish education. This was the norm even in the most faithful Jewish communities (among Ashkenazim and Sephardim). Their Jewish training came from their grandmothers and mothers. In that scenario even if her husband were a Tzaddik and a great scholar, by Torah rule he was not permitted to ask, question or cross-examine his wife. He did not put a *Mashgiach* in the kitchen! He had to rely completely on his wife’s management of the kitchen.

When a Jew marries according to the “laws of Moshe and Israel” and the “Shechinah” comes to rest in his home, he must rely unequivocally on his Jewish wife.

How can the woman carry so great a responsibility? She needs the assistance of the Holy One, Blessed be He! This does not mean to belittle anyone, for even the greatest Tzaddik or Tzidkanis needs G-d’s help.

Let me make a suggestion in this area. To engender G-d’s blessings and help, give money to Tzedakah — to buy food for poor people.

When G-d sees that the woman of the house has a feeling of *Ahavas Yisroel* and she donates money into a *Pushka* because she cares about poor people, then G-d will treat her with “measure for measure” and He will give her *Tzedakah* from His full, open, holy and abundant hand. G-d will assist her to carry out her vital responsibilities, and the food will be kosher and good.

Moreover, if she gives Tzedakah before each meal then she will connect that meal with the poor people.

On Shabbos and Yom Tov when we do not handle money, the fact that the Pushka is there will remind her to make the determination to give Tzedakah again after Shabbos, and “G-d sees the heart” and will bestow His blessings on her household.

We speak not of any great inconvenience, although it would be worth the bother too, for this is a virtue that will bring down infinite blessings.

All that is needed is the proper attention, “Let the living take to heart,” to the importance of this matter.

We have recently spoken of building new buildings. Halachah rules that when a Pushka is firmly attached to a wall it becomes part of the house. Therefore it is suggested to **firmly and permanently attach the Pushka somewhere in the kitchen** (on the wall,

cabinet, etc.) This will make the house a **Tzedakah home**. If the attached Pushka will not be easily seen, then put another Pushka in a visible place.

When neighbors or friends come to visit, and as is the custom that womenfolk go into the kitchen to borrow some food or to ask advice about some recipe for a good, kosher dish, at that moment the Pushka will stare them in the face, and they will question its purpose and be encouraged to follow the good example.

It is also important to attach the pushkas that are in the children's rooms in some fixed manner.

All this will strengthen the home. The Mishnah teaches "The world stands in three pillars: Torah, prayer and acts of loving kindness," so, too, the Jewish home stands on three pillars: a **House of Torah** — a bookcase with Torah books; a **House of Prayer** — a bookcase with prayer books, especially the prayer book traditionally used by women — *Korban Minchah*; and a **House of acts of loving kindness** — a permanently attached Pushka.

(Unedited transcript provided
thanks to Sichos in English)