

### Parshas Shemini 5772

## THE FUTURE OF KASHRUS — AND KASHRUS OF THE FUTURE

There is a time-honored expression that goes: “The more things change, the more they stay the same.”

### PASS THE BACON?

One interesting application of this thought is to the field of *kashrus* — specifically, the prohibition against eating *chazer* (swine). While this is perhaps one of the most universally known of ritual laws, it may come as a surprise to some that the prohibition may not be entirely ironclad. Of course, pig meat is forbidden in all of its forms; but this situation may well change in the future. Chazal tell us that in the Messianic era, pig meat will become permissible (cf. *Vayikra Rabbah*, end of 13:5; *Ritva*, *Kiddushin* 49b).

What is obviously most surprising about this revelation is the fact that we know that Torah is eternal and “will not be changed, nor will there ever be a substitute Torah from the Creator, Blessed Be His Name” (from the *Rambam’s Thirteen Principles of Faith*). Does the fact that *chazer* will ultimately be rendered permissible contradict this tenet, G-d forbid?

The Chasam Sofer (*Toras Moshe*, *Devarim* 14:8) clarifies that — rest assured — no law of the Torah will undergo any change. What will transform is the nature of the beast itself. In this week’s *parshah* (*Vayikra* 11:3), the Torah identifies two *simanim* (characteristics) an animal must possess in order to be fit for consumption: split hooves and the chewing of the cud. Under current conditions, pig is disqualified as it lacks one of these traits: it does not chew its cud (*ibid.*, v. 7). In the future as well, any animal that does not chew its cud will still be considered *treife*. Hashem

will merely restructure the swine’s system to the extent that it will begin to chew its cud, thus meeting all of the *kashrus* requirements. Pig anatomy will change, while the Torah law stays the same (cf. *Mishnas Chayim*, *parshas Re’eh*, 5768).

There is yet another instance concerning the futuristic era wherein a serious *kashrus*-related issue is raised; once again, it is the Chasam Sofer who demonstrates that, in reality, the “product” in question meets with the highest standards.

### FISHY SHECHITAH

In speaking of the grandeur that awaits the righteous in the World to Come, Chazal make reference to a magnificent *se’udah* (feast) that will be prepared for them (cf. *Bava Basra* 75a, *Pesachim* 119b, *Akdamus Millin*, et. al.). Of the items on the menu will be two marvelous and ancient creatures that are mentioned in the Scriptures and the Aggadic literature. One is the *Livyasan*, a type of gargantuan fish, while the other is a behemoth of an ox, known also as — well — *Beheimos*.

Chazal also tell us that prior to this feast, and facilitating its preparation, these two creatures will engage in what basically amounts to the greatest dogfight of all time. *Livyasan* and *Beheimos* will square off against each other and shall more or less simultaneously dispatch the other. Focusing on the death of the *Beheimos*, the *Medrash* describes the method of *shechitah* (ritual slaughter) that shall be employed against this animal: it shall meet its demise at the hands of the *Livyasan*’s scales (*Vayikra Rabbah*, 13:3).

This last detail sparks a *halachic* issue, raised by the *Midrash* itself: has this animal been properly slaughtered? The method employed does not seem to conform to the laws of *shechitah*, as typified by the following *Mishnah* in *Chullin* (1:2):

לז"נ בנימין ב"ר ברוך שלום הי"ד

Kindly take a moment to study MISHNAS CHAYIM in the merit of נחמה בת יואל ע"ה, a fellow Jew who passed away with no relatives to arrange Torah study on behalf of her neshamah.

הכל שוחטין ולעולם שוחטין, ובכל שוחטין, חוץ ממגל קציר, והמגרה, והשנים... מפני שהן חונקין.

“Everyone is qualified to perform *shechitah*; *shechitah* may be performed at all times and in all places; and any object may be used to carry out the *shechitah*, with the exception of a harvester’s sickle, a saw, a jawbone containing some animal-teeth... (These items are disqualified) because they cause death through tearing (as opposed to swift slicing).”

The Mishnah is reflecting the *halachah* that for a knife to be considered appropriate for slaughter, it must have a straight-edged blade. Any kinks or blemishes in the blade render it unfit, as the animal’s vitals must be cleanly severed, not torn asunder. This would seem to present a problem for the grand feast of the future; the Medrash asserted that the slaughtering “knife” to be used on the Beheimos will be the scales of the Livyasan, an instrument resembling the saw-like items disqualified by the Mishnah. How, then, will the food served at that meal be considered kosher — seemingly, it has not undergone proper slaughter! Is there, G-d forbid, an expiration date on the laws of *shechitah*?

Once again, the Chasam Sofer assures us that the *halachah* is properly adhered to. One factor that the Chasam Sofer urges us to take into account in this instance is who, exactly, is performing this *shechitah*.


### THE BEST HASHGACHAH (KOSHER SUPERVISION)

Although blemished implements may not be used for slaughter, the Chasam Sofer explains that such blades do not automatically render the *shechitah* invalid. Rather, the *possibility* of tearing (instead of straight slicing) exists — so much so, that we must *consider* the *shechitah* as invalid. In other words, when an animal is slaughtered with a saw or blemished knife, for example, it is not a *certainty* that the animal was torn; we are simply unsure. Consequently, we must suspect that a tear has occurred and err on the side of caution. Thus, we may only sanction a *shechitah* that was performed with an unblemished knife. It would be a much different matter if, theoretically, we would be notified by some uncontested Divine signal or prophecy that in fact

no tear was inflicted in the course of this *shechitah*. In that case, the animal would be fit for consumption, even if a blemished knife was used.

Of course, it is rare for a Divine messenger to preside over a *shechitah*; as a practical measure, then, we must always consider such *shechitah* (performed with a blemished implement) as *treife*. There is one exception, however: the *shechitah* of the Behemos through the usage of Livyasan scales. For who is the *Shochet* (slaughterer) at that event? None other than Hakadosh Baruch Hu Himself, before Whom there is no room for doubt. When a mortal performs *shechitah*, he is unsure if a tear occurred; but Hashem, of course, knows that His action was flawless.

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