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# TORAS AVIGDOR

AUTHENTIC TORAH THOUGHT FOR LIFE

RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT" L

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# PARSHAS SHEMINI

WITH

RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT" L

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

## OUR NOBLE DIET

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## Part I. Animal Diet

### Elevated From Egypt

In this week's *sedrah*, when Hakadosh Baruch Hu speaks to the Am Yisroel and forbids them from eating *sherotzim* and other non-kosher foods, He concludes the command as follows: *You should fulfill My words*, כִּי אֲנִי הַשֵּׁם – *Because I am Hashem*, הַמַּעֲלָה אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם – *Who brought you up from the land of Mitzrayim* (Vayikra 11:45).

Now, on its most simple level we understand that Hakadosh Baruch Hu is making that point as a motivation towards gratitude. He's talking about our liberation from Mitzrayim – the great phenomena that took place and all of the benefits that the *nissim* of Yetzias Mitzrayim conferred upon us. "In return for what I've done for you," He says, "you should fulfill My words and abstain from eating these forbidden things."

But the Gemara (Bava Metzia 61b) makes a comment on this *possuk* that makes a very big difference in the meaning. Our sages took notice of a curious choice of words in the *possuk* and they derived from it an important lesson. “I am Hashem, הַמַּעֲלֶה אֶתְכֶם – Who *elevated* you from the land of Mitzrayim.” It could have said אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ, Who *took you out* of Mitzrayim. Instead, we find here an unusual word, not used in all the other places where the Torah talks about Yetzias Mitzrayim: “I *elevated* you from Mitzrayim.” And our *Chachomim* explain, what was the elevation? That they eat *sherotzim* and you don’t.

### **Bad Tidings**

Now, in order to better appreciate what *iluy*, what elevation, we’re talking about, we’ll first go back to the beginning of the history of mankind. And then, after we study it in a more general sense, we’ll come back to our subject, the Am Yisroel.

When Adam was expelled from Gan Eden, Hakadosh Baruch Hu informed him of what was now going to be mankind’s diet for the rest of history: וְאָכַלְתָּ אֶת הָעֵשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה – *You’re going to eat the grass of the field* (Bereishis 3:18). It means that from now on your food will be available to you in the gardens and the fields.

Now, our Sages (Pesachim 118a) tell us that when Adam heard that decree, he was far from happy. וְלָגַו עֵינָיו – *When Adam was told that from now on his diet would be the grass of the field, זָלַגוּ עֵינָיו – his eyes flowed with tears; he wept copiously begging Hashem to reverse the decree.*

### **The ‘All You Can Eat’ Special**

Now, we have to understand why Adam complained about this *gezeirah*. Actually he should have accepted it with joy because he was being offered now an extraordinary opportunity. “You will eat grass of the field,” meant that grass would henceforth fulfill all the desires of man’s palate. And not only would man’s taste buds be satisfied, but grass would also provide him with all of the vitamins and minerals he needs. Our bodies would be accommodated to chewing vegetable fibers and our digestive properties would adjust to the task of deriving nourishment from grass.

That would have been a glorious opportunity for mankind! Adam is being offered now a life of leisure because it wouldn’t be necessary to toil for his sustenance. Grass you don’t have to plant; it’s supplied by Hashem. Like it states in the Chumash, וְנָתַתִּי עֵשֶׂב בַּשָּׂדֶה – *I’ll give grass in the fields* (Devarim 11:15). That’s why grass is rhizomes; it grows from roots that remain over winter in the ground. It’s not seeds that you have to plant. Some grass grows from seeds but they fall in abundance and they lie in the ground and in the springtime it comes up by itself.

Grass is free and abundant. Nobody plants grass except the man who wants to have a fancy front yard – if you want it planted in a special place then you have

to order it from the landscaper, but ordinarily, if you walk out into the fields, there's plenty of grass.

And so, all men would be free to sit in *kollel* all day, and whenever his wife says to him, "What are we going to feed the children if you're sitting with your books all day?", so he says, "Let's go." And he takes her out in the backyard, "Here! Eat to your heart's delight! All you want!"

### **Content Cows**

Grain, on the other hand, requires a lot of work before you're ready to eat it. Bread doesn't grow. It's a whole process. It's very hard work to plow! Even *looking* at somebody plowing makes you tired. Back and forth all day long and the next day and the next day. Today even with diesel machines you see it's a heavy job. And then there's the sowing and harvesting and sheathing and winnowing. It's a very big job!

But grass, if you're equipped to eat grass, then it's the simplest matter in the world. Cows don't have to go to the bakery. Cows don't have to go to the grocery store; they don't have to slave away all week at a job from 9 to 5. Their *parmassah* comes easy. And so, if Adam would have remained with the first proposition, with that *gezeirah* of "You shall eat grass," he could have lived a life of ease and devoted his entire career to *ruchniyus*, to making progress. He would have lived a happy and successful existence.

And yet we're told that Adam wept when he heard the decree. Not only he wept; *זָלְגוּ עֵינָיו דְּמָעוֹת* – *His eyes flowed with tears!* It means that tears rained down his cheeks and he *begged* the Almighty not to give him this gift! And we don't understand that at all! Because to be physically satisfied with grass, to get all the vitamins and nutrients that we need from grass, what could be better?

### **Fighting For the Truth**

And so let's listen in to Adam's words and maybe we'll be able to understand a little better. Here's what he said: He cried and he said, *אָנִי וְחֲמוֹרִי נֹאכְל בְּאֵבֹם אֶחָד* – "Shall I and my donkey eat from the same trough, from the same foodbox?"

It means that when Adam would go out to the backyard for breakfast and he would bend over to partake of the grass of the field he would hear somebody rustling nearby; he would look over his shoulder and he would see his donkey is doing the same thing as him, eating the same breakfast. His donkey is eating side by side with him!

"My donkey and I should eat the same breakfast?! If that's the price then I don't want it!"

There was a very important principle involved here; it's the principle of the dignity of man. Man was created *b'tzelem Elokim*, in the image of Hashem and if he's going to eat side by side with his animals, the same diet, then it is a frontal attack on this foundational truth of the greatness of mankind.

Adam was fiercely protective of his peculiar status because he knew more than anybody else what it meant to be an Adam. “The image of Hashem” – we say the words, but we are very far from coming anywhere near appreciating the meaning. But Adam, the first one created at the Hands of the Creator, he understood what it meant.

### **Rescinding the Decree**

There’s nothing in the universe like man. Man is not an animal – man is an angel. It’s a *malach* who is encased in *batei chomer*, an angel that dwells in the clay habitation of a body. Man is *not* a body. He is much greater than a body; the truth is he is greater even than the *malachim*.

And so, it was enough indignity that he was sentenced to live in a human body, in a house of clay, but to be reduced to the status of the beasts of the field?! That would be to him the greatest heartache.

Now this doesn’t mean if Adam would eat grass that he has therefore surrendered his distinction. He’s still Adam even if he’s eating grass alongside his donkey; his *neshama* is still a *neshama* and he is still unequaled in the universe. But there’s a principle here and that principle is not only to be unique in the universe, not only to be distinguished, *but always to remember that you are unique, never to forget that you are distinguished.* That’s what’s most important!

And so, Adam’s dignity was to him paramount. And he therefore wept bitterly that this decree should be rescinded, that Hakadosh Baruch Hu should withdraw this proposition that he should have to live off of grass.

### **The Distinct Diet**

And he wept until Hakadosh Baruch Hu said to him, “Alright! I accept your protest and I am going to give you a different menu; I’m going to give you an elite diet, only aristocrats will have it, only mankind. **בְּזַעַת אֶפְיֹד תֹאכַל לֶחֶם** – You are going to eat bread.”

Bread! Bread is unusual. No creature in the universe has bread except man. Do you know why? Because it’s a dignity to eat bread. It’s a mark of distinction.

When Adam heard that, **נִתְקַרְרָה דִּיעָתוֹ** – *so his mind was calmed.* He was satisfied. Because that’s a demonstration that there’s nobody in the universe that can compare to me. I am reminded that I am the *tzelem Elokim* and I and my children forever will always have an *ois*, a testimonial that we are not animals! That we should never sink to the level of animals in behavior, in morals, in *derech erez*, in our attitude towards the world.

And so we see that the diet of Adam Harishon was a very important part of his world *hashkafa*. It was an important foundation for his awareness of the truths of the Torah and his knowledge of who he was.

### Distinct from Donkeys

Today most of mankind has forgotten this great lesson. And that's why today the donkey is already catching up with us! And I'm afraid he's going ahead of us already because what human beings are doing today under the inspiration of the New York Times are things that a donkey wouldn't stoop to do. A lot of humans have become worse than donkeys.

But we follow the principles of the Torah! *Derech erez* has a number of principles, but one of the chief principles of *derech erez* is to demonstrate that you are different, to demonstrate that you have *tzelem Elokim*.

And therefore if someone were to pick up from the table a loaf of bread and take a bite from the loaf, it's an infringement on this principle of *tzelem Elokim*. You cut off a piece to size, that's all. You can't hold a very big hunk of bread in your hand like a helpless animal and eat from the whole thing. You can't bend over and nibble from the loaf like a *beheimah*.

### Distinct from Dogs

That's why the Gemara (Kiddushin 40b) says that *הַאֹכֵל בְּשׁוּק רֹמָה לְכֶלֶב* – if a man eats in the street, he's like a dog. Even if he washed his hands and he made a *bracha*, if he eats in the street he is *domeh lakelev*, he's like a dog. Because a human being has to remember who he is and therefore he eats his bread in a different manner.

So if you walk in the street munching on a piece of pizza, you have to know where you belong, in which category.

The world today has forgotten the sublime principle of *תֹּאכַל לֶחֶם* – You, Adam, shall eat bread. And so before we go on, let's keep in mind what we have already gained tonight; and the next time you eat bread you have something to think about. It's a demonstration of the greatness of mankind, that *חֲבִיב אֲדָם שֶׁנִּבְרָא* – How beloved by Hashem is man, that he's created in Hashem's image (Avos 3:14). And it's a demonstration of what's expected of us. Our diet, bread and other foods instead of grass, is an eternal reminder of the greatness of mankind that must always be kept before our eyes as a foundational principle of the Torah.

## Part II. Human Diet

### We Are Different

Now, all of this, the greatness of mankind, is actually only an introduction to the subject because now we come back to the diet of the Am Yisroel; and it's an entirely new subject because the Am Yisroel is more than man.

That's what the *mishnah* there in Pirkei Avos (*ibid.*) says. It's true that *חֲבִיב אֲדָם שֶׁנִּבְרָא*; an especial gift of *tzelem Elokim* was given to Mankind, a

skyscraper of greatness. But when we come to the Am Yisroel we are building another, much taller, skyscraper on top of that one. Because the *mishnah* doesn't stop there. It goes on and tells us, yes, man is beloved because he's created in Hashem's image, but **יְשָׂרָאֵל חִבִּיבִין** – *Yisroel are more beloved*, **שְׁנֵי בָנִים לְמִקּוֹם** – *because they are called the children of Hashem*.

You know, we're accustomed to hearing that we're all children of Hashem. Let's say when the Reform Jews get together with the NAACP to work together, they say it's because "we're all children of G.O.D." That's what they say but it's not Torah! No other people are the children of Hashem! Yes, they're mankind! They're *tzelem Elokim*! It's a remarkable greatness, it's a remarkable potential for perfection that every gentile has within him but *chavivin Yisroel*, make no mistake about it, it's only you. **בָּנִים אַתֶּם לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם** – *Only you are children of Hashem* (Devarim 14:1). We don't care what the world says, we stick by the Torah. "You are My children and nobody else."

### **Greater Than Adam**

And if mankind is distinguished with a special diet of bread and all the various foods for human consumption, so the Am Yisroel must be distinguished with an even more noble diet. Just as mankind demonstrates its superiority over animals by its diet, so the Jew, the child of the King of the Universe demonstrates his superiority over mankind by a still more restricted diet; a royal diet of princes.

That's why Adam *could* have eaten *sherotzim*. Along with his bread he could have eaten other foods that a Jew is forbidden to put in his mouth. Whether he did or not, I cannot tell you, but the Am Yisroel was elevated even above the greatness of Adam. The *am kadosh* was given a separate distinction on top of the distinction of Adam Harishon.

And now we come back to the snails and the oysters in the Egyptian waters, to the mitzvah of our *parsha* to not eat the *sherotzim*. Hakadosh Baruch Hu, when He told us you cannot eat these things, that you can't eat mussels, you can't eat seafood, all those things that the nations have in their diet, so He said, "I have conferred upon you a very great honor now! **הִמַּעַלְתִּי אֶתְכֶם** – *I have elevated you*, **מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם** – *from Mitzrayim*." It means, "I lifted you up. I made you distinguished. The fact that you cannot eat these foods is a demonstration of your greatness."

### **Kosher Is Everything**

All of the worms and snails and oysters and all the other delicacies that the gentiles are so happy to pay big money to eat; they sit and eat in a restaurant to the sound of music as they're ingesting worms and slimy things that look like – did you ever see an oyster? An oyster and milk? A man once described the experience to me. It was something slimy, he said. It was nauseating. It looked like somebody had emptied the contents of his nose into the milk.

The disgusting things that the nations eat – and even the less disgusting things – for them it's all right but not for us. כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּנֵי מַלְכִים הֵם – *All Jews are princes*, and therefore what the common multitudes eat is not our diet. It means that every time you eat kosher food, every time you check for a *hechsher*, it's a demonstration of your greatness; a reminder of your elevated status.

That's what the Gemara says, הַמַּעֲלָה אֶתְכֶם, it's a great *aliyah* for them that they're forbidden to eat *sherotzim*. It's such an elevation that Hakadosh Baruch Hu says (Gemara *ibid.*), "If I took you out of Mitzrayim only for one thing, that you shouldn't eat these things that *goyim* eat, it's worth it." It means that's the whole business! Although there's a whole Torah waiting for us but for this alone it would be enough – if no other purpose was achieved by taking you out except this one, to put this stamp of royalty on you that you cannot eat these things, it was worth coming out of Egypt.

And therefore the Jew realizes that kosher is everything to him. וְאַבְדֵּל אֶתְכֶם מִן הָעַמִּים – *I have separated you from the nations*. That's said in our *parsha* of forbidden animals. You cannot eat these forbidden animals because I have separated you from the nations. That's your greatness. That's your mark of distinction.

### **Proud of Our Kishke**

And therefore we don't look down on dietary laws. Some Jews ridicule, they say "The Orthodox are only *kishke* Jews, only intestinal Jews. All they worry about is food, kosher food." But it's not a small thing. It's important; very important, very, very important. What you eat, that's what you are. It's a mark of royalty. And the Torah itself says that. That's the sign of distinction from the nations of the world and we won't give it up. We'll hold onto that badge of royalty forever.

Here's a rich man and he could eat in all the restaurants but he's sitting and eating a sandwich in his office because he's a prince. A person is traveling for business and he doesn't know where to go for lunch. Even if has to fast all day long he's happy. That's the mark of a prince!

And that's why when a person passes a salumeria, an Italian delicatessen, and he sees in the window all kinds of appetizing baloney, if he says, "Oh well, it's not kosher," that's a missed opportunity. Because according to the principle of the Torah, he should say, "*Baruch Elokeinu shehivdilanu min hatoim*. I thank You Hashem; You gave me a privilege not to eat that."

You look at the window, at the dried wurst hanging from the ceiling and generate a certain feeling: "*Feh!* I'm too aristocratic for such food."

### **Let Them Eat Treif**

For them, by the way, you should have appreciation. It's beautiful to see that Hashem is feeding *goyim*. הִזְוֹן אֶת הָעוֹלָם כְּלוֹ בְּטוּבוֹ – *He feeds the whole world with His goodness*. בְּהֵן וּבְהֵסֵר וּבְרֵמִים means that *gentile salami tastes good*. And so if you

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see a gentile salumeria or you see someone standing on the street corner selling hotdogs and a *goy* comes over and gives money and buys a hotdog and eats it, so you should think, “Hashem is feeding him.”

So for the *umos ha'olam* – alright. Let them eat *treif* salami and hotdogs and snails. That's very good if all you are is a *tzelem Elokim*. But we look down on this, “Feh! We are aristocrats!”

You never thanked Hashem for elevating you by means of your diet? Don't miss that opportunity; as you're walking on the avenue look for a seafood place where you'll be able to exercise your mind in this noble activity of understanding what Hakadosh Baruch Hu did for us. When you see snails in the window, don't just pass by. Think, “*Baruch Hashem!*” You should get the attitude that it's undignified for you. It's for gentiles to eat lobster. Gentiles can eat pork. For a Jew, not only it's *ossur*, but it's a descent to the bottom of the social ladder.

### **Earning the Honor**

Now, you have to understand however that once you know of your aristocracy, then you have to live up to it. You have to behave accordingly. It's not enough for a person to know that he is a Jew; *he has to feel it in all of his behavior!* He behaves like a Jew behaves. There are certain rules that aristocrats follow. And therefore the aristocratic Jews have certain *chukei derech eretz* that the Torah prescribes; and the aristocratic Jew lives with such a perfection of behavior that he earns the appellation, he earns the honor of being called “Son of the King”.

A Jew who understands why he eats kosher never thinks that by looking like a *goy*, by having a haircut like a *goy* or wearing Reeboks like a *goy* or wearing pants like a *goy*, jeans, whatever it is, that we're doing something that makes us better. *Chas v'shalom!* We're sinking into the mud! We're drowning into the *tzoah*, in the filth of the *umos ha'olam!*

### **Be A Smart Turk**

Only gentiles go to the movies. Anybody who has aristocracy, it's beneath his dignity to enter such a place. A place of *meshugoyim!* Fools! To see things that don't exist, a story that never happened, a film filled with foolish corruption.

When I pass by a movie and I see a big line waiting to be admitted to the place of morass and they want to pay for it too, I see one or two *yarmulkas*. I say, “What's this?! A prince waiting on line for such garbage?!”

Once I stopped someone; a man with a black hat. I said, “Why are you standing in line here?! A Jew should want to go into a place like that?!”

“I'm not a Jew,” he said to me. “I'm from Turkey. I'm a Turk. And anyhow I'm not going in there. I'm just waiting here.”

“Oh,” I said, “You're a smart Turk.”

When a man learns the attitude of aristocracy, he looks down. He despises these things!

### Happy Always

And so we begin to see that it is not easy to be a Jew. Like a person once said, "It's not easy to be a Jew." But he didn't understand what it meant. It means that a Jew has to have in mind a great deal of meditation, of radial reflection. We must constantly be aware of our greatness.

The reason that you find Jewish people who are ashamed of their Jewishness is because they are ignorant of their greatness. If you learn Chumash properly, if you learn Tanach properly, you begin to understand what a great privilege it is to belong to the Am Yisroel. **אֲשֶׁרִיךָ יְשׁוּרָאֵל** – *How fortunate you are Yisroel*, **מִי כְמוֹךָ** – *who is like you!*

A Jew has to sing at all times; his heart should sing within him because Hakadosh Baruch Hu has elevated him. **אֲשֶׁרִי הָעָם שְׂכָבָה לּוֹ** – *How fortunate is the nation that thus is their lot; you know what lot?* **אֲשֶׁרִי הָעָם נִשְׂחָה לְאֱלֹהָיו** – *That Hashem chose us; He's our G-d.* And therefore at all times we're singing in our hearts, **חֲלֻקְנוּ אֲשֶׁרִינוּ מֵה טוֹב חֲלֻקְנוּ** – *how fortunate we are!* A Jew has to be happy at all times because of the great honor that he possesses.

And in an upside-down world it's a constant *nisayon* to feel that, to never to lose sight of the great principle of **בְּנִים אַתֶּם לַהֲשֵׁם**, that we are the princes of this world. And one of the great and most common, one of the all encompassing ways that we constantly remind ourselves is by means of what we eat and what we don't eat.

Who are we, plain nobodies? A cat will eat anything. A *goy*, not so much, but still, it doesn't need a *hechsher*. But a king has a special diet. And we are the privileged ones who every day demonstrate our status of being chosen as Hashem's children, by means of our noble diets.

## Part III. Sacred Diet

### Next Level Food

Now, we have to know that as important as it is what we've said up till now, as great as it is, this demonstration that the *parsha* of *sherotzim* teaches, something else is being taught to us by means of these *dinim* of what can and cannot go into our mouths. Because up till now we spoke on one level, that we are not permitted the diet of the nations of the world as a *demonstration* of our aristocracy: **הִמְעַלָּה אֶתְכֶם** – *I lifted you up from Mitzrayim*. "I made you exalted," says Hakadosh Baruch Hu "above all the nations."

But now we go to a second level, a higher reason why we don't eat these things. Because it's not merely as a demonstration of our aristocracy; there's

something else that the laws of *kashrus*, the elevated status of eating kosher food, come to teach us. And it's a very important principle that we're going to learn now.

It's the great principle that *the Jewish body is a sanctuary*. The body of a *ben Yisroel* or *bas Yisroel* is a *Beis Hamikdash*! And we have to study that well because it's not a *mashal*! It's actually true that our bodies are holy – and just because of that it's forbidden to bring into it something that is unworthy.

### Post Pesach Perfection

And that's one of the important Pesach lessons that we should take with us all year long. Because it was on that first Pesach, when we came out of *Mitzrayim*, that we achieved that special status of holy bodies. It's included in **הַמַּעֲלָה אֶתְכֶם**, when *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* elevated us at *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, and even when Pesach goes away, what we gained on Pesach remains always.

There's a *possuk* in *Shir HaShirim* (4:16) that says like this: **עוֹרֵי צָפוֹן** – *Awake, bestir yourself, O' north wind*, **וּבוֹאֵי תִימָן** – *and come, you south wind*. The north wind is told to move, to move away, and the south wind is told to come and take its place.

And the *Gemara* (*Zevachim* 116a) tells us a queer *peirush*. Who is the north wind? North means all the nations of the world. And which nation is represented by the south? That's us, the *Am Yisroel*. **עוֹרֵי צָפוֹן** – *Move on, all the nations*, **וּבוֹאֵי תִימָן** – *and come in, the Am Yisroel*. We take the place of the *umos ha'olam*.

What does it mean we'll take their place? I'll tell you two *pshatim* and both are true. One interpretation is that it's talking about *Eretz Yisroel* at the time that we came out of forty years in the Wilderness. The nations of the world lived there for generations and those generations are told to move on to make place for the *Am Hashem*. It's our land now. You watched over it, you planted beautiful gardens and built stone houses – very good, very good. But now *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* has taken us out of *Mitzrayim* and He has decreed that it's time for you to move on and for us to take your place. That's one *pshat*.

### The Glorious Future

Another understanding is that it's talking about *l'osid lavo*. In the future all the nations will be demoted and the *Am Hashem* will be recognized as the princes of the world. Of course, we're the princes even now but the gentiles have a hard time admitting it, they have a hard time recognizing it. It's among ourselves that we have this secret. But in the future it'll become clearly evident to all.

Like it says openly in *Sefer Yeshaya* (49:23), **אֲפִים אֶרֶץ יִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לָךְ** – *they'll bow down to the earth to you*, **וְעִפְרֵי רַגְלֶיךָ יִלְחָכוּ** – *and they'll lick the dust of your feet*. *Yeshaya* says openly *l'osid lavo* the nations will feel it a privilege to kiss the dirt under your feet. And another *possuk* (*ibid.* 60:14), **וְהָלְכוּ אֵלֶיךָ שְׂחוּחַ בְּנֵי מַעֲנִיָּה** – *the*

children of those who once persecuted you will go to you bowed down and they'll bow down to the dust of the earth and kiss the dirt under your feet.

And that's what our *possuk* is saying. **עוֹרֵי צְפוֹן וּבוֹאֵי תִימָן**. In the future, the nations of the north – it means all the gentile nations – will make way for the nation of the south, the Am Yisroel. Our princely status, our distinguished aristocracy, will be recognized by all.

### Different Kinds of Offerings

But still the language of the *possuk* has to be explained. Because after all it's a question, why are the *goyim* called the 'north'? And why is the Am Yisroel called the south? Where do north and south come in here?

Now we have to listen to a big principle that you'll hear now, a remarkable principle.

The only kind of offering that the nations of the world can ever bring are *olos*, burnt offerings. The nations of the world always brought offerings, even before the Torah was given. We know that Adam Harishon brought offerings. Kayin and Hevel brought *korbonos*. Noach brought *korbonos*. But all their *korbonos* were *korbonos* of the north, burnt offerings that are brought on the north side of the *mizbeach*. An *olah* is kosher only if it's sacrificed **עַל יָרֵךְ הַמִּזְבֵּחַ צְפוֹנָה**, on the north side of the *mizbeach*.

So we tell them, “**עוֹרֵי צְפוֹן** – Move on you people of the north side of the *mizbeach*, **וּבוֹאֵי תִימָן** – now come and take their place, you Am Yisroel, the people of the south.” We are the nation of the south because in addition to *olos*, we can bring *shlomim* that are offered on the south of the *mizbeach*. The *olah* you slaughter only on the north, **עַל יָרֵךְ הַמִּזְבֵּחַ צְפוֹנָה**, but *shlomim* you can slaughter anywhere. You can slaughter them on the south if you wish.

But that's no answer yet. Because what of it? So the *goyim* have only *olos* and the Am Yisroel have *shlomim* too; very good, but what's so important? Is that a reason why the *goyim* have to move on and the Am Yisroel take their place?

### Sanctity and Sacrilege

Now listen to the principle. Before Yetzias Mitzrayim nobody ever dreamed of putting a piece of a *korban*, a piece of sacrifice into his mouth. You mean to say you're going to chew up a piece of the *kodshei Hashem* and reduce it to garbage? It'll go down into your intestines and then later you'll excrete it? That's sacrilege! Nobody ever dreamed of treating the *kodshei Hashem* in such a manner.

Until we came to Yetzias Mitzrayim. The *korban Pesach* was a very big novelty; it was the very first time in the history of the world that an offering was eaten. On Pesach night a revolution occurred; the entire picture of history changed with these three words: **וְאָכְלוּ אֶת הַבֶּשֶׂר** – *The bnei Yisroel must eat the flesh of the sacrifice (Shemos 12:8)*. We were commanded to eat from the *korban Pesach*!

At that time Hashem declared that the Jewish body is *kodesh kodoshim*. You hear such a thing?! When a Yisroel consumes a *korban* it's like the fire of the *mizbeach* is burning it! And that's the answer to how it could be such a thing now that never happened before, that a human being eats from a *korban*. Because a Yisroel is not a human being! He's much more than a human being! That's a very important lesson we learned at Yetzias Mitzrayim.

From then on, we eat from the *korbanos*. We eat *kodshim*! No nation ever dreamed of insulting the *kodshei Hashem* by eating it until the Am Yisroel came along and Hakadosh Baruch Hu said, "Yes, they can eat, because when they put *korban* into their mouths, it's burning on the offering on the *mizbeach* to Hashem."

### **Rejecting the Stranger**

Now that was the demonstration of the *korban Pesach*. It is *only we* that Hashem has decided can eat the *korban Pesach*. So let's imagine in Eretz Mitzrayim on that great night wherever there were Bnei Yisroel, in every house they were roasting the sheep on the fire. Imagine, thousands and thousands of homes. They weren't wealthy; they were servants to the Egyptians and they had poor little homes, but there were very many of them. In fact there were already two million of them. And in all of these homes they were roasting lambs that night. And so the odor of roasting lamb began coming out of the houses.

And the Egyptians who passed by, sniffed at it. "We wouldn't eat such things. Lamb, sheep, we wouldn't eat that." But their mouths were watering and in their hearts they were very envious of the Bnei Yisroel. Roasted mutton is delectable and the aroma it gives off is very tempting. Now suppose an Egyptian decided to yield his principles and come in and participate. As he walked in, he'd see a man standing in front of him. "Nothing doing," he said. "I'm sorry my friend, but you can't come in tonight." כָּל בֶּן נֹכֵר לֹא יֵאָכֵל בוֹ – *A stranger cannot eat from the Pesach sacrifice.* (Shemos 12:43)"

"Why not?" the Egyptian says.

"What can I do?" he says, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu says that we are chosen to eat the *korban Pesach* and only we."

### **The Shechina Within You**

So now we begin to see that the eating of the *korban Pesach* among other purposes was to demonstrate the superiority of the Am Yisroel. That night we sat down and only we, nobody else could come in. Even a gentile king couldn't come in and eat the *korban Pesach*. To demonstrate that we are not only distinguished aristocracy, but our *bodies* are holy. We're not ordinary people, we're not only *tzelem Elokim*, we're much more than that.

That's why the nations of the world will have to move on and make place for us. "I'm introducing the Am Yisroel to the world," Hashem says. "Move out of the

way for the holy nation; not only the distinguished nation, the aristocratic nation, the chosen nation, *but the holy nation!*"

### **DiETING JEWISH**

And so I go back to the beginning. Our special diet, the laws of *kashrus*, are not merely laws; they are signs of nobility. Why don't we eat all of those foods that mankind, that *tzelem Elokim*, can eat? **כִּי אֲנִי הָשֵׁם** – "Because I am Hashem, **הַמַּעֲלָה אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם** – Who elevated you when I took you out of the land of Mitzrayim."

And for that we should never stop thanking Him. We owe a debt of gratitude to Hakadosh Baruch Hu for these laws because it means that He declared our bodies sacred; the Jewish body is a *makom kadosh*, a Mishkan or a Mikdash, and in these sacred precincts, you cannot bring in any *sherotzim*.

A remarkable teaching! "I elevated you!" Not merely I *showed* that you are elevated, that you're distinguished from all the nations of the world, but I have declared the sacredness, the holiness of the Jewish body. And it's not a *marshal!* It's a fact! And in that Beis Hamikdash there resides the Shechina. The Shechina is the *neshama*, the soul of the Jew and that soul fills the space of his Beis Hamikdash.

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## **Let's Get Practical**

### **Remember Your Nobility**

The Torah dietary restrictions are actually a sign of our nobility. Every time we eat kosher food it's a reminder of our aristocracy. This week I will *bli neder* be careful to eat with dignity as befitting a human created in Hashem's image. Moreover, when I pass a non-kosher store I will reflect on the fact that I am a Chosen son of the King and I have been elevated by these dietary laws. My body is a Mishkan for the Shechina which dwells inside of me.

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# Q&A

WITH  
RAV AVIGDOR  
MILLER ZT"l



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ש א ב ג ד ה ו ז ח ט י כ ל מ נ ס ע פ צ ק ר ש ת

## QUESTION

**Is it befitting for a *ben Torah* to eat  
in a pizza place or a restaurant?**

## ANSWER

Let me explain something to you. If you're a yeshiva *bochur*, a *kollel* man, or a working man who wants to do what's right, make yourself a sandwich before you leave the house in the morning. Take the sandwich along with you and eat the sandwich for lunch. Why waste money on a restaurant? I don't understand that! For years and years I ate sandwiches that I took with me into the yeshiva every day. Why not?! It costs a load of money to eat in a restaurant. You're not **חָסֵם עַל קְמוֹן יִשְׂרָאֵל**? You'll need that money for yourself. For more important things than pizza or restaurant food.

Secondly, if you're eating in a place where *leitzim* come together, there's no excuse for that. It's a *moshav leitzim* and there's no excuse for you to sit in such a place! **וּבְמוֹשָׁב לֵיצִים לֹא יֵשֵׁב** – You can't sit down over there! Especially in some restaurants and pizza places where girls – *frum* girls – come. *Frum* girls at this table and yeshiva boys at another table. Not good at all. Not good at all!

And therefore, the best thing is, take along something from the house, a lunchbox, and eat it where you're able to sit by yourself, in the office or some other place. And you don't have to spend any money. And you don't have to associate with the wrong people either.

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