



## “Sanctify Yourself with that which Is Permitted”

# Wonderful Advice from the Chasam Sofer and Yismach Moshe: Eat before You Are Hungry and Ravenous

In this week's parsha, parshas Re'eh, we will focus on an exalted lesson concerning the act of eating. We will learn how to overcome the yetzer hara of gluttony and how to sanctify the mundane, vital act of eating. This applies to the consumption of everyday meat that was not offered as a korban, which lacks the kedushah of a "korban shelamim," whose meat may not be eaten in a state of tumah. Let us peruse the pertinent pesukim (Devarim 12, 20):

“כי ירחיב ה' אלקיך את גבולך כאשר דיבר לך, ואמרת אוכלה בשר כי תאווה נפשך לאכול בשר, בכל אות נפשך תאכל בשר, כי ירחק ממך המקום אשר יבחר ה' אלקיך לשוים שמו שם וזבחת מבקרך ומצאנך אשר נתן ה' לך כאשר ציויתך ואכלת בשעריך בכל אות נפשך, אך כאשר יאכל את הצבי ואת האיל כן תאכלנו הטמא והטהור יחדיו יאכלנו.”

**When Hashem, your G-d, will expand your border as He promised you, and you say, “I would like to eat meat,” for it is the desire of your soul to eat meat, as all the desire of your soul you may eat meat. Because the place where Hashem, your G-d, will choose to place His name will be far from you (Rashi: So, you will be unable to come and offer a shelamim every day), you may slaughter from your cattle and your flock that Hashem has given you, as I have commanded you, and you may eat in your cities according to all the desire of your soul. But as the deer and the gazelle are eaten, so may you eat it, the tamei (person) and the tahor (person) may eat it together. Rashi: You are not required to eat them in a state of purity (taharah). A “tamei” person and a “tahor” person may eat them from the same dish. Like the deer and the gazelle, which are animals that are not sacrificed on the mizbeiach, they do not require a state of taharah to be eaten.**

Why does the holy Torah emphasize the fact that man has an deep-rooted appetite for meat? Furthermore, it is even more surprising that the holy Torah approves of the fact that you may eat meat to the full extent of your soul's desire—“בכל אות נפשך תאכל בשר”. Seemingly, it is preferable to only eat enough to satisfy one's hunger but not to the full extent of one's appetite and desire.

### According to the Chasam Sofer the Torah Is Teaching Us to Avoid Gluttony

We will begin to shed some light on the subject by introducing the enlightening words of the great Chasam Sofer, zy”a, in Sefer HaZikaron. In fact, he interprets these pesukim in a totally opposite way. He asserts that the Torah is actually teaching us an important principle—how to sanctify the act of eating and all matters of Olam HaZeh that are influenced by the yetzer. Here are his sacred words of insight:

“כי ירחיב ה' אלקיך את גבולך וגו' ואמרת אוכלה בשר כי תאווה נפשך לאכול בשר, בכל אות נפשך תאכל בשר. המקרא הזה מרבה בבשר ובתאווה בכל ענין. ויש לומר דטוב לאדם למהר לתת להגוף צרכו לקיומו לשם שמים, טרם ירעב ויתאווה תאווה מרובה, ואז יאכל לתאווה ויכשיל גם הנשמה ח"ו באותה אכילה...”

על כן אמר כאן, כי ירחיב ה' אלקיך את גבולך ואמרת אוכלה בשר, טרם תבוא התאווה, שהרי כי תאווה נפשך לאכול בשר, ואז לא תהיה האכילה לשם שמים לקיום הגוף, כי אם בכל אות נפשך תאכל בשר, כבטן רשעים ח"ו, על כן תאמר למהר לאכול בשר.”

**He is astounded that the Torah would encourage a person's gluttony for meat and all types of earthly desires. Instead, he suggests that it is preferable to satisfy the body's basic human needs as quickly as possible to sustain oneself for the sake of Heaven. One should do so before**

developing a ravenous appetite, which would lead to gluttony and have a negative impact on the neshamah, chas v'shalom.

Therefore, Scripture says here: "When Hashem, your G-d, will expand your border as He promised you, and you say, 'I would like to eat meat'"—before a ravenous appetite develops. For, if your soul develops an (excessive) appetite to eat meat, then the eating will not be "I'shem shamayim," to merely sustain the physical body. Because if you eat meat with all your heart's desire, it will be like the appetite of reshaim, chas v'shalom. Therefore, you should decide to eat meat immediately (before you are ravenous).

It is evident that the Chasam Sofer, in his unique sacred way, was able to penetrate and uncover the vital lesson inherent in these pesukim—even for simple folk like us, who have not achieved the level of tzaddikim who eat solely to serve Hashem and to elevate the sparks of kedushah contained in their food. He teaches us how we, too, can sanctify matters of Olam HaZeh and avoid being like gluttons who eat only to satisfy the desire and inclination to eat. While it is definitely permissible to consume and desire meat, in actual practice, it is fraught with danger. It is liable to encourage and feed the yetzer of desire, as depicted by the passuk (ibid. 32, 15): "וישמון ישורון ויבעט, שמנת עבית כתיבת, ויטוש אלקי עשהו וינבל צור: Yeshurun became fat and kicked (rebelled); you became fat, you became thick, you became corpulent; it deserted G-d its Maker and was contemptuous of the Rock of its salvation. In a similar vein, we have learned in the Gemara (32a):

"אמרי דבי רבי ינאי, אין ארי נוהם מתוך קופה של תבן אלא מתוך קופה של בשר... אמר רבי חייא בר אבא אמר רבי יוחנן, משל לאדם אחד שהיה לו בן, הרחיצו וסכו והאכילו והשקהו, ותלה לו כיס על צוארו, והושיבו על פתח של זונות, מה יעשה אותו הבן שלא יחטא... רב נחמן אמר מהכא ורם לכבך ושכחת את ה', ורבנן אמרי מהכא ואכל ושבע ודשן ופנה ואי בעית אימא מהכא, וישמון ישורון ויבעט."

Sages of the school of Rabbi Yannai said: A lion does not roar over a basket of straw from which he derives no pleasure, but rather over a basket of meat, since he only roars when satiated . . . Rabbi Chiya bar Abba said that Rabbi Yochanan said: It is analogous to a person who had a son; he bathed him and anointed him with oil, fed him and gave him drink, and hung a purse of money around his

neck. Then, he brought him to the entrance of a brothel. What could the son do to avoid sinning?

. . . Rav Nachman said: This is derived from here (ibid. 8, 14): "And your heart will become haughty, and you will forget Hashem." The Rabbis say that it is derived from here (ibid. 31, 20): "But they will eat, be sated, and grow fat, and turn (to the gods of others). Or if you wish, say instead that it is derived from here: "And Yeshurun grew fat and kicked."

Therefore, the Torah offers them a wonderful way to overcome the desire of eating: Do not procrastinate to eat meat until you are ravenous; for, then, it will be extremely difficult to overcome your yetzer (inclination) of desire. Instead, eat meat before you are ravenous and cannot control your appetite. At that point, the yetzer of desire is not so powerful and is easier to withstand.

Based on this understanding, the Chasam Sofer interprets the pesukim as follows: "When Hashem, your G-d, will expand your border as He promised you, and you say, 'I would like to eat meat'"—in other words, you will express your desire to eat meat before you are hungry and ravenous. Because you know that "it is the desire of your soul to eat meat." And you realize that if you procrastinate until you are already hungry, it is very likely that "you will eat meat to your heart's content." So, in order to avoid this eventuality, and to prevent the unrestrained desire of your inclination to eat to prevail, the Torah says that it is advisable to eat preemptively: "You may slaughter from your cattle and your flock that Hashem has given you, as I have commanded you, and you may eat in your cities according to all the desire of your soul."

In light of this fantastic insight, however, the last part of the passuk is baffling: "And you may eat in your cities according to all the desire of your soul." This seems to contradict the entire approach of the Chasam Sofer—that the Torah is advising a person to eat meat before he is truly hungry to avoid eating meat with the yetzer of desire and gluttony. So, let us suggest the following clarification. According to the Chasam Sofer, the pesukim refer to someone who chooses to eat meat before his appetite and desire to eat are stimulated. Thus, he will not be controlled by the yetzer of desire and gluttony. Examples of proper meat consumption,

however, are eating the meat of a korban and eating meat in honor of Shabbas and Yom Tov. This is what the passuk refers to when it says, **“according to all the desire of your soul** (to your heart’s content),” because these types of eating please HKB”H.

**“As the deer and the gazelle are eaten”**

As a loyal servant in the presence of his master, I would like to embellish the interpretation of the Chasam Sofer, zy”a. Based on his interpretation, how are we to interpret the end of the passage: **“But as the deer and the gazelle are eaten, so may you eat it, the tamei and the tahor may eat it together”?** Why does the Torah specifically compare this consumption to that of the deer and the gazelle? Also, what is meant by **“the tamei and the tahor may eat it together”?**

It appears that we can explain these pesukim based on the sacred teachings of the Panim Yafos (Re’eh), the mentor and Rav of the Chasam Sofer. He explains the comparison to **“the deer and the gazelle”** by referring to the words of Shlomo HaMelech praising HKB”H in the holiest of songs (Shir HaShirim 2, 8): **“קול דודי הגה זה בא מדלג: על ההרים מקפץ על הגבעות, דומה דודי לצבי או לעופר האילים.”** **The voice of my Beloved! Behold, it came suddenly to redeem me, as if leaping over mountains, skipping over hills. In His swiftness to redeem me, My Beloved is like a gazelle or a young hart.** Rashi comments: **My Uncle (HKB”H) is compared to a deer (gazelle) whose gait is light** (quick); **for He came quickly like a gazelle and like a young ram.**

He is teaching us that HKB”H, so to speak, is light and quick like a gazelle and a ram when Yisrael are in need. Thus, he elevates them from the depths of dire situations to the loftiest of heights. Similarly, it behooves us to emulate the quickness of the gazelle and ram in matters related to eating and drinking, so that we may elevate the sparks of kedushah contained in the food to Hashem. This is the implication of the words: **“As the deer and the gazelle are eaten.”**

Now, if we combine the teaching of the teacher—the Panim Yafos—with the teaching of the pupil—the Chasam Sofer—we can truly appreciate the Torah’s magnificent analogy: **“As the deer and the gazelle are eaten.”** It is alluding to the wonderful suggestion of the Chasam

Sofer for a person to be quick like a gazelle and a ram by eating meat before he is hungry, so that he does not succumb to the burning desire ignited by the yetzer.

This explains very nicely the conclusion of this passage: **“So may you eat it, the tamei and the tahor may eat it together.”** Even if a simple Jew, who does not eat unsanctified food in a state of “taharah,” like a pious tzaddik, nevertheless he can eat with proper, ideal intent solely for the sake of Hashem. He can thereby minimize the influence of the yetzer of desire and gluttony. Therefore, both the tzaddik who is tahor and the simple Jew who is tamei may eat together, because HKB”H derives pleasure from the simple Jew’s eating just as He does from the eating of a tzaddik tahor.

We can suggest that this is the reason our blessed sages established the following in the Gemara (Shabbas 10a): **“שעה רביעית מאכל כל אדם, חמישית מאכל פועלים, ששית מאכל תלמידי חכמים—the fourth hour is the time for the meal of all people; the fifth hour is the time for the meal of laborers; the sixth hour is the time for the meal of “talmidei-chachamim”** (Torah scholars). Undoubtedly, Torah-scholars who devote their time to the study of Torah, possess the ability to sanctify their eating and drinking. Hence, there is no concern that they will succumb to the yetzer of desire even if they delay their meal until the sixth hour. On the other hand, if average Jews delay their meal to a later hour, it is possible that the yetzer of desire and gluttony will overwhelm them. Therefore, they are advised to eat earlier, before their hunger affects them, and they become susceptible to the yetzer of desire.

**A Fascinating Combination of Our Teacher Moshe the Chasam Sofer with Our Teacher Moshe the Yismach Moshe**

We have learned from the Chasam Sofer that to overcome the lusts and cravings provoked by the yetzer, it is advisable to eat before one is truly hungry, before the yetzer is in full force. It befits us to now introduce a similar idea presented by his close friend, the esteemed author of the Yismach Moshe (Kedoshim). He focuses on the words (Vayikra 19, 2): **“קדושים תהיו—you shall be holy.** Just like the Ramban, he says that this urges a person to sanctify himself even with things that are allowed and permissible. Here are his holy words:

“קדש עצמך במותר לך מתקיים על פי שני דרכים, או שממאס במותרות, ולפעמים ההיפך כמבואר בשולחן ערוך שמשביע עצמו מן ההיתר כדי שלא יבוא לידי איסור, והכל לפי מה שהוא אדם באותה שעה, ובלבד שיהיה כוונתו לשמים, והיינו גם כן קדש עצמך במותר לך, שעל ידי המותר הוא מקדש על עצמו שלא יבוא לידי איסור, וגם אם עושה לכוננה זו, הוי עבודה לשם ברוך הוא וברוך שמו ומקדש עצמו והבן”.

To paraphrase, he writes that there are two ways to fulfill the directive of (Yevamos 20a): “קדש עצמך במותר לך—**sanctify yourself (even) with that which is permitted to you:** (1) It is possible to disdain things that are permitted or (2) to occasionally do the opposite, as explained in the Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 231, 1)—to satiate oneself with that which is permitted, so as not to consume or do that which is prohibited. Whatever one’s situation, and whichever method one chooses, one’s actions should always be for the sake of Heaven. This also applies to this directive. Through that which is permitted, a person can sanctify himself, so that he does not eventually do something that is prohibited.

In essence, he is teaching us that when a person eats and drinks that which is permitted to satisfy his appetite, so that he doesn’t violate a prohibition, chas v’shalom, that, too, is classified as: “קדש עצמך במותר לך”—because he is doing so “I’shem shamayim.” This is consistent with the ruling of the author of the Shulchan Aruch (ibid.): “בכל מה שיהנה—**whatever a person derives pleasure from in Olam HaZeh, he should not do so for his own pleasure but rather for the service of the blessed Creator, as it is written (Mishlei 3, 6): ‘In all your endeavors know (emulate) Him.’** All the more so when following the advice of the Chasam Sofer. By eating and drinking before one is hungry or thirsty to avoid eating ravenously, one is fulfilling the directive of: “**Sanctify yourself with that which is permitted to you.**”

By combining the insights of these two great luminaries—Rabeinu Moshe the Chasam Sofer and Rabeinu Moshe the Yismach Moshe—we can shed some light on the meaning of the pesukim: “**When Hashem, your G-d, will expand your border as He promised you, and you say, ‘I would like to eat meat,’ for it is the desire of your soul to eat meat.**” In other words, a person will express a desire to eat meat, because he has a natural appetite for meat. Hence, he fears that if he does not satisfy this appetite, he is liable to eat that which is prohibited, chas v’shalom.

To which the Torah says: “**As all the desire of your soul you may eat meat.**” According to the Yismach Moshe, the Torah is saying that it is preferable to consume meat that is permissible to your heart’s content, so that you do not end up eating something that is prohibited. Furthermore, this is also a form of : “קדש עצמך במותר לך”. Notwithstanding, the Torah goes on to warn us that it is preferable to follow the advice of the Chasam Sofer: “**But as the deer and the gazelle are eaten, so may you eat it.**” Adopt the attribute of quickness characteristic of the deer and the gazelle; do not procrastinate until the yetzer of desire and gluttony overwhelms you and consumes you. For, at that point, you are fighting a losing battle. Instead, eat preemptively before you are affected by your strong appetite and desire.

### “Observing through the windows, peering through the lattices” to See if a Person Sanctifies Himself in Mundane Matters

Based on what we have learned, we can suggest a lovely interpretation of the following passuk (Shir HaShirim 2, 8): “הנה זה עומד אחר דומה דודי לצבי או לעופר האילים, כתלינו משגיח מן החלונות מציץ מן החרכים.” **My Beloved is like a gazelle or a young hart. I thought I would be forever alone but behold! He was standing behind our wall, observing through the windows, peering through the lattices.** What situation is this passuk referring to—when HKB”H, so to speak, is observing our behavior while standing on the other side of our wall? We will suggest an answer based on the words of Yisrael’ sweet psalmist (Tehillim 121, 5): “ה’ צלך”—**Hashem is your shadow.** According to a Midrash cited by the Shela hakadosh, this means that HKB”H mirrors man’s actions. Whatever a person does down below prompts HKB”H to act in a similar fashion up above.

Accordingly, if a person serves Hashem as per the Chasam Sofer’s interpretation of the passuk: “אך כאשר יאכל”—i.e., he hurries to eat and drink before the yetzer of desire is aroused—then HKB”H responds “midah k’neged midah.” He provides the person with abundant good before the heavenly prosecutors accuse the person of wrongdoing to prevent him from receiving the bounty. It reflects the situation depicted by the passuk (Yeshayah 65, 24): “והיה טרם יקראו ואני אענה עוד הם מדברים ואני אשמע”—**it will be that before they call, I will answer; while they**

**yet speak, I will hear.** By responding quickly, HKB”H does not give the heavenly accusers time to oppose man’s tefilah and prove his unworthiness.

Now, we are taught in the Gemara (Berachos 8a) that a person must pray specifically in a Beis Midrash where the Shechinah is present. Because: **“מיום שחרב בית המקדש—from the day the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed, HKB”H only has four cubits of halachah in His world.** Viewed in this light, we can interpret the passuk as follows: **“My Beloved is like a gazelle or a young hart”**—like a gazelle or a young hart, HKB”H rushes to provide man with bountiful good, before the heavenly prosecutors are alerted and attempt to prevent it.

To merit this, however: **“He stands behind our walls”**—the walls of our houses specifically to observe how we deal with the mundane activities of Olam HaZeh; **“observing through the windows”**—the visible rooms where we eat and drink; **“peering through the lattices”**—to observe how we behave in private. This concurs with the elucidation in the Gemara (Chagigah 5b) related to the passuk (Amos 4, 13): **“ומגיד לאדם מה שיחוו... אפילו: “He recounts to a person what his deeds were” . . . even the casual speech between a man and his wife is recounted to him at the time of his death.** Thus, when HKB”H sees that a person eats and drinks **“like a deer and a gazelle”** (before his hunger and thirst are apparent) to preempt the gluttonous influence of the yetzer of desire, Hashem responds in kind—**“Hashem is your shadow.”** HKB”H also acts preemptively: **“My Beloved is like a gazelle or a young hart”**—acting quickly to fulfill our wishes even before we request them and before they can be denied, in keeping with the passuk: **“It will be that before they call, I will answer.”**

**“When you go out to war against your enemies”**

Based on this fantastic combination of insights from the Chasam Sofer and the Yismach Moshe, we can begin to comprehend the opening words of parshas Ki Seitzei (Devarim 21, 10): **“כי תצא למלחמה על אויביך ונתנו ה' אלקיך—when you go out to war against your enemies, and Hashem, your G-d, delivers him into your hands, and you take captives.** According to

Rashi, this passuk is speaking about optional wars, as opposed to the wars of conquest of the land. Our sacred sefarim explain that our main battle is with the yetzer, who besieges man and strives to trap him in its net. The yetzer focuses primarily on permissible matters allowed by Torah-law. Here is what the Be'er Mayim Chaim writes on the subject:

**“כי המלחמה הוא לכופך את עצמו להכניע תאותו בדברי הרשות בדבר המותר לו, כאומרם ז”ל קדש עצמך במותר לך, כי אם לא יכפה את עצמו להכניע תאותו בדבר המותר, ממילא ח”ו קרוב הוא שלא יתגבר על יצרו בדבר האסור.**

**כאמור בדברי חז”ל המשבר כלים בחמתו והמפזר מעותיו בחמתו, יהיה בעיניך כעובד עבודה זרה, שכך אומנתו של יצר הרע, היום אומר לו עשה כך ולמחר אומר לו עשה כך, עד שאומר לו עבוד עבודה זרה והולך ועובד עבודה זרה, וכאשר כתבנו שהתאוה אף בדברי הרשות שורש אל אחר הוא שאינו לה’, ועל כן עיקר המלחמה בדברי הרשות, שבזה יצרו מסיתו מאד לומר, הרי מותר אתה בזה ומה לך לענות נפשך חנם בלא דבר.”**

To summarize: The goal of the battle is to control one’s urges and desires regarding matters that are permissible, in keeping with Chazal’s directive: **“Sanctify yourself in matters that are permitted to you.”** Otherwise, it is likely that one will not withstand his yetzer regarding matters that are prohibited. As Chazal state (Shabbas 105b): **“If one breaks his utensils in anger, or scatters his money in anger, you should view him as one who worships avodah-zarah. For this is the craft of the yetzer hara. Today it tells him, ‘Do this,’ and the next day, it tells him, ‘Do that.’ Until it tells him to worship avodah-zarah, and he goes and worships avodah-zarah.”** For, desire applies even to things that are permitted; they are the root of foreign gods and acts not devoted to Hashem. Therefore, the main battle concerns matters that are permitted. This is where the yetzer focuses and is extremely deceitful. It convinces a person that things are permissible and that he is depriving himself unnecessarily.

In keeping with what we have learned from the Chasam Sofer and the Yismach Moshe, we can interpret the passuk as follows: **“When you go out to war against your enemies”**—do not wait until the yetzer hara has prevailed over you in mundane matters of Olam HaZeh. Then the odds against you will be overwhelming, and you are likely to fall prey to it. On the contrary, take the initiative; be preemptive. Begin to combat the yetzer hara even before it entices you with worldly desires by taking care of your worldly needs before you are truly hungry and overcome

with desire. If you follow this advice, the Torah assures you that **“Hashem, your G-d, will deliver him into your hands and you will take captives.”**

**The Kedushah of Eating Connected with the Love of Your Fellow Jew**

I would like to conclude this essay with a novel teaching from the Chasam Sofer, zy"ta, in Toras Moshe. He reveals his great affection not only for HKB"H and His Torah but also for all of Yisrael. He expresses his love for even the simplest of Jews, even though they may not rise to the level of tzaddikim. This teaching is related to the passage we began with with the addition of one more passuk:

**“When Hashem, your G-d, will expand your border as He promised you, and you say, ‘I would like to eat meat,’ for it is the desire of your soul to eat meat, as all the desire of your soul you may eat meat . . . But as the deer and the gazelle are eaten, so may you eat it, the tamei and the tahor may eat it together. Only be strong not to eat the blood, because the blood is the soul, and you shall not eat the soul with the meat.”**

The Chasam Sofer applies these pesukim to consummate tzaddikim such as Rabeinu hakadosh, who do not derive pleasure from the mundane affairs of Olam HaZeh. He learns from these pesukim that aside from the kedushah of eating with proper intent, they must take care not to belittle or disrespect those who have not achieved the same elite status. Hence, the passuk encourages them to eat together: **“הטמא והטהור יחדיו יאכלנו”**—**the tamei and the tahor should eat it together.** Failure to do so might lead to disgrace and the spilling

of blood. Hence, the Torah continues: **“You shall not eat the soul with the meat”**—alluding to the blood and soul of those who have not achieved an elite status.

He explains that a person’s holy life-source desires meat in order to elevate the sparks of the animal being consumed. It believes that that desire emanates from Hashem just like the malach in charge of desire was sent to Yehudah and Tamar (to sow the seeds of the future Mashiach). Furthermore, when a person satisfies his appetite, he isn’t always totally content, because he may be troubled by the financial expenditure or the time spent. This is not true of the tzaddik. Since he is certain that his desire was decreed from the heavens to fulfill the will of the Creator, blessed is He, he can eat to his heart’s content without any trace of regret.

Yet, when he prepares to eat meat intending to elevate its holy sparks, he should take care not to drive away members of his family whom he deems unworthy. This applies all the more so to members of his household who are not learned and who are unsophisticated. In fact, the Gemara (Pesachim 49b) teaches that they are prohibited to eat meat, because they cause the animal’s sparks to descend rather than ascend. Thus, he embarrasses them and figuratively spills their blood.

Therefore, the Torah admonishes the tzaddik not to alienate them or embarrass them. Instead, **“the tamei and the tahor should eat it together.”** Thus, when you eat meat intending to elevate its holy sparks, you should not eat the blood of this lesser individual also. This is the implication of the passuk: **“Only be strong not to eat the blood, because the blood is the soul, and you shall not eat the soul with the meat.”**

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