



TORAH WEEKLY

A project of the Denver Community Kollel



Parshas Mishpatim

January 28, 2022

A Taste of Torah Cooking Course

by Rabbi Aharon Wilen

Three times in the Torah, including once in this week's parsha, we are commanded not to cook meat and milk together. Our Sages teach that these three instances teach three separate restrictions: It is forbidden to cook milk and meat together, consume milk and meat that was cooked together, or even benefit from such a mixture. Interestingly, the prohibition is expressed by the Torah in a strangely cruel way: "You shall not cook a kid in its mother's milk." (Mishpatim 23:19) Why does the Torah single out the mother's milk, instead of a more neutral "Don't cook a kid in milk"?

The Ralbag (Rabbi Levi ben Gershon; 1288-1344) explains that the Torah wants to give us an insight into one of the deeper messages of this mitzvah. Hashem is always showering us with His countless blessings that give us our ongoing existence. These blessings are akin to mother's milk, which Hashem created to feed and nourish a child so it can grow and develop. Similarly, our blessings are meant to nourish us so we can continuously grow and excel in our service of Hashem.

Cooking the kid in its mother's milk is denaturing its meat in the very substance meant to nourish its growth. If we one takes our blessings, such as mental agility, material prosperity, or the like and uses them in ways ruinous to our spiritual stature and soul, we are essentially cooking our own personal "kid" in its "mother's milk"!

Once we understand this message, another strange thing about the way this mitzvah is presented in the Torah can be explained. This same verse begins with "the first fruits of your land you shall bring to the house

of Hashem, your G-d." This is the mitzvah of *bikkurim*, the bringing of the first fruits of the Seven Species of *Eretz Yisrael* (the Land of Israel) to the *Bais Hamikdash* (Temple). The verse then concludes with "Do not cook a kid in its mother's milk." What connection does the restriction on meat and milk have to *bikkurim*?

The Ralbag explains that when we receive an abundance of blessing, its purpose is to facilitate serving Hashem stress-free. However, an abundance of good can also cause us to forget that we are totally dependent on Hashem, as the verse in the Book of Devarim (32:15) says, "and Yeshurun (a reference to the Jewish Nation) became fat and kicked." As a reminder to dedicate all of our blessings to furthering our spiritual growth and service of Hashem as they were intended, we are commanded to bring the first fruits of *Eretz Yisrael* to the *Bais Hamikdash*. This drives home the message that the blessings of abundance must be connected to Hashem and used in His service.

It turns out that both the mitzvah of *bikkurim* and the mitzvah of not eating milk and meat together are reminders to use our blessings properly!

The Chasam Sofer (Rabbi Moshe Sofer; 1762-1839), echoing the Ralbag, adds that the "mother's milk" is also a reference to the Heavenly fire that burned upon the *Mizbe'ach* (Altar) in the *Bais Hamikdash*. This fire originally descended when the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle) was first dedicated, to demonstrate the ongoing relationship between *Bnai Yisrael* and Hashem. This fire was the fire that consumed the *korbanos* (offerings) offered there, deepening the relationship between

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Stories for the Soul

Coming Back for Money

Rabbi Dov Ber, the Maggid of Mezeritch (d. 1772), once asked his teacher, Rabbi Yisroel Baal Shem Tov (1698-1760), to explain the passage in the Zohar on the opening verse of the Parshas Mishpatim, "These are the laws," which it explains as referring to "the mystery of reincarnation." The Maggid wondered: What connection is there between the straightforward meaning relating to the various financial and tort issues discussed subsequently and the mystical one of multiple incarnations of souls?

In reply, the Baal Shem Tov sent him to a forest and told him to seek out a certain tree next to a spring, and to remain there until evening.

When the Maggid arrived at his destination, he saw there an armed man with a horse. The man was tired and had stopped to rest, eat and drink. When he moved on, he mistakenly left his wallet behind. After a while, another man came, found the wallet and took it with him.

Shortly thereafter, a third man arrived. He was obviously poor and exhausted. He sat down under the tree, ate some bread, drank from the well and lay down to sleep. However, just then the armored rider returned and demanded his wallet from the poor traveler. The latter knew nothing of the wallet, but the rider, not believing him, proceeded to beat him mercilessly before moving on.

As the sun set, Rabbi Dov Ber returned home and told the Baal Shem Tov what he had seen. The Baal Shem Tov explained:

The rider, in his previous

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Kollel Happenings

RABBI YOSSI EPHRATHI NOW TEACHING LEARN 2 LEARN GESHMAK

You may have limited experience learning Talmud. You may think that you don't enjoy serious Talmud study, that it's just not for you. But you haven't tried Learn 2 Learn Geshmak. A Gemara program crafted to give you the satisfaction and joy of learning, Learn 2 Learn Geshmak is taught by Kollel Scholar Rabbi Yossi Ephrathi. Contact Rabbi Nesanel Kipper at rnk@denverkollel.org for further details.

A DEEPER LOOK AT THE PARSHA WITH RABBI SHACHNE SOMMERS

Join Rabbi Shachne Sommers as he discusses a number of difficulties encountered in the weekly Torah portion, and develops a comprehensive approach to resolve the issue, simultaneously conveying a deeper understanding of the material being discussed. Tuesday nights on Zoom at 8:15 for men and women; email info@denverkollel.org for Zoom link info.

TALMUDO BIYADO GEMARA CLUB FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL BOYS

Learn, review, and acquire a masechta! Boys in grades 6-8 are invited to join Rabbi Chaim Gross at the Southeast Kollel Torah Center/Ohel Yissochor weeknights Mon.-Thu. from 8-8:30 pm for a Gemara shiur followed by review. Contact Rabbi Nesanel Kipper at rnk@denverkollel.org for further details.

Halacha Riddles

Last week's question: wo can force one, but one cannot force two. What is this referring to in the context of *zimmin*?

Answer: If three people are obligated to recite *zimmin*, and part of the group is ready to *bentch* while others are still eating, they may recite *zimmin* and those who wish to continue eating respond, listen to the first *bracha* of *Birkas Hamazon* and then resume eating (and recite the entire *Birkas Hamazon* after finishing eating).

If there are three people and two wish to *bentch*, they can force the third person to stop eating and participate in the *zimmin*. However, one person wishing to *bentch* cannot force two who are not yet ready to do so, though he may ask them to accommodate him (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 200:1).

This week's question: In two near-identical scenarios, a major aspect of *zimmin* changes due to movement. What is the nature of this movement and what aspect changes?

Lives of Our Torah Leaders

Rabbi Meir Shapiro - Part XXXVI

On Lag Ba'omer of 1924, the cornerstone-laying ceremony for Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin was held. Some 50,000 Jews attended the event. Polish media and government officials

came as well. Rabbi Shapiro addressed the crowds in three languages - Hebrew, Yiddish and Polish. He said, "Now we have everything - except for the money."

A Taste of Torah

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Hashem and His Nation.

Sadly, when the Jewish People lost their appreciation for this relationship, another Heavenly fire was sent from on high to destroy the *Bais Hamikdash*, the very place where that fire had dwelled, cooking the "kid" - the *Bais Hamikdash* - in its "mother's milk," the Heavenly fire that had, until then, created the nurturing connection between Hashem and the *Bnai Yisrael*. The Chasam Sofer

continues that bringing *bikkurim* to the *Bais Hamikdash* is a special way of strengthening the relationship with Hashem through the *Bais Hamikdash* itself, ensuring that the "kid" is not cooked in its "mother's milk"!

A major part of keeping kosher is avoiding combining milk and meat. But let us also take to heart the important lesson of this mitzvah, and not abuse the blessings we are granted from Hashem.

Stories for the Soul

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incarnation, owed the second man a sum of money equal to that in the wallet but refused to pay him. The creditor then charged him before their local rabbi - none other than the third man in his previous incarnation. But the rabbi failed to investigate the claim as thoroughly as he should have and

dismissed the charge.

That is why in their present reincarnation, the Baal Shem Tov concluded, the first man wound up "paying" his debt to the second one and the third, the rabbi-judge, received the punishment he deserved.

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