

IT'S IN THE BLOOD! Part 1

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“But DO NOT eat flesh with its life, its BLOOD.” **Bereshith 9:4** the *Scriptures*

In the Restoration of Yisrael, and the calling of Ephraim to do teshuvah, we are faced with a problem that seems to have overwhelmed Ephraim since being scattered among the nations and being assimilated into the pagan culture and religion of the nations. The predicament is **THE EATING OF BLOOD AND THE FAILURE OF EPHRAIM TO KEEP THE TORAH OF KASHRUT!** EPHRAIM NOT ONLY STRUGGLES WITH *KASHRUT*, BUT ALL OF YAHWEH'S COMMANDS PERTAINING TO THE BLOOD-BRIT *MILAH* (CIRCUMCISION) AND *NIDDAH* (THE LAWS OF SEXUAL RELATIONS DURING THE MONTHLY FLOW). Since *kashrut* (the proper slaughtering and eating of Biblically clean animals and abstaining from their blood), *niddah* are *chukim* (commands that seem not to have any logical meaning), Ephraim is struggling to see any spiritual significance attached to these instructions from YHWH. This teaching is an attempt to elucidate and bring understanding to Ephraim concerning the significance of keeping *kashrut*. A later teaching (Part 2) will deal with *niddah*. The Torah of *kashrut* and *niddah* are NOT a Yehudite problem, but an Ephraimite problem. I am assuming that the readers of this teaching agree that ALL the Torah of Yahweh is still binding upon ALL Yisrael as taught by our Rebbe Melek Yahshua HaMoshiach in **Mattityahu 5: 17-20**.

In the Beginning (Bereshith)

In the beginning, Elohim gave Adam and Chawah every seed bearing plant and tree to eat (**Bereshith/Genesis 1:29**). Before man's fall into disobedience, man was a vegetarian. There was not any death, nor was he allowed to kill any creature and shed its blood. It was not until Yahweh Elohim sacrificed an animal to atone for Adam's sin that blood was shed- an innocent life had to be sacrificed to pay the penalty for breaking Yahweh's instructions (**Bereshith 3:21**). The shedding of blood is always related to the DEATH of the victim and LIFE for the one that sheds its blood (*dam*).

According to the Torah, Yahweh must have revealed the Torah of *Kashrut* to Noach, because we see Noach being commanded in **Bereshith 7:2-9** to take seven pairs of the CLEAN beasts and only two of the UNCLEAR into the ark. We read in **Bereshith 9:3-4** that Elohim allowed Noach and his family to eat meat for the FIRST time-WITH A STIPULATION ATTACHED-**THEY WERE NOT TO EAT THE FLESH (MEAT) WITH THE BLOOD STILL IN IT!** The blood reflected the LIFE of the animal that was killed so man could survive by eating its flesh. Note that the animals given to Noach and his family to eat HAD TO BE CLEAN ANIMALS AS ONLY TWO UNCLEAR ANIMALS WERE TAKEN INTO THE ARK AND IF THEY HAD EATEN THEM THEN THEY COULD NOT HAVE REPRODUCED AND HAD OFFSPRING TO PROPAGATE THE SPECIES. Noach was to sacrifice from the CLEAN ANIMALS (**Bereshith 8:20**) and was given the FREEDOM by TORAH to eat of the seven pairs he had saved from the flood. Since there were more pairs of CLEAN beasts and birds, they would breed at a higher rate to provide CLEAN MEAT for mankind to eat upon the earth.

We have the understanding from the Torah that man was given CLEAN MEAT before the Torah of Mosheh, and the command to abstain from blood was given to ALL MANKIND BEFORE Mt.Sinai!

- “And the sun rose on him (Yisrael) as he passed over Penu'el, and he (Yisrael) limped on his hip. That is WHY the Bnai Yisrael (children of Yisrael) to THIS DAY does not eat the SINEW of the hip, which is on the socket of the thigh, because He touched the socket of the thigh of Ya'akov, in the sinew of the hip.” **Bereshith 32:31-32**

In Bereshith we read that ALL the Children of Yisrael, TO THIS DAY, will not eat the *gid ha-nasheh* or the displaced nerve running down the back of the leg of an animal. This nerve is known as the sciatic nerve.

Therefore, before ANY hindquarter of an animal may be eaten by a Yisraelite, this nerve, and all its branches, must be carefully removed from the meat. This is very difficult to do; so most Yisraelites will not eat from the hindquarters. This is part of the sirloin. The sages teach us that this nerve is the place where evil has its strongest influence in a person. This word –DISLOCATED–is the same term in Hebrew used for the punishment upon Yisrael after the heresy at *Ba'al Pe'or*. It means to hang or impale. Yisrael's thigh was hanging from the socket. Keeping this command reminds ALL Yisrael of the truth of the eternal survival of the *Bnai* Yisrael even though we must endure hard struggles in the exile at the hands of the *goyim*. It teaches us also that any physical or spiritual handicap should not hinder or discourage us in our fight for survival and to “rule as EL rules” as Yisrael!

From Mount Sinai

“Know Him in all your ways, and He will make all your paths straight.” **Mishle 3:6**

“...I AM Yahweh your Elohim, Who has separated you from the peoples. And you shall make a distinction between clean beasts and unclean, and between unclean birds and clean. And do NOT make yourself abominable by the beast or by the bird, or whatever creeps on the ground, which I have separated from you as unclean. And you shall be set-apart to Me, for I Yahweh am set-apart, and have separated you from the peoples to be Mine.” **Wayyiqra 20:24-26**

Word definitions:

- **Separated-** # 914-*BaDaL*-to divide,distinguish,make different, make separate,select,differ
- **Clean** - # 2889 *TaHoR* –pureness,fair,clear from *TaHeR*-to be bright, to be pure,uncontaminated,purify
- **Unclean** - # 2931 *TaMe* –foul,defiled,polluted,unclean from *Tame*-contaminated,utterly unclean,polluted
- **Abominable** -# 8262 *ShaQaTz* –to be filthy,to loathe, abhor,utterly detest
- **Holy** - # 6918 *QaDoSH*- set apart, a sanctuary, a set apart one from *QaDaSH* to be clean,sanctify oneself wholly

In the Torah, **Wayyiqra (Lev.) 11** is the chapter outlining what food is *TAHOR* or *TAMAI* or sometimes called *trefah*. Any one who knows the Torah is aware of what food we may or may not eat. Hopefully, we are all aware of the simple dietary laws. If you are not then read this chapter diligently to make yourself aware of what Yahweh requires of you. However, there is MORE to keeping *kosher* than just eating the right food. We MUST abstain from the **BLOOD!**

- “And ANY MAN OF THE HOUSE OF YISRAEL, or of the STRANGERS who sojourn among you, who EATS BLOOD, **I SHALL SET MY FACE AGAINST THAT BEING WHO EATS BLOOD, AND SHALL CUT HIM OFF FROM HIS PEOPLE.** For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your lives, for it is the blood that makes atonement for the life. THEREFORE, I say to the children of Yisrael, “NO BEING AMONG YOU EATS BLOOD, NOR DOES THE STRANGER WHO SOJOURNS AMONG YOU EAT BLOOD.” **Wayyiqra (Lev.) 17:10-12 also see 17:14**

The deeper meaning of the Torah of Kashrut

In the Hebraic mind the words *tamai* and *tahor* NEVER describe physical cleanliness or uncleanness, but rather a spiritual or moral state of being! *Tamai* is used in relation to moral or religious deficiency that **CONTAMINATES THE SOUL OR BEING-EVEN THE CHARACTER OF A MAN.** This particularly refers to incest, idol worship, and to characterize ritual impurity .It could be translated **DEFILEMENT!** Notice the animals declared **CLEAN** by Yahweh were also clean to be used for the sacrifices in the Temple. We must view the words of clean and unclean as used in the sense of ritual defilement or purity. All the laws of *kashrut* are in the context of becoming or being *KADOSH* or set-apart to Yahweh as the people of Yisrael!

To be *Kadosh* in the Hebraic mind DOES NOT MEAN TO BECOME ASCETIC, WITHDRAWN FROM LIFE AND THE WORLD. To be set-apart does not call us to practice self-denial of human pleasures or even the repression of bodily drives; YET being set-apart does not condone self-indulgence. The lack of self-control demonstrates a spiritual weakness and also moral decay. To be KADOSH means we are becoming masters over all our passions so that we are in command of them and we control them and not they control us!

The Torah teaches us to elevate the satisfaction of ALL basic urges-such as food, drink, sex- to a level worthy of a people set-apart to Yahweh. We also learn from the Torah to turn even the most mundane everyday activity into a religious experience to reflect WHO WE ARE AS YISRAEL!

The breakdown in the keeping of *kashrut* and abstaining from blood among Messianic Yisrael was a factor leading to the assimilation of Yisrael into the nations and the adopting their pagan life-styles and diet! Remember that this law is a *Chukat*, one without a seemingly logical reason. These are the laws that Ephraim struggles with in its Torah observance even today. It was a major hindrance in the early congregations, as we will see in Acts 15. The eating of BLOOD would result with the man being CUT OFF from his people! This is exactly what happened to Ephraim. He was CUT OFF from the Olive Tree of Yisrael and the land of Yisrael because of his non-Torah observance! It is only by BELIEF (a Torah based life-style that reflects our belief in the Word of Yahweh concerning Moshiach Yahshua) not faith, that we can be grafted back into the Olive Tree and return to the land.

Look at the words Yahweh uses to describe His actions towards ANYONE who eats ANY blood (this law does not refer just to the blood of the sacrifices but to ANY blood of ANY ANIMAL slain for food) – Yahweh says that He will “SET MY FACE AGAINST”. This term is a Hebraic idiom that means that He will stop whatever He is doing and turn all His attention towards that person to punish him. Do you still think that Yahweh does not take the eating of blood seriously? This may help you to understand why the returning Ephraimites were a MAJOR stumbling block to the Yahudim Brethren in Acts 15.

Acts 15, Kashrut, and blood

“That you ABSTAIN from what is offered to idols, and BLOOD, and what is strangled, and whoring. If you keep yourselves from these, you shall do well. Be strong!” **Acts 15:29**

Ephraimites are always quick to quote from Acts 15 whenever confronted with Torah observance or circumcision. I have come to understand that they really do not know nor understand what actions the “Council” was demanding of them. These Torah laws were placed upon the returning Yisraelites just so the Yehudim could sit besides them in the synagogues and have table fellowship with them. Let us look deeper at the “very minimal” commands they were commanded to keep.

- Abstain from BLOOD-This refers to the Torah command we looked at in Wayyiqra 17. The returning Ephraimites were not to eat ANY MEAT THAT HAD NOT BEEN PROPERLY *KASHERED*, OR HAD THE BLOOD DRAINED OUT OF IT BY PROPER SLAUGHTERING METHODS OR BY SALTING THE MEAT! We have to remember that the drinking of blood was a very important part of idol worship in the temples as the meat sold in the market place was offered to false deities.
- What is strangled – They were not to eat meat that WAS NOT SLAUGHTERED IN THE WAY THAT ALLOWS THE BLOOD TO FLOW OUT. TRUE KOSHER MEAT WILL BE PROPERLY SLAUGHTERED AS YAHWEH COMMANDED YISRAEL. *SH'CHITAH* requires an animal to be killed by one single stroke across the neck. The animal dies instantly, painlessly, and the BLOOD is drained very quickly. Devarim 12:21 says, “When the place where Yahweh your Elohim chooses to place His Name is too far from you, then you shall SLAUGHTER from your herd and from your flock which Yahweh has given you, AS I HAVE COMMANDED YOU, and you shall eat it within your gates as much as your being desires.”
- That which has been offered to idols- The returning Ephraimites were not to eat or partake of ANY meat offered to false gods. When someone blesses the food to “GAD-god” has it been offered to a false idol? Please read **Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 65:11** (You who prepare a table for GAWD).

The question of Acts 15 is about table fellowship and ritual purity between Yehudah and Ephraim.

How can the Two Houses ever come together around the table when Ephraim still has BLOOD problem? Has this become major stumbling block again in the Reunification of ALL Yisrael? Is Ephraim willing to pay the price to sit around the table with his brother Yehudah? Remember Acts 15 is stating the bare “minimum” requirements for Reunification of the Two Houses in the synagogues and congregations.

Practical things Ephraim can do

This is a short list of some practical rules Ephraim can look for in meat to begin to observe *KASHRUT*. I admit that kosher meat is more expensive due to the costly and time-consuming steps involved in the breeding, slaughter, and processing. But we need to ask ourselves if we are willing to pay the price for the higher assurances that kosher meat and kosher certification brings SHALOM to our minds and beings as a set-apart people to Yahweh. We are talking about becoming a *KODESH PEOPLE TO YAHWEH!* By observing this commandment of Yahweh, we will maintain our ritual purity before Him and be pleasing to Him.

- The meat must come from a CLEAN animal listed in Wayyiqra 11. It must be in good health. Any diseased animal is automatically considered nonkosher.
- Kosher poultry MUST be raised without hormones or growth stimulants.
- Animals cannot be artificially stunned before slaughter. Nor can they be slaughtered mechanically, but must be slaughtered by a *shochet*. They should be slaughtered in the manner prescribed by Yahweh and as humanely as possible.
- The internal organs are checked by a trained inspector, called a *bodek*, for any abnormalities or disease.
- Certain blood vessels and nerves, and lobes of fat are removed from the meat.
- After slaughter, all the remaining blood must be extracted from the carcass. This is done by the kosher butcher or at home by the consumer by soaking the meat in salt water.
- All meat must be koshered within three days of slaughter because after 72 hours blood becomes coagulated and cannot be removed.
- The meat is tagged and labeled as kosher.

I believe that with all the diseases in the USDA meat you buy at the local market, we as Yisrael will only find safety and security in the perfect Torah of Yahweh. Keeping KOSHER in these last days may save the lives of Yisraelites during the plagues that will be coming upon the earth. Yisrael can also receive HEALING in the Torah of *KASHRUT* as Yahweh said:

- **Shemot (Ex.) 15:26**, “If you diligently obey the voice of Yahweh your Elohim and DO what is right in HIS eyes, and shall LISTEN to His commands and shall guard ALL His laws, I shall bring on you NONE of the diseases I brought on the Mitzrites, for I AM YAHWEH ROPHE’EKA (who heals you).”

Parting thoughts

Yahweh is an Elohim of LIFE, and teaches us through the Torah of *Kashrut*, to abstain from things that eat of the dead. He wants to separate us from DEATH (sin) and have us honor the being that forfeits its life so that we may live. A life is taken to give us life. We learn to control our impulses and desires by eating kosher meat and food. Our diets actually distinguish us as a set-apart people, separate from the pagan nations. The food we eat actually become a part of our being and can render us unclean or an abomination before Yahweh. Our temple of the *Ruach HaKodesh* can become DEFILED by unclean food. Like all the commands in the Torah, *KASHRUT* has spiritual applications. We must have both the physical letter of the law AND the spirit of the law (spiritual application) coming together for it to be TRUE TORAH!

We read in **Wayyiqra 11:4-7** we are forbidden to eat of the “camel, the coney or badger, the hare or rabbit, and the swine or pig. Our sages teach us that these 4 animals symbolize the 4 Empires found in the book of Dani’el.

The sages teach that the camel is Babylon, the coney is the Medes-Persia Empire, the rabbit is Greece, and the pig is ROME. This teaches us that we as Yisrael are not to eat of the culture, religion, and ways of these 4 enemies of Yisrael. It will make us *TAMAI* before Yahweh.

All the commands of the Torah are like a foundation of the house (as Yahshua taught). In and of itself it is NOT the house itself. You cannot live in the foundation. BUT, on the other hand, a Dwelling Place built upon weak or poor foundations or WITHOUT ANY FOUNDATION has not the ability to stand nor is it permanent. It will easily collapse with the slightest wind, rain, or storm. Likewise, *KASHRUT*, by itself does not make for the Dwelling Place, BUT ANY ATTEMPT TO BUILD THE DWELLING PLACE WITHOUT KASHRUT OR ANY COMMANDS OF THE TORAH IS BUILDING UPON SAND OR A WEAK FOUNDATION, AND GREAT WILL BE THE FALL OF THAT HOUSE. WITHOUT THE PROPER FOUNDATION OF ALL THE TORAH OUR DWELLING PLACES WILL BE IN DANGER OF COLLAPSE. Unless YHWH builds the House, the labor is in vain.

This is the time for ALL Yisrael to return to Yahweh and His perfect Torah, the only perfect and peaceful solution to the chaos in the world. It is the blueprint of ALL creation, and for building our Dwelling Place for Yahweh. If we are going to build so He can dwell (*shakan*) in the midst of Yisrael, then the foundations must be laid on solid ground and with the right materials. It MUST be according to the pattern given on Mount Sinai- TORAH! Ask yourself this question: If Yahweh wants us to follow the pattern He has given, and these *tamai* foods were forbidden as sacrifices upon His table (the altar) in His Dwelling Place, should not we as His children follow His pattern for our tables in our Dwelling Places? Are our tables a kosher altar for His service? Should not we as Yisrael strive to be a set-apart people and priesthood before Him? There is an old saying, "You are what you eat." Think about it.