

THE TRIBE WEEKLY

PARASHAT RE'EH

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You are what you eat



TOVA LIEBERT

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One of the more overlooked and seemingly minor prohibitions enumerated in Parashat Re'eh is the prohibition against eating the blood and certain fats of kosher animals. Every minor facet of the Torah has infinite lessons to teach us, and this prohibition is no exception. Let us focus on three lessons that we can learn from this prohibition.

God made an allowance for human beings to eat meat, but He placed a limit on this allowance, forbidding consumption of certain parts of the animal, including certain fats and the

blood. The first lesson that this mitzvah teaches us is that, while we may and indeed should satiate our physical needs, such as eating, we must learn to control our desires for these needs, so we do not become enslaved to them. While exceedingly difficult, our challenge is to find the balance between partaking of the physical aspects of God's world, while making sure we are using them in the service of God and not purely to serve ourselves.

Additionally, refraining from eating blood is a symbol of compassion, as the blood is what imbues an animal with life. This prohibition is an example of how we can use our physical, everyday, menial actions to elevate ourselves and serve God while also refining our characters.

A final lesson we can learn from the prohibition against eating certain fats and blood is the importance of conducting ourselves as a "*Mamlechet Kohanim Vegoi Kadosh*" (Shemot 19:6) - a royal and holy people, with dignity and purity. These fats and the blood can be seen as the lowest and most disgusting parts of the animals, and eating them would be a repulsive, degrading act. We must conduct ourselves according to who we are - the sons and daughters of the *Melech Malchei Hamelechaim*, the King of kings, and therefore, even in our everyday actions, we must ensure we act with dignity in order that we create a *Kiddush Hashem* - a sanctification of God's name.



Animal Quiz Time

Try to unscramble the names of these animals. Do you know which of them are kosher?

1. Onlams (fish)
2. Fearfig (mammal)
3. Gonepi (bird)
4. Gunpeni (bird)
5. Delocrico (reptile)
6. Yukret (bird)
7. Lograil (mammal)
8. Chakdod (fish)
9. Kremtea (mammal)

Some fun animal facts...

1. A polar bear's hair is not white... it is colourless
2. A jaguar can see in the dark six times better than a human
3. A giant tortoise can weigh up to 250 kg which is the same as a brown bear!
4. Emperor penguins can stay underwater for up to 27 minutes
5. Humans share 98.8% of DNA with chimpanzees
6. Bats are the only mammal that can fly
7. An ostrich's eye is bigger than its brain
8. Gorillas burp when they are happy
9. Bats have thumbs
10. Cheetahs only need to drink once every 4 to 7 days

