

The Kabbalah of Kashrut: You Are What You Eat (continued)

1. Zohar, Parshat Shemini pg. 41b

Whether domesticated animals, wild animals, birds or fish, all of them display right or left (mercy or judgment), and any that come from the right side (the side of mercy) one may eat, and those that come from the left side (the side of judgment) one may not eat, because their levels (or: bodies) are all impure, and they are all impure, and an impure spirit rests upon them and they live in it, and the holy spirit of Israel shall not mix with them and become impure from them, so that they will be found holy...

2. Zohar, Parshat Shemini pg. 41b

Come and see: Anyone who eats from these prohibited foods sticks to the other side, and contaminates his soul and body, and a spirit of impurity rests upon him, and he demonstrates that he has no share in Gd above and does not come from His side and does not stick to him, and if he leaves this world thus then all those that hold on to (or come from) the side of impurity contaminate him and judge him like a person rejected by his master, rejected in this world and rejected in the next world. Thus it says וְנִטְמָאתָ בָּם without an א, for there is no cure for his rejection, and he can never leave his impurity...

3. Rabbi Yitzchak Arama (15th century Spain), Akeidat Yitzchak, Leviticus 60

The reason behind all of these [dietary] prohibitions is not that any harm may be caused to the body, but that these foods contaminate and pollute the soul, and seal up the intellect...

4. Talmud, Yoma 39a

Sin obstructs a person's heart, as Leviticus 11:43 says, "Lest you be contaminated [תִּטְמָאוּ] by them, and you shall be contaminated [וְנִטְמָאתֶם] by them." Do not read it as וְנִטְמָאתֶם, but as וְנִטְמָאתָ – 'you shall be obstructed'.

5. Talmud, Gittin 7a

One must never create excessive fear in his home; once, a great man created excessive fear in his home, and they fed him a grave thing. Who was this? Rabbi Chanina ben Gamliel. But did they feed him such a thing? If Gd would not cause an error for the animals of the righteous, how much more so for the righteous themselves! Rather, they meant to feed him a grave thing. What was it? Flesh taken from a creature while it lived.

6. Talmud, Chullin 7a-b

[Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair] went to an inn and they put barley before his donkey, but it would not eat. They beat the barley, and it would not eat. They cleaned the barley, and it would not eat. He said to them, "Perhaps it was not tithed?" They tithed the barley, and it ate. He said, "This poor beast goes to fulfill its Creator's desire, and you would feed it untithed produce?!"

7. Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (19th century Germany), Horeb 454

The body should be subservient to the mind. From this point of view the ideal quality of the body would be utter dependence on the mind and a kind of quiescent neutrality... Bearing in mind this function of the body and also the fact that the physical structure of man is largely influenced by the kind of food he consumes, one might come to the conclusion that vegetable food is the most preferable, as plants are the most passive substance; and indeed, we find that in Jewish law all vegetables are permitted for food, without discrimination. Next in order of desirability as human food would come those animals which are herbivorous and therefore nearer the vegetable world.

The Mysticism of Torah Study: Introduction

8. Talmud, Eruvin 54a

A student was studying quietly. Beruriah said to him, "Isn't it written, 'It is arranged in everything, and protected?' If the Torah is arranged in all 248 of your *eivarim*, it will be protected; otherwise, it will not be protected."

9. Zohar, Parshat Mishpatim 100a

Even the breath of the mouth has a place and position, and Gd does with it what He does. Even a person's word, even a person's voice is not for nothing; all have a place and position.

10. Zohar, Parshat Metzora 55a

Every word that a person produces from his mouth ascends upward and pierces heavens and enters the place above.

Why are we here?

11. Zohar, Bereishit pp. 19b-20a

Everything consists of an inner kernel, with several shells covering the kernel; and the whole world is constructed according to this pattern, above and below; from the mysterious beginning of the highest point down to the lowest of all levels, it is all one within the other, and one within the other, so that we find that one level is the shell of another, and this other the shell of another.

12. Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin (18th century Lithuania/Russia), Nefesh haChaim 1:5

Each world functions...according to the pull of the force in the world above it, which leads it as the soul leads the body. So it goes, higher and higher, until Gd – who is the soul of all.

13. Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin (18th century Lithuania/Russia), Nefesh haChaim 1:15

The *Nefesh* is the lowest level, entirely within a person's body. The *Ruach* is poured in from above; its upper extreme is tied above in the lowest level of the *Neshamah*, and it descends into the person's body, where it links to the upper extreme of the *Nefesh*...But the *Neshamah* is the breath itself, hidden in its inner nature, and its blessed source is – as if it were possible – in the breath of the Divine mouth. Its essence does not enter a person's body at all.

14. Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin (18th century Lithuania/Russia), Nefesh haChaim 1:18

And all of this is due to His great goodness and generosity. He wishes to make us righteous and to improve our end, and therefore He planned and established thus, that each of these three levels would connect to the one above it, so that a person would be able to ascend and connect from below to above, bit by bit... to the point of ascending and cleaving to the bond of life, as it were, with Gd.

15. Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin (18th century Lithuania/Russia), Nefesh haChaim 2:6

Just as the connection and existence of the human soul in its body is via eating and drinking, and without them the soul will separate and leave the body, so Gd's connection to the worlds is the secret of the great Adam. In order to maintain their existence, and for Gd's spirit not to reject them, the Divine will decreed that this would depend on involvement in Torah and the deeds of mitzvot and the worship of prayer of the special nation....

16. Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin (18th century Lithuania/Russia), Nefesh haChaim 1:12-14

To mend the world of Deeds requires that one be clothed in the body in the world of Deeds...And so regarding the awakening of forces above via the realm of Speech... And so regarding the awakening above via the realm of Thought... And these three realms, Deed, Speech and Thought, are the sum of the inner realms of a person, which are the realms of *Nefesh*, *Ruach* and *Neshamah*.

17. Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin (18th century Lithuania/Russia), Nefesh haChaim 1:6

All of the mitzvot are tied into, and dependent upon, the upper source in the orders of the *Merkavah*, and the totality of all worlds... When a person fully performs a mitzvah... he becomes, in entirety, with all of all his strength and his limbs, a *Merkavah* for those realms, and they are sanctified with their higher sanctity.

18. Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin (18th century Lithuania/Russia), Nefesh haChaim 1:8

Even during a brief time when one is involved in earning a livelihood as needed to survive, still, in one's thoughts he should think only words of Torah.

19. Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin (18th century Lithuania/Russia), Nefesh haChaim 1:19

The illness and decrepitude of sin in the *nefesh* may be fixed, and even elevated, via the level of *ruach*. And if the *ruach* is lame, for a person has flawed and warped his *ruach* via sins that depend on the level of *ruach*, then...the repair comes in the level of the *neshamah*.

The Role of Speech

20. Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin (18th century Lithuania/Russia), Nefesh haChaim 2:16

Each word has three aspects: Speech, Thought and Deed, *nefesh*, *ruach* and *neshamah*, which are the letters, vowels and *t'amim* of the word. As the introduction to the Tikkunei Zohar (pg. 7b) states, 'The *t'amim* are the *neshamah*, the vowels are the *ruach*, and the letters are the *nefesh*.'

21. Midrash HaGadol

To what was Amos referring, when he said, 'The Former of mountains and Creator of the wind, who tells a person his speech?' This was, specifically, a reference to Gd's praise and might. When Gd decides to create a person, He decrees how many conversations that person will have, and how many things he will say, as David said, 'For there is no word on my tongue; Gd, You know all of it.'

22. Zohar, Pekudei 264b

There is a spirit that stands over the speakers of Lashon HaRa. When people catalyze Lashon HaRa, then that evil, impure spirit above is awakened, and it rests on that activity of Lashon HaRa in which people are involved, and it rises and causes death and murder in the world through the energy of that Lashon HaRa. Woe to those who arouse that evil spirit and don't guide their mouths and tongues and are not worried about this, and don't know that the arousal above is dependent upon a catalyst below, whether for good or bad.

The Speech of Torah Study

23. Zohar, Emor 105a

When a person produces a holy declaration from his mouth, a declaration of Torah, a voice is produced from it and it ascends above and arouses the holy ones of the Highest King, and it is crowned, and it causes great joy above and below.

24. Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin (18th century Lithuania/Russia), Nefesh haChaim 4:34

Since the time of the destruction of the Temple and the exile of the children from their Father's table, the Shechinah wanders, as it were, and cannot find rest, and the only thing that remains is the Torah. When the Jews, holy nation, speak appropriate words of Torah, then they become a mini-Temple for the Shechinah...as it is written, 'From the day when the Temple was destroyed, Gd has nothing in His world other than the four cubits of Jewish law.'

25. Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin (18th century Lithuania/Russia), Nefesh haChaim 1:13

From every speech and voice and breath of Torah or prayer, holy angels are created.