

SICHA SUMMARY

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 29

Tetze, Sicha 1

The Context:

There are four kinds of forbidden mixtures in the Torah: 1) wearing a garment woven of wool and linen — *shatnez*, 2) crossbreeding animals, 3) sowing a single field with various species, and a slightly similar prohibition, 4) the prohibition of cooking meat and milk together.

An exception is made, however, regarding a garment woven with wool and linen — it may be used for a mitzvah, such as tzitzis, and the priestly garments of the Kohanim.

The Midrash also raises the possibility of an exception in the prohibition of meat and milk, perhaps this amalgam is not forbidden as a sacrifice in the Beis Hamikdash? Yet the Midrash says this is not the case, there is no exception for this prohibition.

The Question:

Why does the suspension of forbidden mixtures for a mitzvah only apply to garments, but not to crossbred animals and

mixtures of seeds? And why does the Midrash entertain the possibility of this exemption to meat and milk, but not open the same investigation regarding the other kinds of forbidden mixtures? This implies that meat and milk is somehow more similar to interwoven garments than to the other instances of forbidden mixtures. How so?

The Explanation:

Ramban explains a fundamental difference between a mixture of thread, and of species (seeds and animals): When we create new forms of species or plants, we are disrupting the distinct identities of the species that G-d intended to create, and thereby corrupting their continuity. When we weave wool and linen, however, there is no emergence of a new identity. This is why, Ramban says, the nations of the world scoff at the prohibition of *shatnez* as opposed to other forms of forbidden mixtures — the latter is more comprehensible than the former.

Meat and milk cooked together lies in between these poles: on the one hand, it is similar to *shatnez* in that no new species is generated. On the other hand, both

elements cook together, becoming something beyond what they were as individual ingredients. In this sense, it is more similar to crossbreeding and mixed seeds.

The Bechaya expands this idea to the metaphysical realm: Each species and element in creation reflects a different Divine energy — kindness and judgment. When we combine these different energies together, we are harming the spiritual equilibrium which G-d intends with the perpetuation of distinct species. Why, though, would the combination of diverse elements be harmful? Indeed, in the spiritual realm, such a combination is productive, it is a vehicle for peace and harmony. This is because in a transcendent environment, the individual species or objects are not focused on themselves but on a higher reality — G-d, and therefore seek out ways to unite with disparate elements in their common goal. When two elements are mixed in a holy context, they are really one, undifferentiated, species not two.

In the egoistic world, however, each object maintains its own concrete sense of identity without the suppleness needed for true harmony. When two species come together in this context, no unification is affected, they remain two different species.

When two species are forced to interact, two results are possible: they can erase each other's individuality and produce a new entity which does not reflect either of the specie's true identity; or they can

remain stubbornly apart and refuse to relinquish their identity at all. The mixture of wool and linen does not erase the individual elements — they clash without resolution. The other forms of mixtures alter the very identities (material and spiritual) of the combination, erasing the identities G-d had intended.

This can lead us to an understanding of the distinctions between the prohibitions: When a forbidden mixture is used in the context of a mitzvah, the heightened sense of transcendence aligns the opposing elements together, in search of Divine unity. Thus, when the detriment of a mixture is that it produces friction and conflict, this worry dissolves in the case of a mitzvah, which ensures that the elements will selflessly find a way to achieve harmony. This is why wool and linen is permitted in tzitzis and the Beis Hamikdash.

If the danger of a forbidden mixture is that it alters the spiritual chemistry of creation as G-d desired it, then there is no difference if the context is spiritual or self-centered, in both cases, the identities are being corrupted. Therefore there is no exception for a mitzvah in the other forms of forbidden mixtures which actually produce new entities.

Meat and milk cooked together resemble both forms, leading to the possibility that, because no new entity is created, it may be assumed that this mixture can be “healed” in a sacred context which encourages unity. The conclusion, however, is that because both elements meld together in the cooking

process, it is more similar to crossbreeding and planting, a corruption of G-d's species which cannot be remedied by a focus on unity.

The End of Days:

The Bechaya says that in the Messianic Era, meat and milk cooked together will become permitted. In the terms set forth above we can explain as follows: meat and milk only resemble crossbreeding and planting externally — it seems to produce a new entity, a food infused with both meat and milk properties. On a deeper, molecular

level, however, it is more similar to interwoven wool and linen — two species brought close together, yet which do not create a new identity and remain fundamentally apart. In the Messianic Era when we will appreciate the deeper reality of existence, and not mere surfaces, we will understand how meat and milk can also be “sublimated” in a holy context — because it is not a corruption of divergent species, but a clash that can be directed towards unity when brought together in a sacred environment.
