

“But this you shall not eat from among those that bring up their cud or have a completely separated hoof...” (14:7)

The criteria for identifying the kosher animal is repeated once again in *Parashas Re'eh*, thus emphasizing the significance of *Kashrus*. Two identifying characteristics of kosher animals are mentioned: they chew their cud; and they have completely split hooves. In the entire creation, just four animals have only one kosher sign. The overwhelming majority have neither sign. Only the One Who created these animals can make such an undisputed statement. As the *Alter, z.l.*, *m'Kelm* notes, this attests to the Divine authorship of the Torah. No human author would publicly make a claim that could be refuted. Yet, there are those who are still foolish enough to claim that Moshe *Rabbeinu* was not merely the lawgiver – he was the lawmaker.

Interestingly, in citing these animals, the Torah mentions the kosher characteristic first, then mentions that they lack the second qualification. If they are indeed not kosher because they lack the second kosher sign, should that not be emphasized first? The *Kli Yakar* explains that the presence of their kosher characteristic adds an insidious element to their non-kosher status. He cites the *Midrash* that compares Edom/Eisav to a pig which presents its cloven hooves in an attempt to delude people into thinking that it is kosher. In reality, the fact that it does not chew its cud is the reason it is declared not kosher. It puts on a good show, presenting itself as kosher. In truth, it is all a sham – just like those chameleons who attempt to deceive people with their acts of piety while concealing their inner evil. This, in essence, makes them much worse than those who have no shame and publicly manifest their sinful behavior.

Horav Avraham Pam, z.l., cited in *The Pleasant Way*, explains that a person also needs two kosher signs to declare him an *adam kasher*, an expression found in the *Talmud* denoting a righteous and honorable person. The two signs are *gut tzu Got* and *gut tzu leit*; he performs those *mitzvos* that are *bein adam laMakom*, between man and G-d, and those *mitzvos* that are *bein adam lachaveiro*, between man and his fellow man.

Regrettably, just like the pig that exhibits his one kosher sign, there are Jews who go to great lengths to fulfill the obligation between themselves and G-d and totally ignore the other side of the coin. They spare no expense when it comes to purchasing the most beautiful *Tefillin*, the most beautiful *Esrog*. They make sure that everyone knows this. Otherwise, what value would their “public” display of devotion have? They pray with great intensity and devotion, seeing to it that they are among the last to complete *Shemoneh Esrai*, all the time making sure that everyone is aware of their devotion to prayer. Yet, when it comes to dealings between themselves and other people, they are sorely lacking. They will destroy anyone who has the nerve to compete with them in commerce or other pursuits. They are never present when a member of the community is down and out and must be helped. Suddenly, they have other commitments. They mistreat their wives and children and everybody who gets in their way, but they *daven* a long *Shemoneh Esrai* and buy a beautiful *Esrog*. Thus, their kosher sign is of the same significance as that of the pig – worthless!

This deficiency is much worse when it is manifest by a Jew who possesses one kosher sign than by a Jew with none. A Jew who does not act in accordance with the dictates of the Torah is simply not a Torah Jew. Hence, we do not expect as much from him in the way of ethical behavior. When someone expounds the Torah way of life, however, and he publicly displays his *frumkeit* for all to see, we expect him to maintain exemplary ethical conduct with his fellow man. Indeed, if he doesn't then such a person undermines and even humiliates the very Torah that he emphatically claims to observe.

Rav Pam asks a noteworthy question. If true ethical behavior is inextricably bound with one's relationship with Hashem, how is it that we meet gentiles who are fine, honest, decent, well-mannered human beings who perform kindness in a manner becoming the most righteous person? They certainly do not observe *mitzvos bein adam laMakom*, according to the standard demanded of a Jew. Rav Pam explains that their meritorious conduct is manifest only under normal conditions. Under extenuating circumstances, however, when they are under duress or in pain, their personality flaws appear. They become angry and irrational, acting in a cruel and selfish manner. The gentile world has yet to produce anyone who can compare with our *gedolei Yisrael*, Torah leaders, who exemplify ethical conduct even under the most stressful situations. Such *zachus ha'nefesh*, purity of spirit, is possible only by one who exemplifies total commitment to the entire Torah.

Last, a *ben Torah* who spends his days and nights immersed in the sea of Torah should see to it that he expends the same time and energy in going beyond the letter of the law to fulfill *mitzvos bein adam lachaveiro* that he does for *mitzvos bein adam laMakom*.