

"Do not make your souls into an abomination through any creeping thing that creeps, and do not make yourselves unclean through them, so that you become completely ruined by them." (11:43)

Horav Shimshon Rephael Hirsch Z"l notes that in this *posuk* the *Torah* implies two different forms of moral degradation in conjunction with eating prohibited food. "ofh,apb ,t umea, kt" - the term *sheketz* is used exclusively in reference to spiritual and mental abominations, particularly referring to idol-worship (ubmea, .ea) to describe the extent to which we should go to reject idolatry and all related concepts. These areas are antithetical to our spiritual and moral well-being. Similarly, when the eating of a food is described as *sheketz*, we infer that consuming the food is diametrically opposed to the development of our spirituality. The focus of this "*sheketz*" is "your souls." This idea emphasizes the aspect of our being which is especially designated by the word *nefesh*. It refers to our will which, in aspiring and rejecting, accomplishes the most important objectives of our lives. "apb .iea" suggests a passionate direction of our will towards anything that is directly opposed to Hashem's will. Accordingly, the eating of prohibited foods increases our passion for satisfaction in the areas which are prohibited by the will of Hashem.

The other form of degradation is "utny, tku" - which implies an impurity which affects one's whole personality. This "spiritual" impurity leads to lack of moral freedom. Thus, man no longer has the moral energy to control his desires in order to keep it within the limits described by Hashem's *Torah*. This uncontained force which should vehemently oppose the immoral paths into which our weakened desires are driven, is further drained by the consumption of prohibited foods. Consequently, such eating has a baneful influence on both phases of our spiritual lives, and the combination of the two threatens to effect the final destruction of our morality. It effects apbv .uea - by arousing increased immoral desires. Simultaneously, it brings about *tumah*, a weakening of the G-d like mastery of ourselves and control of our free will. The end result is "oc o,nybu" - complete ruin, which designates that stage in which our freedom of will in moral matters has become completely limited to the idea of physical gratification. This gradual degradation of our moral senses is the result of eating the insidious poison of prohibited foods.