

“And the pig...it is unclean to you.” (11:7)

Professor Daniel Chavelson was a living tragedy. A brilliant scholar, who became an apostate and converted out of the faith in order to advance his secular status, he enjoyed the respect and friendship of a number of rabbinic leaders. He continued to study *Torah* on a consistent basis, maintaining an active correspondence of *halachic* responsa with these rabbis. When the *Netziv*, *z.l.*, was questioned about this enigma – an individual who, although a heretic, was still held in esteem by many observant Jews, he sighed, responding with the following story:

One day the wife of the town’s wealthiest man became seriously ill. This woman was very special and G-d-fearing. They sent for the greatest physicians, the most erudite specialists to find some cure for her illness. The doctors all came to the decision that in order for her to live, she must eat meat from a pig. Understandably, both husband and wife vehemently refused to consider such a cure. Unfortunately, the situation appeared to be very bleak, as her health slowly deteriorated. She was literally at death’s door.

When the *rav* of the community heard this, he immediately went to the woman and insisted that she partake of the forbidden food. “Not only are you permitted – you are obligated to eat from the pig if it will cure you,” exclaimed the *rav*. “Hashem wants us to live, not to die.” Reluctantly, the woman accepted the *rav*’s ruling, and said that she would eat from the pig.

As the *rav* was leaving, the woman asked, “I have one request. I would like, at least, to have the pig slaughtered by a *shochet*, ritual slaughterer.” The *rav* held back a smile and agreed to permit the pig to be slaughtered. The *shochet* slaughtered the pig. The woman now requested that the lungs be examined to make sure there were no adhesions that would “disqualify” the *shechitah*. Indeed, there was a questionable adhesion on the lobe of one the lungs. The *shochet* did not know what to do. He went to the *rav*, who carefully examined the lung. He said, “This is a difficult decision to make, for if this were the lung of a *kosher* animal, I would not hesitate to render a decision of *kosher*. This is the lung of a pig, however. How can I say *kosher* on a lung, if the rest of the animal is not *kosher*? When all is said and done, this is a pig! I cannot say *kosher* on a pig.”

It was not necessary for the *Netziv* to explain the implication of this story regarding the “scholarly” apostate. A *kosher* lung does not render a pig *kosher*.