

OCEANS OF HOLY ENERGY

by Rabbi Label Lam

For I am HASHEM your G-d, you are to sanctify yourselves and you shall be holy, for I am holy; and you shall not contaminate yourselves through any teeming thing that creeps on the earth. For I am HASHEM Who elevates you from the land of Egypt to be a G-d to you; you should be holy, for I am holy. This is the law of the animal, the bird, every living creature that teems on the ground; to distinguish between the contaminated and the pure, and between any creature that may be eaten and the creature that may not be eaten. (Vayikra 11: 44-47)

Eating is such an animalistic function and yet it made to sound like a holy business. I suppose that it is potentially both or either. More apparent is how eating lends itself to be a materialistic action. How is it ever understood to be a holy endeavor?

In a panel discussion a question was asked by someone newly introduced to the world of the Talmud, "How can one ever possibly hope to learn all those huge tomes and its supplementary volumes?" Acknowledging that it is a daunting task in the spirit of the Mishne in Pirke Avos, "It is not our job to complete it but neither are we exempt from trying..." one of the rabbis offered the following bizarre scenario, "Consider a baby newly born into the world and suckling with great effort drops of his mother's milk. What if this child would be granted adult consciousness and before him would be placed all the food he would eat in his lifetime; All the mountains of potatoes and grains, lakes of drinks, train loads of meat, and fields of fruits and vegetables. The child would take one look and faint saying, "How can I ever eat all this in my lifetime?"

The rabbi explained that his feeling of intimidation is based upon a false premise. He assumes that he will continue to eat at the pace and in the way he approaches food now. He fails to realize that his appetite and ability to consume mass quantities will increase dramatically over the years and soon he may even need to diet so as not to consume his allotted amount before his time. So it is with learning Torah. As one's language skills and knowledge base increases so does one's desire and capacity.

In a similar vein, I once heard the following brutally frank question presented by a clever person; "What benefit is there to eating all those storehouses of food if so little actually remains on the body?" Let's say one enters the world 7 pounds and after 70 years of eating tens of tons of food stuffs one exits life 197 pounds, what was the value of all that eating if one, in the end, added a net 190 pounds that is fed back to the earth?

The Alter from Slobodka ztl. said that we mistakenly refer to things as being either physical or spiritual. Actually everything is really one. It is all spiritual. Only, there is less-dense and more-dense spirituality. The later a thing appears in creation the more thick and complex it is and therefore animals are darker forms. It is no surprise to learn that the Talmud entertains the idea that only a Talmud Scholar should eat meat, which is so viscous that it may be hard to access its core unless the person eating it is spiritually advantageous. On Yom Tov and Shabbos and in the Temple meat is regularly eaten since those times and that place are spiritually advantageous and the dark spiritual energy within the food is more readily accessible. The terms "mutar"-permissible and "usser"-forbidden designate absolute inaccessibility and accessibility.

Now maybe we can understand what Adam had done so wrong that we still suffer from the fallout of his failing. He erred in the arena of Kashrus and he crashed the system of converting the material into spiritual. Learning, praying, and doing acts of kindness splits the atoms of each bite of Kosher food and yields the greatest part of us -found forever in oceans of holy energy. Text Copyright © 2005 by Rabbi Label Lam and **Torah.org**.