

Shmini- Forbidden for Body, forbidden for Soul

By Rabbi Eliyahu Kirsh

In Vayikra 11:45, after the laws of forbidden and permitted foods, the Torah states that Hashem took us out of Mitzrayim as a reason for observing kashrus. Rashi states that abstaining from creeping things is reason enough for Hashem to take us out of Mitzrayim. There seems to be a connection between eating creeping things and Hashem taking us out of Mitzrayim.

The Kli Yakar asks, based on this Rashi, why is kashrus a reason for Hashem to take us out of Mitzrayim? The Kli Yakar explains, based on Chazal, that eating forbidden things is especially damaging to our neshamos. Rashi points out that forbidden foods metattem stop up, the heart. Hence the Torah writes in verse 44, *venitmaisebam*, you will be defiled without the letter *alef* to read as *venetantem bam*, you will be stopped up by these forbidden foods. But why is eating forbidden foods more damaging than other forbidden acts?

A number of sources explain the idea that eating forbidden foods is more damaging because what we eat becomes part of us physically so things that are forbidden, when eaten literally become part of our bodies. The Kli Yakar adds another thought. He explains that anything closer to the ground is lower down and therefore less spiritual. For this reason, man stands upright and his head is farthest from the other animals that walk on all four legs. What is closest to the ground such as creeping things is the lowliest. Hashem took us out of Mitzrayim to elevate us as much as possible and not to descend the lowliness of the creeping things.

The Kli Yakar also brings an interesting point regarding shechita. Fish which came from water alone require no shechita to be eaten. Land animals that are kosher, require shechita of both *simanim*, pipes the trachea and the esophagus. Birds, which were created from the mud a combination of earth and water, require shechita of one *siman*. Again we see the closer the connection to the earth requires more effort to make the creature permitted for us. Again, the idea of our going out of Mitzrayim was to raise ourselves above the earthliness. In this way we become true servants of Hashem, influenced by the Torah originating the higher more spiritual worlds.