

On the Spiritual and Physical Benefits of the Kosher Dietary Laws*

| | |
|--|----|
| INTRODUCTION..... | 1 |
| SPIRITUAL ADVANTAGES | 3 |
| PHYSICAL ADVANTAGES..... | 5 |
| THE LAWS OF KASHRUS | 5 |
| HEALTH BENEFITS | 7 |
| CHARACTER TRAITS | 9 |
| SPIRITUAL DESENSITIZATION (<i>TIMTUM HALEV</i>)..... | 13 |

*

Introduction

Before we embark on the journey to understand the various reasons for the Kosher dietary laws, we must address a fundamental question: are we, humans, privy to the infinite wisdom of the Creator?

Maimonides is famous for his incisive insights and sound logical reasoning into many of the Torah's commandments, which are distributed throughout his *Guide to the Perplexed*. Yet Maimonides himself makes the following assertion elsewhere:¹

“It is appropriate for a person to meditate on the judgments of the holy Torah and know their ultimate purpose according to his capacity. If he cannot find a reason or a motivating rationale for a practice, he should not regard it lightly . . . One's thoughts concerning them should not be like his thoughts concerning other ordinary matters.”²

* המאמר נערך ע"י חברי המכון הרב יעקב שי' גרשון והרב אברהם שי' בערגשטיין.

1 *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Me'ila, 8:8.

2 Maimonides continues: “With regard to the mitzvot which G-d ordained for us should a person not treat them derisively, because he does not understand their rationale. He should not conjure up matters that are not true concerning G-d, nor should he think about

