

When the Swine Will Be Divine

עתיד חזיר ליטהר

Index

Origin of an Enigmatic Teaching

The pig is one of the most distinguished symbol of all things non-Kosher.¹ There is however a puzzling statement attributed to רז"ל implying that in the Time to Come, the prohibition against its consumption will be suspended and it will experience a "return," as the etymology of its name suggests (חזיר-לחזור).

Discussion

The precise statement "עתיד חזיר ליטהר" does not seem to appear in the common Midrashim available today. This has sparked a lengthy discussion as to the origin, authenticity and interpretation of this statement. An impressive collection of sources discussing this teaching is available in [1] ספר אלפא ביתא הנייחא with a number of different readings of the original as well as an assortment of explanations.

The Rebbe's Notes

A Chassidic discourse by Rabbi Shmuel Schneersohn (the Rebbe *Maharash*) of Lubavitch entitled "המשך מים רבים – תרל"ו" was printed by Kehot Publication Society in 1946 (תש"ו). As editor-in-chief, the Rebbe זי"ע provided copious supporting notes on the discourse among which appears a detailed observation of the origin of this teaching (which is mentioned by the Rebbe *Maharash*). This note was later published in לקוטי שיחות [2]. The Rebbe points to several references throughout the celebrated work, שדי חמד by Rabbi Chaim Hezekiah Medini (1834-1905). [3]

Additional Explanations from the Rebbe

The Rebbe insists that this statement ought to be interpreted literally, [4] and explains why the pig was singled out from all the other animals. [5] The allowance will be relevant in the initial stage of the Messianic era [6], and will be

(1) ויקרא (יא, ז): "וְנָאֵת הַחֲזִיר כִּי מִפְּרִיֵס פֶּרֶסָה הוּא וְשָׁסַע וְשָׁסַע פֶּרֶסָה וְהוּא גֵרָה לֹא יִגֵּר טָמֵא הוּא לְכֶם."



be predicated on the animal beginning to exhibit the Torah's prescribed Kosher signs. This reconciles the eternal nature and immutability of the Torah with this teaching. [7]

This allowance also has a broader meaning relevant to the larger purpose of creation. [8] In one of his *Reshimos* the Rebbe elaborates on the spiritual significance of Kosher indicators of animals in general, including their application to the pig and its ultimate subsumption into holiness. [9]

The Rebbe discussed the effects of the Messianic era on the world and why it would ultimately change the status of the pig. Included are references to the specifics of this creature in halachah and its placement within the spiritual hierarchy. [10]

Summary

A number of these Chassidic insights are summarized in "הנה ימים באים" by Rabbi Mendel Reitzes. [11]

