



OUR BODIES ARE
THE **THRONES** FOR
OUR SOULS. YOU ARE
WHAT YOU EAT.

We can't really see what our "soul" looks like... but it's easy to tell that it's not the same thing as the body that we can actually see. Our soul is a "piece of G-d", so to speak... and our bodies are constantly being regenerated by the food and nutrients we ingest every day.

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch taught that the incredibly holy soul and intellect can have a major impact on your life, but **the soul can only reside on a physical throne that's befitting of its own holiness**. We have the opportunity to create our own bodies out of food that is holy, so that our souls can be better seated inside of us.



KEEPING KOSHER
GIVES US AS AN
EXCUSE TO CONNECT
TO THE ONE ABOVE.

Mmmm.... bugs! Yum! Did you know that almost **80%** of the world's cultures eat bugs? Gross! Did you also know that if you eat a bug, you are breaking numerous laws of kosher??

There are lots of gross things out there that people eat and even treat as a delicacy! Cow brains... cats and dogs... and probably even worse! **Who wants to eat those things anyway, even if they WERE kosher?**

Rashi tells us that through keeping certain laws of kosher, we have the opportunity to say, **"I'm not going to eat that - not because it's gross - but because it's a Mitzvah!"** This way, we have "free" ways to connect to G-d - by doing things we would have done anyway!



**THE LAWS OF KOSHER
MIGHT JUST BE
KEEPING THE JEWISH
PEOPLE **ALIVE.****

There are a lot of deep reasons why we have the laws of kosher... but sometimes the benefits of a **kosher lifestyle** are enough to demonstrate their source in truth.

One of the greatest and most unique strengths of the Jewish people is our tendency to live together in **tight-knit communities**. It keeps our heritage strong and creates our feelings of togetherness. When we need kosher food on a consistent basis, the only way we can find it is to be close to the Kosher markets. If we all act that way, we create communities, and begin to depend on each other.

Often, the rules of Kosher require us to wait certain lengths of time, pass up on opportunities, and sometimes say “no.” Through keeping Kosher, we regularly express our inner capacity to choose a moral value over the simple value of being hungry. When you can do that over and over again, you’re flexing your moral muscles and building an inner strength to always do what’s right in life, when we’re put in a difficult decision of temptation vs greatness.

These kinds of victories have been giving the Jewish people the inner strength to get through thousands of years of difficulty.



SAY IT LIKE IT IS.
AVOID **ROUNDABOUTS**
SO YOU WON'T FALL
INTO THE **TRAP.**

The Torah says that Noach brought both *Tahor* (pure/kosher) and non-*Tahor* (non-kosher) animals into the ark. Why did the Torah use the milder, indirect term “non-*Tahor*” rather than simply calling the animals *Tamei* (impure)?

The Gemara praises the Torah for its choice of words, saying that we learn from here to **avoid saying harsh expressions**. It’s nicer and cleaner to talk about “non-*Tahor*” animals rather than to call them outright “impure.”

But later, when the Torah specifies the signs and characteristics of non-kosher animals, it refers to these animals with the **harsher word, *Tamei* (impure)**! If “non-*Tahor*” is a cleaner, more praiseworthy way of speaking than *Tamei* (impure), why didn’t the Torah say “non-***Tahor***” this time, too?

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky explains that when you’re speaking regularly, it’s better to speak in positive, mild terms, but when talking about Jewish law - what is permitted and prohibited - **it’s important to be clear and definitive.**

Sometimes, we just have to say “no.” If we start calling prohibited things “a little not-kosher” rather than outright wrong, it’s easy to fall into a trap and end up doing things we shouldn’t be doing. We can’t afford to speak in a roundabout manner when it comes to Jewish law.



**BUILDING OUR
SPIRITUAL MUSCLES
AND THE PATH TO
SUCCESS.**

In the 1970's Stanford psychologists conducted studies, called "the marshmallow test," in which children were given a marshmallow and promised an additional reward if they could withstand the temptation to eat it immediately. The studies found that children who were able to control their eating had better life outcomes, like SAT scores and other achievements.

Keeping Kosher is G-d's way of giving us an **advantage in life**: by giving us rules and guidelines on what, when, and how we can eat foods, G-d is preparing us to pass the "marshmallow tests" of life. Whether it is passing up on the fast food chain or the fancy cuisine, or even just waiting until we find kosher gum, keeping kosher challenges us to not just go for the immediate pleasure, but rather to think through what we are putting in our bodies and souls.

Kashrut helps us to build and strengthen the muscles of **self-control** and **delayed gratification**. With a proper kosher diet and lots of exercising of self-control, we are setting ourselves up for a successful life in this world (and the next!).



THERE WAS A
METHOD TO
THE MADNESS.
NOW USE IT AGAIN.

We all make mistakes. Even if you already keep a kosher kitchen, it's possible that one of your utensils will become non-kosher if you accidentally cook meat and milk inside of it together. What now?

The general principle is: **You must fix (kasher) the utensil in the same way it was used to begin with.** The way the non-kosher food substance became absorbed into the walls of the utensil is the way it needs to be expelled. For example, a pot that is used for boiling must be kashered by boiling. A grill is kashered by blowtorching (i.e. by using dry heat without any liquid).

We can “kasher” ourselves in the same way. Our Sages teach that when we mess up in our relationship with God, the best way to do teshuva and repair our relationship with Him is by using the **same body part** that you used to mess up, but now use it for good.

So if you spoke gossip with your mouth, use your mouth now to say prayers, instead. If your feet walked into a place that is not befitting for a Jew to enter, use your feet to walk into a shul or Beis Medresh. It's never too late to re-think your actions and transform yourself into a better, more “kosher” self.



LOOKS MAY BE
DECEIVING. DIG
DEEPER BENEATH
THE SURFACE.

You walk into the supermarket and see an array of different cookies on the shelf. They all look basically the same... what could be wrong? They're made of just flour, sugar, eggs, a few more things... what could be non-kosher about them?

But if you look closely at the **ingredients**, you may find weird non-kosher things hidden inside. The sprinkles on the cookie were made with food coloring.... potentially extracted from non-kosher bug juices used as dyes! Or some factories might use lard (pig fat) in foods you would never expect to have it. Or, you might think a cookie is pareve - it tastes pareve and looks pareve - but find out later that really it contained milk and cannot be eaten with meat.

Keeping kosher reminds us to ask ourselves: **What's inside? What's hiding within this package, beneath the surface?** The movie looks kosher, but does it contain messages and values that conflict with my own? My boyfriend/girlfriend seems nice, but are they pulling me in the right direction to help me grow? The more we ask ourselves, **"What's hiding inside here?"** the better we will be able to become the people we aspire to be.