7 LAWS OF NOAH (#6): Do not eat meat…while the animal is still alive

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The Creator told the first man that his diet should consist of plants, seeds and fruits. I quote the words of Ribbi Menashe ben Israel (1604-1657) on this topic. Two Talmudic Sages, Rabbi Yohanan and Rab, agreed that at the beginning … “Adam was not allowed to take animals as food […] God blessed Adam and made him supreme over all the animals, but although he had dominion over them, he was not their absolute master [allowed to take the life of animals] … God had already designated the food through which every living being should be kept: as He told them ‘I have given you every herb that gives seed … and every tree that has fruit that gives seed; for you it will be for food’ ». (Genesis 1:29)
Ten generations after Adam, however, God granted Noah the right to eat animal flesh:
Genesis 9: 2 … the birds, the wild beasts, the animals that crawl on the ground, and the fish of the sea. All will be under your domain. 9:3 Everything that moves and has life in it will be, like the plants, that I gave them to you as food.
Why this change?
There are several opinions on this matter, which deserve to be analyzed one by one and in depth. But our subject is “The Seven Laws of the Descendants of Noah,” so I’m only going to mention a couple of opinions without exploring them.
1. When Noah leaves the ark, the first thing he does is offering a sacrifice to God, as a sign of gratitude. This was an animal sacrifice, and it consisted of roasted meat, whose smoke/smell rose towards the sky. Some biblical scholars indicated. with my own words, that Noah was projecting what he himself wished to be granted. In other words, an offering, a gift, usually represents something that the person who offers it, appreciates, values and subliminally, wants it. The fact that Noah offered roasted meat to the Creator manifests his subconscious desire to consume animal flesh.

2. The license to eat animal flesh might have a positive effect in terms of suppressing the desire to shed human blood and murder. Which, as we saw in Genesis chapter 6, was the cause of the destruction of human society and what brought the flood.

Returning to the Seven Laws of Noah, although Noah was allowed to eat meat of any kind of animal, God established one limitation:

Genesis 9: 4:

[You can eat animal flesh] … however, you shall not eat the animal's flesh, while the animal is alive.

This is known as eber min hahai, that is, when an animal is mutilated and its flesh eaten, while the animal is still alive. This is a common phenomenon in the animal world, where many animals suffer a slow and unimaginable painful death while being eaten alive by their predators. The minimum required of human beings is to avoid this type of suffering to animals.

As we can see, the Noahic laws of meat consumption are significantly less strict than the Mosaic laws of Cashrut.

A brief comparison:

1.There are more than 1,000,000 animal species in the world. Animals, birds and fish allowed by the Mosaic law, I estimate, should not exceed a few hundred species. For Noahic Law, all animals are allowed.

2. Mosaic Law requires that animals and birds be slaughtered in a special way called in Hebrew shehita (yugulation). This method minimizes the suffering of the animal at the time of death. In the Noahic law the way to sacrifice animals is not regulated.

3. Mosaic law prohibits the consumption of the blood of birds and animals. Noahic Law, according to most opinions, does not prohibit it.

4. Mosaic Law has a much more extensive regulation to minimize animal suffering in general, a biblical prohibition to cause any unnecessary suffering to any animal (tsa'ar ba'alé hayim), even, or especially, outside the act of consumption.

5. Finally, and although it is not a formal prohibition, the Gemara (Pesahim 49b) indicates that a Jewish person who does not have the minimum basic instruction ('am haarets) has no right to consume meat.