



הלכה of the Week

~ בשרות (3) ~

Kashrut (3) ~ Fish, Fish Eggs and Fish Blood, Other Water Creatures

1. All fish that have fins and scales are kosher and may be eaten.

Fish that do not have fins and scales are not kosher and may not be eaten.

The scales must also be removable, otherwise the fish is not kosher.

2. Fish are the only water creatures we may eat. The Torah refers to all other water creatures as “שָׂרָץ הַמַּיִם,” “those that swarm in the water.” These include oysters, snails, crabs, shrimps, and so on.

3. Fish do not have to be slaughtered or salted.

4. All fish that have scales also have fins. However, there are many forbidden kinds of fish that have fins but no scales. If one finds scales on a fish or on a piece of fish he can be sure that the fish is kosher.

5. It is important to remember that non-kosher fish are widely available and sold.

If one does not have access to a kosher fishmonger one must be particularly careful when buying fish fillets (fish with the bones removed) or chopped / ground fish, because one can not see whether the fish had scales. Therefore, one must not buy any part of a fish unless he can confirm that it is truly kosher. Cans of fish may contain non-kosher fish whose flesh (and name) may be similar to kosher fish.

6. The eggs of non-kosher fish are also prohibited. Caviar, for example, is usually made from non-kosher fish and is therefore usually not kosher.

7. Unlike animals and fowl, the blood of kosher fish is permitted.

However, one should not use fish blood that is collected in a bowl because people may think it is from animals or fowl. If the blood contains some scales it may be used, because it is then clear that it came from fish.

When we do not do something because of what people may think it is called “מְרֵאִית הָעַיִן”. This refers to an action that is misleading; in this case, people may mistakenly think that the blood is from animals or fowl and wrongly believe such blood to be kosher.

פְּרָקִי אָבוֹת of the Week

פְּרָק ה

ד עֲשָׂרָה נְסִיּוֹנוֹת נִתְּנָסָה אֲבִרָהֶם אָבִינוּ עָלֵינוּ הַשְּׁלוֹם וְעָמַד בְּכָלֶם, לְהוֹדִיעַ כִּמְהָ חֲבָתוֹ שֶׁל אֲבִרָהֶם אָבִינוּ עָלֵינוּ הַשְּׁלוֹם:

Avraham Avinu* was given ten tests, and he passed all of them. This shows how great was Avraham Avinu’s love for Hashem.

* ‘Avraham Avinu’ means ‘Avraham, our father.’