**Scope of Unit:**

* Hilchot kashrut
* Personal philosophy of kashrut

**Standards**

* **Standard 7:** Students will understand, through the study of Tanakh and its interpretations, the role of mitzvot in the shaping of the ethical character and religious practices of the individual and the Jewish People.
* **Standard 8:** Students will develop a love of Torah study for its own sake and embrace it as an inspiring resource, informing their values, moral commitments, and ways of experiencing the world.

**Skills Goals:**

* **key terms:** מזיד/שוגג, בדיעבד/לכתחילה
* unit begins with Tanakh psukim, a bit of gemara, then mostly CODES -- first introduction to codes

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| **Benchmark 7.23:** Traces the evolution of the dietary laws in the Torah and its post-biblical observance. | | |
| **To Know** | **To Do** | **Texts** |
| Biblical psukim that form the basis of kashrut    Animals, permitted and forbidden   * Which are they? ויק דב * Why these animals, with these characteristics? * Concepts of holiness and *imatio dei*     Where one can eat(Devarim)   * Is this a concession due to our weakness? * Is all meat consumption a pseudo קרבן? * In general, should it matter where we eat? * What does the prohibition of eating an animal that dies of natural causes force us to do? | read and translate  parse grammar  distinguish between kashrut rules for different types of animals | 1. **Vayikra chapter 11: 11:2-8 (animals) 9-12 (fish) 13-19 (birds) 20-21 (insects)** 2. **Devarim 12:20-25 (taiva to eat meat -- the goal of eating meat is to give a sacrifice, but if you can’t, you must shecht it and must abstain from blood), 14:21** 3. **Shemot 23:19, 34:26, Devarim 14:21 -- do not cook a goat in its mother’s milk[[1]](#footnote-0)** 4. **Rashi, Shemot 23:19 -- more about milk and meat[[2]](#footnote-1)** 5. **Vayikra 11:45-47 -- holiness** |
| For Further Study:   1. Sifra Shminia, Parshat Yayin ve-Shechar, Parshah 2 -- Moshe holds up each animal to show that it’s kosher[[3]](#footnote-2) 2. Bereishit 32:33 -- gid hanasheh (no filet mignon in America)[[4]](#footnote-3) 3. Nehama Leibowitz on ויק יא , particularly her citations to Rambam, Sefer HaC hinuch, Ramban, Akeidat Yizchak, Abravanel, Seforno 4. Baruch A. Levine in “JPS Torah Commentary: Leviticus” 5. Mary Douglas in “Purity and Danger” 6. Arthur Waskow in “Down-to-Earth Judaism: Food, Money, Sex, and the Rest of Life” |
| בטל בששים  בטל נרוב  נותן טעם (לפגם)  דבר חריף  בן יומו  יד סולדת  Three T’s: Taste, Temperature, Time  Taste transfers  Negligible amounts can be annulled  Separate dishes are a סייג | root rabbinic laws in biblical sources  explain the logic underlying rabbinic laws | * Chullin 96b-97b (excerpted heavily) * SA YD 98 (Excerpted) -- taste * SA YD 105 -- temperature * SA YD 122:1-2, 6 -- time |
| The differences between different community standards of kashrut (Conservative positions on cheese, glatt vs non-glatt, etc…) | trace the development of a legal idea through different media  compare different halachic approaches | source sheets we’ll put together from Conservative and Orthodox sites |
| Values of eating is different from kashrut (kashrut refers to a specific set of laws, not to values of eating writ large) | define aspects of traditional kashrut  contrast these values with other moral principles that underlie eating practices |  |

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| **Benchmarks 7.30 and 8:18 combined:** Examines legal passages in the Torah, Talmud, and codes for their ethical and moral implications -- and uses these ethical insights as a tool for reflecting upon one’s personal eating practice. | | |
| **To Know** | **To Do** | **Texts** |
|  |  | **Rambam (113?-1204), Moreh Nevuchim 3:48 - Kashrut is about health[[5]](#footnote-4)** |
|  | ***Ramban (Nachmanides 1194-1270), Torat Hashem Temimah (p. 166 in Vol. I of Chavel edition Kisvei Ramban) – Non-kosher food is damaging to the body and the soul[[6]](#footnote-5)*** |
| a variety of philosophical reasons for keeping kosher  concept of *chok* -- do we look for reasons? | reading Hebrew texts for main ideas and essential arguments (as opposed to grammatical analysis)  (Distilling the core philosophical ideas from the texts studied.)  Distills and analyzes moral reasons that undergird interpretations  applying reasoning to various practical hypothetical situations  comparing and contrasting opinions  debating  articulating own perspective | ***Seforno (1475-1550), Devarim 14:4 – Our elevated national status after the giving of the Torah requires that we eat “elevated” food.[[7]](#footnote-6)*** |
| ***Kli Yakar (1550-1619), Ibid. – Kashrut ensures the well-being of the soul[[8]](#footnote-7)*** |
| ***Yeshayahu Leibowitz -- the only goal of mitzvot is to serve God -- no other reasons are valid[[9]](#footnote-8)*** |
| ***Ramban, Devarim 14:21 – Kashrut prevents the trait of cruelty.[[10]](#footnote-9)*** |
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Big Ideas:

* The internal system of Kashrut makes logical sense.
* We do not necessarily keep kosher for logical reasons -- emotional and communal reasons play a large part.
* There are multiple ways to keep kosher with integrity, being true to the textual tradition.
* The thickness and complexity of ritual practice can make practice compelling.

Essential Questions:

* Do we need to understand the reasons for a mitzvah to feel motivated to keep it? What if there is no “reason” to understand in the first place?
* How do we experience “separation” in a pluralistic community?
* How do we make kashrut personally meaningful?
* How do we maintain our commitment to rabbinic law when we see its tenuous connection to biblical law?

Assessment 1 (7.23):

* A recent survey of Gann students, parents, and staff has showcased an overwhelming desire for the Servery to begin serving both meat and dairy. To this end, Rabbi Baker has brought you in as an expert consultant as to how this might be possible.
* Respond to the following questions:
  + What would the Servery need to do in order to serve both meat and dairy in accord with the laws of Kashrut? Detail at least four procedures that they would need to implement, supporting each of your claims with evidence from our texts.
  + One concern of the staff is that they might not know what to do if they made a mistake. Propose two hypothetical yet likely scenarios that might occur and explain how the mistakes could be rectified.
  + In your opinion, how should Gann’s identity as a pluralistic school impact the kashrut policy that is developed? Defend your answer, bringing at least one quote from our sources.

Assessment 2 (7.30, 8.18):

* Give a dvar Torah on your relationship to kashrut. You can root this dvar Torah in parashat Shemini or in one of the parashiyyot that relate to kashrut.
* You must include at least two distinct perspectives on kashrut from the thinkers we’ve studied, as well as giving your own perspective.
* Your dvar Torah should begin with a compelling hook or anecdote and conclude with a strong message for your listener.

Checklist:

* approximately 2-3 double-spaced pages
* The DT begins with a compelling hook or anecdote
* The opening of the DT then leads into the stating of one of the unit’s essential questions (or another essential question that you formulate)
* incorporates analysis of one (or more) of our biblical psukim, translated accurately
* integrates insights of two of the rabbinic, medieval, or contemporary thinkers that we’ve studied
* includes your own personal perspective or grappling with these questions
* concludes with a strong message for your listener
* written in language appropriate for a compelling oral presentation
* you will be asked to present this dvar Torah in front of your classmates, but you will not be graded on your oral presentation

Rubric for Dvar Torah

**Benchmarks 7.30 and 8:18 combined:** Examines legal passages in the Torah, Talmud, and codes for their ethical and moral implications -- and uses these ethical insights as a tool for reflecting upon one’s personal eating practice.

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| Criteria (skills/knowledge from the unwrapping) | Mastery | Approaching | Beginning |
| Writes in a clear, organized, and compelling fashion | Need to produce department-wide rubric for this criterion. | | |
| Organizes rhetorical argument around essential question or issue of concern | Articulates clear essential question or issue of concern around which the DT is structured  All pieces of the DT are in service of addressing the EQ/IoC  Texts selected are appropriately connected to EQ/IoC |  |  |
| Distills main ideas and essential arguments from Hebrew texts (as opposed to grammatical or literary analysis) | The explanation of texts is built on a reasonable reading and interpretation of the text.  Restatement of textual arguments is clearly articulated and addresses all relevant parts of the text. | The explanation of text is partially grounded in the text but it makes claims that are not fully harmonious with the text as a whole.  Pieces of the text may be quoted out of context or misunderstood.  Inappropriate weight is given to less significant parts of the text and/or important parts of the text are neglected. |  |
| Analyzes, compares, and contrasts opinions  /interpretations | Analysis chooses significant and appropriate aspects of opinions  /interpretations to compare and contrast.  Analysis skillfully and precisely analyzes the particular differences between the texts, thoroughly explaining each step of the reasoning process. | Analysis is overly terse or does not fully explain argument. |  |
| Articulates own perspective | Perspective explores or acknowledges other viewpoints with compassion and then settles on own conclusion in relationship to the former.  Perspective compellingly articulates the student’s “own inner truth” in response to or relationship to the EQ/IoC |  |  |

2) and 5) Students can derive key Jewish responses to fundamental human questions from more complex biblical, rabbinic and medieval texts and contemporary Jewish philosophical texts.

2) Students can integrate Jewish responses to fundamental human questions into their own worldview.

Other resources:

Jeff’s curriculum

<https://judaicscurricula.files.wordpress.com/2007/02/kashrut-curriculum.pdf>

1. לא תבשל גדי בחלב אמו

   Do not cook a goat in its mother’s milk. [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. ובשלושה מקומות נכתב בתורה אחד לאיסור אכילה, ואחד לאיסור הנאה, ואחד לאיסור בישול

   The three places where the Torah writes the prohibition of mixing milk and meat teach that it is (1) forbidden to eat the mixture,

   (2) forbidden to derive any benefit from such a mixture, and (3) forbidden to cook such a mixture. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
3. זאת החיה, מלמד שהיה משה אוחז החיה ומ ראה להם לישראל, ואומר להם זו תאכלו, וזו לא תאכלו...

   “This is the animal that you may eat.” This teaches that Moshe held each one and showed it to Israel, saying, “You may eat this kind” and, “You may not eat this kind.” [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
4. על כן לא יאכלו בני ישראל את גיד הנשה אשר על כף הירך עד היום הזה כי נגע בכף ירך יעקב בגיד הנשה:

   Therefore the Children of Israel do not eat the gid hanasheh on the hip-socket to this day, because [the angel of Esau] struck Yaakov’s (Jacob) hip-socket on the gid hanasheh. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
5. I maintain that the food which is forbidden by the Law is unwholesome. There is nothing among the forbidden kinds of food whose injurious character is doubted, except pork (Lev. xi. 7), and fat (ibid. vii. 23). But also in these cases the doubt is not justified. For pork contains more moisture than necessary [for human food], and too much of superfluous matter. The principal reason why the Law forbids swine’s flesh is to be found in the circumstance that its habits and its food are very dirty and loathsome. It has already been pointed out how emphatically the Law enjoins the removal of the sight of loathsome objects, even in the field and in the camp; how much more objectionable is such a sight in towns. But if it were allowed to eat swine’s flesh, the streets and houses would be more dirty than any cesspool, as may be seen at present in the country of the Franks. A saying of our Sages declares: “The mouth of a swine is as dirty as dung itself” (B. T. Ber. 25a).

   The fat of the intestines makes us full, interrupts our digestion, and produces cold and thick blood; it is more fit for fuel [than for human food].

   Blood (Lev. xvii. 12), and nebelah, i.e., the flesh of an animal that died of itself (Deut. xiv. 21), are indigestible, and injurious as food; Trefah, an animal in a diseased state (Exod. xxii. 30), is on the way of becoming a nebelah.

   The characteristics given in the Law (Lev. xi., and Deut. xiv.) of the permitted animals, viz., chewing the cud and divided hoofs for cattle, and fins and scales for fish, are in themselves neither the cause of the permission when they are present, nor of the prohibition when they are absent; but merely signs by which the recommended species of animals can be discerned from those that are forbidden. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
6. ועוד התורה מאירה עינים בסוד התולדה, שאסרה לנו מקצת בהמות וחיות ומקצת עופות ומקצת דגים, וגם זה הולך בשאר דרכי התורה שכל דברים טובים לגוף כנוהג שבעולם, וטובים לנפש, מצד היצירה ומצד המצות, כי הדברים האלה ידוע שאינן מאכלים טובים לרפואה ולבריאות, ומלבד זה יש להם נזק בנפש מצד התולדות, וזהו ונטמתם חסר א' לומר שהן מטמטמות הלב,

   כאשר ידענו כי העופות האסורין כולן דורסין חוץ מפרס ועזניה ואין בעולם עוף אחר דורס אלא הם והם בעלי אכזריות, ודמם ובשרם מוליד אכזריות בנפש, וישראל, שנצטוו להיות רחמנים ואוהבים זה לזה, ראוי הוא להאסר להם.

   The Torah further enlightens us with the secret of cause and effect. It forbade us from eating certain animals, birds and fish. This is in keeping with the other laws of the Torah, which are beneficial both for the body and the soul. For all these forbidden foods are known to be foods which are not good for one’s health. However, besides this they cause damage to the soul. This is why the Torah writes, “They will make you blocked up (nitmetem)” without the letter aleph (which would spell nitmeitem – you will become impure) to teach that they block up the heart.

   An illustration of this point can be found in the list of non-kosher birds. These are all birds of prey, except for two, and include all the birds of prey in the world. These birds are all cruel. Through consuming their flesh and blood, the soul absorbs the attribute of cruelty. Therefore it is appropriate that the Jewish people, who are commanded to be merciful and to love one another, be forbidden from these things. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
7. קודם מתן תורה נודע הבדל הטמא והטהור, כמבואר בנח, מכל מקום לא אסר לנח אכילתם, ואתה בהיותך קדוש, אין ראוי לך להיות ניזון מהאסור.

   Before the Torah was given the difference between impure and pure animals was known as is clear from Noach (who differentiated between them in the Ark). Nevertheless it was not prohibited for non-Jews to eat non-kosher animals. But you [the Jewish people], since you are holy, it is not fitting for you to be sustained by these forbidden things. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
8. מלמד שאין ענין המאכלות האסורות לבריאות הגוף כברמב"ן, שהאי האומות אוכלים ובריאים, אלא כונתם לרפואת הנשמה, כי מגרשים רוח טהרה וקדושה, ומולידים אטימות השכל ואכזריות, וזה דוקא מואיל "אליהם" לישראל, שהם לחיי העולם הבא, אבל לאומות העולם אין תועלת במצוה זה.

   The reason for the laws of kashrut is not for physical health benefits, as the Ramban explains. We see that non-Jews eat non-kosher foods and are healthy. Rather their purpose is for the well-being of the soul. Non-kosher foods remove the spirit of purity and holiness, and create a blockage in the intelligence, and cause cruelty. This only helps “them,” Israel, for they will live in the world to come. But for non-Jews there is no purpose in this mitzvah. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
9. Mitzvot as a way of life, as a fixed and permanent form of human existence, preserve religion as a goal in itself and prevent it from turning into a means for attaining a goal. Indeed, most of the mitzvot have no sense unless we regard them in this manner, as an expression of selfless divine service. Most of the mitzvot have no instrumental or utilitarian value and cannot be construed as helping a person fulfill his earthly or spiritual needs. A person would not undertake this way of life unless he sees divine service as a goal in itself, not as a means to achieve any other purpose. Therefore, the halakha directs its attention to one’s duties and not to one’s feelings.

   If mitzvot are service to God and not service to man, they do not have to be intended or directed to man’s needs. Every reason given for the mitzvot that bases itself on human needs — be they intellectual, ethical, social or national — voids the mitzvot of all religious meaning. For if the mitzvot are the expression of philosophic knowledge, or if they have any ethical content, or if they are meant to benefit society, or if they are meant to maintain the Jewish people, then he who performs them serves not God but himself, his society or his people. He does not serve God but uses the Torah of God for human benefit and as a means to satisfy human needs.

   Therefore, the so-called “reasons for the mitzvot” are a theological construct and not a fact of religious faith. The only genuine reason for the mitzvot is the worship of God, and not the satisfaction of a human need or interest. If, for example, the meaning of Shabbat were social or national, it would be completely superfluous: The secretary of the labor union takes care of the workers’ need for rest. The Divine Presence did not descend upon Mount Sinai to fulfill that function. If Shabbat does not have the meaning of holiness — and holiness is a concept utterly devoid of humanistic and anthropocentric meaning — then it has no meaning at all. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
10. וטעם כי עם קדוש אתה לה' אלוהיך - דבק עם לא תבשל גדי בחלב אמו - כי איננו מאכל נתעב, אבל יאסור אותו להיותנו קדושים במאכלים, או להיותנו קדושים שלא נהיה עם אכזרי לא ירחמו שנחלוב את האם ונוציא ממנה החלב שנבשל בו הבן.

    ואף על פי שכל בשר בחלב יכנס בלאו הזה, כי כל מינקת תקרא אם וכל יונק יקרא גדי, והוא דרך הבישול, והנה בכולם אכזריות.

    The reason it states, “For you are a holy nation to the L-rd, your God” in connection to “Do not eat a kid in its mother’s milk” is not because this is a disgusting food. Rather, it is forbidden in order that we should be holy regarding our food and not act as a cruel and merciless nation – milking the mother in order to cook her kid in her milk.

    All meat and milk is included in this prohibition (even when someone does not cook meat in its mother’s milk, which one might think is not considered cruel) nonetheless, since any nursing mother is called a “mother,” and any nursling is called a “kid,” cooking them together is always considered cruel. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)