

## Rabbi Meir of Premishlan

Divrie Meir

Parshas Shemini

וְאֵת הַחֲזִיר כִּי מִפְּרִיִּם פְּרָסָה הוּא וְשֹׁסֵעַ שֹׁסֵעַ פְּרָסָה וְהוּא גֵרָה לֹא יִגַּר טָמֵא הוּא לָכֶם  
וַיִּקְרָא יָא, ז)

**And the pig, for it splits the hoof and completely splits the hoof, but it does not chew the cud—it is impure to you.  
(Leviticus 11:7)**

Rabbi Meir of Premishlan said: There is a mitzvah in the Holy Torah called "Hospitality to Guests," and the way to conduct oneself with guests requires instruction.	אמר רבי מאיר מפרמישלאן: יש מצוה בתורה הקדושה הכנסת אורחים, וכיצד להתנהג עם אורחים צריכין למוד.
And there is nothing that is not hinted at in the Torah, and even the particulars of the mitzvah of hospitality are found in the Torah.	ולפי מדי דלא רמיזא באורייתא, וגם מנהגי מצות הכנסת אורחים יש בתורה.
That is: when one takes a guest into his home, the host must break many pieces of bread upon the table, so that the guest will not be embarrassed to take for himself, and so that he not leave the table hungry.	הינו: כשלוקחין אורח לביתו, צריף הבעל הבית להפריס חתיכות לחם הרבה על השלחן, שיהאורח לא יתבייש מלהפריס ויצא מהשלחן רעב.
And even if the host breaks the bread but does not himself eat, then too, the guest will be embarrassed to eat and will also leave the table hungry.	וגם אפלו אם הבעל הבית יפריס פרוסות לחם והוא בעצמו לא יאכל — אז גם בן יתבייש האורח מלאכל ויצא גם בן מהשלחן רעב.
Therefore, the host must also eat at the table, in order that the guest not be ashamed to eat.	לכן צריף הבעל הבית בעצמו גם בן לאכל על השלחן, בכדי שיהאורח לא יתבייש מלאכל.
This is hinted in the Holy Torah (Vayikra 11:7): “And the pig, for it splits the hoof...” — meaning, it slices [pōres] pieces of challah on the table (as in haMotzi).	ונה מרמז בתורה הקדושה: “את החזיר כי מפריס פרסה” — ער שנייט אהו מוציס חלה [הוא פורס חלות המוציא].
But “it does not chew the cud” — meaning, he himself does not eat. “It is impure to you” — from these do not eat.	אבל גרה לא יגר” — והוא בעצמו לא אוכל. “טמא” הוא לכם” — ומאילה לא תאכלו.
Similarly, the camel — who chews the cud (he eats) but does not split the hoof (does not break bread on the table), he too is impure to you — do not eat from such people.	גם הגמל — שהוא גרה יגר, הוא אוכל על שלחנו, ואינו מפריס חלה על שלחנו, “טמא הוא לכם” — ומאילה לא תאכלו.
Only those who “bring up the cud” — who themselves eat, and who “split the hoof” — who break bread on the table, are proper.	רק “מעלי גרה” — שאוכל בעצמו, ומ“מפריסי פרסה” — שמפריס לחם על שלחנו.

**[NOTE: Summary**

Rabbi Meir of Premishlan offers a deep insight into the mitzvah of **הכנסת אורחים (hospitality)** by drawing a surprising connection to the kosher laws in Parshas Shemini. He explains that genuine

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hospitality is not just about offering food, but about ensuring the guest feels **comfortable enough to eat**.

He brings a *remez* (allusion) from the Torah:

- The **pig** splits its hoof (i.e., it *appears* externally proper—like breaking bread on the table), but doesn't chew the cud (i.e., doesn't eat itself), symbolizing someone who performs the *external* gestures of hospitality without partaking, making the guest uncomfortable.
- The **camel**, by contrast, *chews the cud* (eats) but doesn't *split the hoof* (doesn't prepare the table generously), representing someone who eats himself but doesn't share.
- Only an animal that **chews the cud and splits the hoof**—eats himself and visibly prepares food for the guest—is kosher.

In this way, Torah laws hint at how true hosts behave: with both inner sincerity and outward action.

### Practical Takeaway

When we welcome guests, especially those who may be shy or unfamiliar, it's not enough to merely set food before them. A host must create an **atmosphere of warmth and ease**, demonstrating that the food is not just there—but *meant for the guest*.

### Practically:

- Put out generous portions.
- Eat with your guest.
- Make conversation light and inclusive.
- Never make a guest feel they're a burden.

It's a sacred act to ensure no one leaves your home still hungry—*emotionally or physically*.

### True Chassidic Story

#### The Bread of Ruzhin

The **holy Rebbe Yisrael of Ruzhin**, known for his regal bearing and deep compassion, would personally oversee the bread baked for his Shabbos meals. But what stood out most was how he treated his guests.

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Once, a poor man was invited to his table. Though the Rebbe was surrounded by noble followers and silver utensils, he carefully made sure the guest felt at ease. He **broke pieces of challah**, handed them directly to the man, and even took a large bite himself—smiling warmly as he did.

After the meal, the man said, "Rebbe, I've never felt so full. Not just of food, but of dignity."

The Rebbe replied gently:

*"A hungry person needs more than food. He needs someone to eat with him."* **END NOTE]**

<p>וְאֵת הַחֲסִידָה, הָאֲנָפָה לְמִינָהּ, וְאֵת הַדּוֹכִיפָת, וְאֵת הָעֶשְׂתְּלָה. (ויקרא יא, יט)</p> <p><b>And the stork, the heron according to its kind, and the hoopoe, and the bat.</b></p> <p><b>(Leviticus 11:19)</b></p>	
In the name of the holy Rav, our teacher Rabbi Meir, of blessed memory, of Premishlan:	בְּשֵׁם הָרַב הַקְּדוֹשׁ מוֹרְנוּ הָרַב רַבִּי מְאִיר זצ"ל מְפָרוּמֵי שְׁלֹאן:
“And the stork” — Rashi comments: “And why is it called chasidah (the kind one)? Because it performs kindness (chasidus) with its companions regarding food.”	וְאֵת הַחֲסִידָה — לְשׁוֹן רַשִׁ"י: “וְלָמָּה נִקְרָא שְׁמָהּ חֲסִידָה? שְׁעוֹשָׂה חֲסִידוֹת עִם חֲבֵרוֹתֶיהָ בְּמִזְוָנוֹת.”
It is difficult [to understand]: if it performs kindness, why is it an impure bird?	קוּשָׁה: אִם הִיא עוֹשֶׂה חֲסִידוֹת — מַדּוּעַ הִיא עוֹף טָמֵא?
He answered that one must be precise in Rashi’s wording—where it says: “with its companions,”	וְתַרְזִי: דְּנִשְׁ לְדִיּוֹק בְּלִשׁוֹן רַשִׁ"י ז"ל, בְּמָה שֶׁכָּתַב: “עִם חֲבֵרוֹתֶיהָ.”
That is: it only performs kindness with its own kind—with those who are her companions.	וְהִינּוּ: כִּי רַק עִם חֲבֵרוֹתֶיהָ עוֹשֶׂה חֲסִידוֹת.
But if she is not her companion, she does not extend kindness to her.	אָבָל אִם אֵינָה חֲבֵרָתָהּ — אֵינָה עוֹשֶׂה עִמָּה חֶסֶד.

**[NOTE: 📄 Summary**

The Torah lists the **chasidah** (stork) as a **non-kosher bird**, despite its name being derived from the word **חסד (kindness)**. Rashi explains that it’s called *chasidah* because it does kindness with its companions, sharing food with them.

**Rabbi Meir of Premishlan** raises a powerful question:

If the chasidah is so kind, why is it considered *impure*?

His answer?

It only does kindness **with its own kind** — those who are already its friends or part of its circle.

But when it comes to **outsiders**, it withholds its kindness.

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This **selective chesed**—helping only those we like or who resemble us—is not the Torah’s ideal. That’s not true chesed. The chasidah may look kind, but it lacks the universal compassion that defines genuine holiness.

### ✓ Practical Takeaway

#### Real kindness isn’t tribal.

It’s easy to be kind to people we naturally get along with—family, friends, neighbors, people who think like us, or share our background.

But Torah demands more. **True חסד (chesed)** is extended even to strangers, outsiders, or those we might not naturally identify with.

If our kindness **excludes others**, we must ask ourselves: is it truly kindness, or is it just comfort?

💡 *This week, go out of your way to help someone who is not "in your circle." That’s holy chesed.*

### 📖 True Chassidic Story: The Stranger in Berdichev

**Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev**, the great advocate for all Jews, once noticed a ragged man enter the shul right before davening. The man looked lost, unfamiliar, and completely out of place.

The gabbaim tried to usher him out, suspecting he was a beggar who had wandered in. But Reb Levi Yitzchak stopped them and personally invited the man to sit beside him.

After davening, the Rebbe gave him food and money—and asked about his family and needs with genuine interest.

Later, someone asked the Rebbe, “Why such honor for a total stranger?”

He replied:

*“The Torah says, ‘Love the convert, the stranger.’ If I can’t love someone just because he’s unfamiliar—what kind of Jew am I?”* **END NOTE]**