

ושחתתם בזה

Ushchat'tem Bazeh



THE CHULLIN & SHECHITA
COMPANION



AVROHOM REIT

Avrohom Reit
1918 82 Street
Brooklyn NY 11214
347.407.1239

תשפ"ו © 2026

ISBN: 978-0-9859721-4-1


מכון עלה זית
עריכת ספרים מרישא עד גמירא
publish@alehzayis.com | 732.513.3466
FAX: 732.865.7002 | 732.387.7841

כבוד ידידי, גיסי כאחי, הרב הגאון רב אברהם יצחק ריט שליט"א, שלום וברכה.

אחדשה"ט נהניתי מאוד על הבשורה הטובה שעומד כתר"ה להוציא לאור הספר הנקרא ושחטתם בזה, ביאור מקיף על עניני שחיטה, והוא חוליא נוספת בשרשרת הספרים היקרים שהוציא לאור כבר על תקיעת שופר, ד' מינים, אפיית מצה, כפרות, חליצה, ועוד, כמעשהו בראשונים כך מעשהו בזה, שמוציא הענינים לאורה בבהירות ובהיקף ורבים נהנים מאורם. ואשר בקש ממני לכתוב בשבח הספר ובתועלתו, אף שלדעתי הוא אך למותר כי כבר אימתחי גברא ואימתחי קמיע והספרים מדברים בעד עצמם, מ"מ בשמחה רבה אמלא בקשתו לכבוד כתר"ה ולהראות אות ידידות העזה השרויה בינינו, וגם הוא אצלי כבוד גדול לעשות כן.

הנה ספר זה כספריו הקודמים הוא מעשה אומן נפלא, שהספר נכתב בבהירות גדול, כל פרט ופרט אף ענינים מסובכים מאוד נכתב באופן שהוא מוסבר ומובן אף למתחילים שיהא הכל מובן היטב, וגם הוא נכתב באופן מדוייק טובא הן כל היקף הלכה מהו דאורייתא ומהו מדינא דגמ' ומהו חומרות שהנהיגו הקדמונים, וגם מהו אופן המעשה אשר יעשון בזמן הזה ובתנאים שאנו חיים וההנהגות הנהוגות בזמנינו אצל השוחטים, כל הלכה והנהגה בתכלית הדיוק, וגם יש מידע רב על עניני המציאות הנחוצים אף אותן שאינם מתפרסמים כ"כ ומעטים היודעים אותם. והשלימות בב' הענינים, הבהירות והדיוק הוא חזון בלתי נפרץ. והספר מקיף המון ענינים השייכים להלכות שחיטה כולל איזה בהמות ועופות הם כשרות ומסורת העופות ופרטי הלכות שחיטה ובדיקת הסכין וכמה עניני טרפות וניקור החלב והגיד ועניני מליחה ועוד ועוד, והספר הוא שימושי הן לאותן שאין להם ידיעות בענינים אלו וצריכים פתח להיכנס בזה, הן ללומדים שיוודעים הגמ' והפוסקים ורוצים לידע הלכה למעשה היוצא מזה, הן לאותם שרוצים למלא ידם להיות שוחט ובודק ורוצים הדרכה לזה, ואף שוחטים מובהקים יכולים ליהנות מהיקף הידיעות וההסברים כדרך של דברי תורה שכל פעם שממשמש בהם מוציאם בהם טעם.

והנני להעיד מה שמפורסם, שהרב הגאון המחבר הנ"ל מסר נפשו על הענינים האלו כבר כמה וכמה שנים ללמוד אותם וללמד אותם הלכה למעשה, יגיעה רבה הן בסוגיות הש"ס והפוסקים והן בשימוש מעשי, וגם ידוע לי אישית כמה מסר נפשו ללמד הלכות אלו לבני תורה הלכה למעשה, וספר הזה הוא המשך חשוב מאוד בעבודתו בזה, להרביץ תורה הלכה למעשה בענינים אלו.

ואסיים בברכה שיצליח מאוד בעבודת קודש שלו ויתקבלו הדברים בי מדרשא ורבים יהנו לאורו.

הכו"ח בידידות יום ד' לסדר תרומה ב' דר"ח אדר תשפ"ו,

א"י י"א סיוט

אהרן יואל סורשר

אמתֵי בן-דוד

מחב"ס שיחת חולין עמ"ס חולין

בית מדרש בכורי יוסף

חבורת חולין ובכורות, ומרכז להוראת כשרות הבשר

ע"ש ר' בכור יוסף בן-דוד זצ"ל

נוסד ע"י בנו הרב דרור בן-דוד זצ"ל

רחוב הרב סורוצקין 24

טל. 053-3180967

בס"ד, ירושלים עיה"ק ת"ו, כח בשבט תשפ"ו

מכתב ברכה ותהילה

לכבוד מעלת ידידי היקר,
מוזכה הרבים, בחיבורים חביבים,
מרבץ תורה לצאן קדושים, ומבאר כל הקשים,
חוקר ודורש בחכמה, בכל מקצועות תורה תמימה,
הרה"ג **אברהם רייט** שליט"א
ראש ישיבת בין הזמנים 'מחנה יורה דעה'
המאלף דעה הלכה למעשה, לבני תורה ואנשי מעשה,

תועלת עצומה לעם ישראל הביא לנו כת"ר בתורתו ובספריו, להגיש בצורה ברורה ומעשית לכל לומד את מקצועות הקודש הנצרכים לקיום מצוות התורה המעשיות, גם במחנה הקיץ המפורסם אשר משתתפים בו מאות צורבים צעירים שוחרי תורה והלכה, אשר הנך מלמדם הלכות מעשיות כשחיטה וכשרות ועירובין וסת"ם ומקוואות ועוד ועוד, והגדיים הרכים עדיים לגדול לעתודים בעלי קרני הוד ותפארת להיות מורי הוראה בישראל. וגם בספרך היקרים המכונסים בסדרת '**תקופת השנה**' להמחיש ולהדגים עד לפרטים הדקים ביותר את ענפי מקצועות התורה המעשיים נכמו שחזיתי על בשרי, שבלילה לפני שיצאתי לאפות מצות יד בחבורה קדישא, עיינתי בספרך המדריך לאפיית מצות, ולמחרת בשעת עבודת הקודש דיברתי והערתי כאחד המבניים, עד שחברי החבורה היו בטוחים שאני אופה מצות ותיק ומומחה).

ועתה הנה הנפת ידך לכתוב ספר מרהיב עין '**ישחטתם בזה**' בלשון אנגלית, בו השכלת לבאר בדקדוק רב ובפרטי פרטים כל שלבי קיום מצוות שחיטה וטריפות והמסתעף והמתקשר, עד דקה מן הדקה בעצות מעשיות ותושיה וחכמה כיצד לרכוש כלים מתאימים לקיום המצוה, והיאך לאחוז ולחתוך ולהצליח בכל שלב מבלי להיכשל לא בהלכה ולא במעשה, בכל סוג בעל חיים ושיטת אחיזה ועוד כהנה וכנה, בליווי תמונות מדויקות ומאירות עיניים, אדם עד בית אלוקים בקול רנה, עד שיוכל הקטן שבישראל לדעת ולהשכיל ולהבין לשמור ולעשות ולקיים, כזה ראה וקדש.

יהי רצון שתזכה להפיץ ספרך ביעקב ולחלקו בישראל, ויהיה מורה דרך לרבים, וגם יתורגם בקרוב ללשון הקודש כדי שיוכלו גם בני ארץ הקודש ליהנות מזיו אורו המחכים, המאיר למרחקים.

כברכת ידיך

אמתֵי בן-דוד אמתֵי בן-דוד





מ"ש פרשת זכור
יא אדר תשפו

בהתפעלות עמוקה החזקתי בידי את הספר המונומנטלי ושחטתם בזה: ביוריים במעשה השחיטה מאת הרב אברהם רייט על הלכות שחיטה. כבר בעיון ראשון ניכר כי אין זה עוד חיבור הלכתי מן השורה, אלא יצירה תורנית רחבת-היקף, פרי עמל שנים רבות של לימוד, עיון, שימושה של תורה ויגיעה לברר כל פרט ופרט עד עיקרו. בשערים נודע רבי רייט בבהירות הצגתו המיוחדת, בסדר מחשבתו הישר והמאורגן, וביסודיות הרבה הוא חוקר, מעיין ומבאר את הסוגיות ההלכתיות על כל סעיפיהן והסתעפויותיהן.

דרכו של המחבר לשלב עיון מעמיק במקורות הראשונים והאחרונים יחד עם הבנה מעשית חדה ובהירה של מציאות השחיטה בפועל. ירד לשטח, בדק, חקר ושאל, עד שנתבררו הדברים שלמה כשמלה. כל סימן וסימן נבנה נדבך על גבי נדבך — מן המקרא, דרך דברי חז"ל, הראשונים והפוסקים, ועד להכרעות ברורות ומנומקות — באופן המאיר את עיני הלומד ומעניק לו כלים מוצקים להבנת ההלכה למעשה.

זכיתי לראות רבי רייט כאשר פעל במסירות ובחזון והקים את מחנה יורה דעה, מתוך תחושת אחריות עמוקה הנהגת הרבנות בישראל. מגמתו הייתה להבטיח כי בני התורה העומדים לשאת בעול ההוראה של יורה דעה והרבנות לא יסתפקו בידיעות ספרותיות בלבד, אלא ירכשו שליטה אמיתית בהלכות התלויות במעשה — הלכות אשר אין להבינן כראוי אלא מתוך שימוש מעשי, הדרכה צמודה והתנסות בפועל. במסירות נפש השקיע כוחות עצומים להעמיד מסגרת שבה יתלכדו תורה ועשייה, עיון ומעשה, מסורת ודיוק הלכתי.

ספר זה משקף את תפיסתו העמוקה של המחבר, הרואה בהלכות שחיטה יסוד מרכזי בקדושת מאכלי ישראל ובחזוק שמירת המצוות בשלמותן. ידיעת פרטי הדינים, דקדוקי ההלכה, והבנת הרקע והטעמים — כל אלו תנאי הכרחי להעמדת מערכת כשרות מהודרת ואמינה. ואכן, מתוך הספר ניכרת אחריות כבדה ויראת שמים טהורה, המלוות כל דיון וכל הכרעה.

עתה, עם הופעת חיבור מקיף זה, נפתח שער רחב בפני תלמידי חכמים, רבנים, שוחטים ובני תורה המבקשים להעמיק ולהרחיב ידיעותיהם. הידע העצום שצבר רבי רייט, יחד עם המחקר המקיף והמסודר שערך בנושא השחיטה, עומדים לרשות הכלל בלשון בהירה, בסדר נאה ובהנגשה ראויה, באופן המאפשר לכל מי שיש בו רצון כן ושאיפה לאמתה של תורה — לעיין, ללמוד, לחזור ולברר, עד שתהא ההלכה סדורה וברורה לפניו.

אין ספק כי ספר זה עתיד לתפוס מקום של כבוד במדף הספרים התורני, ולהיות לאבן יסוד בלימוד הלכות שחיטה בדורנו. יהי רצון שחפץ ה' בידו יצליח, ויזכה המחבר לראות פירות בעמלו — תלמידי חכמים ושוחטים יראי שמים, הבקיאים בהלכה, המקדשים שם שמים במעשיהם ומרבים טהרה וקדושה בישראל.

חיים דב לויקה



הן היה למראה עיני אשר פעל ועשה כבוד ידידי שארי ובשרי אדם יקר באנשים ת"ח מופלג הרה"ג רב אברהם רייט שליט"א וכבר אתמחי גברא ואתמחי קמיעא, חז"ל הקדושים אומרים משחרב בית המקדש אין לו להקב"ה אלא ד' אמות של הלכה והני ספרים הוי חלק מהד' אמות של הלכה של הקב"ה.

אלף נכנס לבית מדרש ואחד יוצא להוראה

It is both an honor and a privilege to express my feelings regarding the great benefit that the תורה ומצות are getting from all the ספרים written by הרה"ג רב אברהם שליט"א.

the current ספר "ושחטתם בזה" as with his previous ספרים, this ספר is written with clarity and with the reader firmly in mind, presenting the מצות ה' with a practical, "hands-on" approach. It is truly a תורת חיים that brings the מצות שחיטה to life and making the הלכות of שחיטה tangible and accessible.

יהי רצון מלפני אבינו שבשמים שתזכה לכתוב ולהפיץ עוד הרבה ספרים בכל מקצועות התורה ותזכה להמשיך עבודתך להעמיד תלמידים הרבה.

המצפה לישועת ה' בקרוב וחותרם ביקרא דאורייתא

חיים רעננערט
חיים רעננערט

Table of Contents

Introduction 1
 Presentation 1 | Who Should Read This Work? 3 | Persona of the Shochet 4
 | Sources 5 | The Beginnings 5 | Ushchat'tem Bazeh 6 | Pictures 7 |
 Acknowledgements 7 | Rabbanim 7 | Editors 8 | Photographers 8

Part I

Chapter One Introducing Shechita 13
 Why Shechita? 13 | Why the Neck? 13

Chapter Two The Mitzva of Shechita 17
 Torah Source for the Mitzva 17

Chapter Three What Are Kosher Animals? 19
 Which Animals Are “Kosher”? 19 | Identifying Kosher Quadrupeds 19 |

VIII *Ushchat'tem Bazeh* The Chullin & Shechita Companion

Mafreses Parsah and Ma'aleh Gayrah 19 | Do the Signs Make the Animal Kosher? 21 | Other Signs 21 | 1) Toothless Upper Jaw 22 | 2) Rump 23 | 3) Horns 24 | Signs of Kosher: 25 | Relying on the Signs 26 | Differentiating a B'heima from a Chaya 27 | Bison 29 | In a Nutshell 29 | Identifying Kosher Birds 30 | Introduction to Mesora 33 | The Story Behind the Need for Mesora 33 | The Rules of Mesora 34 | Can Mesora Be Transmitted in Writing? 35 | In a Nutshell 36 | Popular Kosher Birds 36

Chapter Four **The Shochet**..... 39

Who May Shecht? 39 | Types of Shochochim 40 | Bodek 41 | The Laws of Shechita 41 | The Necessity for Kabbalah 42 | Hoda'ah and Kabbalah 43 | Yiras Shamayim 45

Chapter Five **Tools of the Trade: Knives and Stones**..... 47

Chaleph – the Knife 47 | The Shape 47 | Why Rectangle? 47 | Handle – Size and Position 48 | Sharp and Smooth 49 | חרפ – Sharp 49 | Smooth 49 | The Ideal Knife 50 | Size of the Knife 52 | Selecting the Correct Length Blade 52

Chapter Six **Behind the Scenes: Knife Mechanics**..... 55

How Knives Are Made 55 | Ancient Knives 55 | Modern Knives 55 | The Making of a Shechita Knife 56 | Hardening 57 | Tempering 57 | Filing 58 | Sharpening by Honing 58 | Stones 59 | Types of Stones 60 | Care 61

Chapter Seven **Preparing the Knife** 63

The Need for Knife Inspection 63 | The Inspection 64 | On Flesh and Nail 64 | Three Angles 64 | Bi-Directional Inspection 65 | Twelve Inspections 65 |

P'gimos: What They Are and How to Find Them **67** | The P'gima Sensation **67**
 | Finding a P'gima **67** | Which Finger **68** | Alternate Fingers **68** | Support
 Your Finger **71** | Wet/Dry **73** | Inspecting Between Shechitos **74** | The
 Commercial Environment for Birds **75** | The Commercial Environment for
 Animals **76**

Chapter Eight What Is Shechita? 77

What Does the Shochet Shecht? **78** | The Chamisha Hilchos Shechita **81** |
 The Five Principles of Shechita: **81** | Understanding the Principles **81**

Chapter Nine Preparing To Shecht 87

Selecting Birds **87** | Prepping with a Drink **88** | How To Shecht **88** | Pulling
 Feathers **90** | Tefisa **91**

Chapter Ten Tefisa: Positioning for Shechita 93

Positioning a Bird for Shechita **93** | Method A: Self-held **93** | Method B:
 Assistant-held **97** | Method C: Assistant-held Kepel Shechita **101** | The
 Difference Between the Methods **102** | Caution **103**

Chapter Eleven Shechita! 105

Shechita Steps: **105** | *Tekufas Agodul* **107** | After Checking Simanim **108** |
 Consecutive Shechitos **108** | Speed **109** | Checking the Knife After Use **109**

Chapter Twelve Kisuy Hadam 111

Who Is Obligated **111** | Earth **111** | Covered From Above and Below **113** |

X Ushchat'tem Bazeh The Chullin & Shechita Companion

Kisuy of Chicken and Other Fowl 113 | Kisuy of Chayos 113 | Inspect Your Knife 114 | Beracha 115 | Clean Environment 115

Chapter Thirteen How To Shecht Other Types of Birds and Animals 117

Duck 117 | Goose 118 | Small Birds: Pigeon, Dove, Sparrow, Quail 119 | Pigeon 119 | Quail 120 | Sparrow 120 | How To Hold a Sparrow 121 | Lamb 121 | Goat 122 | Deer 122 | Dakos [Small Animals]: Lambs, Goats, Calves 123 | Gasos [Large Animals]: Cattle, Elk, Bison 123 | All Animals 124 | Shechita Munachas vs. Shechita Meumades (Lying Down Shechita vs. Upright Shechita) 124

Chapter Fourteen Cleaning and Inspecting 127

Evisceration 127 | Inspections [בדיקות] 128 | Meckel's Diverticulum 129 | Other *Treifos* 130 | *Pupikel* 130 | Broken Wings 133 | Tzumos Hagidin 134 | Lungs Inspections (for Gasos and Dakos) 135 | Bedikas P'nim [Internal Inspection] 135 | Bedikas Chutz [External Inspection of Lungs] 136 | Glatt or Kosher 139 | Nikur 140

Chapter Fifteen The Steps of Shechita in Brief 141

The Steps of Shechita in Brief 141

Further Reading 142

Part II

Chapter Sixteen What Is a Ruminant?	145
Ruminants 145 What Are Ruminants? 145	
Chapter Seventeen Anatomy of the Lungs	147
Inspecting the Lungs 147 Anatomy 101 147 Thoracic Cavity 147	
Sections of the Lungs 148 Mespatzeles 149 Inunisa D'varda 149 Why	
Inspect? 149 <i>Sircha</i> 150 <i>Ririn</i> 150 The Inspection 151	
Chapter Eighteen Camel Hooves and the Hippopotamus	153
Gamal 153 Rashi's Opinion 154 Rashbam's Opinion 155	
Hippopotamus 156 Halacha 156	
Chapter Nineteen Hagroma: Off Course and Time Pyramids	157
The Meaning of the Word 157 Hagroma (הגרמה): the Notched Tiers 157	
Yeihu's Appointment 157 Ancient Timepieces 158 Time-pyramids 159	
Throning Yeihu 160 הגרמה [Notched] Shechita 160 The <i>Pesul</i> of	
<i>Hagroma</i> 161 Tilted 161	
Chapter Twenty A Virtual Tour of a Commercial Poultry Shechita	163
Commercial Shechita of Chickens 163 Holding the Bird when Shechting 164	
The Shechita 167 Shifts 167 Checking the Knife 168 If the Knife	
Is Bad 168 Bitul 169 Color-Coded Shackles 169 <i>Kisuy Hadam</i> 170	
Blood Safety 171 Removing the Feathers, Entrails, and More 172	
Feathers 172 Removing the Head and Feet 174 Entrails 175 Treifos	

XII *Ushchat'tem Bazeh* The Chullin & Shechita Companion

Inspections 175 | Meckel's Diverticulum 175 | *Tzumos Hagidin* 175 |
Pupikel [Gizzard] 176 | USDA Inspection 176 | *Pupik* 176 | Liver 177 |
Clear Out the Entrails 177 | Kashering 177 | Salting 178 | The Finished
Product 180

Chapter Twenty-One A Virtual Tour of a Commercial Beef Shechita 183

Commercial Beef Shechita 183 | The Yard 183 | The Shechting Pen 184 |
Shechita Munachas 185 | Cleaning the Neck 185 | Drink 186 | Lamb 186
| The Shechita 186 | Inspecting the Knife 187 | Pulling the Skin 187 |
Checking the Lungs 187 | Tracking 189

Chapter Twenty-Two Factory Kashering vs. Local Butcher Kashering . . . 191

Kashering in the Commercial (Beef) Environment: The Basic Process 192
| In-Plant Kashering: The Benefits 194 | In-Plant Kashering: The
Disadvantages 198 | Local Butcher Kashering 199 | The Delivery 200 |
Separate Facility Kashering 201

Chapter Twenty-Three The Meat-Washing Controversy 203

The Meat-Washing Controversy 203

Chapter Twenty-Four Admonishment for the Shochet 207

Chapter Twenty-Five The Shochet's Lexicon 209

Knife 209 | Lungs 210 | Shechita 212 | Shochet 213 | Stones 214 |
Treifos 215

Table of Contents **XIII**

Chapter Twenty-Six Shechita Glossary..... 217

Index of Sources 228

Shechita: *verb* when a shochet uses a special knife to slaughter a kosher animal by severing the *simanim* in a special way.

There we go, the essence of the entire book in a single sentence. But if you want to know how a shochet becomes qualified, what is special about his knife and why he must use that specific type, which animals are kosher and what their *simanim* are (and what are *simanim*[!?!]), and how and why the *simanim* must be severed — you are going to have to read the rest of the book.

Introduction

Everyone is a bit intrigued with shechita, but most of us are not in a position to satisfy that curiosity. Well, here's your chance, with this book I hope to satisfy that curiosity. Please join me as I share everything that you could ever want to know about shechita in clear language and digestible bites.

Presentation

This book is primarily about shechita. What the shochet must know to be able to shecht and what the curious onlooker peeking over the shochet's shoulder should

2 *Ushchat'tem Bazeh* The Chullin & Shechita Companion

be alert to. The presentation is from the perspective of a spectator to the shochet's mind, balanced between the commercial experience and the hobbyist.

This book is designed to prepare the would-be shochet by providing all of the information he needs before he picks up a *chaleph* [shochet's knife]. The book follows the stages of shechita from the initial planning until the meat reaches the kashering¹ stage. The first section of the book is arranged in order of relevance for someone studying the shechita process. To consider shechting, a person must know which animals are kosher. He must have the correct equipment and a proper setup. He must have the necessary training and be fluent in what constitutes kosher shechita. He must know the defects on the animal's organs that impact its kosher status. He must be aware of how the *chelev* [forbidden fats] and blood should be removed.

The second section delves a bit deeper into understanding some shechita terminology, background, and auxiliary information, including an overview of how commercial chicken and beef *shechitos* and kashering are performed today.

Alongside the main text is a considerable amount of supplementary material that will educate the curious reader and put him in the know.

In all, the book offers a panoramic view of shechita. The author has endeavored to present the ideas in a simple and straightforward manner to allow an easy, cover-to-cover read. The reader is advised to read from beginning to end in order to understand the complete process. Skipping to the page of interest should be reserved for emergencies. Moreover, most of the obscure concepts – and what about shechita is not obscure? – are explained only the first time they appear.

¹ Only an overview of the kashering process is provided in the current work. The full process is covered in this author's book, *Zeh Kaparosi: The Custom of Kaparos*, Chapter 11, Home-Style Kashering.

That being said, the reader is encouraged to peruse the glossary and the Shochet's Vocabulary section at the end of the book. They are chock-full of shechita-related definitions and terminology along with other interesting information that will enhance the rest of your read but does not appear in the rest of the work. The glossary contains additional words that may have been skipped in the footnotes and a handful of shechita-related words that do not appear in the book but should be in a shochet's lexicon.

This book is devoted to shechita and everything that entails. It does not touch upon *treifos*.

Who Should Read This Work?

This work is intended for anyone curious about shechita and anyone engaged in the study of practical shechita or Mesechtas Chullin on any level. This book is for everyone, from members of a kollel or *chabura* studying the *sugya* in the Gemara or Shulchan Aruch in depth, to someone learning *daf hayomi*, or even someone only mildly involved with the material.

Everyone will discover a tremendous amount of information that is not readily available from any other source but will aid their comprehension of what they are learning. The book will fill in the knowledge gaps and missing details while translating the theoretical information studied in texts into useable, real-life knowledge. It will also supply the background needed to fully absorb all the information a shochet might share at a shechita presentation.

The motivated student will benefit from this book as it will prepare him for what his trainer might cover in the course and augment what his trainer might omit; shechita trainers are often concerned about overloading their students with too much information. It will, likewise, cure him from something that many newbie

Considering a visit with a shochet? Be aware that every professional has his own way of explaining what you will see in a manner that is clearly the best and easiest way to understand it.

4 *Ushchat'tem Bazei* The Chullin & Shechita Companion

shochtim suffer from – a lack of experience. No, this won't give him the experience of *been there, done that*, but it can compensate for a lot of missing information typically garnered only through experience.

This book contains no secrets. Whatever is shared here is known to anyone who has worked in the field. The goal is simply to fill in the gaps and provide the student with a wealth of information not accessible elsewhere.

This work includes cautions directed at the amateur or hobbyist shochet that would not concern a professional. A career shochet's knowledge and experience help him avoid issues and solve problems before they arise. The professional work environment is designed properly and the team members are trained to perform. The pro does not require this advice.

Persona of the Shochet

Can you pick the shochet in the crowd? Shochtim abound. Their service is essential to observant Judaism. People tend to need them or their handiwork more frequently than they might need any other Jewish service. There are thousands of qualified shochtim scattered around the globe. They come from all walks of life and all tiers of society. They can be yeshivish, chassidish, Sefardic, or any other Jewish denomination or religious affiliation you can think of. They blend into any crowd. There is no one shochet personality. The vast majority are ordinary people, hobbyists who shecht only occasionally, for themselves or for special events.

There are several hundred career shochtim who work as full-time shochtim. The primary distinguishing factor between a hobbyist and a professional is how much time is devoted to shechting. Professionals are people who earn their livelihood or spend the majority of their week dedicated to shechting.

In short, anyone can be a shochet!

Sources

From the time of the Mishna through modern times, hundreds, perhaps thousands, of *sefarim* have been authored specifically on hilchos shechita. Of these *sefarim*, two have attained classical status: the Simla Chadasha and the Beis Dovid. On the applied level, both reflect the popular *minhagim* with minimal variation between the two. The difference between them is in the style of presentation, the amount of requisite background knowledge, the inclusion of incidental information, and the ease of reading. The Simla Chadasha (published 1733), the older and more widely studied of the two, is ideal for the *talmid chachom*. The main text mimics that of Shulchan Aruch, as it covers both what the shochet needs to know as well as knowledge reserved for the *rov*. As it delves into the intricate discussions, the breadth of information can be overwhelming to the beginning student, particularly if he is unfamiliar with the background material.

Beis Dovid (published 1901) is written in clear, concise, Kitzur Shulchan Aruch-style language. The basic halachos necessary for the modern shochet are presented in the main text, while the sources, background, and scholarly deliberations are assigned to the notes section. The current work is primarily sourced in the Beis Dovid, because it is an easier *sefer* for the amateur shochet to follow.

The Beginnings

I come from humble beginnings. I had learned Mesechtas Chullin in kollel and raised several small flocks of chickens in my Brooklyn backyard. I, too, was among the uninitiated. I had never met a shochet.

When I set out to learn shechita I discovered that just like not everyone who knows how to read can teach *kriyah*, not everyone who knows how to shecht can teach shechita. I started to wonder: Was shechita relegated to the realm of elusive

6 *Ushchat'tem Bazeh* The Chullin & Shechita Companion

topics available only to a privileged few? Was it to be clumped together with *shatnes* and *tolaim* [bugs], not intended for the common man? This changed when I met Reb Yisroel Landsman, zt”l, a phenomenal teacher who presented shechita so clearly that anyone could learn from him.

After studying under Rabbi Landsman, I entered the world of shochtim and was able to glean hundreds of interesting tidbits from the people I encountered. The most notable shochtim with whom I interacted were Rav Amitai BenDavid, author of *Sichas Chullin*, the renowned shochtim Rabbi Itcha Meir Olen and Rabbi Moshe Yurman, lo”y, Reb Herschel Ashkenazi, zt”l, and some good friends of mine: Rabbi Ari Wajsfeld, Rabbi Yirmiyahu Benyowitz, and Rabbi Zvi Holland (of the Star-K), among many others.

Ushchat'tem Bazeh

Ushchat'tem Bazeh, literally meaning *shecht with this*, are words in a *pasuk*² referring to the shechita knife. After King Shaul conquered the Plishtim at Michmash, the people slaughtered some of the cattle taken from the booty. The king was disturbed by what he felt was improper observance of the laws of shechita. Shaul lectured the people on the laws of shechita and then gave out pre-checked shechita knives.³ Shaul instructed the people *ushchat'tem bazeh* – “use this to shecht your animals.” Although the phrase is referring to the knife, these words *Ushchat'tem Bazeh* – shecht with this – also make for a superb title for a Chullin companion and shechita primer.

² Shmuel I, 14:34.

³ See Rashi, Chullin 17b v.s. *ushchat'tem bazeh*.

Pictures

This book contains close to one hundred and fifty photos and diagrams to aid with understanding the less familiar concepts. Please bear in mind that this is a volume about shechita. You can expect some gore in the descriptions or photos. Effort has been made to minimize the grime and squalidness. Non-essential parts of pictures have been altered and some photos may appear slightly off color. If you need to see the true colors – you know what you need to do!

Acknowledgements

Rabbanim

Feedback on the earlier versions of this work has been positive and the many comments and questions have enhanced the current edition. Professional shochtim and members of the commercial shechita and kashrus industries have been extremely helpful and supportive of this project. They have been forthcoming with assistance, including sharing technical knowledge and resources.

Special thanks to the many people who reviewed and advised on this manuscript, including, but not limited to:

A distinguished *talmid chachom* who graciously tested me on hilchos shechita over twenty years ago and benevolently reviewed the manuscript. In addition to his profound knowledge, he brings considerable practical experience from the time he spent as a *bodek sakinim* and *mashgiach* for *treifos* before coming to New York and entering Rabbanus. Much of his rabbinical career was spent working in close relationship with Reb Moshe Feinstein, zt”l, and my *rebbe*, Reb Dovid Feinstein, zt”l. I greatly appreciate his input and sincerely thank him for his guidance in this project.

Rabbi Luzer Steinwurz, shlita, a phenomenal rebbe in Boro Park yeshivos and a talented shochet and *bodek*, who kindly allowed me to read most of the manuscript to him over a good many Friday mornings. His amazing teaching skills and knack for clear explanation shine on every page.

Rabbi Zvi Holland, Director of Special Projects for the Star-K (including international shechita), shared his expertise in reviewing an earlier version of the manuscript. The renowned shochet and *menaker* of Lakewood NJ, Rabbi Aaron Koschitsky, Rabbi Yossi Gestetner, Rosh Kollel of Kollel Shimush V'Horah and author of Simanei Tahara, and Rabbi Yosef Reit, a shechita trainer and *menaker* in Lakewood, all reviewed the manuscript and contributed with their professional knowledge.

Many Roshei Chabura and *kolleleit* in Chullin *chaboros* have taken the time to review and comment on the manuscript during its various stages of development. I value their contributions and thank them all for their assistance.

Mr. Natan Fink of David Elliot Poultry checked the accuracy of our description of the commercial environment.

Editors

Some very kind people have taken time to review, edit, and comment on this work. Primary amongst them were editors Rabbi Doron Kornbluth, Mrs. Rivka Leah Rotenfeld, and Mrs. Tova Ovits, who really worked the manuscript over. Their insights and the fruit of their craft grace every page of this book.

Photographers

Most of the pictures in this edition are “private sector” pictures, i.e., they were taken at private shechita events.

Many thanks to Moshe Gershbaum of Brilliant Photography and Reuvain Kaplan, who together took most of the pictures in this book. Their pictures were shot in studios and similar private locations. Their stunning pictures (if you can use this expression about this genre of photography) really enhance this volume.

The commercial industry is extremely camera shy. The author understands and respects their concerns about potential hostile reactions engendered by photos of shechita. Therefore, there are no pictures of commercial shechita in this book, except for a few of the dressing and kashering procedures.

Any pictures of the commercial environment were taken with authorization or provided to the author by the management or the *hechsher* of the establishment. Identifying features of people and locations in all commercial pictures have been altered and any resemblance to a specific person or location is coincidental.

A special friend, Dr. Ari Greenspan of Efros, Eretz Yisrael, has travelled the world picking up all kinds of Jewish artifacts and memorabilia, including an impressive collection of shechita knives. He kindly allowed me to photograph some of these unique knives. Pictures of two of them, with a concave edge and a convex edge, appear in in this book.

The remainder of the pictures in this volume were taken specifically for this book by a group of amateur photographers over several years at a variety of “backyard” locations.

Mrs Shaindy Bussu of Yerushalayim edited and enhanced the photos and diagrams found throughout this book.

So, come along for the journey as I attempt to address the clueless and the scholar, each on their own level.

Part I

Chapter One

Introducing Shechita

Why Shechita?

The mitzva of shechita – the process of kosher slaughter – offers an excellent opportunity for humans to distinguish themselves from animals. Animals attack their prey directly and eat them immediately. The process for humans is more complex. As humans, we must restrain, kill, and prepare our food. As Yidden, we may do so only in the manner prescribed by the Torah.

Among the essential concepts associated with shechita is the mitzva of *tza'ar ba'alei chaim*, the requirement to avoid needless pain to animals. The shochet must be cognizant of this every step of the way. During shechita itself, the animal is held in the most comfortable position possible and the animal is killed with a sharp and smooth knife to make its death as quick and painless as possible.

Why the Neck?

Shechita is performed at the neck. The primary focus is on the *kaneh* [trachea]

14 Ushchat'tem Bazeh The Chullin & Shechita Companion

and the *veshet* [esophagus]. Severing the trachea inhibits the airflow to the lungs and brain, causing the animal to die swiftly.⁴

The shochet must also aim to sever the main veins and arteries (the jugular veins and carotid arteries), collectively called the *veridim*, which pass through the neck. Cutting these critical blood vessels causes the blood to drain quickly and completely. We are prohibited from consuming blood. Efficiently removing the blood allows us to distance ourselves from the forbidden blood and reduce the risk of ingesting blood and the harmful bacteria and pathogens it may contain that can cause food poisoning or transmit blood-borne diseases.

The Sefer Hachinuch adds that shechita is performed at the neck in order to diminish any potential *tza'ar ba'alei chaim*. Although the Sefer Hachinuch does not elaborate on how shechita at the neck prevents pain to the animals, throughout Shas life is associated with the *simanim* found in the throat. When Kayin, the son of Adom, wanted to kill his brother Hevel the secret of how to afflict death was as yet unknown. Kayin grabbed a sword and inflicted wounds all over Hevel's body until he chanced upon the neck. Once he hit him in the neck, Hevel died.⁵

Rashi⁶ notes that life is dependent on an intact *veshet* and an animal with even a small hole in the *veshet* is a *treifa*, expected to die within a short while.

It stands to reason that if the blood vessels and trachea are cut, the rapid loss of blood and lack of oxygen will cause the animal to die quickly. Furthermore, recent

4 עיין גיטין ע' ב' והאמר רב יהודה אמר שמואל שחט בו שנים או רוב שנים וברח מעידין עליו, ורש"י סנהדרין ע"ח א' ד"ה מחתכי סמנין שפי' סימן חיותא.

5 Sanhedrin 37b.

6 Chullin 28a v.s. *veshet*. See also, Chullin 27a Rashi v.s. *menayin* and Sanhedrin 78a Rashi v.s. *m'chatchei simanim*.

studies⁷ suggest that when the arteries are severed during shechita, blood flow to the brain is suspended and the animal immediately loses all sensation.⁸

In this guide, we will cover the basic procedure of slaughtering an animal in the most humane way known to mankind. It is inconceivable to brutally kill an animal with a bullet or even put an animal through the needless pain of stunning.⁹ The Torah's approach to killing an animal is mindful, not mechanical. Shechita is done consciously, intentionally, by hand. The sharpness of the knife is essential; slaughtering with a dull or serrated knife is viewed as cruel and inhumane. The speed and ease of the process is crucial, both for the animal itself and for the soul and sensitivity of the Jew who kills it in a permissible manner in order to eat it.

Core concepts of this chapter have been drawn from Sefer Hachinuch §148, §187, §451; Ramban, Bereishis 1:29, and Rav Hirsch, Vayikra 19:26.

-
- 7 Many articles have been written on this topic. See for example, Rabkin SW. The cardiovascular effects of shechita in cattle: a systematic review shows the fallacies that vertebral artery will preserve cerebral blood flow and false aneurysms occur in severed carotid arteries. J Am Vet Med Assoc. 2025 Apr 30;263(7):1-10. doi: 10.2460/javma.24.08.0534. PMID: 40306313.
- 8 Alternatively, the Sefer Hachinuch might be contrasting kosher slaughter with the gruesome practices of ancient idol worshippers, for example, extracting the heart of a living animal. See Rashi to Avodah Zara 29b v.s. *v'oros*.
- 9 Stunning before slaughtering is comparable to a dentist whacking a patient on the jaw with a hammer prior to treating him and then taking advantage of the intense pain to perform a minorly painful procedure.