

## ~FAT (514)

[Hebrew, *Che'lev*, fat, *pe'dher*, Suet]

- The Law Regarding Fat
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- The English word fat is used to translate various Hebrew words that describe not only the substance called fat, but also that which is full-fleshed and plump.
- These terms may also be used in a figurative sense to express that which is rich or fertile, just as in the English expression fat of the land, or to convey the idea of insensibility or dullness of mind and heart.
- *Che'lev*, is ordinarily used to refer to the substance fat, either of animals.
- And he must present some of the communion sacrifice as an offering made by fire to Yehowah, namely, the fat that covers the intestines, even all the fat that is over the intestines. (Leviticus 3:3)
- Or of men.
- And the handle kept going in also after the blade so that the fat closed in over the blade, for he did not draw the sword out of his belly, and the fecal matter began to come out. (Judges 3:22)
- The suet, or hard fat about the kidneys or loins, in the burnt offerings is also expressed by another word, *pe'dher*.
- And the sons of Aaron, the priests, must set the pieces in order with the head and the suet over the wood that is on the fire that is on the altar. (Leviticus 1:8)
- And he must cut it up into its parts and its head and its suet, and the priest must set them in order over the wood that is on the fire that is on the altar. (Leviticus 1:12)

- And he cut up the ram into its pieces, and Moses proceeded to make the head and the pieces and the **suet** smoke. (**Leviticus 8:20**)
- *Che'lev* first appears at;
- But as for Abel, he too brought some firstlings of his flock, even their **fatty** pieces. Now while Yehowah was looking with favor upon Abel and his offering. (**Genesis 4:4**)
- In connection with Abel's sacrifice to Yehowah of **fatty** pieces from the firstlings of his flock. Most references to *che'lev* thereafter simply relate to sacrificing.
- *Che'lev* is also used metaphorically for the **best or richest part of anything**. For instance, at;
- And take your father and your households and come here to me, that I may give you the good of the land of Egypt, and eat the fat part of the land. (**Genesis 45:18**)
- Pharaoh tells Joseph that his family is welcome to eat the **fat** part of the land. Thus, too,
- All the best of the oil and all the best of the new wine and the grain, their firstfruits, which they will give to Yehowah, I have given them to you. (**Numbers 18:12**)
- All the best *che'lev* of the oil and all the best *che'lev* of the new wine and the grain I have given them to you.
- And he will keep feeding him off the **fat** of the wheat, and out of the rock I shall satisfy you with honey itself. (**Psalms 81:16**)
- He is putting peace in your territory, with the **fat** of the wheat he keeps satisfying you. (**Psalms 147:14**)

## •• The Law Regarding Fat

- In the third chapter of Leviticus, Yehowah gave the Israelites instructions concerning the use of **fat** in communion sacrifices. When offering cattle or goats, they were to make the **fat** around the loins and intestines and that over the kidneys, as well as the **fatty** appendage upon the liver, smoke upon the altar.

**In the case of sheep, the entire **fatty** tail likewise was to be offered. The sheep of Syria, Palestine, Arabia, and Egypt have fat tails, often weighing 5 kilograms, 11 pounds or more. The Law specifically said; All the **fat** belongs to Yehowah. You must not eat any **fat** or any blood at all.**

- **And he must present some of the communion sacrifice as an offering made by fire to Yehowah, namely, the **fat** that covers the intestines, even all the fat that is over the intestines. (Leviticus 3:3)**
- **And the two kidneys and the **fat** that is upon them, the same as that upon the loins. And as for the appendage upon the liver, he will remove it along with the kidneys. (Leviticus 3:4)**
- **And Aaron's sons must make it smoke on the altar, upon the burnt offering that is over the wood that is on the fire, as an offering made by fire of a restful odor to Yehowah. (Leviticus 3:5)**
- **And if his offering is from the flock for a communion sacrifice to Yehowah, a male or a female, a sound one is what he will present. (Leviticus 3:6)**
- **If he is presenting a young ram as his offering, then he must present it before Yehowah. (Leviticus 3:7)**
- **And he must lay his hand upon the head of his offering, and it must be slaughtered before the tent of meeting, and Aaron's sons must sprinkle its blood round about upon the altar. (Leviticus 3:8)**
- **And from the communion sacrifice he must present its **fat** as an offering made by fire to Yehowah. The entire **fatty** tail is what he will remove near the backbone, and the **fat** that covers the intestines, even all the **fat** that is upon the intestines. (Leviticus 3:9)**
- **And the two kidneys and the **fat** that is upon them, the same as that upon the loins. And as for the appendage upon the liver, he will remove it along with the kidneys. (Leviticus 3:10)**
- **And the priest must make it smoke on the altar as food, an**

offering made by fire to Yehowah. (**Leviticus 3:11**)

- And if his offering is a goat, then he must present it before Yehowah. (**Leviticus 3:12**)
- And he must lay his hand upon its head, and it must be slaughtered before the tent of meeting, and Aaron's sons must sprinkle its blood round about upon the altar. (**Leviticus 3:13**)
- And from it he must present as his offering, as an offering made by fire to Yehowah, the **fat** that covers the intestines, even all the fat that is upon the intestines. (**Leviticus 3:14**)
- And the two kidneys and the **fat** that is upon them, the same as that upon the loins. And as for the appendage upon the liver, he will remove it along with the kidneys. (**Leviticus 3:15**)
- And the priest must make them smoke upon the altar as food, an offering made by fire for a restful odor. All the **fat** belongs to Yehowah. (**Leviticus 3:16**)
- It is a statute to time indefinite for your generations, in all your dwelling places, you must not eat any **fat** or any blood at all. (**Leviticus 3:17**)
- **Fat** would burn fiercely and would be quite thoroughly consumed upon the altar. Any **fat** offered on the altar was not to be left over until the next morning, it was likely to corrupt and become offensive, something very unseemly for any part of the sacred offerings.
- You must not sacrifice along with what is leavened the blood of my sacrifice. And the **fat** of my festival should not stay overnight until morning. (**Exodus 23:18**)

## •• Not incumbent On Christians

- After the Flood, when permission was given to Noah and his family to add flesh to their diet, nothing was stated regarding **fat**.
- Every moving animal that is alive may serve as food for you. As in the case of green vegetation, I do give it all to you. (**Genesis 9:3**)
- Only flesh with its soul, its blood, you must not eat. (**Genesis 9:4**)

- However, the eating of blood was prohibited. This was more than 850 years before the Law covenant, with its prohibitions against the eating of both blood and **fat**, was made with Israel. In the **First Century C.E.** the older men of the Christian congregation confirmed the prohibition against blood as remaining in force for Christians.
- But to write them to abstain from things polluted by idols and from fornication and from what is strangled and from blood. (**Acts of Apostles 15:20**)
- For the Holy Spirit and we ourselves have favored adding no further burden to you, except these necessary things. (**Acts of Apostles 15:28**)
- To keep abstaining from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication. If you carefully keep yourselves from these things, you will prosper. Good health to you! (**Acts of Apostles 15:29**)
- As in the case with Noah and his family, however, nothing was stated concerning the eating of **fat** by Christians. Thus, the Law against eating fat was given only to the nation of Israel.

## • Reason For The Law

- Under the Law covenant, both the blood and **fat** were looked upon as exclusively Yehowah's. The blood contains the life, which only Yehowah can give, therefore it belongs to him.
- For the soul of the flesh is in the blood, and I myself have put it upon the altar for you to make atonement for your souls, because it is the blood that makes atonement by the soul in it. (**Leviticus 17:11**)
- For the soul of every sort of flesh is its blood by the soul in it. Consequently I said to the sons of Israel; You must not eat the blood of any sort of flesh, because the soul of every sort of flesh is its blood. Anyone eating it will be cut off. (**Leviticus 17:14**)
- The **fat** was viewed as the richest part of the flesh of the animal. The offering of the **fat** of the animal would evidently be in recognition of the fact that the best parts belong to Yehowah, who provides

abundantly, and it would demonstrate the desire of the worshiper to offer the best to God.

- Because it was symbolic of the Israelites devotion of their best to Yehowah, it was said to smoke upon the altar as food and for a restful odor to him.

- And the priest must make it smoke on the altar as food, an offering made by fire to Yehowah. ([Leviticus 3:11](#))

- And the priest must make them smoke upon the altar as food, an offering made by fire for a restful odor. All the **fat** belongs to Yehowah. ([Leviticus 3:16](#))

- To eat **fat**, therefore, was an illegal appropriation of what was sanctified to God, an invasion of the rights of Yehowah. Eating **fat** would incur the death penalty.

- Unlike blood, however, **fat** could be used for other purposes, at least in the case of an animal that died of itself or was killed by another beast.

- Speak to the sons of Israel, saying; You must not eat any **fat** of a bull or a young ram or a goat. ([Leviticus 7:23](#))

- Now the **fat** of a body already dead and the fat of an animal torn to pieces may be used for anything else conceivable, but you must not eat it at all. ([Leviticus 7:24](#))

- For anyone eating **fat** from the beast from which he presents it as an offering made by fire to Yehowah, the soul that eats must be cut off from his people. ([Leviticus 7:25](#))

#### .. Extent Of The Laws Application

- Because of this latter text, many commentators have sought to limit the prohibition of;

- It is a statute to time indefinite for your generations, in all your dwelling places. You must not eat any **fat** or any blood at all. ([Leviticus 3:17](#))

- Only to the **fat** of those kinds of animals that were acceptable for offering in sacrifice, such as bulls, sheep, and goats. Rabbinic Jewish teaching is divided on this subject. However, the injunction on **fat** at,
- It is a statute to time indefinite for your generations, in all your dwelling places. You must not eat any **fat** or any blood at all. (**Leviticus 3:17**)
- Is linked with the one regarding the eating of blood, a Law that clearly included the blood of **all** animals.
- As for any man of the sons of Israel or some alien resident who is residing as an alien in your midst who in hunting catches a wild beast or a fowl that may be eaten, he must in that case pour its blood out and cover it with dust. (**Leviticus 17:13**)
- Only whenever your soul craves it you may slaughter, and you must eat meat according to the blessing of Yehowah your God that he has given you, inside all your gates. The unclean one and the clean one may eat it, like the gazelle and like the stag. (**Deuteronomy 12:15**)
- Only the blood you must not eat. On the earth you should pour it out as water. (**Deuteronomy 12:16**)
- It seems more consistent, therefore, that the Law on **fat** should also have embraced the **fat** of all animals, including those killed for the Israelites common use.
- The view that the prohibition applied to all **fat** is not controverted by the text at,
- Butter of the herd and milk of the flock together with the **fat** of rams, and male sheep, the breed of Bashan, and he-goats together with the kidney **fat** of wheat, and the blood of the grape you kept drinking as wine. (**Deuteronomy 32:14**)
- Which speaks of Yehowah as giving Israel **fat** of rams to eat. This is a figurative expression referring to the best of the flock, or as **The Jerusalem Bible** renders the phrase, rich food of the pastures. [**Daniel Footnote and Kx.**]

- This poetic sense is indicated by later portions of the same verse referring to the **kidney fat** of wheat and the **blood** of the grape. So, too, with,
- And he went on to say to them; Go, eat the **fatty** things and drink the sweet things, and send portions to the one for whom nothing has been prepared, for this day is holy to our Lord, and do not feel hurt, for the joy of Yehowah is your stronghold. (**Nehemiah 8:10**)
- Where the people are commanded; Go, eat the **fatty** things, we are not to conclude that they literally consumed whole fat. Fatty things refers to rich portions, things not skinny or dry, but luscious, including tasty items prepared with vegetable oils. Thus, **Knox** translation here reads, regale yourselves with rich meat, while **Moffatt's** translation says, eat the dainty pieces.
- The Mosaic Law restriction did not prevent the feeding or **fattening** of sheep or cattle for the table. We read of the **fattened** young bull slaughtered for the prodigal son.
- And bring the **fattened** young bull, slaughter it and let us eat and enjoy ourselves. (**Luke 15:23**)
- Solomon's food included **fattened** cuckoos and cattle.
- Ten **fat** cattle and twenty pastured cattle and a hundred sheep, besides some stags and gazelles and roebucks and fattened cuckoos. (**1 Kings 4:23**)
- The **Hebrew** '*e-ghel-mar-beq*', translated **fattened calf**, occurs at;
- Now the woman had a **fattened calf** in the house. So she quickly sacrificed it and took flour and kneaded dough and baked it into unfermented cakes. (**1 Samuel 28:24**)
- *Me'ach* and *meri'*, refer to a well-fed animal or a **fatling**.
- And the male lambs will actually graze as in their pasture, and the desolate places of **well-fed animals** alien residents will eat. (**Isaiah 5:17**)
- The flesh of mighty ones you will eat, and the blood of the chieftains of the earth you will drink, rams, young male sheep,



and he-goats, young bulls, the **fatlings** of Bashan all of them.  
(**Ezekiel 39:18**)

- However, this does not mean that this **fattening** was for the purpose of producing **suet** or layers of **fat**, rather, the sense again is that the animals became full-fleshed, or beefy, not skinny.
- And here ascending out of the river Nile were seven cows **fat** fleshed and beautiful in form, and they began to feed among the Nile grass. (**Genesis 41:18**)
- And here there were seven other cows ascending after them, poor and very bad in form and thin fleshed. For badness I have not seen the like of them in all the land of Egypt. (**Genesis 41:19**)

## •• Other Hebrew Terms

- Among the **Hebrew** terms used to describe anything in a **fat** condition are those derived from the root verb *sha-men'*, while meaning grow **fat**.
- When Jeshurun began to grow **fat**, then he kicked. You have grown fat, you have become thick, you have become gorged. So he forsook God, who made him, and despised the Rock of his salvation. (**Deuteronomy 32:15**)
- They have grown **fat**, they have become shiny. They have also overflowed with bad things. No legal case have they pleaded, even the legal case of the fatherless boy, that they may gain success, and the judgment of the poor ones they have not taken up. (**Jeremiah 5:28**)
- It also conveys the thought of being robust. *Sha-men'* appears at;
- Make the heart of this people unreceptive, and make their very ears unresponsive, and paste their very eyes together, that they may not see with their eyes and with their ears they may not hear, and that their own heart may not understand and that they may not actually turn back and get healing for themselves. (**Isaiah 6:10**)
- Where the **King James Version** reads make the heart of this people **fat**, that is, unresponsive and dull, as if their hearts were enveloped in **fat**.

- And at that time they went striking down Moab, about ten thousand men, every one robust and every one a valiant man, and not a single one escaped. (**Judges 3:29**)
- Describes certain Moabites as every one robust *sha-men'*, literally, **fat** and every one a valiant man. The related *she'men* is usually translated oil.
- Thriving may be the thought behind the verb *da-shen'*, also used literally to mean grow **fat**. If that is the case, *da-shen'*, and the related *de'shen*, would imply prosperity, fertility, or abundance. Yehowah told Israel that he would bring them to a land which flows with milk and honey, and they will certainly eat and be satisfied and grow **fat** *wedha-shen'*.
- For I shall bring them to the ground that I have sworn about to their fore**fat**thers, which flows with milk and honey, and they will certainly eat and be satisfied and grow fat and turn to other gods, and they will indeed serve them and treat me with disrespect and break my covenant. (**Deuteronomy 31:20**)
- We are told that those who are generous, diligent, and reliant on Yehowah will be made **fat**, that is, prosper abundantly.
- The generous soul will itself be made **fat**, and the one freely watering others will himself also be freely watered. (**Proverbs 11:25**)
- The lazy one is showing himself desirous, but his soul has nothing. However, the very soul of the diligent ones will be made **fat**. (**Proverbs 13:4**)
- He that is arrogant in soul stirs up contention, but he that is relying upon Yehowah will be made **fat**. (**Proverbs 28:25**)
- The brightness of the eyes makes the heart rejoice, a report that is good makes the bones **fat**. (**Proverbs 15:30**)
- Good news is said to make the bones **fat**, or fill them with marrow in other words, the whole body is invigorated. The noun *de'shen* also reflects this idea of affluence, as at;
- They drink their fill of the **fatness** of your house, and of the

torrent of your pleasures you cause them to drink. (**Psalms 36:8**)

- Where the sons of men are said to drink their fill of the **fatness** *mid-de'shen*, abundance, **RS** of God's house.
- And I will saturate the soul of the priests with fatness, and with my goodness my own people will become satisfied, is the utterance of Yehowah. (**Jeremiah 31:14**)
- The **Hebrew** noun, *de'shen*, is also rendered ashes by many translators, as when referring to the wastes from the tabernacles altar of sacrifice.
- And he must remove its crop with its feathers and throw it beside the altar, to the east, to the place for the **fatty** ashes. (**Leviticus 1:16**)
- He must have the entire bull taken out to the outskirts of the camp to a clean place where the **fatty** ashes are poured out, and he must burn it upon wood in the fire. Where the fatty ashes are poured out it should be burned. (**Leviticus 4:12**)
- And the priest must clothe himself with his official dress of linen, and he will put the linen drawers on over his flesh. Then he must lift up the fatty ashes of the burnt offering that the fire regularly consumes upon the altar, and he must place them beside the altar. (**Leviticus 6:10**)
- And he must strip off his garments and put on other garments, and he must take the fatty ashes out to a clean place outside the camp. (**Leviticus 6:11**) **KJ, JB, RS**
- To other scholars, however, ashes does not fully reflect the original-language root. They, therefore, prefer such terms as **fat**-ashes **Ro**, or **fatty** ashes **NW**, reasoning that the term indicates that the hot **fat** from the sacrifices soaked the burnt firewood below.
- The idea of being well fed and healthy is expressed by the word *ba-ri* 'It is translated **plump**.
- The **fat** is what you eat, and with the wool you clothe your own selves. The **plump** animal is what you slaughter. The flock itself you do not feed. (**Ezekiel 34:3**)

- Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord Yehowah has said to them, Here I am, I myself, and I shall certainly judge between a **plump** sheep and a lean sheep. (**Ezekiel 34:20**)
- And healthful.
- That is why he offers sacrifice to his dragnet and makes sacrificial smoke to his fishing net, for by them his portion is well oiled, and his food is **healthful**. (**Habakkuk 1:16**)
- Though it may also be rendered as **fat** in describing men, cattle, and grain.
- And here ascending out of the river Nile were seven cows beautiful in appearance and **fat** fleshed, and they went feeding among the Nile grass. (**Genesis 41:2**)
- And the thin ears of grain began to swallow up the seven **fat** and full ears of grain. At this Pharaoh woke up and here it was a dream. (**Genesis 41:7**)
- And he proceeded to present the tribute to Eglon the king of Moab. Now Eglon was a very **fat** man. (**Judges 3:17**)