

Shaare Tefila Adult Education Committee
“THE BIG READ”
November 1, 2008
(After Shabbat Services, during Kiddush)
Facilitated by Rabbi Jonah Layman

THE BIG READ ~ THE BIG QUESTION:
If kosher meat is made in an *unkosher* atmosphere, is it kosher?

The laws of *kashrut* are intended to produce meat in a fashion that corresponds with the teachings of Judaism, e.g.: respect for the lives of animals, no consumption of blood, and a recognition that sustenance is a matter of God's grace to humans. Eating kosher is an attempt to elevate the process of eating from merely feeding to teach ethical principals. If that is the case, can the meat be kosher if it is made under circumstances that violate other teachings, e.g.: respect for the rights of workers, not mistreating the poor, abiding by the law of the country in which you reside?

Recently, a series of articles hit the public press about conditions at the *Agriprocessors* kosher beef slaughtering facility. The federal government raided the facility and arrested undocumented workers and management personnel who hired them. There were also questions raised about the treatment of animals in a video by PETA.

The issue, although framed in this case as one of *kashrut*, has parallels in society as a whole. Americans were urged to boycott grapes during the struggle to unionize farm workers. Several years ago, certain celebrities were taken to task for endorsing products made in sweatshop conditions in Asia.

The articles in this reading discuss the *Agriprocessors* raid and resulting questions and suggestions.

You are encouraged to take a package home and read it before

THE BIG READ

On November 1, 2008

Package prepared by Michael Gross