

Hunting

Is it at all acceptable to hunt for game, given the Torah's regulations about animal blood?

It is obvious that throughout human history, ancient peoples, including many in Ancient Israel, had to hunt wild game in order to survive. The scene of Genesis ch. 27, and in Jacob usurping his brother's birthright, involves Esau going out to the field with his bow and hunting for wild game for Isaac to eat. There is some kind of hunting for wild game or fowl mentioned in Leviticus 17:13: "So when any man from the sons of Israel, or from the aliens who sojourn among them, in hunting catches a beast or a bird which may be eaten, he shall pour out its blood and cover it with earth" (NASU). However, it is easily deduced that this kind of hunting is much different than the kind present today, with hunters out in the woods with shotguns and rifles.

In his book *Kosher Living: It's More Than Just the Food*, Conservative Jewish rabbi Ron Isaacs addresses the question, "**Is it kosher for Jews to hunt for sport?**", stating,

"The laws of keeping kosher guaranteed that an animal be permitted as food only if slaughtered quickly and painlessly. Any prolonging of an animal's death renders the animal *treif*. All animals killed through hunting are nonkosher. The Talmud permitted the slaying of wild animals when they invaded human settlements but not simply for sport. Thus, Jews partake in many sports but not hunting. Rabbinic consensus continues to posit that the shooting of an animal for no reason other than sport is an utter abhorrence."¹

Most in today's Messianic community have not thought through the ethics of hunting wild animals or fowl for sport, even if most animals hunted would be classified on the clean lists of Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 (i.e., deer, duck). There are many Messianic people who do not hunt (or for that matter fish), because it either does not interest them, or they consider any sporting activity with guns to be unsafe. There are some Messianic people, Jewish and non-Jewish alike, who have little problem with going out on hunting or fishing trips. Some of this is so that they can gain a reappreciation for the outdoors, and for how many generations of people and/or pioneers had to catch animals for meat.

Hopefully if Messianic people do actively hunt for wild game, they will pause and consider what their intentions actually are, and try to see the animals taken down in an as-humane manner as possible. This would also include not just killing for sport, but killing with the intention of eating what is hunted. How quickly can an animal be taken down by a bullet, and then hung upside down for most of its blood to be drained?

¹ Ron Isaacs, *Kosher Living: It's More Than Just the Food* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005), pp 94-95.