



## To Eat or Not to Eat

by: Dean and Susan Wheelock

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## ~ Forward ~

Shalom Aleichem (Peace be unto you),

Once a Believer in Messiah *Y'shua* begins to discover that the ancient biblical paths are to be both understood and followed, certain lifestyle changes begin to occur. For many, the first of these changes is in their coming to embrace the weekly Sabbath as a commanded day of rest. The next step may be their observance of the annual Festivals as they are set forth in Leviticus 23. Jude would have referred to these discoveries and changes as returning to "the faith once delivered:"

**"Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." (Jude 1:3)**

One of the ancient paths which many Believers do not find convenient to follow, concerns what we put in our mouths. The *Written Torah* (the first five books of the Bible) contain detailed information on which animals God has created to be fit food for human consumption. Many chafe against these rules asking "all foods have been declared clean, haven't they?" It is very difficult for a person to give up what might be some of their favorite foods.

Despite all of the arguments against the food laws of the Bible, the fact remains that a really careful study of the Scriptures will lead one to the conclusion that what God declared to be unclean for the children of Israel is still unclean for all of us who have been "grafted in" to the Olive Tree of Israel. If you are a Believer and disciple of *Y'shua HaMashiach* (Yeh-shoe'-ah Hah Mah-shee'achk = Jesus the Messiah) then you have been "grafted in:"

**"And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, <sup>18</sup> do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, *remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you.*" (Rom. 11:17-18)**

The ancient paths are still valid for every Believer today. That includes being diligent to follow the food guidelines established thousands of years ago by our Creator God. It is not a matter of choosing what foods we believe should be eaten, it is a matter of whether we want to follow the Instruction Book which God has given to mankind as a way to order one's life.

One of the amazing things about following God's food laws, is that after a period of time the Messianic Believer begins to feel a closeness to God that may not have been there previously. It is truly comforting to know that our heavenly Father is so concerned about our well being that He even gave detailed instructions as to which foods are good for us and which ones are bad.

In Temple times, eating unclean food made the partaker unclean as well, and that ritual purity would place a temporary separation between him and God so that he would not be able to enter the Temple for worship. Even coming in contact with the carcass of an unclean animal would render a worshipper ritually impure or unclean. Some might say that since the Temple no longer stands, there is no need for ritual purity. However, we believe these laws are still important for as the Apostle to the Gentiles (Paul) said:

**"Do you not know that you are the temple of God and *that the Spirit of God dwells in you?* <sup>17</sup> If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which *temple you are.*" (I Cor. 3:16-17)**

**"Therefore**

**'Come out from among them  
And be separate, says the Lord.  
Do not touch what is unclean,  
And I will receive you.**

**I will be a Father to you,  
And you shall be My sons and daughters,  
Says the LORD Almighty." (II Cor. 6:17-18)**

Now we invite you to come along with us on a study of the Scriptures, so that you too may come to understand God's will for you when it comes to food and thereby develop an even closer relation with our Father in heaven.

May God bless you as you seek  
to worship Him in Spirit and in Truth,

Dean & Susan Wheelock

*Beit Shalom*  
December, 2005

## ~ To Eat or Not to Eat? ~

**A**s Believers come to an understanding of the *Torah* and the Hebraic roots of the Faith, they often begin to make changes in their lifestyle. Many become convicted and begin keeping the weekly Sabbath and the other Festivals of the LORD (*YHVH* = the Sacred Name). As the Feasts of God gain prominence in their life, the non-Biblical holidays found on the modern Christian calendar often become less important.

Another area of *Torah* instruction which is often overlooked by those who are just entering the Messianic way of life, concern the food laws. Many Believers are taught that *Y'shua* (Jesus) did away with the food laws and that all foods are now acceptable for consumption. Yet, is this what the Scriptures really teach?

The purpose of this booklet is to explore fully the various passages found in both the Hebrew (Old Testament) and Greek (New Testament) Scriptures which address the laws of clean and unclean foods.

### ~ Animals ~

The basic laws concerning food are found in Leviticus chapter eleven, where God laid out the flesh foods which were considered 'clean' for consumption by the children of Israel. The first category addressed is the land animals:

**"Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying to them, 'Speak to the children of Israel, saying, "These *are* the animals which you may eat among all the animals that *are* on the earth: Among the animals, whatever divides the hoof, having cloven hooves *and* chewing the cud -- that you may eat. Nevertheless these you shall not eat among those that chew the cud or those that have cloven hooves: the camel, because it chews the cud but does not have cloven hooves, is unclean to you; the rock hyrax, because it chews the cud but does not have cloven hooves, *is* unclean to you; the hare, because it chews the cud but does not have cloven hooves, *is* unclean to you; and the swine, though it divides the hoof, having cloven hooves, yet does not chew the cud, *is* unclean to you. Their flesh you shall not eat, and their carcasses you shall not touch. They *are* unclean to you."'"**

(Lev. 11:1-8)

The list is clear. Only animals that have both cloven hooves and chew the cud are acceptable for food. This includes, among others: sheep, goats, cattle, deer, buffalo, and elk. It forbids the eating of pigs, dogs, cats, rabbits, squirrels, rodents, bears, horses, and camels. It does not forbid the keeping of household pets such as cats and dogs, or using horses or camels for farm work or riding.

According to Jewish teaching, no living animal is unclean in the sense that touching it can make a person ritually unclean. In addition, traditional Rabbinic Judaism teaches that the prohibition on touching the carcass of an unclean animal applies only during Festival visits to the Temple, when everyone must remain in a state of ritual purity (see *Hebrew Roots* Issue 01-2 articles on ritual purity). After all, if a farmer's horse dies, someone must remove the carcass and properly deal with it so that it does not rot and become a breeding ground for disease.

### ~ Water Creatures ~

**"'"These you may eat of all that *are* in the water: whatever in the water has fins and scales, whether in the seas or in the rivers -- that you may eat. But all in the seas or in the rivers that do not have fins and scales, all that move in the water or any living thing which *is* in the water, they *are* an abomination to you. They shall be an abomination to you; you shall not eat their flesh, but you shall regard their carcasses as an abomination. Whatever in the water does not have fins or scales -- that *shall be* an abomination to you."'"**

(Lev. 11:9-12)

Again, the rules for permissible water creatures are clear; only those with both fins and scales are permitted for food. Water creatures such as catfish, shark, dolphin, and whale do not have true scales. In addition, all shell fish are forbidden for food (crab, lobster, shrimp, etc.). Eating them is an abomination (a shamefully wicked action).

### ~ Fowl ~

Birds are also classified into clean and unclean categories:

**""And these you shall regard as an abomination among the birds; they shall not be eaten, they are an abomination: the eagle, the vulture, the buzzard, the kite, and the falcon after its kind; every raven after its kind, the ostrich, the short-eared owl, the sea gull, and the hawk after its kind; the little owl, the fisher owl, and the screech owl; the white owl, the jackdaw, and the carrion vulture; the stork, the heron after its kind, the hoopoe, and the bat." (Lev. 11:13-19)**

This group is more difficult to categorize since the birds are listed by name rather than by characteristics (as are the land animals and marine life). No doubt this worked well when the *Torah* was given and the proper identity of these various birds were common knowledge. However, today some of the names listed do not translate very well from Hebrew into English, thereby making identification much more difficult.

From a traditional Jewish standpoint (as per *The Stone Edition Tanach*), the non-kosher birds listed in the *Torah* are generally understood to be the following:

- ◆ *Nesher* - the eagle.
- ◆ *Peres* - the bearded vulture.
- ◆ *Ozniyah* - the white-tailed or sea eagle.
- ◆ *Daah* - the kite (a vulture).
- ◆ *Orev* - the raven.
- ◆ *Netz* - the sparrow hawk.
- ◆ *Kos* - the owl.
- ◆ *Yanshuf* - the great horned owl.
- ◆ *Shalach* - the pelican, heron, or cormorant.
- ◆ *Chasidah* - the stork.
- ◆ *Anafah* - the heron.
- ◆ *Duchifas* - the hoopoe.
- ◆ *Atalaf* - the bat.

Whenever the phrase "... after its kind..." is used, it is intended to include all birds of the same family, even though they may go under different names. Thus, the crow would also be considered an unclean bird because it is of the species (the lowest classification) to which the raven belongs.

### ~ Insects ~

In modern Western culture, the eating of insects is not considered, by most people, to be desirable. Nevertheless, in some cultures certain insects are considered a delicacy. Our Creator God, in His infinite wisdom, set down rules to identify which insects are suitable for consumption:

**""All flying insects that creep on all fours shall be an abomination to you. Yet these you may eat of every flying insect that creeps on all fours: those which have jointed legs above their feet with which to leap on the earth. These you may eat: the locust after its kind, the destroying locust after its kind, the cricket after its kind, and the grasshopper after its kind. But all other flying insects which have four feet shall be an abomination to you.""**

(Lev. 11:20-23)

There is one problem with this passage, all insects have six, not four legs. The traditional explanation is that they use four for walking, while the other two are used for jumping. Other creatures, such as spiders, have eight legs.

It is generally understood that the types of insects that are permissible for food are generally from the grasshopper family. They have six legs, with two of them jointed in a special way which allows them to jump nearly twenty times the length of their body.

Like the unclean birds, it is difficult to discern exactly what types of insects are 'clean' based upon the four names given. The generally accepted definitions are:

- ◆ *arbeh* - locust
- ◆ *solam* - destroying locust (bald locust in KJV)
- ◆ *khargohl* - cricket (beetle in KJV)
- ◆ *kahgahb* - grasshopper

It is commonly taught that *Yochanan HaMatsvil* (Yoh-cah-nahn' Ha Mahts-ville' = John the Immerser or Baptist) lived on a diet of insects and honey:

**"And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey."** (Matt. 3:4)

However, another acceptable interpretation of this passage is that what is being spoken of here could be the locust tree, of which there are a number of varieties. Locust trees form long pods which contain edible seeds. The carob tree is related to the locust, so what *Yochanan* could have been eating was a meal made with carob or locust pods, ground up and served with honey.

#### ~ Additional Instruction ~

Some additional instruction is given further on in the Leviticus 11 passage which identifies other creatures which are unclean:

**""These also shall be unclean to you among the creeping things that creep on the earth: the mole, the mouse, and the large lizard after its kind; the gecko, the monitor lizard, the sand reptile, the sand lizard, and the chameleon. These are unclean to you among all that creep. Whoever touches them when they are dead shall be unclean until evening.""**

(Lev. 11:29-31)

Once again, it is sometimes difficult to translate the Hebrew names of these creatures into identifiable English equivalents, but from the translations given, the average reader may get the general idea as to what is forbidden.

*The Stone Edition Chumash* identifies these creatures as follows:

- ◆ *choled* - weasel or mole
- ◆ *achbar* - mouse (rat)
- ◆ *tzav* -frog or toad
- ◆ *anakah* - hedgehog or porcupine (another interpretation is a viper)
- ◆ *koach* - a species of lizard
- ◆ *letaah* - lizard
- ◆ *chomet* - chameleon
- ◆ *tinshernes* - mole or type of lizard

The carcasses of these animals can also cause contamination if they come into contact with certain types of food storage containers:

**""Anything on which any of them falls, when they are dead shall be unclean, whether it is any item of wood or clothing or skin or sack, whatever item it is, in which any work is done, it must be put in water. And it shall be unclean until evening; then it shall be clean. Any earthen vessel into which any of them falls you shall break; and whatever is in it shall be unclean: in such a vessel, any edible food upon which water falls becomes unclean, and any drink that may be drunk from it becomes unclean. And everything on which a part of any such carcass falls shall be unclean; whether it is an oven or cooking stove, it shall be broken down; for they are unclean, and shall be unclean to you.""**

(Lev. 11:32-25)

It is important to understand that touching the carcass of any unclean creature does not render an individual permanently unclean in the ritual sense. God always provides a method by which someone can dispel their uncleanness and return to a state of ritual purity:

**""The carcass of any animal which divides the foot, but is not cloven-hoofed or does not chew the cud, is unclean to you. Everyone who touches it shall be unclean. And whatever goes on its paws, among all kinds of animals that go on all fours, those are unclean to you. Whoever touches any such carcass shall be unclean until evening. Whoever carries any such carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening. It is unclean to you.""**  
(Lev. 11:26-28)

In Jewish understanding, the expression "wash his clothes" also implies an immersion in a *mikveh* (meek'-vah), an immersion pool of *mayim hayim* (mah-yeem' hah-yeem') 'living water.'

#### ~ The Purpose of These Laws ~

Why did God give food laws to man?

Although it is common knowledge that people from many cultures eat some of these creatures as a regular part of their diet, apparently without physical harm, there are certain health reasons for avoiding unclean foods. But, the most important reason given in the Scriptures is found at the end of Leviticus 11:

**""You shall not make yourselves abominable with any creeping thing that creeps; nor shall you make yourselves unclean with them, lest you be defiled by them. For I am the LORD your God. You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I am holy. Neither shall you defile yourselves with any creeping thing that creeps on the earth. For I am the LORD who brings you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.""** (Lev. 11:43-45)

While it may be true that the consumption of these creatures can sometimes contribute to health problems (see the chapter *Food and Health*), the Scriptures do not give this as a reason for avoiding them. Rather, the reason given is that the children of Israel are to be *kadosh* (kah-dosh'); holy or set-apart from all other people. It is God's direct revelation that the eating of these creatures makes a man *shakats* (shaw-kahts' = abominable, causing disgust, loathsome) and *tamai* (tah-may' = unclean) before God.

Instead of being abominable and unclean, God's people should be *kadosh* (holy) just as God is *kadosh*. In other words, by refraining from these forbidden foods, God is teaching man to live more fully in His image. One of the distinguishing characteristics (identifying signs) of being called and set-apart by God from other peoples, is to avoid eating unclean flesh:

**""And you shall not walk in the statutes of the nation which I am casting out before you; for they commit all these things, and therefore I abhor them. But I have said to you, 'You shall inherit their land, and I will give it to you to possess, a land flowing with milk and honey.' I am the LORD your God, who has separated you from the peoples.**

**""You shall therefore distinguish between clean animals and unclean, between unclean birds and clean, and you shall not make yourselves abominable by beast or by bird, or by any kind of living thing that creeps on the ground, which I have separated from you as unclean. And you shall be holy to Me, for I the LORD am holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be Mine.""** (Lev. 20:23-26)

The children of Israel are to be both set-apart and holy. Therefore:

**""This is the law of the animals and the birds and every living creature that moves in the waters, and of every creature that creeps on the earth, to distinguish between the unclean and the clean, and between the animal that may be eaten and the animal that may not be eaten.""** (Lev. 11:46-47)

#### ~ An Ancient Standard ~

While Leviticus chapter eleven is the primary place where the laws of clean and unclean foods are set forth, it is not the first place in Scripture where this subject is mentioned. This distinction was actually made prior to the Flood:

**"You shall take with you seven each of every clean animal, a male and his female; two each of animals that are unclean, a male and his female; ...."** (Gen. 7:2)



Obviously, *Noach* (Noh-ach' = Noah) must have known what constituted a clean animal versus an unclean one. This opens up the entire question about how much of the *Torah* was given to those who lived before the Flood. This passage suggests that it was quite a bit.

~ Reiteration ~

Just in case the Scripture student thought that God was not totally serious about the laws of clean and unclean foods, they are reiterated in the book of Deuteronomy:

**"You shall not eat any detestable thing."** (Deut. 14:3)

Following this direct prohibitive command is a complete list of the unclean animals just as they were first given in Leviticus 11. One additional instruction is included in Deuteronomy that was not given in Leviticus 11:

**"Only be sure that you do not eat the blood, for the blood is the life; you may not eat the life with the meat."** (Deut. 12:23)

The prohibition against eating blood also goes back to more ancient times. It was first given to *Noach* just after the Flood:

**"Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood."**

(Gen. 9:3-4)

This passage often raises one of the first objections to differentiating between clean and unclean meats, for it seems to say that everything that moves is fit for food. In other words, all animals, birds, water creatures, and insects are fit for food. However, we just read that *Noach* took seven of each of the clean animals into the ark. Why would God have differentiated between clean and unclean animals if He intended that all of them should be eaten? Some say the clean animals were intended to be used for sacrifice and therefore had to be clean:

**"Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar."** (Gen. 8:20)

While it is clear from this passage that God wanted only clean animals used in offerings, we do not agree that this was the only purpose in bringing seven pairs of clean animals across from the other side of the Flood. Based on the later instruction given in Lev. 11, we believe that what God was communicating to *Noach* is that all moving things which are designated as clean, have been given as food.

~ Blood ~

The prohibition against consuming blood in any form is mentioned several times in Scripture. The first occurrence is the one already mentioned in Gen. 9:3-4. However, the primary Scripture concerning blood is found in Leviticus:

**"And whatever man of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, who eats any blood, I will set My face against that person who eats blood, and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.**

**"Therefore I said to the children of Israel, "No one among you shall eat blood, nor shall any stranger who dwells among you eat blood." Whatever man of the children of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, who hunts and catches any animal or bird that may be eaten, he shall pour out its blood and cover it with dust; for it is the life of all flesh. Its blood sustains its life. Therefore I said to the children of Israel, "You shall not eat the blood of any flesh, for the life of all flesh is its blood. Whoever eats it shall be cut off.""**

(Lev. 17:10-14)

The prohibition against the eating of blood is so strong that God set the punishment for disobedience on this point at one of the highest levels; being *karet* (kah-reht') or 'cutoff' from the community of Israel. The reason for this extreme punishment is because: **"the life [*nephesh*] of the flesh is in the blood"** and **"Its blood sustains its life [*nephesh*]."**

The *nephesh* (nay'-fesh) is a term that is often translated in English Bibles as 'soul:'

**"And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul [*nephesh*]."** (Gen. 2:7 KJV)

The *New King James Version* translates *nephesh* more correctly in this passage:

**"And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being."** (Gen. 2:7 NKJV)

In other words, what is commonly called the 'soul' of every living creature (including man) is in the blood. When the *nephesh* (or 'soul') is drained out with the blood, the body of that creature dies. It is because this vital life-force (the *nephesh* or soul) is contained in the blood that God has prohibited its consumption:

**"Only be sure that you do not eat the blood, for the blood is the life [*nephesh*: soul or life]; you may not eat the life [*nephesh*] with the meat."** (Deut. 12:23)

### ~ Objections? ~

Many people raise objections to the laws of clean and unclean. Usually the first one raised is that the 'Old Testament' law was "done away" at the cross. This subject is covered in our booklet, *A Believer's Guide to Complete Righteousness*. However, one statement from our Husband and Savior, *Y'shua* should make clear His position on this question. *Y'shua* said that He did not come to destroy the *Torah* (law):

**"Do not think that I came to destroy [*kataluo*] the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill [*pleroo*]."** (Matt. 5:17)

The Greek word translated as "destroy" is *kataluo*. Its primary definition is: "to dissolve." Other meanings include: "to annul, abrogate, or discard." By His own words, *Y'shua* said He did not come to annul, abrogate, or discard the *Torah*.

When confronted with this information the next objection is that *Y'shua* did not destroy the law, but He fulfilled it and therefore we do not have to observe it. The Greek word translated as "fulfill" in Matt. 5:17 is *pleroo*. Some of the definitions of *pleroo* are:

"to consummate ... to make complete in every particular, to render perfect ... to carry into effect, bring to realization, realize ... to fulfill, i.e. to cause God's will (as made known in the law) to be obeyed as it should be, and God's promises (given through the prophets) to receive fulfillment." (Underlining ours.)

Thus, *Y'shua's* purpose was to accurately interpret the *Torah* (law), not to "do away with it." One of the ways in which He accomplished this task was through His teachings in the *Sermon on the Mount*. For example:

**"You have heard that it was said to those of old, "You shall not commit adultery." But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart."** (Matt. 5:27-28)

Certainly, this teaching 'completed' the *Torah* instruction concerning adultery by emphasizing that the intent of the heart was just as important as the action. *Y'shua* then went on to say:

**"For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled [*ginomai*]."** (Matt. 5:18)

Here a totally different word is used for the English word 'fulfilled.' In this case it means: "to become, i.e. to come into existence, ... to come to pass, ... appear in history, ..."

Here *Y'shua* is saying that not even the smallest letter of the *Alef Bet*, or the decorations on the letters, would "**pass from the law [*Torah*]**" until everything that is to happen, happens. The sun still came up today, Messiah has yet to return, the Kingdom of God has not yet been established over all the earth, etc. Therefore, by *Y'shua's* own words, the *Torah* is still in effect.

### ~ The Unclean Sheet ~

There are a number of specific passages which people often cite when trying to refute the Biblical laws of *kashrut*. A primary example is the story of the conversion of Cornelius, the Roman centurion, and his encounter with *Shimon Kefa* (Shee-moan' Key'-phah = Simon Peter).

*Kefa* was staying in Joppa at the home of Simon the tanner and he was up on the roof of the house praying at midday. Cornelius had seen a vision in which God directed him to send an envoy of men to find *Shimon Kefa* in Joppa. Just as the men were about to arrive, *Kefa* too had a vision:

**"The next day, as they went on their journey and drew near the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour. Then he became very hungry and wanted to**

eat; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth. In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. And a voice came to him, 'Rise, Peter; kill and eat.' But Peter said, 'Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean.' And a voice *spoke* to him again the second time, 'What God has cleansed you must not call common.' This was done three times. And the object was taken up into heaven again." (Acts 10:9-16)

The first thing to notice about this account is *Shimon Kefa's* statement, "I have never eaten anything common or unclean." What this means is that all during the time when *Shimon Kefa* walked with *Y'shua* (not to mention the years previous to that time and the ten or so years that had elapsed since *Y'shua's* resurrection), he had never eaten unclean food of any kind. Surely during all the time *Y'shua* taught, He had many opportunities to instruct His disciples whether or not it was acceptable to eat unclean meats. *Y'shua* taught His disciples to eat *kosher* because He ate *kosher*.

Not only did *Kefa* not eat Biblically unclean food, he also did not eat anything that was common. The term 'common' (*koinos* in the Greek) refers to food that was sold in the general marketplace, whether it be fruits, vegetables, or meat. When applied to fruits and vegetables, it meant that *Kefa* had never eaten anything at all which had not had the proper tithes paid upon it. When applied to meat, the term 'common' meant that *Kefa* never ate any Biblically clean meat in his life which had not been properly tithed upon and slaughtered according to the principles of *kashrut*.

In other words, *Kefa* had made a lifelong practice of buying his food from fellow Jews whom he knew would both follow all the Jewish *Kashrut* laws, and pay tithes upon the increase of their crops and animals.

Yet, the vision occurred not once, but three times. What then did the vision mean? The answer is in verse 28:

**"Then he said to them, 'You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean.'"** (Acts 10:28)

The purpose of the vision was to teach *Shimon Kefa* that he: "**should not call any man common or unclean,**" not that it was suddenly permissible to eat foods which God Himself had declared to be unclean.

### ~ Second Class People ~

To more fully understand this vision, it is necessary to understand what the actual practice was (within the first century Jewish community) towards the Gentiles. At that time, the Jews were forbidden by traditional law (*halacha*) to have social contact with Gentiles, out of the fear that by so doing the Jew would become ritually unclean and unable to participate in Temple worship. This prohibition even invaded the local synagogues, though they might be many miles from Jerusalem and the Temple. In practice this meant that the Jews were not to touch a Gentile, and they were certainly not to sit down and have a meal with them. We believe this to be one of the oral ordinances which put a "wall of division" between the Jews and the Gentiles:

**"For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity."** (Eph. 2:14-16)

There was much enmity between the Jews and the Gentiles because of this practice by the Jews of not having any social contact (and especially not having any table fellowship) with the Gentiles. This was true even in the synagogues where Gentiles were in training to become Jewish proselytes. This is why *Shimon Kefa* made the comment to Cornelius:

**"You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation."** (Acts 10:28a)

*Shimon Kefa* clearly said that it was unlawful for him to 'keep company' with a Gentile or go into his house. Yet that prohibition is not a part of the written *Torah*. Therefore, it must have been part of the *Oral* traditions by which an observant Jew was expected to live. These were ordinances that were established by the Rabbis, not commands that had been issued by God.

Notice how this point is emphasized when *Kefa* returned to Jerusalem and met with the brethren of the Believing Community:

**"Now the apostles and brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those of the circumcision contended with him, saying, 'You went in to uncircumcised men and ate with them!'"**

(Acts 11:1-3)

To us today it seems incredible that the first reaction of the Believing Jews in Jerusalem was not joy that Gentiles were being called by God, but horror that *Kefa* had actually gone into the house of a Gentile and ate a meal with them. That is how ingrained these traditional ordinances were among the common people. They could not imagine that *Shimon Kefa*, one of the twelve, would actually set such a bad example by doing this despicable act. However, to their credit, once they heard *Kefa's* explanation they totally changed their minds:

**"When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, 'Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life.'" (Acts 11:18)**

The above passage makes it clear that *Shimon Kefa's* vision had nothing at all to do with changing the laws of Leviticus 11, therefore, making it permissible to eat unclean meats. Rather, the vision was a revelation from God that all men could come to Him through Messiah *Y'shua*.

~ All Foods Clean? ~

Another passage that is often used to proclaim that all foods are now fit for human consumption is:

**"So He said to them, 'Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, thus purifying all foods?'"**

(Mark 7:18-19)

In order to properly understand this passage, one must go back to the beginning of the chapter and read the entire story in context. First of all, the original subject was not clean and unclean meats, rather it was the eating of any kind of food with unwashed hands:

**"Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to Him, having come from Jerusalem. Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault." (Mark 7:1-2)**

However, this does not mean that their hands were physically dirty. Rather, they were eating without going through the ritual hand washing which the School of Shammai (the strict school of the Pharisees) said was required of all people before eating a meal:

**"For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands in a special way, holding the tradition of the elders. *When they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and hold, like the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches. Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, 'Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?'*" (Mark 7:3-5)**

What is being questioned here is why they had not washed their hands according to the tradition of the Pharisaic School of Shammai.

*Y'shua* took this opportunity to turn the question about traditions around and show how some people used the tradition of setting aside funds (that should have been used to support their parents) as *korban* (kahr-bahn'), a gift to the Temple:

**"For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother;' and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' But you say, 'If a man says to his father or mother, 'Whatever profit you might have received from me *is Corban*' -- ' (that is, a gift to God), then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do.'" (Mark 7:10-13)**

*Y'shua* turned the issue from the physical to a moral and spiritual one. Apparently, some people were turning what was essentially a good tradition (promising a gift to God) into a method to avoid keeping the commandment of God to care for one's aged parents.

*Y'shua* continued this moral teaching by showing how food which had been created to be eaten (that is clean foods) can still contain impurities which the body will separate and eliminate through the digestive system:

**"So He said to them, 'Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, thus purifying all foods?'"** (Mark 7:18-19)

The main point of *Y'shua's* discourse is that what proceeds out of a person's heart is that which truly defiles him:

**"And He said, 'What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man.'"** (Mark 7:20-23)

Again, this is not a case of *Y'shua* declaring that what God had prohibited was now permitted. Rather it is a case of *Y'shua* taking the opportunity afforded Him, by the Pharisee's question concerning ritual hand washing, to teach a great moral and spiritual principle.

#### ~ Meats Created to be Received With Thanksgiving ~

In *Shaul's* (Shaw-ool' = Saul or Paul) first letter to Timothy, he speaks about things that would occur in the 'latter days:'

**"Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For every creature of God *is* good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer."**

(I Tim. 4:1-5)

The laws of clean and unclean food were given by God. To say they are "doctrines of demons" is close to blasphemy.

It is sometimes taught that if one just prays over food, that God will automatically purify whatever one eats. But what foods has God created to be received with thanksgiving? When it comes to animals, fowl, water creatures, and insects, it is those listed in Leviticus 11 and Deut. 14. Likewise, when it comes to fruits or vegetables it is those plants which are nonpoisonous and also nutritious. If you are aware that a certain plant is poisonous (or not nutritious for humans), you can be assured that it was not **"... created to be received with thanksgiving ..."**

As Dr. David H. Stern comments in his *Jewish New Testament Commentary*:

"Everything created by God is good, but not everything created by God is food. Therefore, this verse does *not* abolish the Jewish dietary laws." (p. 644)

#### ~ Eating All Things ~

Yet another passage is sometimes used to claim all meats are now clean:

**"Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things. For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats *only* vegetables."** (Rom. 14:1-2)

The question here is not whether one may eat unclean meats, but what to do about those vegetarians who think it is spiritually wrong to eat any kind of meat. (Notice the issue is not about being a vegetarian for health reasons, but solely for spiritual reasons.)

One of the characteristics of pagan Gentile religions is the tendency to designate certain days for fasting or abstaining from certain types of food. This tendency can even be found within traditional Christian churches. It was not that many years ago when one major denomination required all of their adherents to eat fish rather than meat on Fridays. This type of practice is known as asceticism; abstaining from something for 'spiritual' reasons.

*Shaul*, like *Y'shua* before him, takes this opportunity to teach some important spiritual principles about not judging one another and learning how to love; thus avoiding dissension in the body of Believers:

**"Let not him who eats [*clean meats*] despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat [*any kind of clean meat*] judge him who eats; for God has received him. Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand."** (Rom. 14:3-4)

We are all servants of the Father. Therefore, since we are all fellow servants, we should not judge one another in these matters since that is God's prerogative. What we must be very careful not to do is tempt someone into doing something which they believe to be a sin, even though we understand it is not a sin. Thus, *Shaul* gives us one of the main New Testament definitions of sin:

**"But he who doubts is condemned if he eats [*meat*], because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin."** (Rom. 14:23)

Thus we see, that in the above passage, *Shaul* is talking about asceticism in the form of spiritual vegetarianism. He is not talking about meats which God declared unclean.

~ Meat Offered to Idols ~

A similar situation is found in *Shaul's* first letter to the Corinthians. Here the subject is not special days and vegetarianism, but meat that has been offered to idols and then taken to the market to be sold. Apparently, this was a common practice in pagan cities such as Corinth. Once again, there is no evidence that the text is talking about unclean animal food, but rather it is speaking of clean animal food. It merely mentions food which has been used in pagan rituals. Based on our understanding of God's law, we can assume that it is referring only to clean animal meat:

**"Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one."** (I Cor. 8:4)

*Shaul* pointed out that there really is only one God and that the pagan gods are not gods at all, but merely idols of wood or stone. Even though this is true, there are Believers who would not think of touching the meat of an animal that had been offered to an idol:

**"However not all men have this knowledge; but some, being accustomed to the idol until now, eat food as if it were sacrificed to an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled."** (I Cor. 8:7 NAS)

Because some Believers had practiced idolatry in the past, and were offended by the eating of meat that had been offered to idols, *Shaul* once again taught the loving way to solve the problem:

**"But food will not commend us to God; we are neither the worse if we do not eat, nor the better if we do eat."**

**"But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if someone sees you, who have knowledge, dining in an idol's temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be strengthened to eat things sacrificed to idols? For through your knowledge he who is weak is ruined, the brother for whose sake Christ [*Messiah*] died."**

**"And so, by sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ [*Messiah*]. Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause my brother to stumble."**(I Cor. 8:8-13 NAS)

*Shaul*, being a good Jewish teacher, picks up this subject again in chapter 10. However, here in chapter 8 he said that the idol is nothing, and it was permissible to eat meat offered to idols as long as it did not offend anyone. Then he spoke to those who believed this to be so and encouraged them to refrain from eating meat offered to idols, not just for the sake of a weak brother's conscience, but because, as Believers, we should be holy before God:

**"What do I mean then? That a thing sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, but I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God; and I do not want you to become sharers in demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons."** (I Cor. 10:19-21 NAS)

*Shaul* went on to say that if you do buy meat in the market, do not bother to ask if it has been offered to an idol. It is permissible to eat such meat (as long as it is from a clean animal), but it is better not to know if it was offered to an idol so that one's conscience is clear:

**"Eat anything that is sold in the meat market without asking questions for conscience' sake; FOR THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S, AND ALL IT CONTAINS. If one of the unbelievers invites you and you want to go, eat anything that is set before you without asking questions for conscience' sake."** (I Cor. 10:25-27 NAS)

Nevertheless, if anyone identifies what you are eating as having been offered to an idol, then do not eat it so as not to cause another person to also eat it and sin because they are not eating it from faith, but merely because they saw you doing so:

**"But if anyone says to you, 'This is meat sacrificed to idols,' do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for conscience' sake; I mean not your own conscience, but the other man's; for why is my freedom judged by another's conscience?"**

**"If I partake with thankfulness, why am I slandered concerning that for which I give thanks? Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God; just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit but the profit of the many, so that they may be saved." (I Cor. 10:28-33 NAS)**

*Shaul* concluded this discourse about not eating meat offered to idols by saying:

**"Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ." (I Cor. 11:1 NAS)**

Since we have already established that *Shimon Kefa* still did not eat unclean foods several years after the resurrection, it follows that *Y'shua* also obeyed the *Torah* in this regard, since *Y'shua* was *Kefa's* Rabbi. Therefore, if *Shaul* followed *Y'shua*, then he too followed the food laws. That this is true is confirmed by *Shaul's* own testimony:

**"Men and brethren, though I have done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans." (Acts 28:17)**

By this we see that *Shaul* could not have taught the Believers that it was permissible to eat unclean foods, since "the custom of our fathers" is to be *Torah* observant and that includes the laws of Leviticus 11.

~ Let No Man Judge ~

The final passage which is often used to justify the eating of unclean meats is found in *Shaul's* writing to the Colossians.:

**"And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ." (Col. 2:13-17)**

The phrase "food or in drink" should be rendered "in eating or drinking." This changes the meaning of the passage considerably because now instead of it focusing on food and drink as equal in weight to the days mentioned, it focuses on the manner in which one observes those days.

Because all of a Believer's trespasses and sins have been forgiven (both those that were committed against the written *Torah* and those which some believe to be sins that were committed against the *Oral* traditions), we are admonished to not let anyone judge us in what foods we eat or drink on the festivals, sabbaths or new moons. In other words, we are not obligated to serve the special festival foods that traditionally go with a particular Festival or Sabbath.

The "**handwriting of requirements**" [*or ordinances*] has to do with the abolishing of those charges which have been lodged against us because of our sins. Because our sins are forgiven, the death penalty that had accrued to us has been pardoned.

~ The Four Requirements ~

Because of Jewish traditions, Gentile Believers had difficulty being assimilated into the Believing community. Some of the Orthodox Jewish Believers held to the old custom of requiring the Gentiles to go through a year long training period, followed by physical circumcision, before they could be admitted as full fledged members into the Believing Community. This issue caused great problems when Jewish Believers from Jerusalem visited Gentile churches in Asia where this requirement was not being observed.

This issue was addressed at the famous Jerusalem Council meeting spoken of in Acts 15. The outcome of this meeting was decisive and *Ya'acov* (Yah ah'-cove = Jacob or James), *Y'shua's* half brother, being head of the Believer's Sanhedrin, made the following announcement:

**""Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.""** (Acts 15:19-21)

Three of the four requirements *Ya'acov* specified had to do with food:

- ◆ Pollution's of idols (Acts 15:29 says: **"... abstain from meats [that you know were] offered to idols ..."**), for this was a form of idolatry. (Lev. 19:4)
- ◆ Things strangled -- avoid animals that were strangled to death. (Strangulation would not allow for proper bleeding of the animal.) (Deut. 15:23)
- ◆ From blood. While this was no doubt a prohibition against eating blood, it may also have been referring to the prohibition against have marital relations during a woman's menstrual cycle. (Lev. 19:24)
- ◆ The fourth requirement had to do with sexual immorality.

If a Gentile believed that *Y'shua* was the Messiah, and was willing to accept these four requirements, they could be admitted into full fellowship with the Believing Community and have table fellowship with the Jewish Believers. However, verse 21 is very important, for once the Gentile Believer had been admitted into fellowship, they were expected to study the *Torah* each week in the synagogue and thereby learn what their obligations were regarding the rest of the commandments.

The prophet Isaiah, in a prophecy for the future, also addressed the issue of the clean and the unclean in the context of those people who choose to do that **"...in which I do not delight."** He said that their offerings would be unacceptable:

**"He who kills a bull is as if he slays a man;  
He who sacrifices a lamb, as if he breaks a dog's neck;  
He who offers a grain offering, as if he offers swine's blood;  
He who burns incense, as if he blesses an idol.  
Just as they have chosen their own ways,  
And their soul delights in their abominations,  
So will I choose their delusions,  
And bring their fears on them;  
Because, when I called, no one answered,  
When I spoke they did not hear;  
But they did evil before My eyes,  
And chose *that in which I do not delight.*"** (Isa. 66:3-4)

God does not delight in swine's blood. *Shaul* sums it all up:

**"As God has said:  
'I will dwell in them  
And walk among *them*.  
I will be their God,  
And they shall be My people.'  
Therefore 'Come out from among them  
And be separate, says the Lord.  
Do not touch what is unclean,  
And I will receive you.  
I will be a Father to you,  
And you shall be My sons and daughters,  
Says the LORD Almighty."** (II Cor. 6:16-18)

It is clear from a detailed study of all the passages in both the Hebrew (Old Testament) and Greek (New Testament) Scriptures, that *Y'shua* did not "do away" with the food laws given in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14.

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## ~ Food and Health ~

**A**n old adage states: "You are what you eat." If this is true, many Americans may be in big trouble health wise, for the modern diet of fast food is anything but healthy. Many contemporary nutritionists advocate a diet high in fiber (fruits, vegetables, and grains) and low in meat, especially red meat.

The original diet given by God to *Adam* (Ah-dahm') and *Chava* (Hah-vah' = Eve) in the Garden of Eden, was vegetarian:

**"And God said, 'See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food'; and it was so.'" (Gen. 1:30)**

According to Jewish tradition, it was not until after the flood that permission was granted to *Noach* (Noh-ach' = Noah) to kill animals for food. Since *Noach* took seven pairs of clean animals into the ark, we know that he knew which animals were considered to be clean and which were considered to be unclean:

**"You shall take with you seven each of every clean animal, a male and his female; two each of animals that are unclean, a male and his female; ..." (Gen. 7:2)**

It was not until modern times when nutritional science discovered that unclean foods are not good for humans to consume. Yet, our Creator God, in His infinite wisdom, knew it all the time and set health safeguards for His people in the Scriptures indicating which animals are fit for human consumption.

There is a book and audio cassette series on the market called *What Would Jesus Eat?* from *Thomas Nelson Publishers*. It should be available through most Christian bookstores. The author, a medical doctor named Don Colbert, gives good Biblical and historical evidence as to what *Y'shua's* diet would have been like in the first century.

Dr. Colbert points out that meat was a very expensive item in the first century, and therefore, it would only have been consumed on special occasions, such as during the Festivals. Since the Jews of *Y'shua's* day were primarily under the instruction of the Pharisees (who ruled the synagogues), whatever meat they did eat would have been both clean and *kosher* (slaughtered according to strict standards to insure that all of the blood was removed).

A diet that was rich in grains, vegetables, and fruits is what Dr. Colbert believes was common during that time. When it came to flesh foods, the most common staple was fish, since marine life was abundant in both the Mediterranean Sea and the Sea of Galilee.

Dr. Colbert delves into the problems caused by eating unclean meats. He states that physiologically, the human digestive system is more suited to consuming plant life than animal flesh. He states: "Our bodies have not been created to handle a diet rich in meat."

Horse meat is an unclean food according to Leviticus 11 (the primary chapter detailing clean and unclean foods). Dr. Colbert states that parasites, viruses, and bacteria are more common in horse meat than in the flesh of clean animals.

Pigs (known to eat feces and decaying flesh) are wonderful animals for cleaning up garbage that might breed disease, so they can be useful animals. However, pork has long been known to harbor parasites. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* states:

*"Because pigs may be infected by the parasitic disease trichinosis, pork must be cooked to an internal temperature of 160° F in order to destroy the disease-causing organism."*  
(CD-ROM version, article: *Pork*)

Shellfish is a common item in the diet of many cultures, especially those who have seacoast borders. Dr. Colbert tells us that shellfish is a major source of food poisoning often containing salmonella and the Hepatitis A virus.

One might ask why God even created shellfish, since they are forbidden by the Leviticus food laws. Actually, shellfish are extremely beneficial to the waters in which they dwell, because they remove the toxins from the water. Clams and oysters can filter up to fifty gallons of water a day. However, the toxins they remove from the water remain in the shellfish, only to be transferred to the human digestive system when eaten. Catfish are also cleansing agents that absorb pollutants.

People who eat a diet rich in clean fish are said to experience forty percent fewer heart attacks than those who do not. Dr. Colbert claims that the oils in clean fish can lower LDL cholesterol and blood pressure, and reduce the likelihood of stroke.

One last comment by Dr. Colbert is that certain portions of a clean animal's fat is dedicated to God. This would be the midrib fat around the kidneys and intestines, it is not the marbled fat one finds in a steak. All fat is saturated fat and can lead to high cholesterol. God does not intend for man to eat these large fatty tissues.

In conclusion, Dr. Colbert suggests buying grass fed livestock for our meat. This was how cattle, sheep, and goats were fed in ancient times, and modern nutrition has shown it to be a much healthier choice than meat from grain fed animals.

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## ~ Kashrut ~

The terms *kashrut* (kash'-root; noun) and *kosher* (koh'-shuhr; adjective, verb, or noun) mean "fit or proper." These terms are most often used in reference to food that is acceptable according to Jewish *halacha* (hah-lah-chah' = the way one walks).

While the various 'clean' foods listed in Leviticus 11 are *kosher* according to Biblical standards, they are not considered *kosher* under *halachic* terms unless they come from animals that were slaughtered in a manner which assures that all of the blood was properly drained from the body. Not only that, the animal also has to be slaughtered by a specially trained *shochet* (show-keht' = kosher butcher) using an extremely sharp knife, so that the animal dies as quickly and painlessly as possible. This slaughtering process is called *shechitah* (shkee-tah'). The animal is then thoroughly examined for any disease or defects in the internal organs and for broken bones. If any defects are found, the animal is declared *tamai* (tah-may' = unclean).

In addition to proper slaughter, *kosher* meat is immersed in cold water for thirty minutes and then covered with salt for one hour in order to draw out any blood remaining in the tissue. It is then washed two or three times in cold water. Also, the sciatic nerve must be removed before the animal can be eaten:

**"Just as he [Jacob] crossed over Penuel the sun rose on him, and he limped on his hip. Therefore to this day the children of Israel do not eat the muscle that shrank, which is on the hip socket, because He touched the socket of Jacob's hip in the muscle that shrank."**

(Gen. 32:31-32)

### ~ Meat and Milk ~

*Kosher* according to *halacha* also includes a prohibition against eating meat and milk (all dairy products) at the same meal, or even in close proximity to each other. This teaching is based upon the following passage:

**""The first of the firstfruits of your land you shall bring into the house of the LORD your God. You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.""** (Ex. 23:19)

This prohibition is repeated word for word in Ex. 34:26 and mentioned again in Deut. 14, where it is directly connected with the listing of clean and unclean meats:

**""You shall not eat any detestable thing. ... You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.""** (Deut. 14:13, 21b)

In traditional Rabbinic Jewish teaching, the reason for the milk/meat prohibition is because:

*"Meat represents the animal portion of life, the muscle and sinew. Milk presents the reproductive capacity of animal life, ... In animals, these two aspects of life are inseparable; animals instinctively eat and reproduce. Man has a higher calling. He must not mingle these aspects of his nature. ... This higher duty is symbolized in the prohibition against mixing milk and meat." (The Stone Chumash, p. 437).*

However, not all Jewish teachers agree. Rabbi Avigdor Bonchek, in his book, *Studying the Torah*, writes about, what he calls, a Plain Sense interpretation based upon the Contiguity Principle.<sup>1</sup>

*"This injunction forbidding seething a kid in its mother's milk is the biblical basis for the laws of Kashruth requiring the separation of meat and mile. ...*

*"At first glance, we have here [Ex. 23:19 and 34:26] two unrelated clauses within the same sentence. Not so, according to the early commentator Joseph Bekhor Shor. He points out that the word bashail, regularly translated here as 'seethe,' [or boil in the NKJV] really means 'to become ripe or mature.' The phrase then means 'Thou shalt not allow a kid to become mature with its mother's milk,' that is, you should not allow the kid to mature, rather bring it as a sacrifice in the Temple. In this way, both clauses of the sentence are related: Bring your first fruits as an offering and likewise bring your first -- young -- animals as offerings of God." (p. 55).*

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<sup>1</sup> Deriving interpretive clues from the neighboring text.

It is believed the practice of cooking meat in milk was used by the ancient pagans as a good luck charm, so the *Torah* prohibition may also have been related to having the children of Israel refrain from any idolatrous practices.

The Rabbinic decree not to eat meat and milk at the same meal can be considered to be a fence around the Biblical *kosher* commands. It is our opinion that the choice of whether to keep Biblically *kosher* (avoiding the unclean foods, blood, and meat boiled in milk) or Rabbinic *kosher*, must be an individual decision based upon one's convictions.

### ~ Other Kashrut Rules ~

Other rules pertaining to *kashrut* include not eating vegetables from plantings that were contaminated by sowing with 'mixed seeds' (See: Lev. 19:19 and Deut. 22:9-11), and not eating modern prepared foods which contain non *kosher* synthetic ingredients.

### ~ Common Kosher Symbols ~

**T**here are a number of Jewish agencies that have been established to determine if prepared food meets the strict *Kashrut* standards established by the Orthodox Rabbis. Each agency has its own set of symbols to indicate if a product is *kosher*.

While the presence of a certified symbol guarantees that the product does not contain any unclean animal products and has been properly prepared as either a meat product, a dairy product, or a neutral product, the absence of a symbol does not necessarily mean that the food product contains unclean animal parts or extracts. There may be other reasons why it has not been certified *kosher*. For example, the product may not yet have been examined, or the facility that prepares the product may not meet all of the strict *kosher* standards for cleanliness and the proper handling of food items.

Following are some of the major certifying agencies and the symbols they use to identify Kosher products:

**OU** - One of the most common symbols is a circle with the letter U in the middle of it. This symbol means the product has been approved by the *Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations*.

**OK** - A circle with the letter K in the middle - Approved by the *Organized Kashrus Laboratories*.

**Ⓚ** - The Hebrew letter *Kof* with the letter K inside of the opening. - Approved by *KOF-K Kosher Supervision*.

There are many other *kosher* symbols. Most have the letter K within another symbol. Some contain the letters CRC or COR.

**IMPORTANT:** Generally, a stand-alone letter K, by itself, does not mean the product has been certified as *kosher* by any of the official *Kashrut* associations. That does not mean that it is made with unclean products, it just means that it has not been officially certified as being *kosher*.

In addition, one may find other codes in conjunction with the official *kosher* symbols which give additional information:

**D** - Dairy

**DE** - Dairy Equipment (no actual dairy ingredients, therefore it can be eaten before or after a meat meal, but not together with meat)

**P** - Passover; *Kosher* for all year including Passover. (Note: "P" never designates *pareve*.)

**Pareve** - Nondairy and non-meat.

**Chalav Yisrael** - *Kosher* supervised milk used in ingredients.

*Pas Yisrael* - Jewish baked goods.

*Yashan* - Not from current crop.

For more complete information on *kosher* symbols, access the following Websites:

[www.kosherquest.org](http://www.kosherquest.org)

[www.ok.org](http://www.ok.org)

[www.beingjewish.com](http://www.beingjewish.com)

[www.kosherhouston.org](http://www.kosherhouston.org)


A *Google* search on *Kosher Symbols* will yield many other sites.

There are some anti-Jewish groups which claim that companies have to pay a "*kosher* tax" in order to have their products designated as being *kosher*. They say this "tax" pays for a Rabbi to come a "bless" the product so that Jews can use it.

This is a complete falsehood. There is no "tax" involved in having a product declared *kosher*. What is involved is the expense to make sure the product is being produced in a proper way and in a clean environment. Given some of the horror stories circulated about the processing of food, this should give the consumer some degree of comfort that what they are buying is fit for human consumption. As one of the above Websites stated: "Reliable Kosher Symbols. When these are on the outside, you can trust what's inside."

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## ~ Clean and Unclean Animals ~

 Following is a partial list of clean and unclean animals, marine life and birds. This list is not meant to be complete, but is merely a representative sample of the clean and unclean species.

### ~ Clean Animals ~

The following animals have cloven hooves and chew the cud:

- Antelope
- Buffalo (bison)
- Caribou
- Cattle (includes beef and veal)
- Deer (venison)
- Elk
- Goat
- Moose
- Ox
- Sheep (includes lamb and mutton)

### ~ Unclean Animals ~

The following animals either do not have cloven hooves and/or do not chew the cud:

- Felines: (includes cats, leopards, lions, tigers, panthers, etc.)
- Canines: (includes dogs, coyotes, wolves, fox, etc.)
- Equines (includes horses, donkeys, mules, etc.)
- Swine: (includes pig, boar, etc.)  
(Pig products include: bacon, ham, lard, and pork. Most sausage and pepperoni are made from pig meat.)
- Other unclean creatures include: (armadillo, badger, bear, beaver, camel, kangaroo, monkey, mouse, opossum, porcupine, rabbit, raccoon, rat, skunk, snail, squirrel, worms, and all insects except as noted below.)

### ~ Clean Marine Animals ~

The following marine life has both fins and scales.

- Anchovy
- Bass
- Bluegill
- Carp
- Cod
- Crappie
- Flounder
- Grouper
- Haddock
- Halibut
- Herring
- Mackerel
- Mahi-mahi
- Minnow
- Perch
- Pike
- Pollock
- Rockfish
- Salmon

Sardine  
Shad  
Smelt  
Snapper  
Sole  
Sucker  
Trout  
Tuna  
Whitefish

**~ Unclean Marine Life ~**

The following marine life does not have fins and scales:

**\* Fish \***

Bullhead  
Catfish  
Eel  
Marlin  
Shark  
Squid  
Sturgeon

**\* Shellfish \***

Abalone  
Clam  
Crab  
Crayfish  
Lobster  
Mussel  
Prawn  
Oyster  
Scallop  
Shrimp

**\* Soft Body Marine Animals \***

Jellyfish  
Octopus  
Squid

**\* Water Mammals \***

Dolphin  
Otter  
Porpoise  
Seal  
Walrus  
Whale

**~ Clean Birds ~**

It is somewhat difficult to identify which birds are clean and which are unclean because there are no specific characteristics given in Scripture, as there are for animals and marine life. It is generally accepted that the following list constitutes some of the clean birds:

Chicken  
Dove  
Duck  
Goose

Guinea  
Partridge  
Peafowl  
Pheasant  
Pigeon  
Prairie Chicken  
Quail  
Sagehen  
Songbirds (for the most part)  
Turkey

**~ Unclean Birds ~**

Many of the unclean birds fall into the category of birds of prey.

Albatross  
Bat  
Buzzard  
Condor  
Crane  
Crow  
Cuckoo  
Eagle  
Flamingo  
Grosbeak  
Gull  
Hawk  
Heron  
Loon  
Magpie  
Osprey  
Ostrich  
Owl  
Parrot  
Pelican  
Penguin  
Plover  
Raven  
Roadrunner  
Sandpiper  
Seagull  
Stork  
Swallow  
Vulture  
Woodpecker

**~ Clean Insects ~**

Scripture indicates that certain types of insects are considered to be clean:

Locusts  
Crickets  
Grasshopper




(See pages 5 - 7 for more information.)

**~ Unclean Reptiles and Amphibians ~**

Alligator  
Crocodile  
Frog  
Lizard  
Salamander  
Snake  
Toad  
Turtle

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## ~ Summary ~

ur Creator God, in His infinite wisdom, has given us a list of clean animals, fowl, water creatures, and insects which He says are suitable for food, and another list of those which He defines as unclean and not suitable for food.

While one of the purposes of these laws may have to do with health issues, the primary reason given in the Scriptures for their existence is so that God's people can be holy (set apart) just as He is holy. By eating that which is unclean, man makes himself abominable to God. By refraining from eating such creatures, God's people are separated from the rest of the nations.

Not only are the unclean creatures to be avoided as food, so also is the blood of any creature, clean or unclean, for, it is written that the *nephesh* (soul or life) is in the blood, and God's people are not to partake of the *nephesh* of any creature. (Lev. 17:11)

Several New Testament objections have been raised against these prohibitions. Many Bible teachers teach that these food laws have been "done away," and that Believers are now allowed to eat whatever they wish. However, when carefully examined, each one of their New Testament objections can be shown to pertain to matters other than the issue of clean and unclean foods.

It is our opinion that, in order to please God, Believers should minimally have Biblically *kosher* diets; diets based on the food laws of Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14. If Believers want to go further and follow the Jewish practice of keeping *Kashrut*, that is perfectly acceptable as well, for it is the more restricted diet.

Shalom!

DEW & SAW

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