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Clean vs. Unclean Animals

Between my Ministry and my Natural Health practice, I am often asked to help decipher what most people consider to be a difficult-to-understand set of rules and regulations regarding what God considers to be “clean” and “unclean” animals. This is a handout that I prepared for a talk that I gave at an herb conference in 2003. I hope that it helps to “de-mystify” the issue and helps you to understand why G-d has provided these restrictions for our protection.

Most of Christianity has, in general, decided that the food restrictions of the Torah (the so-called “Old Testament”) do not apply today. This opinion is based on an *incorrect interpretation* of what the Apostles wrote about “clean” and “unclean” food in the Apostolic Letters (the so-called “New Testament”). If G-d never changes, and the entire Bible is the Word of G-d, then how can what was “unclean” in the Hebrew Bible be considered “clean” in the Apostolic Letters?

We can go a long way to resolving this apparent conflict if we can just remember that the Apostles were all considered Jewish Rabbis who carefully observed the *entire* Torah, that the only “Scripture” they had was the Torah, that their target audience was overwhelmingly Jewish, and that the Jewish people have never considered anything on the “unclean” list to be included in the definition of “food.” If the Apostle was ever discussing “food,” he was talking *only* about those animals on the “clean” list, never those animals on the “unclean” list — they simply were not “food.”

ADONAI said to Moshe and Aharon, “Tell the people of Isra’el, ‘These are the living creatures which you may eat among all the land animals: any that has a separate hoof which is completely divided and chews the cud—these animals you may eat. But you are not to eat those that only chew the cud or only have a separate hoof. For example, the camel, the coney, and the hare are unclean for you, because they chew the cud but don’t have a separate hoof; while the pig is unclean for you, because, although it has a separate and completely divided hoof, it doesn’t chew the cud. You are not to eat meat from these or touch their carcasses; they are unclean for you.

“Of all the things that live in the water, you may eat these: anything in the water that has fins and scales, wheth-

er in seas or rivers—these you may eat. But everything in the seas and rivers without both fins and scales, of all the small water-creatures and of all the living creatures in the water, is a detestable thing for you. Yes, these will be detestable for you—you are not to eat their meat, and you are to detest their carcasses. Whatever lack fins and scales in the water is a detestable thing for you.

“The following creatures of the air are to be detestable for you—they are not to be eaten, they are a detestable thing: the eagle, the vulture, the osprey, the kite, the various kinds of buzzards, the various kinds of ravens, the ostrich, the screech-owl, the seagull, the various kinds of hawks, the little owl, the cormorant, the great owl, the horned owl, the pelican, the barn owl, the stork, the vari-



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Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers. (3 John 2)

ous kinds of herons, the hoopoe, and the bat. [They are either scavengers, or they eat shellfish, rodents, or reptiles, all of which are “unclean.”]

“All winged swarming creatures that go about on all fours are a detestable thing for you; except that of all winged swarming creatures that go on all fours, you may eat those that have jointed legs above their feet, enabling them to jump off the ground. Specifically, of these you may eat the various kinds of locusts, grasshoppers, katydids, and crickets. But other than that, all winged swarming creatures having four feet are a detestable thing for you.

...

“The following are unclean for you among the small creatures that swarm on the ground: the weasle, the mouse, the various kinds of lizards, the gecko, the land crocodile, the skink, the sand lizard, and the chameleon. ...

“Any creature that swarms on the ground is a detestable thing; it is not to be eaten—whatever moves on its stomach, goes on all fours, or has many legs—all creatures that swarm on the ground; you are not to eat them because they are a detestable thing.”

— Leviticus 11:1-42, CJB

ADONAI said to Aharon the priest: “... you will distinguish between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean; ...” (Lev. 10:10) G-d was not nearly as concerned with ritual purity in the dietary instructions as he was with *physical* cleanliness or uncleanliness.

The chart on the next page tabulates the results of a 1953 study in which “Dr. David Macht of Johns Hopkins University reported the toxic effects of animal flesh on a controlled growth culture. A substance was classified as toxic if it slowed the culture’s growth rate below 75 percent. In each case, the *blood* of all the animals Dr. Macht tested showed up more toxic than the flesh.

“The table ... is based on Dr. Macht’s study. The results show that *the lower the growth percentage of the culture, the more toxic the flesh*. Note that the animals and fish given to us by G-d for food are all nontoxic, but all forbidden animals lie in the toxic range. (Animals without percentage rankings in the chart were not studied, but are included here to provide a more comprehensive list of clean and unclean meats.)

“*Don’t get confused! Any number above 75 percent is nontoxic, or clean.*”

“This chart should make it easy for us to identify which meats we should choose to eat. It also makes it apparent we are eating many toxic substances that were not created for food.

“The differences between clean and unclean animals appear to be related to their primary food source and to their digestive systems. Scavengers that eat anything and everything are unclean, not suitable for food, according to the Bible. Animals described as clean, and therefore good for food, primarily eat grasses and grains.

“This examination of clean and unclean flesh could

be a more revealing study considering today’s modern toxicological technology. A loving G-d protects His people by showing them just which foods are safe. He summarizes His will in Leviticus 11:43:

“*Do not defile by any of these creatures. Do not make yourselves unclean by means of them or be made unclean by them.*’

“... Note that an animal doesn’t have to be a scavenger to be unclean. Horses and rabbits, for example, are unclean because they do not have split hooves. Although they are considered to be good food in some countries, studies have shown that horse meat often contains viruses and parasites. Rabbits, as innocent as they appear, are the cause of tularemia (an infectious disease) in humans.

“... One reason for G-d’s rule forbidding pork is that the digestive system of a pig is completely different from that of a cow. It is similar to ours, in that the stomach is very acidic. Pigs are gluttonous, never knowing when to stop eating. Their stomach acids become diluted because of the volume of food, allowing all kinds of vermin to pass through this protective barrier. Parasites, bacteria, viruses, and toxins can pass into the pig’s flesh because of overeating. These toxins and infectious agents can be passed on to humans when they eat a pig’s flesh.

“... In the *Biblical Archeological Review*, Jane Cahill examined the toilets of a Jewish household in Jerusalem, finding no parasites nor infectious agents, but only pollen from the many fruits, vegetables and herbs they had eaten. A similar study about Egyptians revealed eggs from Schistosoma, Trichinella, wire worm and tapeworms, all found in pork. All of these organisms cause significant chronic diseases.”

Clean and Unclean Meats

(Any number below 75% is toxic — See text for explanation)

Four-Footed Animals

CLEAN

(Cloven-hoofed, cud-chewing)

calf	82%
deer	98%
goat	90%
ox	91%
sheep	94%

UNCLEAN

(All others)

black bear	59%
camel	41%
cat	62%
coney (guinea pig)	46%
dog	62%
fox (silver)	58%
grizzly bear	55%
ground hog	53%
hamster	46%
horse	39%
opossum	53%
rabbit	49%
rat	55%
rhinoceros	60%
squirrel	43%
swine (pigs/hogs)	54%



Water Creatures

CLEAN

(With scales and fins)

black bass	80%
black drum	105%
bluefish	80%
carp	90%
channel bass	80%
chub	91%
cod	98%
croaker	90%
flounder	83%
flying fish	87%
goldfish	88%
haddock	80%
hake	98%
halibut	82%
herring	100%
kingfish	83%
mullet	87%
pike	98%
pompano	110%
porgy	80%
rainbow trout	81%
rock bass	100%
salmon	81%
smelt	90%
sea bass	103%
shad	100%
Spanish mackerel	98%
spot	80%
sturgeon	87%
tuna (bluefin)	88%
white perch	81%
whiting, Carolina	84%
yellow perch	87%

UNCLEAN

(Without scales and fins)

catfish	48%
clams	
crabs	
eel	40%
lobster	
octopus	
oysters	
porcupine fish	60%
puffer	51%
sand skate	59%
scallops	
shark (dogfish)	62%
shrimp	
squid	
stingray	46%
toad fish	49%

Flying Animals

CLEAN

goose	85%
chicken	83%
coot	88%
duck	98%
pigeon	93%
quail	89%
swan	87%
turkey	85%

UNCLEAN

bat	
cormorant	
crow	46%
eagle	
falcon	
hawk	
heron	
ibis	
kite	
nighthawk	
osprey	
ostrich	
owl	62%
pelican	
raven	
red-tail hawk	36%
sparrow hawk	36%
sea gull	
stork	
vulture	

Insects

CLEAN

(Winged, with jointed hopping legs)

cricket
grasshopper
katydid
locust

UNCLEAN

(All others)