

DO WE REALLY KEEP YAHWEH'S FOOD LAWS?

I'm writing this article with the hope of exhorting sincere believers in the Torah to consider that although they claim to observe the food laws, they in actuality may not be. For those who do not believe that the food laws are salvational, I suggest that you do more studying. It's either all or none. You can't pick and choose which of the Almighty's laws you are going to obey.

In Leviticus 11, we find the animals that Yahweh says are to be food. Leviticus 11:1-2 says: "And Yahweh said to Moses and Aaron 'Say to the people of Israel, These are the living things which you may eat among all the beasts that are on the earth' ". The next 21 verses tell us what Yahweh says is food and what is not. I imagine that after having spoken to the Israelites, Moses would have assumed that they understood that *no* part of the unclean animal could be used as food. When the Torah was written, food was not processed to the nth degree by gentiles and then sold to the Israelites. Since that is the case today, we have to assume that Yahweh did not lower or change his standards so that we can buy food from the heathen. Obviously there is no prohibition against buying food from the gentiles, but we can only do so when what they sell us falls under the category of clean animals. Let me give you an example. Suppose Joe Israelite, living 4000 years ago, wanted to trade some of his produce with Tom Gentile in exchange for some of Tom's turkey sausage. "No problem", you say, "as long as it is bled out properly and did not die of itself". We all know turkeys are a clean food. Now, what if you found out that Tom wrapped his turkey sausages in pig intestine (casings) since this was readily available to him? We know that Yahweh declared the pig unclean in Leviticus 11:7, but is there a possibility that He only meant the actual flesh or meat of the pig is unclean and not the rest of the animal? Could we possibly rationalize that since Yahweh said that the swine is unclean but didn't specify which parts of the pig are unclean, that we can't know? We have to assume that when Moses said swine, he meant the whole pig. Just because swine skin, bones or cartilage are boiled down and called gelatin doesn't make it any less swine! If eating pork chops is sin then I believe it is also sin to eat anything containing gelatin, digestive enzymes, etc. if they are from an unclean animal source. If we took the lining of a pig's stomach and used it to make cheese and listed on the ingredients, "enzymes or rennet" instead of pig stomach would that be acceptable for food? Enzymes and rennet are very commonly made from the lining of a pig or other mammal's stomach to make cheese and other items such as bread. Monoglycerides is another item that can be made from either an animal (sometimes unclean) or vegetable source. You cannot always know which unless you call the company. If we are going to say that eating unclean animals is sin then we have to be consistent.

We have to assume that since Yahweh didn't specify which part of the swine is unclean, then *all* of it is. How do I know this? I know this partly because when He *didn't* want us to eat part of a clean animal he was very specific, Leviticus 3:17, 7:22-27. If Leviticus 11 were the only chapter in the scriptures, I would assume that the entire cow is clean/permitted for us to eat, (including the fat and blood). Yahweh, however, specified that we are *not* to eat the blood or the fat. Now we know that every part of a clean animal is not okay to eat. Concerning the swine, there is no verse that states that any part of the swine is clean. Yahweh has drawn the line, the swine is unclean!!!!

Can anyone possibly justify knowingly eating something if they know that one of the ingredients comes from an animal that Yahweh says is unclean? If you think I am just being judgmental, please show me! I realize that ingredients may be listed in such a way that we don't know their source, but it is our job to check things out, especially when a brother/sister points this out to us.

When we eat something that we are not certain of the ingredients and their source, we are skating on thin ice. If someone offered us a hotdog and when we asked what it was made of, they told us they didn't know, should we eat it? We do know that hot dogs can be made of pork, chicken, beef, turkey, soy, etc., or any combination of those items. Do we just play Russian roulette with sin? Of course we don't if we fear Yahweh and understand that to eat the foods Yahweh declared unclean is a serious sin.

Knowing that unclean animals are so often used in a variety of foods, such as buttermilk, whey, yogurt, gelatin, spaghetti sauce, Jell-O, margarine, cheese and bread just to name a few, I believe it is just as wrong to eat foods containing these ingredients as it is to eat a pork chop. We have to check the source of these. Many of them such as gelatin, enzymes, rennet, monodiglycerides can come from either an animal or a vegetable source.

I understand that some may say that they just don't take such a black and white view of all this. That once something is processed and boiled, it is no longer pig. I would like to know then, where do you draw the line? If rat bones were processed and boiled, made into gelatin and then added to your Jell-O salad, would you be so quick to dismiss it as no longer rat? Of course not! The bottom line is that rat is no more unclean than pig. It's just that we live in a society that puts swine in *everything!!!!*

An excellent point was made by Kenny Vaughan, that if someone was allergic to a certain food such as dairy, peanuts, wheat, etc. and they could possibly die from just a trace amount of these substances, wouldn't it be wise to make sure that your food was absolutely free from such ingredients? How much more should we be concerned about preserving our eternal life than our earthly life?

I've found over the years that one simply cannot assume that just because someone says they keep the food laws that they keep them strictly. At one feast my wife noticed a dip on the table set out for all to eat at a communal lunch. The ingredients were listed on the lid and among them was gelatin. She brought it to the attention of the woman who had brought the dip thinking that all was now taken care of. Returning to the table a few minutes later, she noticed that the dip was still there but *the lid was now gone* leaving the dip for unsuspecting people to eat! Eventually a member of the host assembly removed the dip. I bring this up to point out that we can never assume that people actually keep the food laws by merit of the fact that they are attending a Sabbath meeting or feast.

This brings me to my next point. Should we be eating out at non-kosher restaurants? If we are consistent, we cannot. If we are unable to verify what the ingredients are in the food that

we eat, how can we eat there? A case in point; I recently obtained ingredient lists of both McDonalds and KFC. As I browsed through them I was appalled, but not surprised at the number of items that could be unclean. For example, a “grilled chicken breast filet” on the surface would seem fine. A chicken is clean, so what could possibly be wrong with a chicken breast? There actually were several things on that one item that were potentially unclean. My desire is not to burden people, but to inform and exhort sincere brethren to be diligent in keeping the Torah. Yahweh asks us for total devotion. How can we give Him any less? We are not talking about a gray area. What we are talking about is making sure our food falls in line with the Torah. If 100 % of the food sold in supermarkets were unclean then what would we do? We would have to find a way to eat without buying from them. That isn't the case though. We simply need to check the source of the ingredients. Know what you are eating. Don't just blindly eat anything! One of the men we have fellowshipped with implied that he had no intention of calling companies. Is that the attitude that pleases the Almighty! I hardly think so. Especially not when it comes to a matter of sin. Sin will keep us out of the Kingdom. How do we ever expect to make it through tough times if checking a few ingredients is too much for us! Can we say that giving up eating at restaurants is too much when Yahshua asks us to give our life to and for Him?

Getting back to the restaurants. Do we actually think that when they grill food for us that they make sure the grill or deep fryer has been thoroughly cleaned before they cook our food? What if they just grilled a nice big pork chop, catfish fillet, etc. and 30 seconds later, they throw on your chicken fillet. What about a Chinese restaurant that uses woks? Do you think they clean it after stir-frying somebody's shrimp or pork lo-mein before they cook your vegetarian fried rice? Would it make a difference to you if they had just fixed up a big dish of sweet and sour cat? If you eat at an un-kosher pizza place, I know for a fact that they run that pizza cutter straight from someone's pepperoni pizza, into your veggie delight or cheese pizza. My wife used to help manage one many, many moons ago and she assures me this is true. They do not wash the pizza cutter between each pizza. Can you possibly try to tell me that you are not getting pepperoni, or oil from the pepperoni on your pizza? She even recalls finding little pieces of pepperoni or other ingredients not belonging to her pizza on it. Can you imagine Yahshua eating a chicken leg knowing it was cooked right after and on the same grill as a pork chop? I don't think so. Please explain to me where I am going overboard. I've purposely left out gray areas because I am sure that accusations would pour in that I am going overboard. Please show me. The gray areas are between you and your conscience. The black and white are not.

We love to use Acts chapter 10 to show that Yahweh did not change His mind about the food laws. Peter was repulsed at the very thought of being told to eat anything unclean. Shouldn't his response be ours? Peter obviously took the food laws very seriously. Shouldn't we?

Some of you may be thinking, “If this is the case, how can we be sure what is in *any* of our food?” Unless we grow and prepare all of our own foods, we cannot. At some point we have to take the word of the person/company that prepared it. If they are deceitful, the responsibility is on them. However, if we have been made aware that something may be unclean and we refuse to follow up and find out, then, the sin is on our head. We are not talking

about gray areas like if a gnat flies in your food and totally unaware of that fact, you eat it, we are talking about knowing that an ingredient in a food may be unclean and eating it anyway.

Some of you reading this may not have been aware that certain ingredients can be unclean, or really hadn't thought about eating at restaurants being a sin issue. If that is the case, then make the changes necessary as I did once I became aware. If you are one of those who think my position is extreme or ridiculous, or that I'm being too judgmental, then love me enough to correct me. I welcome the feedback. If I am shown that I am adding to the Torah then I'll back off. If you have been shown that you are taking away from the Torah, will you now change? If you are taking away from the Torah, you need to repent of either knowingly or unknowingly eating what Yahweh forbade.

I realize that no matter how good a case one presents, there will always be those who refuse to obey Yahweh. I do not write for them, but for those who have a hunger and thirst for righteousness, who welcome truth and don't resent those whom they can't refute. I'd like to leave by quoting from one of my heroes. Ezekial 4:14 "But I said "ah Yahweh Elohim! Behold, I have never been defiled; for from my youth until now I have never eaten what died of itself or was torn by beasts, nor has any unclean meat ever entered my mouth." Is this going to be your testimony from now on? I pray so.

If you have any questions or comment, please feel free to contact me at

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John lives in the backwoods of Southwest Missouri with his wife, Susie, and their daughter, Elizabeth. They have been learning and striving to keep Yahweh's Torah for the last 13 years. This article was a joint effort from the whole family. They sincerely pray that you will take it to heart and strive to live for Yahweh to the fullest.