

The Biblical Diet

Divine Instructions for Healthy Living

By David M Rogers
www.BibleTruth.cc
Published: 2006
3rd Edition: January 2011

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For all the talk these days about Universal Health Care for everyone, when is somebody going to check with the primary source of information about the very best health care plan in the world? The Mighty One and Creator has given us instructions in his book - the Bible - about how everyone on earth can enjoy good health and avoid the sicknesses and diseases which afflict and kill more and more of our population.

Nobody enjoys being sick! It's no fun going through the day and the long night with that achy, dreary, itchy, stuffed up, headachy feeling. Or worse, being stuck in bed with a fever, cough, diarrhea and vomiting. Yak! Yeach! Yet this is not out of the ordinary, when the cold and flu season comes around - that is, for people who eat the standard American diet made of meat, dairy, sugar, salt, white flour, whatever-moves-along-the-ground-or-in-the-water.

Well, I've got some more good news for you. You don't have to be sick in bed any longer! That is not the Almighty's will for you. Yahuwah, the Creator of heaven and earth, does not want his people to be ill. His will for you can be summarized by John's words in his third letter:

Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well (3 John 2, NIV).

Yahuwah wants to bless his people with health, prosperity and happiness. The diet he gave us is intended to bring about this kind of physical health and blessing. Now there's a HealthCare Plan we could all appreciate. No more need for expensive Health Care Reform and crippling taxation on working people.

Why So Much Sickness and Disease?

Statistically speaking, most believers in Jesus (whose given Hebrew name is *Yahusha'*) have all the health problems that everyone else in the world has! There is no discernable difference between the healthiness of the people of the world and the healthiness of the people who claim to be believers in the Messiah. Most Christian prayer services and prayer lists consist primarily of health related issues. Colds, flu, pneumonia, HIV, STDs, macular degeneration, restless leg syndrome, cancer, heart disease, stroke and many others are the problems that we are all asked to pray about regularly. What's wrong with this picture?

This long list of health concerns among the Almighty's people seems to contradict the promises of Scripture. Yahuwah promised his people health and long life on the condition that they obey his Instructions. Consider Devarim [Deuteronomy] 11:8 and 9:

Now pay attention to all the commandments I am giving you today, so that you may be strong enough to enter and possess the land where you are headed, and that you may enjoy long life on the land Yahuwah promised to give to your ancestors and their descendants, a land flowing with milk and honey.

Long life is the promise of Yahuwah for those who are in covenant relation with him and obey his commandments. Yet Christians don't live any longer than unbelievers in the world. The numbers indicate that there is no difference between the lifespan of the Christian and the lifespan of the non-Christian.

Why? Is it because Yahuwah is not keeping his promise? Unthinkable! Of course this cannot be the reason believers in Messiah don't live longer than others. The other possibility is implied in Devarim 11:8: "**Now pay attention to all the commandments I am giving you today, so that....**" Yahuwah promised long life on the condition that his people obey his commandments. Perhaps it is because most Christians do not obey his commandments that they don't benefit from this promise.

But there is more to his promise than merely longer life. What good would longer life be if it was spent in the misery of pain and disease? Quality of that longer life is also part of the blessing Yahuwah promises:

If you obey these ordinances and are careful to do them, Yahuwah your Elohim will faithfully keep covenant with you as he promised your ancestors. He will love and bless you, and make you numerous. He will bless you with children, with the produce of your soil, your grain, your new wine, your oil, the offspring of your oxen, and the young of your flocks in the land which he promised your ancestors to give you. You will be blessed beyond all people; there will be no barrenness among you or your livestock. Yahuwah will protect you from all sickness, and you will not experience any of the terrible diseases that you knew in Egypt; rather he will inflict them on all who hate you. (Devarim 7:12-15)

Thus, not only will Yahuwah bless his people who obey his commandments with longer life, but he promises to guard (protect) his obedient ones from all sickness and disease. This is a full-service commitment from the Maker of heaven and earth. He will take care of every area of the life of anyone who wholeheartedly follows him and trustingly obeys all his commandments faithfully.

No reasonable, thinking person could conclude from this that Yahuwah has failed to keep his word. Rather, anyone with eyes or ears and has just a speck of spiritual discernment knows full well that Christians by and large do not keep the commandments of the Creator. In fact, nearly all Christians are quite forthcoming and braggadocios about being under no compulsion or pressure to obey all Yah's commandments. "They were nailed to Messiah's tree," they are quick to retort. "We don't have to obey his commandments under the New Covenant." Yet, that's not what Messiah Yahusha clearly stated in Matthew 5. He stated emphatically that he had not come to destroy the Torah (the Law or Instructions) or the Prophets, but had come to fulfill (obey and explain) them.

The theologians and fathers of Christianity have concocted a theological excuse not to obey the clear instructions given by the Messiah, and have replaced the written Word with their own interpretations, laws and ordinances. And Christians are following these lies and have therefore forfeited the promises of Elohim to keep them free of diseases. This explains why Christians do not see fulfilled in their lives the clear promise from the living Creator to protect them from all diseases and sicknesses.

Just as it is clear and certain from the word of Elohim that he would protect his obedient people from all harm, he unequivocally promises that he would inflict his people with all the diseases and sicknesses which come upon the rest of the world if they refuse to obey his commandments. Mosheh (Moses) explains this emphatically. Regarding those who hard-heartedly refuse to obey the clear instructions of the living Elohim, he explains that

Yahuwah will plague you with deadly diseases until he has completely removed you from the land you are about to possess. He will afflict you with weakness, fever, inflammation, infection, sword, blight, and mildew; these will attack you until you perish. (Devarim 28:21,22)

And not only would he inflict on his people the diseases of the Gentiles, but, if they still refuse to obey his instructions, he would multiply these afflictions even more:

If you refuse to obey all the words of this law, the things written in this scroll, and refuse to fear this glorious and awesome name, Yahuwah your Elohim, then Yahuwah will increase your punishments and those of your descendants--great and long-lasting afflictions and severe, enduring illnesses. He will infect you with all the diseases of Egypt that you dreaded, and they will persistently afflict you. Moreover, Yahuwah will bring upon you every kind of sickness and plague not mentioned in this scroll of commandments until you have perished. (Devarim 28:58-61)

No wonder we keep praying over and over again about all the sickness and diseases that Christians are afflicted with, with no answer from heaven. We keep praying and praying for our sick and dying ones, with no apparent sympathy from our Maker

It seems like he is not only ignoring our prayers for healing for all the nasty diseases, sicknesses and inflictions for our Christian brothers, but he seems to keep piling them on. On the surface, we scratch our heads and wonder if he really is a compassionate and merciful Elohim. But on deeper reflection, we realize that he is merely keeping true to his promises!! Our Christian world is afflicted with disease and illness, sickness and shortness of life because they stubbornly refuse to obey his commandments! The truth of the matter is that Elohim is very compassionate and kind to his people who obey him. But those who disobey are only receiving what he promised to the disobedient. He will not answer the prayers of the disobedient, but rather, he will inflict them with the diseases of the world!.

David's prayer for protection and well-being is based upon his taking refuge in his Maker:

Protect me, O Elohim, for I have taken shelter in you. I say to Yahuwah, "You are the sovereign Master, my only source of well-being." (Psalm 16:1,2)

It is clear that David only expected to be heard from heaven because he was living in obedience to Yah's will. The phrase "taken shelter in you" implies David's compliance with the instructions of Yahuwah. Furthermore, the Scripture affirms that our Creator answers the prayers only of those who obey him:

Yahuwah abhors the sacrifices of the wicked, but the prayer of the upright pleases him. (Proverbs 15:8)

Yahuwah is far from the wicked, but he hears the prayer of the righteous. (Proverbs 15:29)

The "righteous" one is elsewhere defined as one who obeys the Torah, Yahuwah's instructions for his people. In fact, one who refuses to obey the Torah, Scripture tells us, cannot expect to be heard:

The one who turns away his ear from hearing the Torah, even his prayer is an abomination. (Proverbs 28:9)

It should not surprise us, then, that Christians continue to pray and pray about their health issues - all the common illnesses, diseases and inflictions which the unbelievers have - but those prayers are not answered. Yahuwah only promises good health to those who obey his commandments. And he will not listen to the prayers for healing and health from those who refuse to listen to and obey his Torah (Law or Instruction).

The "Garden" Salad

Let's begin to investigate how Yahuwah is going to bless his obedient ones with good health by examining the Scriptures. Elohim's plan for our health can be summarized by the first mention of diet in the Bible. Bereshith [Genesis] 1:29 tells us exactly what Elohim intended for us to eat when he created us.

And Elohim 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."

There you have it. Elohim gave us seed yielding things that grow out of the ground to eat. From the beginning, it was never Elohim's intention for us to be eating animals or animal products! He gave us fresh (raw) fruits, vegetables and grains - those things grown in a garden. These are the best foods which will properly nourish our bodies and keep us healthy.

Just as the manufacturer of our automobile engines tell us exactly what kind of fuel will keep that engine running efficiently, our Maker has instructed us about what kind of food will keep our bodies running smoothly. If the automobile manual states that high octane fuel is best for efficient operation of your car, and then warns not to put diesel fuel or alcohol into the carburetor because they can cause serious damage to it, you would be a fool to put those substances into your gas tank which don't belong. Many an engine has been ruined for this reason.

Another illustration and we will move on. Another substance with doesn't belong in a gas tank is sugar. When sugar is placed in the gasoline, the sugar melts and burns and clogs up the carburetor causing irreparable damage to it. The human body is the same way. Yahuwah told us from the beginning what fuels are to be placed into it, and which should not be put into it. When we place the wrong fuels or substances into our bodies, we run less than efficiently, and often clog up the arteries and cause irreparable damage to our cells and organs, which even surgery cannot correct. All of the illnesses and diseases which mankind encounters are the result of non-food items being consumed.

Yahuwah wants his people to be healthy, free of disease and vibrant. And he has provided us with a diet of healthy and nutritious foods so that we can be. But this can't happen when we are eating so many "foods" that are harmful to our bodies, but are neglecting the foods which He has provided for us. Health and proper nutrition are important to Elohim and should be to us. Bereshith 1:29 speaks plainly about how Yahuwah wants us to properly nourish the human body.

When I and my wife first began to eat a vegetarian diet, we were often met by objections from our loved ones that we would surely not be getting proper nutrition. "What about protein?" we were often asked. How can you get sufficient protein from green leafy substances? Well, my answer is, "the same way a cow gets protein - from eating green grass"! Why do we think we need to eat the meat of a cow to get our protein? The cow doesn't eat other animals to get her protein.

All that is needed by the human body for full and proper nutrition is found in the substances which Yahuwah gave us to eat "in the beginning." It is presumptuous and insulting to our Maker to suggest that we know better than Him how to properly feed ourselves. And such presumptive haughtiness on our part has resulted in illnesses and diseases which have been spread to all who refuse to eat in the manner in which Elohim has instructed us.

"Everything" Permitted After the Flood

But didn't Elohim allow Noah to eat "everything" after the flood?, one familiar with his Bible will argue.

"There. That proves that we can eat everything," he says. But, slow down. Let's not jump to any conclusions just yet. Instead, let's examine the Scripture account and get all the facts. It is written that following the flood, when Noah came out of the ark,

Then Elohim blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. Every living creature of the earth and every bird of the sky will be terrified of you. Everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea are under your authority. You may eat any moving thing that lives. As I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything. But you must not eat meat with its life (that is, its blood) in it. (Bereshith 9:1-4)

There is no getting around it. The translation is accurate to the Hebrew text. The Bible records that Elohim gave "everything" to Noah and his descendants for food, just as at creation he gave the vegetation to mankind for food.

But the first clue that "everything" does not mean "everything" is in the statement that follows. **"But you must not eat meat with its life (that is, its blood) in it."** Clearly there is this limitation to just eating anything. Unless the lifeblood is drained from an animal, Elohim does not permit its consumption. Later in the Torah and in the New Testament, there are emphatic instructions which forbid the eating of meat with its lifeblood in it. The Law says,

Do not eat any meat with the blood still in it (Vayiqra {Leviticus} 19:26)

But you must not eat the blood; pour it out on the ground like water. (Devarim [Deuteronomy] 12:16)

This instruction is elaborated on here:

Any man from the house of Yisrael or any alien living among them who eats any blood-- I will set my face against that person who eats blood and will cut him off from his people. For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life. Therefore I say to the sons of Yisrael, "None of you may eat blood, nor may an alien living among you eat blood. Any Yisraelite or any alien living among you who hunts any animal or bird that may be eaten must drain out the blood and cover it with earth, because the life of every creature is its blood. That is why I have said to the sons of Yisrael, "You must not eat the blood of any creature, because the life of every creature is its blood; anyone who eats it must be cut off." (Vayiqra {Leviticus} 17:10-14)

Eating blood was also forbidden by the Messianic assembly in Jerusalem. Concerning the Gentiles who were coming into the faith, the apostles recommended the following:

Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood. (Acts 15:20)

And there is another compelling reason why we must understand that the "everything" that Elohim permitted mankind to eat after the flood does not include living creatures elsewhere labeled unclean. First, Noah knew the difference between "clean" and "unclean" animals. Before the flood, he was told to gather seven pairs of all the clean animals and two pairs of those creatures that were "unclean." How could he have done this if Elohim does not make a distinction between clean and unclean. The fact that Noah understood these things indicates that animals that are

called "unclean" have always been unclean, from creation and forward.

Secondly, there are extensive instructions in the Law of Mosheh which give us further illumination about what it means that "everything" is now permitted to be eaten. A very detailed list of animals which are not to be eaten are given. The definition of "clean" and "unclean" animals is given in the Law. Therefore, this understanding must have been known by Noah who was told to make a distinction between clean and unclean animals he was to take on the ark.

Furthermore, our Creator has told us that we may eat "everything" which means meat of clean animals which has been drained of its blood. But that doesn't mean that eating meat is best for us. Yahuwah had already given in the garden what are the best foods for humankind. After the flood, he *permitted* meat as an alternate food source.

Consider what Yahusha the Messiah said about divorce. When the Pharisees pressed him on the meaning of the Torah where Mosheh speaks about divorcing an unwanted wife,

Yahusha said to them, "Mosheh permitted you to divorce your wives because of your hard hearts, but from the beginning it was not this way. Now I say to you that whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another commits adultery." (Mattityahu 19:8,9)

Yahuwah (and thus, Mosheh) permitted divorce because of the stubbornness of his people. But divorce was not in the original plan of Yahuwah for his people. Marriage was supposed to be a permanent covenant between a man and a woman. Marriage is a picture of the relationship between Yahuwah and his people, and as such, this covenant was never to have been broken. Just as Yahuwah allowed divorce because the conditions had changed (man became sinful), Elohim allowed meat to be eaten after the flood.

There is compelling evidence from the Scriptures that eating meat is not so good for humans. It seems from the Scripture record that one of the effects of Him allowing meat to be eaten was the shortening of the lifespan of mankind. Consider the following facts: The genealogies listed in Bereshith (Genesis) 5 record the average lifespan of men at approximately 750 years before the flood. But after the flood, after meat was allowed, the lifespan of mankind drops dramatically to about 120 years.

Creation scientists have suggested that the reason for the drop in the length of life after the flood may have been due to the changes in the atmospheric conditions brought on by the flood; specifically, that the water canopy provided protection from the harmful rays of the sun before the flood, accounting for the significantly longer lifespan before the flood. Thus, with that protection gone with the collapse of the vapor canopy, life spans were shortened.

The theory of the creation scientists is speculation at best. While the theory does make sense and would account for the changes, the only thing the Bible says about what has changed after the flood is the statement we are examining about permitting "everything" as food. It is likely that both changes contributed to the shorter life span of mankind. The eating of animal substances and the profound change in earth's atmosphere may account for the significant decrease in the lifespan of mankind.

Yet, an additional word needs to be said regarding the clean meats sold in our markets today. The American meat industry (and others around the globe) has greatly compromised the quality of the meats processed for human consumption. It is common knowledge that animals raised for butchering are filled with growth hormone and artificial chemicals and drugs to combat diseases which run rampant on farms where these animals are raised - not to mention that fact that the animals are never drained of their lifeblood properly. Thus, the meat from most animals sold in the commercial establishments is tainted and greatly compromised in quality and edibility. These chemicals, drugs, hormones and animal blood reek havoc in the human body and are the probable cause of many diseases and health problems in humans.

So, while meat was permitted by Elohim after the worldwide flood in Noah's day, the meat being offered today is a huge problem for health conscious individuals. It is far better to reduce or completely eliminate meat from your diet if you hope to avoid unnecessary diseases caused by the tainted animals sold in your local market. A better option for those who insist on eating meat is to raise your own, or buy from a reputable farm where the animals are properly grown and processed.

Clean and Unclean

Elohim gave instructions in the beginning about what are proper food sources for mankind. He 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." (Bereshith 1:29)

And he gave instructions about what is not proper food and what should not be eaten. Elohim made a distinction between that which is clean and proper for human consumption and that which is inappropriate and harmful if eaten by humans made in his image. Even before the flood which engulfed the earth during Noah's day, a knowledge of the principle of distinguishing between clean and unclean was understood. Noah had a clear understanding of this distinction:

Yahuwah said to Noah, "Come into the ark, you and all your household, for I consider you righteous among this generation. You must take with you seven of every kind of clean animal, the male and its mate, two of every kind of unclean animal, the male and its mate, and also seven of every kind of bird in the sky, male and female, to preserve their offspring on the face of the earth. (Bereshith 7:1-3)

We are told that Noah understood these instructions and complied:

And Noah did all that Yahuwah commanded him. Noah was six hundred years old when the floodwaters engulfed the earth. Noah entered the ark along with his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives because of the floodwaters. Pairs of clean animals, of unclean animals, of birds, and of everything that creeps along the ground, male and female, came into the ark to Noah, just as Elohim had commanded Noah. (Bereshith 7:5-9)

So, those skeptics who would argue that the health laws were only given to ancient Israel by Mosheh at Mt Sinai need to go back and rethink their argument. Clearly, Yahuwah has always forbidden consumption by humans of that which is "unclean."

But the instructions given by Mosheh to the Israelites at Mt Sinai are the only detailed revelation given regarding those animals and fish and birds which are deemed "clean" and are fit for human consumption. Thus, they are instructive to us as well. The general rule of thumb for identifying edible animals is written:

"Tell the sons of Yisrael: 'This is the kind of creature you may eat from among all the animals that are on the land. You may eat any that has a divided hoof (the hooves are completely split in two) and that also chews the cud among the animals'" (Vayiqra 11:2-3).

Thus, it is quite simple to identify those animals which are fit to eat as food. Those that have a divided hoof and also chew their cud.

Unclean animals are those that do not both chew the cud and have a divided hoof. A short list of animals which are not fit for human consumption are listed in Vayiqra (Leviticus) 11:4-8:

There are some that only chew the cud or only have a split hoof, but you must not eat them. The camel, though it chews the cud, does not have a split hoof; it is unclean for you. The coney, though it chews the cud, does not have a split hoof; it is unclean for you. The rabbit, though it chews the cud, does not have a split hoof; it is unclean for you. And the pig, though it has a split hoof completely divided, does not chew the cud; it is unclean for you. You must not eat their meat or touch their carcasses; they are unclean for you.

The Hebrew word here translated as *unclean* is *amj'* (pronounced t•m), and it means *unclean, polluted*. In Devarim (Deuteronomy) 14:3, the instruction reads, "**Do not eat any detestable thing.**" The Hebrew word translated here as detestable thing is *hb'AT* (pronounced t - h-vah), which means *abomination, abhorred thing*, from the root word which means *to abhor, to reject*. Thus, these animals which are unclean are to be abhorred and rejected by Yah's people as food.

Here are some additional instructions about specific animal which are unclean:

Of all the animals that walk on all fours, those that walk on their paws are unclean for you; whoever touches their carcasses will be unclean till evening. (11:27)

Of the animals that move about on the ground, these are unclean for you: the weasel, the rat, any kind of great lizard, the gecko, the monitor lizard, the wall lizard, the skink and the chameleon. Of all those that move along the ground, these are unclean for you. Whoever touches them when they are dead will be unclean till evening. (11:29-31)

Every creature that moves about on the ground is detestable; it is not to be eaten. You are not to eat any creature that moves about on the ground, whether it moves on its belly or walks on all fours or on many feet; it is detestable. (11:41-42)

All of these animals which Elohim declares to be unclean and an abomination to eat are eaten by the world of unbelievers and Christians alike. No wonder Christians have all the same diseases as the rest of the world has!

Among the water creatures, the general rule is:

Of all the creatures living in the water of the seas and the streams, you may eat any that have fins and scales. But all creatures in the seas or streams that do not have fins and scales-- whether among all the swarming things or among all the other living creatures in the water-- you are to detest. And since you are to detest them, you must not eat their meat and you must detest their carcasses. Anything living in the water that does not have fins and scales is to be detestable to you. (Vayiqra 11:9,10)

Those water creatures which have fins and scales may be eaten, but those which do not meet these qualifications are

not to be eaten. We are instructed to *detest* them. This is the Hebrew word #QV, (pronounced sh•k•ts) and this word means) *detest, make abominable*. So, the Word teaches us to abhor the unclean animal and to detest the unclean sea creature. Clearly, these Hebrew synonyms convey to us that all unclean creatures are unfit for human consumption and we are to consider them as disgustingly detestable.

The law for clean birds is a little harder to distinguish. We are given a list of birds in verses 13-20 that are forbidden because they are unclean.

These are the birds you are to detest and not eat because they are detestable: the eagle, the vulture, the black vulture, the red kite, any kind of black kite, any kind of raven, the horned owl, the screech owl, the gull, any kind of hawk, the little owl, the cormorant, the great owl, the white owl, the desert owl, the osprey, the stork, any kind of heron, the hoopoe and the bat. All flying insects that walk on all fours are to be detestable to you.

Most birds are unclean and detestable. But we are told that there are some swarming flying things that can be eaten:

However, this you may eat from all the winged swarming things that walk on all fours, that have jointed legs to hop with on the land. These you may eat from them: the locust of any kind, the katydid of any kind, the cricket of any kind, the grasshopper of any kind. (Vayiqra 11:21,22)

A careful study of the lists of clean and unclean animals in Vayiqra 11 and Devarim 14 reveals an important clue about why some creatures are clean while others are unclean and unfit to be food for us. It seems that, in summary, the clean animals are those that eat only greens, herbs and grains. But creatures which eat other creatures or that eat and roll around in the waste products of other creatures are unclean and inappropriate as food for us.

Next, these laws are summarized and the reason for these laws is given:

Do not defile yourselves by any of these creatures. Do not make yourselves unclean by means of them or be made unclean by them. I am Yahuwah your Elohim; separate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy. Do not make yourselves unclean by any creature that moves about on the ground. I am Yahuwah who brought you up out of Mizrayim to be your Elohim; therefore be holy, because I am holy. These are the regulations concerning animals, birds, every living thing that moves in the water and every creature that moves about on the ground. You must distinguish between the unclean and the clean, between living creatures that may be eaten and those that may not be eaten. (Vayiqra 11:43-47)

The instruction is to avoid these creatures and be holy, like Elohim is holy. We are to make a distinction between things clean and things unclean.

Most Christians do not comprehend the meaning of the English word *holy*. Because it is an abstract term, most people think that it vaguely means "to be like God", but they don't understand exactly how one can be like the Creator. Actually, the Hebrew word here is VAdq' (pronounced k•d sh). This word means *to separate, be set-apart*. What it means is that Elohim wants us to separate ourselves from the practice of eating the abominable things. So to be holy as Elohim is holy means to separate ourselves from all things unclean or sinful and to thereby be more like him.

We see in these rules and principles Elohim's plan for our health, and a glimpse of his loving care for us. It makes

perfectly good sense that our Creator does not want us to be affected and infected with the parasites, germs and diseases which animals that eat dead carcasses or that eat and roll around in fecal matter have in their bodies. Certainly our bodies, fearfully and wonderfully made, are designed to clean themselves of reasonable amounts of unneeded and unwanted substances which find their way into them. But there is a limit to which our bodies can safely handle hazardous materials. If bombarded purposefully and carelessly with dangerous substances such as are found in "unclean" animals, birds and sea creatures, our bodies are unable to safely neutralize and dispose of such harmful substances, and then their ill effect harms our bodies.

Elohim made our bodies in the beginning to run efficiently on the foods which he appointed as such. But pigs, rabbits, mice, shrimp, vultures and all the rest of the so-named unclean creatures were not ever created to be food for our consumption. These creatures have their place and purpose. They are appointed as the "clean-up crew" on the earth. And as created, they do a wonderful job of assisting the creation in recycling waste products back into a form which they can be re-used in the ground to fertilize and grow foods appropriate for human consumption.

A Living Sacrifice

The New Testament speaks volumes about how to care for our physical bodies. In a passage quoted frequently by Christian ministers, Sha'ul (Paul) asks us,

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from Elohim? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor Elohim with your body. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

Here, Sha'ul emphasizes the importance of caring for our physical bodies, because they are the "temple" of the Holy Spirit, that is, they are the home of Elohim's spirit - he literally dwells in our bodies by his Spirit. If this is true (and it is), then we might ask ourselves, what kind of body can Elohim's Spirit reside in? Can he reside in and stay in a body that is corrupted by that which Elohim has declared is abominable? Would Elohim remain in an unclean body which is defiled by that which is detestable to him?

The context of 1 Corinthians 6 explicitly expresses that we should not use our bodies to commit adultery or any of the other scripturally forbidden sexual sins (see Lev. 18). But, honoring Elohim with your body also seems to imply making your body a fitting vessel for him to reside in. And this would suggest not defiling your body with those things which Yahuwah has declared to be unclean and an abomination. How much clearer does it have to be that Elohim wants his people to be set-apart from the world in the way they care for their bodies?

And in another passage quoted frequently by Christians, Sha'ul pleads,

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of Elohim's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to Elohim-- this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what Elohim's will is-- his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:1-2).

This is speaking about our physical bodies. What is this spiritual act of worship which we are to be doing with our bodies? He instructs us to hand over our body to God - not just any way, but our body is to be holy and pleasing to Him.

What does it mean that our body is to be holy and pleasing to Him? The instructions in Vayiqra regarding clean and unclean clearly inform us how to keep our bodies holy (set-apart from sin). We are commanded to separate ourselves from the pagan practice of eating that which Elohim has declared to be unclean! Thus, the exhortation to offer our bodies as holy and pleasing can have no other meaning than to be pure from all sin and uncleanness - meaning what we put into our bodies and what we do with our bodies.

Paul next says not to conform ourselves to the pattern of this world. He is still talking about offering our bodies to Elohim in a holy and pleasing way. This conforming that we are to avoid is the eating of all the abominable things that the world eats and thinks is okay. Instead, we are to transform our minds in this regard by reading and studying and applying the Scriptural laws and instructions about how we are to take care of our bodies before Elohim. Again, the renewing of our minds is clearly an allusion to the teachings in Leviticus 11 about clean and unclean and holiness before our Maker.

Elohim's good and pleasing and perfect will for your body is expressed in the Instructions of Leviticus! When you "test and approve" these teachings about clean and unclean, you will experience for yourself that Elohim's will for you in the things he wants you to eat is indeed good and pleasing and perfect, because you will be healthier, and you will feel much better, and you will be "clean" before the Almighty.

This matter of being careful not to eat things which Yahuwah has declared to be unclean and an abomination is much more important than at first glimpse. The commandment to avoid what is unclean and to eat only what is declared by Elohim to be clean is at the heart of what it means to be holy:

But I said to you, "You will possess their land; I will give it to you as an inheritance, a land flowing with milk and honey." I am Yahuwah your Elohim, who has set you apart from the nations. "You must therefore make a distinction between clean and unclean animals and between unclean and clean birds. Do not defile yourselves by any animal or bird or anything that moves along the ground-- those which I have set apart as unclean for you. You are to be holy to me because I, Yahuwah, am holy, and I have set you apart from the nations to be my own. (Vayiqra 20:24-26)

Yahuwah is setting his people apart (making holy) from the nations to be a people unto himself. For this reason, Yahuwah commands his people to steer clear of those things which defile the body.

Furthermore, making distinctions between clean and unclean is a *spiritual* exercise, not merely physical, and is equal in importance to making distinctions between what is set-apart (holy) and what is common:

You must distinguish between the holy and the common, between the unclean and the clean, and you must teach the sons of Yisrael all the decrees Yahuwah has given them through Mosheh." (Vayiqra 10:10-11)

That Elohim has commanded his people to be set-apart does not mean just in thought and intent. Being set-apart (holy) has very much to do with what we put into our bodies.

In still another New Testament passage, the apostle Paul explicitly invokes the Torah teaching about clean and unclean where he exhorts the followers of Messiah to stay away from that which is unclean:

"Therefore come out from them and be separate," says Yahuwah. "Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters," says Yahuwah Almighty. (2 Corinthians 6:17-18)

Here, the promise of Yahuwah that he will be an Elohim to us is contingent upon our separating ourselves from all worldliness and setting ourselves apart from all that is unclean.

Did Yahusha Declare All Things Clean?

Since Scripture describes as unclean those creatures whose purpose in creation was not for consumption, but for the recycling of the waste products in the environment, does it make any sense at all that Elohim changed his mind about the appropriateness of these creatures for human consumption and nourishment? Does it make any sense at all, that Messiah Yahusha would have "declared all things clean" which were, from their very purpose in creation, made NOT to be food, but for cleanup? Does it make any sense at all that Elohim now approves and gives his blessing to the human ingestion of creatures which will bring harm, disease and death to the ones who would eat them?

Of course not! It would be a fair assessment to describe those people who would purport such a scenario as God-hating, rejecters of plain simple truth (though many of them are just deceived). Such proponents of eating that which is by nature harmful to humans must have an agenda whose end is to bring harm and death to those who believe such a lie. Those "experts" who try to tell us that Elohim will bless and prosper those who eat such things must surely be antagonistic towards the Creator's ways and truth.

We would expect the enemy of our souls to try to convince those who love the truth and serve the Creator of such nonsense and to lure them into such a lie. And that he does. Satan is the father of lies. But we see Christian scholars, pastors and teachers doing this in the name of Messiah. Those Christian leaders in their churches are teaching as truth what is, to any clear-thinking individual who has an ounce of common sense, plainly and clearly a lie from the father of lies. Worse yet, they attribute to our Messiah this teaching that what our Creator declared to be "unclean" and inappropriate for human consumption as now "clean" and good for food! Talk about slight of hand trickery, of the variety of crooks and cheats at a poker table. This is the worst kind of deception on the unsuspecting sheep in the churches.

The primary "proof text" of Scripture which these false prophets and false teachers who are leading the sheep away from truth use to convince us that our Torah observant Messiah declared all unclean creatures to be clean is found in Mark 7:

Then he called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, everyone, and understand. There is nothing outside of a person that can defile him by going into him. Rather, it is what comes out of a person that defiles him." Now when Yahusha had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about the parable. He said to them, "Are you so foolish? Don't you understand that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him? For it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and then goes out into the sewer." (This means all foods are clean.) (Mark 7:14-19)

This text, based on the New American Standard Version, like nearly all English Bible translations, interprets and translates the Greek text of Mark as saying that Messiah declared all unclean creatures to now be clean and good for food! What an **incredible lie** perpetrated by Bible "scholars" in whom millions of people trust!

To find out what this Scripture is really saying and teaching us, we start in the parallel passage in Matthew's gospel chapter 15:

Then Pharisees and experts in the law came from Yerushalayim to Yahusha and said, "Why do your disciples disobey the tradition of the elders? For they don't wash their hands when they eat." He answered them, "And why do you disobey the commandment of Elohim because of your tradition? (Mattityahu 15:1-3)

The first thing we notice about this teaching is that there is no mention of the "clean vs. unclean" debate. If we want to understand the correct interpretation, then we need to know what question is being addressed. The subject of this teaching by the Master in Matt 15 is "washing one's hand before eating."

There is no commandment in Scripture about washing one's hands before partaking of food. If someone tells you that Elohim commanded us to wash our hands before eating, then you should be made aware that that person doesn't know the Scriptures and has accepted and believed the lie that is being told about this saying of Messiah. I repeat, Elohim says nothing to us in Torah about washing hands before eating a meal.

But the Pharisees have something to say about washing the hands. A well-known teaching (*takenah*) of the Pharisees is that one must undergo a ritual cleaning of the hands before a meal. But this is a man-made teaching! In their Oral Law, the Pharisees teach that hands have to be washed to remove any defilement that would cause anything touched (i.e., food) to become unclean. Yahuwah never said this. The Pharisees did! And so Yahusha replies to these legalistic Pharisees (they are "legalistic" because they want to enforce *man-made commandments!*), "**And why do you disobey the commandment of Elohim because of your tradition?** (Mattityahu 15:3).

This response of Yahusha is to draw attention to the fact that the Pharisees were suggesting that their own commandments superseded the commands of Elohim. And he gives another example of this:

For Elohim said, 'Honor your father and mother' and 'Whoever insults his father or mother must be put to death.' But you say, 'If someone tells his father or mother, "Whatever help you would have received from me is given to Elohim," he does not need to honor his father.' You have nullified the word of Elohim on account of your tradition. (vs. 4-6)

The commandment of Scripture to "**honor your father and mother**" includes the responsibility one has to take care of your parents in their older years. The Pharisees, however, in their greed wanted to convince people that it is acceptable to take the money one should be using to care for their parents and to put that money in the temple treasury instead! Thus, they could rob people of this money and use it to their own ends. At the end of the day, they taught that their own commands to put that money in their treasury boxes was more important than helping one's own parents, and thus, their commandment superseded the command of Yahuwah.

So he calls them "hypocrites." A hypocrite is a "fake" or "pretender" (the Greek word means "play actor").

Hypocrites! Yesha'yahu prophesied correctly about you when he said, 'This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me, and they worship me in vain, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' (vs 7-9)

This quotation from the prophet Yeshayahu 29:9-14 speaks of a large number of people who claim to worship Elohim. In their sinful human nature, people want to appear as worshipping Elohim and obeying him, but in their hearts they want to live their life in the own ways, following their own evil desires. The Pharisees were such. They wanted to appear righteous by showing off in public places, but they refused to honor Elohim by obeying his clear commandments. They made up their own laws and rules which they taught were more important than Yahuwah's instructions.

Finally, he comes to a conclusion about washing the hands:

Then he called the crowd to him and said, "Listen and understand. What defiles a person is not what goes into the mouth; it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles a person." (vs. 10-11)

When his own disciples didn't understand what he was saying, he explained this parable to them:

Then the disciples came to him and said, "Do you know that when the Pharisees heard this saying they were offended?" And he replied, "Every plant that my heavenly Father did not plant will be uprooted. Leave them! They are blind guides. If someone who is blind leads another who is blind, both will fall into a pit." But Peter said to him, "Explain this parable to us." Yahusha said, "Even after all this, are you still so foolish? Don't you understand that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach and then passes out into the sewer? But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these things defile a person. For out of the heart come evil ideas, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are the things that defile a person; it is not eating with unwashed hands that defiles a person." (vs. 12-20)

Note carefully again that Yahusha is NOT talking about "clean vs. unclean" here. He is talking about food eaten with "dirty" hands. He explains why food eaten with dirty hands is not detrimental to one's health: "**whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach and then passes out into the sewer.**" This is a vital piece of information because we see the parallel account of this saying in Mark's gospel, which is misinterpreted to mean that "he made all things clean" (More about this later).

The conclusion of the matter is stated emphatically in verse 20: "**These are the things that defile a person; it is not eating with unwashed hands that defiles a person.**" Dirt from the hands that accompanies food which enters into the body does not defile the body. The food enters the belly and then passes out of the body. But what makes a man unclean are the things a person says and the wicked deeds a person does. What we should surmise from this teaching is that followers of Messiah should not take heed to man-made commandments, and should not add to or subtract from the Instructions of Scripture. And we could also reasonably conclude that Yahusha did not give permission to eat that which has been declared to be unclean.

Now let's consider the parallel in the gospel of Mark 7.

Now the Pharisees and some of the experts in the law who came from Yerushalayim gathered around him. And they saw that some of Yahusha's disciples ate their bread with unclean hands, that is, unwashed. (Mark 7:1-2)

Here, as in Mattityahu's account, the subject is NOT "clean vs. unclean" but rather "eating with unwashed hands." And as in Mattityahu's account, the writer explains about the reason the Pharisees demand a washing of hands:

(For the Pharisees and all the Yehudim do not eat unless they perform a ritual washing, holding fast to the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. They hold fast to many other traditions: the washing of cups, pots, kettles, and dining couches.) The Pharisees and the experts in the law asked him, "Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with unwashed hands?" (vs. 3-5)

The Pharisees perform a ritual washing because it is part of their Oral Law, not of the Written Scriptures. You will not

find anything about this ritual washing of hands in the Torah of Mosheh, the written word of Elohim.

Then, Yahusha rebukes the Pharisees for their emphasis on their own commandments over against the commandments of Scripture:

He said to them, "Yesha'yahu prophesied correctly about you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. They worship me in vain, teaching as doctrine the commandments of men.' Having no regard for the command of Elohim, you hold fast to human tradition." (vs. 6-8)

The Pharisees reject the instructions of Scripture and instead teach and promote their own commands and traditions. Next, as recorded in Mattityahu, he gives a practical example of how the Pharisees elevate their own traditions over the Scriptures:

He also said to them, "You neatly reject the commandment of Elohim in order to set up your tradition. For Mosheh said, 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'Whoever insults his father or mother must be put to death.' But you say that if anyone tells his father or mother, 'Whatever help you would have received from me is *corban*' (that is, a gift for Elohim), then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother. Thus you nullify the word of Elohim by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like this." (vs. 9-13)

At this point, Yahusha speaks a word of explanation to the crowds about the meaning of his response to the Pharisees:

Then he called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, everyone, and understand. There is nothing outside of a person that can defile him by going into him. Rather, it is what comes out of a person that defiles him." (vs. 14-15)

Following this, he explains privately to his own disciples the meaning of his teaching. But notice that verse 19 is rendered like most English Bibles. (I will correct and explain afterwards what verse 19 is actually telling us):

Now when Yahusha had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about the parable. He said to them, "Are you so foolish? Don't you understand that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him? For it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and then goes out into the sewer." (This means all foods are clean.) He said, "What comes out of a person defiles him. For from within, out of the human heart, come evil ideas, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, evil, deceit, debauchery, envy, slander, pride, and folly. All these evils come from within and defile a person." (vs. 17-23)

The teaching is clear: That which enters into a man (with dirty hands via the mouth) goes in and then gets eliminated. But that which comes out of the mouth, that is, the words spoken by a man, are what defiles him.

The critical point of the passage is in verse 19, where English Bible translators typically render the text something like above: **For it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and then goes out into the sewer." (This means all foods are clean.)** This is parallel to Mattityahu's account which reads: **"Don't you understand that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach and then passes out into the sewer?"** (Matt 15:17). Unfortunately for most readers, the translators misunderstood what Yahusha was saying and stumbled over a difficult Greek expression.

Did Yahusha really declare "all foods are clean" by this saying? If Messiah is declaring all meats clean, then he is contradicting his own teaching in the Sermon on the Mount where he emphatically declares:

Do not think that I have come to abolish the Torah or the prophets. I have not come to abolish these things but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth pass away not the smallest letter or stroke of a letter will pass from the Torah until everything takes place. So anyone who breaks one of the least of these commands and teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever obeys them and teaches others to do so will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.
(Mattityahu 5:17-19)

And he would also be taking away from the Torah and adding to the Torah, which is strictly forbidden by the Torah. Clearly, this is not a reasonable or viable outcome of interpretation. Messiah had come to explain and fulfill the Torah, not to abolish it.

The answer to this riddle is in the very words of the Greek text. The end of verse 19 literally say:

Mark 7:19 kai. eij ton afedrwna ekporeuetai(kaqarizwn panta ta. brwmata

This Greek phrase is usually translated by most English Bibles something like: "and goes out into the sewer. This means all foods are clean."

Breaking down the individual Greek words:

afedrwn (*aphedron*) toilet(?), from **afedroj**, the same Macedon. word which in Lev. 12:5; 15:19ff answers to the Hebrew **נדה** (*nida*) – clearly a reference to menstrual bleeding (the elimination of blood and contaminates from the woman's body)

Most English Bibles are painfully inadequate in their rendering of this phrase, **eij ton afedrwna**. Here, for example, interpreters translated **afedrwn** as "sewer" in the expression, "and then goes out into the sewer." But *aphedron* refers rather to the process whereby a woman's body gets flushed in the monthly menstrual cycle.

kaqarizw (*katharizo*) to cleanse, to heal, to purify, to remove (for the purpose of purification)

panta (*panta*) all things

brwna (*broma*) things eaten, food, items consumed

Following the expression which describes the elimination of food from the body is the explanation: **kaqarizwn panta ta. brwmata** which should be literally rendered, "purifying (or removing) all things eaten." Thus the subsequent editorial is that the food goes into the stomach and then "goes out into the toilet" (i.e. "gets eliminated"), removing all things which have been eaten.

A better rendering of Mark 7:19 is:

because it does not go into the heart, but into the belly, and goes out as a discharge, removing all things eaten.

Yahusha was NOT "declaring all things clean"! He was merely describing how things eaten with dirty hands get eliminated (removed) from the body in a bowel movement! Pardon the crudity of the explanation, but this is precisely the point the Master is making. Food eaten with unwashed hands gets eliminated out of the body, but sinful words proceeding from the mouth of a man defile him.

So it turns out that the shameful mistranslation of Mark 7:19 accounts for the misunderstanding about Messiah's teaching regarding unwashed hands. Messiah never declared clean that which is unclean and an abomination. Messiah upheld the Law to the very last "jot and tittle."

That's it! These are the texts which "prove" that Yahusha Messiah changed the Law and declared all things to be clean. And because of this irresponsible misinterpretation of the text, millions of Christians eat all manner of items that the Creator has identified as "unclean" and "abomination." Those items which defile the human body and which were never intended to be ingested are eaten by people who make claim to love God and to belong to the Messiah. This ought not to be.

What Did Peter Learn in His Dream of the Sheet?

Additional support for the unfounded supposition that Messiah "declared all things clean" is the dream of Kepha (Peter). Most Christian interpreters, pastors and teachers insist that Peter's dream is incontrovertible proof that Elohim has changed the Law and made all things that used to be an abomination to eat and even to touch, clean!

The background of this incident finds the players in a situation where the Jews wanted to have nothing to do with Gentiles. The Pharisees and Scribes had made it very clear in their Oral tradition that Gentiles were the scum of the earth. They called them "dogs." Thus, a devout Jew who wanted to please Elohim was to have nothing to do with dirty Gentiles. (This sentiment is still alive and well today among many in the Orthodox community.)

So, let's find out what Kepha's dream is intended to teach.

Now there was a man in Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of what was known as the Italian Cohort. He was a devout, Elohim-fearing man, as was all his household; he did many acts of charity for the people and prayed to Elohim regularly. About three o'clock one afternoon he saw clearly in a vision an angel of Elohim who came in and said to him, "Cornelius." Staring at him and becoming greatly afraid, Cornelius replied, "What is it, Lord?" The angel said to him, "Your prayers and your acts of charity have gone up as a memorial before Elohim. Now send men to Joppa and summon a man named Simon, who is called Kepha (Peter). This man is staying as a guest with a man named Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea." (Acts 10:1-6)

Until this point in time, all of Yahusha Messiah's talmidim (disciples) were ALL Jewish. But here, this devout Gentile follower of Elohim is told to approach the leader of Messiah's talmidim. So Cornelius does what he is told.

While Cornelius is making his way to meet with Kepha, Kepha gets alone to pray:

About noon the next day, while they were on their way and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. He became hungry and wanted to eat, but while

they were preparing the meal, a trance came over him. He saw heaven opened and an object something like a large sheet descending, being let down to earth by its four corners. In it were all kinds of four-footed animals and reptiles of the earth and wild birds. Then a voice said to him, "Get up, Peter; slaughter and eat!" But Peter said, "Certainly not, Lord, for I have never eaten anything defiled and ritually unclean!" (Acts 10:9-14)

The trance that overcame Kepha was Elohim's method of teaching him a profoundly important lesson. In the dream, Kepha sees all manner of disgusting unclean creatures. He must have cringed in his mind's eye. But the voice from heaven tells him to "kill and eat," to which he naturally objects, "No way. I don't eat those abominable things." Simon Kepha was very much aware that things declared "unclean" are off limits to those who serve Yahuwah. But the voice from heaven said, "**What Elohim has made clean, you must not consider ritually unclean!**" (vs15). Then, this same sequence of events happens two more times.

"Now while Peter was puzzling over what the vision he had seen could signify, the men sent by Cornelius had learned where Simon's house was and approached the gate" (vs 17). Peter was confused about the vision. He knew full well that the Torah was not abolished or changed. So he couldn't figure out what is it that Elohim was declaring to be "clean." So the men at his gate

called out to ask if Simon, known as Kepha (Peter), was staying there as a guest. While Peter was still thinking seriously about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Look! Three men are looking for you. But get up, go down, and accompany them without hesitation, because I have sent them." So Peter went down to the men and said, "Here I am, the person you're looking for. Why have you come?" They said, "Cornelius the centurion, a righteous and Elohim-fearing man, well spoken of by the whole Jewish nation, was directed by a set-apart angel to summon you to his house and to hear a message from you." So Peter invited them in and entertained them as guests. On the next day he got up and set out with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa accompanied him. (Acts 10:18-23)

This is an astounding thing for a Jew to do. Kepha invited this Gentile into his home as his guest. Until this very moment, any Gentile was unfit to be in the presence of a Jew, much less be invited into a Jew's home. But the text doesn't say they sat down to a pork chop meal!! That's the furthest thing from anyone's mind.

What can we conclude about the meaning of the vision? Was Yahuwah declaring now that all unclean beasts, filthy birds and abominable reptiles and rodents were now clean to be eaten by Elohim-fearing people? No! Of course not. Kepha explains precisely what the vision means:

The following day he entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting anxiously for them and had called together his relatives and close friends. So when Peter came in, Cornelius met him, fell at his feet, and worshiped him. But Peter helped him up, saying, "Stand up. I too am a mere mortal." Peter continued talking with him as he went in, and he found many people gathered together. He said to them, "You know that it is unlawful for a Yehudi to associate with or visit a Gentile, yet Elohim has shown me that I should call no person defiled or ritually unclean. Therefore when you sent for me, I came without any objection. (Acts 10:24-29)

Can it get any clearer than that? Kepha himself explains the meaning of the vision of the unclean beasts being let down on a sheet. He does not interpret the vision as indicating that unclean things are now clean. The vision was intended to teach that Gentiles are no longer to be considered "unclean." That's it.

Then Kepha cements this interpretation in his follow-up explanation of the vision of the sheet:

Then Peter started speaking: "I now truly understand that Elohim does not show favoritism in dealing with people, but in every nation the person who fears him and does what is right is welcomed before him. You know the message he sent to the people of Yisrael, proclaiming the good news of peace through Yahusha Messiah (Acts 10:34-36).

Kepha had come to the conclusion through the vision of the sheet that Gentiles were to be treated as human beings and not as dogs. So, let's have no more of that nonsense that the Spirit was teaching what is profoundly ridiculous: namely, that those things that are to be regarded as an abomination can now be eaten with a clear conscience.

Did Paul Give Permission to Eat Any and All Things?

What about Sha'ul (a.k.a. Paul)? Did he support the proposition that all things unclean have been declared clean and permissible to eat? It should be obvious now that Sha'ul taught no such thing. But, as Kepha wrote, and as we now see in the world of Christianity, people twist and distort the Scriptures

just as also our dear brother Sha'ul (Paul) wrote to you, according to the wisdom given to him, speaking of these things in all his letters. Some things in these letters are hard to understand, things the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they also do to the rest of the scriptures. Therefore, dear friends, since you have been forewarned, be on your guard that you do not get led astray by the error of these unprincipled men and fall from your firm grasp on the truth. 2 Kepha 3:15-17)

The reason people distort and misinterpret Paul is the same reason they distort the rest of Scripture - because they are ignorant about the teaching of the Torah. It should be clear to everyone who reads and loves the Scriptures that there are certain creatures that are "unclean" to humans. They are not fit for human consumption. This teaching is clear and plain and has not been altered. It is clear because Elohim himself said so. Therefore, no man may change it. Nevertheless, there are some who continue to distort and misrepresent the teachings of Sha'ul.

One of the greatest theological debates of that first generation of disciples of Yahusha Messiah was that of eating meat offered to idols. According to the strict rules of the Pharisees, meat offered to idols was "unclean" and forbidden as food, because eating of such would, in their thinking, constitute participation in idolatry. Also, they taught that meat not killed and drained according to their own practice and rules was unclean. So, those controversies over what could be considered "clean" and "unclean," even for foods that the Scriptures declared to be clean, were faced by all who cling to Messiah. Sha'ul addresses some of these issues to the Corinthians:

With regard to food sacrificed to idols, we know that "we all have knowledge." Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. If someone thinks he knows something, he does not yet know to the degree that he needs to know. But if someone loves Elohim, he is known by Elohim. With regard then to eating food sacrificed to idols, we know that "an idol in this world is nothing," and that "there is no Elohim but one." If after all there are so-called elohim, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many elohim and many lords), yet for us there is one Elohim, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we live, and one Masster, Yahusha Messiah, through whom are

all things and through whom we live. (1 Corinthians 8:1-6)

Sha'ul's argument is that there really is no such thing as another elohim, since the true and only Elohim is One. Therefore, those who offer edible (clean) meats to idols are doing so in their imaginations. Such meat is really not "unclean" just because a pagan offered it up in sacrifice to his god. It is still good to eat.

But this knowledge is not shared by all. And some, by being accustomed to idols in former times, eat this food as an idol sacrifice, and their conscience, because it is weak, is defiled. Now food will not bring us close to Elohim. We are no worse if we do not eat and no better if we do. But be careful that this liberty of yours does not become a hindrance to the weak. For if someone weak sees you who possess knowledge dining in an idol's temple, will not his conscience be "strengthened" to eat food offered to idols? So by your knowledge the weak brother or sister, for whom Messiah died, is destroyed. If you sin against your brothers or sisters in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Messiah. For this reason, if food causes my brother or sister to sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I may not cause one of them to sin. (1 Corinthians 8:7-13)

The weak brother is NOT defined here as the one who won't eat meats declared to be unclean by the Torah of Mosheh. The "weak" brother is the one who is afraid to eat meat sacrificed to idols. Because the Pharisees have declared such meats offered to be idols, the weak in conscience are afraid to eat, out of respect for the teachings of the Sanhedrin. But Sha'ul is explaining that such reasoning is nonsense. Eating meat sacrificed to idols is nothing. It doesn't make one better or worse. It's just meat.

This teaching by the Pharisees was widespread during this time. So, in nearly every congregation in every city where Sha'ul preached the message of Messiah, he had to undo the brainwashing done by the religious rulers. He had to reinforce the truth that Messiah has set us free from the commandments of men, including the rules and regulations of the Oral Torah of the Pharisees. So we see this teaching about "the weak and the strong" taught a number of times in Sha'ul's letters.

Again, to the Romans, Sha'ul is addressing the problems of eating food sacrificed to idols, and other Pharisaic rules and regulations:

Now receive the one who is weak in the faith, and do not have disputes over differing opinions. One person believes in eating everything, but the weak person eats only vegetables. The one who eats everything must not despise the one who does not, and the one who abstains must not judge the one who eats everything, for Elohim has accepted him. Who are you to pass judgment on another's servant? Before his own Adonai he stands or falls. And he will stand, for Yahuwah is able to make him stand. (Romans 14:1-4)

Some of the followers of Messiah had come to the conclusion that it would be best not to eat meat offered to idols and so, were inclined not to eat any meat at all, just to be sure not to eat idol food. The teaching here is to those "weak" ones who decided not to eat any meat. Sha'ul exhorts them to not judge those who eat the meat offered to idols, because again, there really is nothing wrong with eating such meat. And the one who eat this meat shouldn't despise the one who will only eat vegetables.

Sha'ul continues his exhortation:

But you who eat vegetables only--why do you judge your brother or sister? And you

who eat everything--why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of Elohim. For it is written, "As I live, says Yahuwah, every knee will bow to me, and every tongue will give praise to Elohim." Therefore, each of us will give an account of himself to Elohim. (Romans 14:10-12)

The vegetable eater should not condemn the one who eats the idol meat. And the meat eater should not hate the "weak" brother who won't eat the idol meat. For each of us will answer to Elohim for our actions.

He then makes a statement which is difficult for some to understand, because they don't understand the context of the issue:

I know and am convinced in the Master Yahusha that there is nothing unclean in itself; still, it is unclean to the one who considers it unclean. For if your brother or sister is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy by your food someone for whom Messiah died. Therefore do not let what you consider good be spoken of as evil. For the kingdom of Elohim does not consist of food and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Set-apart Spirit. (Romans 14:14-17)

This declaration that Sha'ul is "convinced that nothing is unclean in itself" must be interpreted in the greater context of the teaching here. He is NOT talking about things declared by Elohim to be unclean. He is talking about meat sacrificed to idols. He is talking about a man-made commandment. He had already explained elsewhere that an idol is nothing in the world. Therefore, sacrificing to idols does nothing at all to make the meat unclean. Therefore, it is clean, even if some (the Pharisees and legalists) regard it as "unclean."

The conclusion of the matter exactly parallels the conclusion he came to in 1 Corinthians 8:13:

Do not destroy the work of Elohim for the sake of food. For although all things (i.e. meats sacrificed to idols) are clean, it is wrong to cause anyone to stumble by what you eat. It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything that causes your brother to stumble. (Romans 14:20, 21)

It is best not to eat meat sacrificed to idols, even though there is nothing wrong with it, if it causes a brother to stumble and sin in his conscience.

In every place where Paul discusses the weak and strong brother and the issue of eating meat, he is not speaking about meats that are from unclean animals, he is speaking about meats declared "unclean" by the Pharisees because those "clean" meats were offered to idols and have thus become, in their opinion, "unclean." By contrast, nowhere does Paul teach that it is alright for followers of the Messiah to eat items which Elohim has declared to be unclean.

Conclusion

Elohim has given all the instructions we need to live healthy lives, free of disease, sickness and malady. He gave us the instructions we need to eat healthy and stay clean before Him. He created a balanced world in which all things have a purpose. Some things belong to the cleanup crew. And thus, he doesn't want humans made in his image to eat those things which harm and contaminate the human body. This has never changed. What would contaminate people at Creation will still contaminate them now.

Elohim's Instructions to us for our good and well being have not changed. Let's obey the Instructions which were given for our good and prosperity. Let's regard as an abomination that which our Creator regards as abomination. Elohim wants a holy people, separated from all sin and uncleanness. So, let's be his set-apart people and steer clear of all things "unclean."

