

# LEVITICUS

*be holy as I am holy*

## Leviticus 11

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, 2  
“Say to the Israelites: ‘Of all the animals that live on land, these are the ones you may eat: 3 You may eat any animal that has a split hoof completely divided and that chews the cud. 4 “ ‘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 ceremonially unclean for you.



The coney, though it chews the cud, does not have a split hoof; it is unclean for you.



6 The rabbit, though it chews the cud, does not have a split hoof; it is unclean for you. 7 And the pig, though it has a split hoof completely divided, does not chew the cud; it is unclean for you. 8 You must not eat their meat or touch their carcasses; they are unclean for you.



9 “ ‘Of all the creatures living in the water of the seas and the streams, you may eat any that have fins and scales. 10 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. 11 And since you are to detest them, you must not eat their meat and you must detest their carcasses. 12 Anything living in the water that does not have fins and scales is to be detestable to you.



13 “ ‘These are the birds you are to detest and not eat because they are detestable: the eagle, the vulture, the black vulture, 14 the red kite, any kind of black kite, 15 any kind of raven, 16 the horned owl, the screech owl, the gull, any kind of hawk, 17 the little owl, the cormorant, the great owl, 18 the white owl, the desert owl, the osprey, 19 the stork, any kind of heron, the hoopoe and the bat.



20 “ ‘All flying insects that walk on all fours are to be detestable to you. 21 There are, however, some winged creatures that walk on all fours that you may eat: those that have jointed legs for hopping on the ground. 22 Of these you may eat any kind of locust, katydid, cricket or grasshopper.

23 But all other winged creatures that have four legs you are to detest.

24 “ ‘You will make yourselves unclean by these; whoever touches their carcasses will be unclean till evening. 25 Whoever picks up one of their carcasses must wash his clothes, and he will be unclean till evening.

43 Do not defile yourselves by any of these creatures. Do not make yourselves unclean by means of them or be made unclean by them. 44 I am the Lord your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy. Do not make yourselves unclean by any creature that moves about on the ground.

45 I am the Lord who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy.



## The Omnivore's Conundrum



AND YOU  
SHALL BE  
TO ME A  
KINGDOM  
OF PRIESTS  
AND A  
HOLY  
NATION

....  
EXO. 19:6

“Impurity is the realm of death  
and life is the only antidote.

Life purges the sanctuary by nullifying,  
overpowering and absorbing the  
Israelites’ impurities that adhere to it,  
allowing the divine presence to remain  
and Israel to survive.”

Jacob Milgrom



Three primary instructions regarding  
dietary regulations in the Torah

1. Animal food choices are severely limited, only domesticated herbivorous species.  
(No restrictions on the vegetable and fruit kingdom)

2. Animals must only be killed by those who are qualified by skill and piety. Skill in applying a hallowed technique of slaughtering that renders death painless & piety in being aware of the divine sanction permitting such slaughter, ensuring those employed as butchers do not become brutalized through incessant killing.

3. Even the few permitted animals are not fit for consumption until their blood is drained. (Lev 17:14b)

Humans have the right to nourishment but not the right to the life of others. Blood, the symbol of life, must be drained and returned to God.

Nefesh



If they kill, they must die. (Ex 21:28)

Animals are part of God's Covenant (Gen 9:9-10)

Animals belonging to Israelites must keep Sabbath. (Ex 20:10, Deut 5:14)

Firstborn male animals are God's property.

In the Messianic age,  
they renew their covenant with God (Hos 2:20)  
and will no longer be predators. (Is 11:3)

Dietary Commands given in the  
Garden  
Given to Noah  
Given to Israel  
Given to the Church  
Upheld in Acts 15 ... no blood.

When the Lord your God enlarges your territory, as he has promised you, and you say, "I am going to eat some meat," because you wish to eat meat, you may eat meat whenever you have the desire. If the place where the Lord your God will choose to put his name is too far from you, and you slaughter as I have commanded you any of your herd or flock that the Lord has given you, then you may eat within your towns whenever you desire. Indeed, just as gazelle or deer is eaten, so you may eat it; the unclean and the clean alike may eat it.

Only be sure that you do not eat the blood; for the blood is the life, and you shall not eat the life with the meat. Do not eat it; you shall pour it out on the ground like water. Do not eat it, so that all may go well with you and your children after you, because you do what is right in the sight of the Lord. (Deut 12:21)

Implications for us Today

A Holy Table

God's Commands in the Garden



Just cause you want it doesn't mean  
you get to have it ...

Distinguishing between that which is  
prohibited and permitted is God's  
first command to humanity.

**Preservation of our Humanity  
through Respect for Life**

**The Bible's dietary laws are God's  
method of taming the killer instinct  
in humans. An ethical system by  
which Israel will not be brutalized by  
the killing of animals for their flesh.**

**Animal life is conceded to humanity's lust  
and need only on the condition that a  
qualified few will actually do the killing and  
that death must be effected in such a way  
(by painless slaughter and spilling the blood)  
that the slaughterer's sense of reverence for  
life may never be blunted.**

**How animals are treated matters.  
How people are treated matters.**

Stop. Remember. Thank.

“When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you.”

Deuteronomy 8:10

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