



Dietary Laws in Scripture

In this article we examine the subjects of **Vegetarianism** and the **dietary laws in Scripture**. Let me deal with vegetarianism first.

Vegetarianism

Millions of people do not eat meat for a variety of reasons:

- It is against their religion (Hinduism).
- Man's original diet according to Genesis 1:29 did not include meat.
- Meat from diseased animals can be a danger to one's health, and it is difficult to be sure that the meat bought in the market place is disease free.
- Meat is a major source of cholesterol, a fatty substance found in animal tissues, thought to cause hardening of the arteries.
- Meat is expensive and the money spent on it could more profitably be spent on fruit and vegetables.
- Meat is difficult to digest etc.

There are other reasons, but these are amongst the main ones. **Stewarton Bible School** does not publish literature as to the advantages or disadvantages of eating meat. However, there are certain meats which **Yahweh, the Almighty God of Israel** has forbidden His followers to eat. This is discussed later. Our observations concerning vegetarianism are as follows.

- The Scriptures do **not** forbid believers from eating **clean meats** (from animals that chew the cud and have the cloven hoof, or fish that have scales and fins).
- Most Israelites in Bible times (the prophets, patriarchs, apostles and the Saviour) ate meat. The Bible has scores of texts to prove this point. See John 21:13 where the record states that the Messiah even ate fish after His resurrection. Yahweh - as stated - has not forbidden His people from eating meat. He even symbolically talks of giving us "*a feast of fat things full of marrow*" (the choicest parts of a meat dish) at the great spiritual banquet still to be held in the future (Isaiah 25:6-8).
- Most of the offerings made to the Most High on His Sabbaths were meat offerings, of which the priests partook (Leviticus chapters 2, 6, 7, 9, 10, 14 and

Numbers chapters 28 and 29). Those animal sacrifices represented Yahweh's Son the Messiah whose "**flesh**" we believers symbolically partake of at each communion service. (John 6:53-56)

- Meat is also a symbol of the advanced doctrines of Yahweh; whereas the eating of vegetables is likened to a spiritual babe's diet. (Hebrews 5:2-14, Romans 14:1-13)
- Vegetarianism as a spiritual requirement originated in heathen India, where multiplied millions are strict vegetarians. We note that even after thousands of years of vegetarianism there is no evidence that Indians are any healthier than other nations. Their neighbours the meat-eating Moslems of Pakistan, for example, live just as long as the vegetarian Hindus of India: and both countries have the same climate. The Indians are no healthier, stronger or long-lived than their Moslem neighbours. Neither do Indians excel in sport when competing in the Olympic Games.
- Forbidding a believer to '*marry*' or '*eat meat*' is a deception of Satan's. In his letter to Timothy the apostle Paul calls this practice "***a doctrine of demons.***"

1 Timothy 4: *1: Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to **seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;**
2: Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;
3: **Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.***

Stewarton Bible School makes it a point of duty not to go beyond the Scriptures. You will see from the above arguments that a believer in Yahweh is allowed to eat **clean meats**; and no one should judge him/her - least of all a vegetarian.

Romans 14: *3: For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth **herbs**. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not, and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for Yahweh hath received him.*

Unclean Meats

There are, however, certain meats which are strictly forbidden in the Bible. Yahweh's law tells us about **clean** and **unclean meats**. I quote a whole chapter:

Leviticus 11: *1: And the LORD spake unto Moses and to Aaron, saying unto them,
2: Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, These are the beasts which ye shall eat among all the beasts that are on the earth.
3: **Whatsoever parteth the hoof, and is clovenfooted, and cheweth the cud, among the beasts, that shall ye eat.**
4: Nevertheless these shall ye not eat of them that chew the cud, or of them that divide the hoof: as the camel, because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he is unclean unto you.
5: And the coney, because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he is unclean unto you.*

6: And the hare, because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he is unclean unto you.

7: And the swine, though he divide the hoof, and be clovenfooted, yet he cheweth not the cud; he is unclean to you.

8: Of their flesh shall ye not eat, and their carcase shall ye not touch; they are unclean to you.

9: These shall ye eat of all that are in the waters: whatsoever hath fins and scales in the waters, in the seas, and in the rivers, them shall ye eat.

10: And all that have not fins and scales in the seas, and in the rivers, of all that move in the waters, and of any living thing which is in the waters, they shall be an abomination unto you:

11: They shall be even an abomination unto you; ye shall not eat of their flesh, but ye shall have their carcasses in abomination.

12: Whatsoever hath no fins nor scales in the waters, that shall be an abomination unto you.

13: And these are they which ye shall have in abomination among the fowls; they shall not be eaten, they are an abomination: the eagle, and the ossifrage, and the ospray,

14: And the vulture, and the kite after his kind;

15: Every raven after his kind;

16: And the owl, and the night hawk, and the cuckow, and the hawk after his kind,

17: And the little owl, and the cormorant, and the great owl, 18: And the swan, and the pelican, and the gier eagle,

19: And the stork, the heron after her kind, and the lapwing, and the bat.

20: All fowls that creep, going upon all four, shall be an abomination unto you.

21: Yet these may ye eat of every flying creeping thing that goeth upon all four, which have legs above their feet, to leap withal upon the earth;

22: Even these of them ye may eat; the locust after his kind, and the bald locust after his kind, and the beetle after his kind, and the grasshopper after his kind.

23: But all other flying creeping things, which have four feet, shall be an abomination unto you.

24: And for these ye shall be unclean: whosoever toucheth the carcase of them shall be unclean until the even.

25: And whosoever beareth ought of the carcase of them shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even.

26: The carcasses of every beast which divideth the hoof, and is not clovenfooted, nor cheweth the cud, are unclean unto you: every one that toucheth them shall be unclean.

27: And whatsoever goeth upon his paws, among all manner of beasts that go on all four, those are unclean unto you: whoso toucheth their carcase shall be unclean until the even.

28: And he that beareth the carcase of them shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even: they are unclean unto you.

29: *These also shall be unclean unto you among the creeping things that creep upon the earth; the weasel, and the mouse, and the tortoise after his kind,*

30: *And the ferret, and the chameleon, and the lizard, and the snail, and the mole.*

31: *These are unclean to you among all that creep: whosoever doth touch them, when they be dead, shall be unclean until the even.*

32: *And upon whatsoever any of them, when they are dead, doth fall, it shall be unclean; whether it be any vessel of wood, or raiment, or skin, or sack, whatsoever vessel it be, wherein any work is done, it must be put into water, and it shall be unclean until the even; so it shall be cleansed.*

33: *And every earthen vessel, whereinto any of them falleth, whatsoever is in it shall be unclean; and ye shall break it.*

34: *Of all meat which may be eaten, that on which such water cometh shall be unclean: and all drink that may be drunk in every such vessel shall be unclean.*

35: *And every thing whereupon any part of their carcase falleth shall be unclean; whether it be oven, or ranges for pots, they shall be broken down: for they are unclean, and shall be unclean unto you.*

36: *Nevertheless a fountain or pit, wherein there is plenty of water, shall be clean: but that which toucheth their carcase shall be unclean.*

37: *And if any part of their carcase fall upon any sowing seed which is to be sown, it shall be clean.*

38: *But if any water be put upon the seed, and any part of their carcase fall thereon, it shall be unclean unto you.*

39: *And if any beast, of which ye may eat, die; he that toucheth the carcase thereof shall be unclean until the even.*

40: *And he that eateth of the carcase of it shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even: he also that beareth the carcase of it shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even.*

41: *And every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth shall be an abomination; it shall not be eaten.*

42: *Whatsoever goeth upon the belly, and whatsoever goeth upon all four, or whatsoever hath more feet among all creeping things that creep upon the earth, them ye shall not eat; for they are an abomination.*

43: *Ye shall not make yourselves abominable with any creeping thing that creepeth, neither shall ye make yourselves unclean with them, that ye should be defiled thereby.*

44: *For I am the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.*

45: *For I am the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.*

46: *This is the law of the beasts, and of the fowl, and of every living creature that moveth in the waters, and of every creature that creepeth upon the earth:*

47: To make a difference between the unclean and the clean, and between the beast that may be eaten and the beast that may not be eaten.

Many Christians do not keep these commandments. They believe that texts such as Mark 7:15 and Acts 10:10-15 give them full permission to eat all kinds of meat: pigs, rabbits, horses, mice, dogs, cats, shell fish, lobsters and prawns. They are mistaken. These Christians have completely missed the point of these texts and have also ignored vital prophecies in Isaiah where the Most High categorically states that on the Day of Judgement He is going to destroy eaters of unclean meats - the mouse and the swine. I quote the prophecies:

Isaiah 65: *1: I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name.*

2: I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts;

3: A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face; that sacrificeth in gardens, and burneth incense upon altars of brick;

*4: Which remain among the graves, and lodge in the monuments, **which eat swine's flesh, and broth of abominable things is in their vessels.***

Isaiah 66: *15: For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. 16: For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many.*

17: They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the LORD.

The Judgement Day is still future and it is unlikely that **Yahweh** would punish the generation before Calvary for eating **swine's flesh** and then forgive the generation after Calvary for eating the same things. Such an inconsistent Judgement would create chaos in people's minds for all time. You may therefore be certain that eating unclean meat (swine and mouse etc.) is still a sin and will be punished on the Day of Judgement.

Mark 7:15

What then of these words of Jesus?

There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man.

This text simply points to a higher level of defilement - the human mind. Filth on the clothes and the skin are not as bad as filth in the stomach. Still worse is the filth in the mind. And worst of all is the unclean Spirit of Satan who roams this world and at the least excuse will pollute the unsuspecting human soul. Unclean animals and birds (*snakes, dogs, vultures, bats etc.*) symbolise Satan and his unbelieving followers; just as clean animals and birds (*the ram, the lamb, the kid, the deer and the dove*) symbolise Yahweh, His Son and the Holy Ghost. Knowingly eating unclean foods is insulting the

Most High. It is not only blatant disobedience, but is tantamount to saying: *'I am going to partake of unclean meats even though I know they symbolise Satan and his filthy lifestyle.'* This is an extremely dangerous stand to take.

Acts 10:9-16

Another misunderstood passage is found in the book of Acts. I quote:

Acts 10: 9: *On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour:*
10: *And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance,*
11: *And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth:*
12: *Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.*
13: *And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat.*
14: *But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.*
15: *And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.*
16: *This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.*

In this experience the Almighty is teaching Peter, and all who later read the chapter, a great spiritual truth: **that true believers in the Most High - of whatever nation - who were previously regarded as 'unclean dogs,' are now totally acceptable to Yahweh.** Their previous unbelief had made them unclean: they were then likened unto dogs, pigs and snakes in the Almighty's eyes. But, because of their new-found faith in the Messiah they are now clean. They are now clean and wholly acceptable to the Most High and should also be accepted and welcomed by every strict Jew. Believing Gentiles, in other words, are now part of Yahweh's flock. **They are His sheep.** They are no longer to be regarded as *dogs, swine or other unclean beasts.* Because of their faith in **Yeshua (Jesus)** they have been cleansed through and through by God Himself and are now clean and holy. This symbolic drama on the rooftop was given to teach the Apostle Peter and subsequent generations of Christians that faith in Yeshua the Messiah purifies the vilest sinner, no matter from what nation he/she comes.

This passage is not to be taken as a lifting of the divine ban against eating unclean animals. **Reptiles, dogs, cats, mice, swine, rabbits, shell fish, lobsters, prawns etc. are still unclean for human consumption. They should not be eaten.** These unclean creatures symbolise unbelief: and unbelief pollutes a person, it makes him/her unclean. I repeat, unclean creatures are still unclean: just as unbelievers remain unbelievers until such time as genuine faith in God purges their uncleanness.

Because of these facts unclean meats should not be eaten; especially in view of the coming **Day of Judgement.**

Remember the divine warning:

"They that sanctify themselves and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the Lord."

Conclusion

- Vegetarianism is not taught in the Scriptures. It may or may not have advantages: most certainly they are not evident in vegetarian nations such as India. Indians are no healthier or long-lived than other nations.
- According to the Scriptures, believers are allowed to eat the flesh (**but not the blood or the fat**) of clean animals: **animals that chew the cud and are cloven footed**. Clean animals include cattle, sheep, goats and deer. Animals such as the pig, the horse, the rabbit, the mouse and the snake are unclean. They do not have those two qualifying points. **Fish which have scales and fins are clean**. Shell fish are unclean. Birds of prey are unclean. See Leviticus 11 for further details.
- When an unbeliever, of whatever race, accepts the Saviour and is washed in his cleansing blood, he/she then becomes clean and is henceforth acceptable to **Yahweh the Almighty God of Israel**. Cornelius the Gentile became a believer, and was cleansed through his faith in the Saviour's blood. Cornelius became clean and was acceptable to the Most High. That was the lesson God was teaching Peter in the experience recorded in Acts 10. In no way was the Almighty reversing His law regarding clean and unclean animals.
- **Unclean animals are still unclean**. Dogs, cats, pigs, rabbits, rats and mice have not been cleansed. They are still unclean animals: and eating their flesh will bring down judgement on the eater.

SBS **Divine Law**

Author: David B Loughran
Stewarton Bible School, Stewarton, Scotland
August 1996 ... Reformatted: December 1999