

What's Kosher about a Pig?

Who isn't turned off by a hypocrite? Most of us try to keep away from people who act outwardly righteous, yet are immoral on the inside. Judaism admires the quality of being "of one mouth and one heart," people who feel as they act.

But, that doesn't mean you should always act or say what you feel!

*Sure, we appreciate honesty, but not if it means being ruthlessly insulting or grouchy every time we're in a lousy mood. **Clearly, there are times when our insides are better left inside.** Everyone around us doesn't need to suffer from our inner negativity or bad tempers.*

We learn this concept in Shemini, from the pig. Kosher land animals must chew their cuds and have split hooves. The Torah lists four animals that have only one kosher symbol and are therefore not kosher. The camel, hyrax (rock-badger, coney), and hare chew their cud but don't have split hooves, whereas, only the pig has split hooves but does not chew its cud.

And the swine, though it divides the hoof and is cloven-footed, yet it does not chew the cud; it is unclean to you.—LEVITICUS 11:7

The Midrash compares the swine to an individual who acts more "kosher" or righteous than he actually is. "The swine, when reclining, puts forth its hooves, as if to say, 'See, I am kosher!' Such hypocritical, deceitful behavior is reprehensible to us, and **perhaps that is why the pig has become the archetype of non-kosher animals.**

Yet, the Hebrew name for a pig is *chazir*, which literally means, to return.

Why is its name called *chazir*? Because in the future, G-d will return it to Israel.—RITV"^A, KIDUSHIN (BETROTHAL) 49B

The pig's Hebrew name hints that it is unkosher for as long as it only has split hooves. In the era of Moshiach, however, when its nature will be altered and it will also chew its cud, it will become kosher. (Ohr HaChaim³)

The physical symbols of kosher animals represent spiritual characteristics. Regurgitating its cud reflects the quality where one's inner character

is refined and introspective. Split hooves, the animal's limb of activity, reflect outward, practical good deeds. The pig has split hooves, its good deeds are many, but its innards are not yet refined.

From all the non-kosher animals, the pig is unique in its "return" to kosher status in the time of Moshiach when the world will be cleansed of negativity.

And thus the pig has an important message for us.

While we strive to be "kosher" in both our inner character as well as our outward deeds, no one is perfect. Just because your insides aren't yet perfectly refined doesn't mean your deeds should be just as imperfect. If you are feeling angry, don't lash out or yell. If you are feeling stingy, it doesn't mean you shouldn't open your purse.

Focus on doing good deeds and acting outwardly kindly. Eventually, your insides, too, will follow.

1. *The Midrash compares the swine to an individual who acts more "kosher" or righteous than he actually is.*

a. Genesis Rabbah XXII:13

13. AND CAIN WENT OUT, etc. Whence did he go out?⁽⁸⁾ R. Aibu said: It means that he threw the words behind

him and went out, like one who would deceive the Almighty,⁽¹⁾ R. Berekiah said in R. Eleazar's name: **He went forth like one who shows the cloven hoof,**⁽²⁾ like one who deceives his Creator.

(8) For one cannot go out from the presence of God, who is everywhere.

(1) He rejected God's reproof, as though murder was a light matter.

(2) **I.e. a hypocrite. A swine shows his cloven hoof as though pretending to be clean.**

b. Genesis Rabbah LXV:1

1. AND WHEN ESAU WAS FORTY YEARS OLD, HE TOOK TO WIFE JUDITH THE DAUGHTER OF BEERI THE HITTITE, AND BASEMATH THE DAUGHTER OF ELON, etc. (XXVI, 34). It is written, **The swine out of the wood doth ravage it, that which moveth in the field feedeth on it** (Ps. LXXX, 14). R. Phinehas and R. Helkiah in R. Simon's name said: Of all the prophets, only two, Moses and Asaph,⁽¹⁾ exposed it.⁽²⁾ Asaph: *'The boar [swine] out of the wood doth ravage it.'* While Moses said: *And the swine, because he parteth the hoof* (Deut. XIV, 8). Why does he compare it [the Roman State] to a swine? For this reason: **when the swine is lying down it puts out its hoofs, as if to say, 'I am clean'**⁽³⁾; so does this wicked State rob and oppress, yet **pretend** to be executing justice.⁽⁴⁾ So for forty years Esau used to ensnare married women and violate them, yet when he attained forty years he compared himself to his father, saying, 'As my father was forty years old when he married,⁽⁵⁾ so I

1 Chana Weisberg, *Shabbat deLights*, Vayikra/Bamidbar/Devarim, (Chabad.org), pp. 23-25.

2 Yom Tob Ben Abraham Ishbili. He was a Talmudic commentator in Spain during the fourteenth century.

3 Chaim ibn Attar or Chayyim ben Moshe ibn Attar (1696-1743), also known as the Or ha-Hayyim (the light of life) after his popular commentary on the Pentateuch, was a Talmudist and Kabbalist. He is arguably considered to be one of the most prominent Rabbis of Morocco.

will marry at the age of forty. Hence it is written, AND WHEN ESAU WAS FORTY YEARS OLD, HE TOOK TO WIFE, etc.

- (1) The authorship of Ps. LXXX is ascribed to Asaph ... who is called a prophet.
- (2) Sc. the cunning and perfidy of Rome.
- (3) The parted hoof being a sign of cleanness (Deut. XIV, 6).
- (4) Lit., 'setting up a dais' (in the court of law).
- (5) Gen. XXV, 19.

2. *Such hypocritical, deceitful behavior is reprehensible to us, and perhaps that is why the pig has become the archetype of non-kosher animals.*

a. ARN 25 (Avot de-R. Nathan)

Ben Azzai used to say: It is easier to rule the entire world, all of it, **than to sit and teach in the presence of men who cloak themselves [hypocritically] in sages' robes.**

b. Esther Rabbah I:17

There are ten portions of physical strength in the world, nine among the Chaldeans and one in the rest of the world. There are ten portions of courage in the world, nine in Judaea and one in the rest of the world. There are ten portions of beauty in the world, nine in Jerusalem and one in the rest of the world. There are ten portions of wisdom in the world, nine in the Land of Israel and one in the rest of the world. There are ten portions of the Torah in the world, nine in the Land of Israel and one in the rest of the world. **There are ten portions of hypocrisy in the world, nine in Jerusalem and one in the rest of the world,** as it is written, For from the prophets of Jerusalem is hypocrisy [E.V. ungodliness] gone forth into all the earth—E.V. land (Jer. XXIII, 15).

c. Luke 12:1

Meanwhile, when a crowd of many thousands had gathered, so that they were trampling on one another, Yeshua began to speak first to his disciples, saying: **"Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.**

Matthew 16:6,11—"the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

Mark 8:15—"the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod."

d. Matthew 7:6

⁷⁶"Do not **give** dogs what is sacred; do not **throw** your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces.

- 1) The only difficulty in the passage is the word "throw," Gr: *ballo*, which is parallel to "do not give" of the first part of the verse.

- 2) The Semitic original of *bollais* is *toru*, from the root *yaro*, which means "to teach" and also "to throw."

- 3) **The translator, not realizing that "pearls" was used here in a metaphorical sense for biblical verses, naturally chose the meaning "to throw," for to his mind to translate "to teach" would have been absurd.**

- 4) The meaning of the passage; **"Do not present that which is holy, i.e., scriptural verses, before the dogs, and do not teach 'pearls,' i.e., biblical passages or any nuggets of 'wisdom,' before swine."**

- a) For pearls used in a figurative sense, see Song R. 1:10; Hag. 3a; ARN 18; T. Sot 7; Mek. Exod. 31:2.

- 5) Who are the "dogs" and the "swine" in this passage?

- a) We suggest that **"dogs" refers to the Samaritans**, who are similarly compared to dogs in an early rabbinic source. As to **"swine" ... It probably refers to the Romans, for Esau-Edom in rabbinic literature stands for Rome** ... We suggest that *choiros*, Heb: *qazir*, is not to be taken as domestic swine but as the "wild boar," as in Psa 81, and which, in later literature, stands for **the enemies of Israel. The figure of the wild boar adorned the banners of the Roman legions then stationed in Palestine.** Some New Testament scholars are disturbed by the identification of these animals with the Gentiles and by the idea that (Yeshua) advised the disciples not to bring the gospel to them. In their view this does not fit the character and mission of (Yeshua).⁴

- 6) **This passage is ... only in Matthew. This fact is instructive ... One cannot ignore the Matthean passages which indicate that the message of (Yeshua) was directed to the members of the Jewish people.**

- a) **I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Mat 15:24); Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (ibid. 10:6); You will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of man comes (ibid. 10:23); You who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel (ibid. 19:28).**

- b) Luke probably has omitted this passage, i.e., Matthew 7.6, as being offensive to his Greek audience.

4 Samuel Tobias Lachs, *A Rabbinic Commentary on the New Testament*, (KTAV Publishing House, 1987), pp. 138-139.

7) Matthew 15:21-28

²¹Leaving that place, Yeshua withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. ²²A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is suffering terribly from demon-possession." ²³Yeshua did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, "Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us." ²⁴He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel." ²⁵The woman came and knelt before him. "Lord, help me!" she said. ²⁶He replied, "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs (κυνάριον—*kunarion*, lit., little [i.e., pet] dogs)." ²⁷"Yes, Lord," she said, "but even the dogs (*kunarion*) eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." ²⁸Then Yeshua answered, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

3. *The physical symbols of kosher animals represent spiritual characteristics.*

a. Tanhuma⁵, Noah, §13

When Noah began planting, Satan came by, stationed himself before him, and asked, What are you planting?" Noah: "A vineyard." Satan: "What is its nature" Noah: "Its fruit, whether fresh or dried, is sweet, and from it wine is made, which gladdens a man's heart." Satan: "Would you like the two of us, me and you, to plant together?" Noah: "Very well."

What did Satan do? He brought a ewe lamb and slaughtered it over the vine; then he brought a lion, which he likewise slaughtered over the vine; then a monkey, which he also slaughtered over the vine; and finally a pig, which he again slaughtered over the vine. And with the blood that dripped from them, he watered the vineyard.

The charade was Satan's way of saying that when a man drinks one cup [of wine], he acts like a ewe lamb, humble and meek. When he drinks two, he becomes as mighty as a lion and proceeds to brag extravagantly, saying, "Who is like me?" When he drinks three or four cups, he becomes like a monkey, hopping about, dancing, giggling, and uttering obscenities in public, without realizing what he is doing. Finally, **when he becomes blind drunk, he is like a pig, wallowing in mire and coming to rest among refuse.**

b. Esther Rabbah 7:1, Yalkut⁶ Esther, §1053

A parable of a man who had a filly, a she-ass, and a sow. He measured out barley to the she-ass and the filly, but let the sow eat as much as she wanted. The filly complained to the she-ass, "What is the idiot doing? To us, who do the work of the master, he rations food, but to the sow, who does nothing, he gives as much as she wants." The she-ass replied, "The time will come when you will see the sow's downfall, for she is stuffed with fodder not out of deference to her but to her own harm." When the Calends⁷ came, they took the sow and stuck her. Later, when barley was placed before the youngling of the she-ass, she sniffed at it without eating it. So her dam (female parent) said to her: My daughter, **not the eating but the idleness leads to being slaughtered.**

c. Berachot 43b.

Hang the heart of a palm on a pig, and he will do his usual thing with it.⁽¹⁵⁾

(15) The pig will take even this delicacy to a dungheap to eat it there.

4. *While we strive to be "kosher" in both our inner character as well as our outward deeds, no one is perfect. Just because your insides aren't yet perfectly refined doesn't mean your deeds should be just as imperfect. If you are feeling angry, don't lash out or yell. If you are feeling stingy, it doesn't mean you shouldn't open your purse.*

a. Romans 7:13-25 (CBJ)

¹³Then did something good become for me the source of death? Heaven forbid! Rather, it was sin working death in me through something good, so that sin might be clearly exposed as sin, so that sin through the commandment might come to be experienced as sinful beyond measure. ¹⁴For **we know that the Torah is of the Spirit**; but as for me, I am bound to the old nature, sold to sin as a slave. ¹⁵**I don't understand my own behavior—I don't do what I want to do; instead, I do the very thing I hate!** ¹⁶Now if I am doing what I don't want to do, **I am agreeing that the Torah is good.** ¹⁷But now it is no longer "the real me" doing it, but the sin housed inside me. ¹⁸For I know that there is nothing good housed inside me—**that is, inside my old nature.** I can want what is good, but I can't do it! ¹⁹For I don't do the good I want; instead, the evil that I don't want is what I do! ²⁰But if I am doing what "the real me" doesn't want, it is no longer "the real me" doing it but the sin housed inside me.

⁵ Midrash Tanhuma is the name given to three different collections of Pentateuch aggadot; two are extant, while the third is known only through citations. These midrashim, although bearing the name of R. Tanhuma, must not be regarded as having been written or edited by him.

⁶ An aggadic compilation (anthology) on the Book of Esther.

⁷ The first day of the Roman month, usually observed as a feast.

²¹So I find it to be the rule, a kind of perverse "*torah*," that although I want to do what is good, evil is right there with me! ²²For in my inner self I completely agree with God's *Torah*; ²³but in my various parts, I see a different "*torah*," one that battles with the *Torah* in my mind and makes me a prisoner of sin's "*torah*," which is operating in my various parts. ²⁴What a miserable creature I am! Who will rescue me from this body bound for death? ²⁵Thanks be to God [he will]!—through Yeshua the Messiah, our Lord! To sum up: with my mind, I am a slave of God's *Torah*; but with my old nature, I am a slave of sin's "*Torah*."

b. 2Corinthians 4:16-18

¹⁶Therefore we do not lose heart. **Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.** ¹⁷For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

c. Ephesians 3:14-21 (CJB)

¹⁴For this reason, I fall on my knees before the Father, ¹⁵from whom every family in heaven and on earth **receives its character (lit., its name).** ¹⁶I pray that from the treasures of his glory he will empower you with **inner strength** by his Spirit, ¹⁷so that the Messiah may live in your hearts through your trusting. Also I pray that you will be rooted and founded in love, ¹⁸so that you, with all God's people, will be given strength to grasp the breadth, length, height and depth of the Messiah's love, ¹⁹yes, to know it, even though it is beyond all knowing, so that you will be filled with all the fullness of God.

²⁰Now to him who by his power working in us is able to do far beyond anything we can ask or imagine, ²¹to him be glory in the Messianic Community and in the Messiah Yeshua from generation to generation forever. *Amen.*

5. How do we define "food"? As something "edible," i.e., something we can eat? Or, as something God has said we can eat? If we can't (or shouldn't) eat it—it's not "food"!

a. Mark 7:14-23

¹⁴Again Yeshua called the crowd to him and said, "Listen to me, everyone, and understand this. ¹⁵Nothing outside a person can defile them by going into them. Rather, **it is what comes out of a person that defiles them.**" ¹⁶If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

¹⁷After he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about this parable. ¹⁸"Are you so dull?" he asked. "Don't you see that nothing that enters a person from the outside can defile

them? ¹⁹**For it doesn't go into their heart but into their stomach, and then out of the body."** (IN SAYING THIS, YESHUA DECLARED ALL FOODS CLEAN.) ²⁰He went on: "What comes out of a person is what defiles them. ²¹**For it is from within, out of a person's heart,** that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, ²²adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. ²³All these evils come from inside and defile a person."

1) The question that prompts this response (vv 7-14) is why (on this occasion) did Yeshua and his disciples eat food "with defiled (or unwashed) hands" (v. 5).

a) Yeshua's response has NOTHING to do with food—it has to do with the purpose of washing one's hands before eating food. It is NOT what makes the food edible.

b) That is why Jews do not "bless" the food they eat—we bless God for providing the food we eat.

2) If Yeshua changed the dietary laws—he is NOT the Messiah.

a) Matthew 5:17-20

¹⁷**Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.**

b) By definition—"fulfill" CANNOT mean "abolish"—which, for Christian theology is the "net effect" of this statement.

b. Acts 10:14

⁹About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. ¹⁰He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. ¹¹He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. ¹²It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds. ¹³**Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat."** ¹⁴**"Surely not, Lord!" Peter replied. "I HAVE NEVER EATEN ANYTHING IMPURE OR UNCLEAN."** ¹⁵The voice spoke to him a second time, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean." ¹⁶This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven.