

KOSHER KORNER: ASK THE RABBI

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B'nai Avraham

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Question: Rabbi, can you please explain Mark Chapter 7:1-19 for me? It appears the Rebbe Yahshua is teaching that it is all right for us to eat anything we please.

Rabbi's reply: The response to Mark 7 is a very frequent misinterpretation and understanding of these verses in their context, which if understood from the Hebraic mindset and Halakah, would be much uncomplicated for us to comprehend. Let us look at these passages together in your Scriptures to gain a better perception of what Yahshua is really saying. Our Rebbe, Yahshua, is schooling us in a real TRUTH here if we will only open our hearts.

First of all, you need to understand that Yahshua is dealing with an Oral Tradition from the elders called "*n'tilat-yadayim*," or more properly called ritual hand-washing. It is found in the *Mishnah* tractate called *Yadayim*. When one would buy something in a common marketplace, it might happen that one might buy food (such as meat or fruits and vegetables) touched by a "goy" or even a ceremonially unclean person (such as a *niddah*). Because of this possibility, the sages set the Halakah that one **MUST** wash his hands up to the wrist 3 times with water to remove any uncleanness he may have accidentally cam in contact with by touching the food.

The table in the typical Jewish home becomes the altar and the father acts as the priest. Just as the priests would wash their hands and feet in the laver before serving in the *Mishkan* or Temple (*Beit HaMikdash*) the father will wash his hands before eating or distributing the food at the dinner table or on *Shabbat*. We experience this every *Erev Shabbat* in our homes at the *Shabbat* table when everyone washes their hands before they eat the bread (*Challah*). This is not commanded in the Torah, but a tradition of the elders we have included into our homes to teach us a spiritual truth of Torah. It is a great reminder of the necessity of being clean to serve Yahweh. Our hands have been in contact with the world and its uncleanness, so we want to serve YHWH as a *Cohen* ritually clean.

Next, you must understand that to the Hebrew mind, FOOD is only the CLEAN FOODS listed in *Wayyiqra* (Lev.) 11. To a Yisra'elite, anything else is not even considered food or fit to eat, as Yahweh did not give the unclean thing as FOOD to eat. Anything but the clean foods are abominations in the sight of Yahweh. We praise Yahweh that the Yehudim have kept alive the belief that Yahweh wants to set-apart **EVERY PART** of your life, even your table and the food you

eat. You MUST understand we are dealing with kosher or clean foods to begin this discussion of Yahshua's *Halakah*. We are not even referring to swine flesh or seafood here in this passage. These are forbidden foods for a Yisra'elites diet.

In verse 19 please NOTE the phrase –"thus purging all foods (meat)" is not found in the Aramaic Translation of the *Brit Chadasha* or in the Lamsa Translation of the Peshitta.

- "Because it does not enter his heart but his belly, and it is thrown away and cleansed, even all food." **HRV-Dr. James Trimm**
- : And then is thrown out through the intestines, THEREBY purifying the food." **Lamsa Translation of the Holy Bible from the Peshitta**
- "And casts into purification, purifying all food?" **The Aramaic New Covenant by Herb Jahn**
- "And proceeds into the privy purifying all food" **Exegeses Parallel Bible**
- The word in the **KJV** "draught" in this verse is "*aphedron*" or sewer.

So all clean food (whether you have eaten with washed hands or not) is purged from the body by the digestive system and goes into the sewer as waste. There is no justification in interpreting this verse to mean Yahshua was abrogating the Laws of *Kashrut* in the Torah as many "New Testament" translations wrongly add in parenthesis (a translators addition).

Yahshua *HaMoshiach* is teaching that all Biblically clean, kosher, and Yahweh approved foods are ritually clean for Yisra'el to eat EVEN IF YOU DO NOT WASH YOUR HANDS! He was NOT abrogating the Torah on *kashrut*. The whole subject of His teaching is the washing of hands before eating as a tradition (which they had magnified above caring for their aged fathers and mothers). Yahshua is telling them to straighten out their spiritual priorities! He was not doing away with the hand washing tradition nor was He against the washing ritual, as some would teach from this passage. He does not overrule the rabbinical laws of ritual purity, but He demotes them to a subsidiary importance in comparison to the Written Torah. Yahshua was teaching that *tohar* is not primarily ritual or even physical, but spiritual or within the heart. We cannot place anything above the Written Torah. He was dealing with the matter of spiritual priorities in the hearts of the *Perushim*.

Yahshua was teaching the Pharisees that it is the evil things that proceed out of the heart of a man and come from the *yetzer hara*, such as envy, fornication, jealousy, adultery, murder, strife, foolishness, the *evil eye* (greed) and anger, are what really defiles a person, and makes him unclean in the sight of Yahweh. Things come out from within a person's heart.

He was explaining to them that to eat with unwashed hands couldn't defile the inside of a person spiritually because the body's cleansing process in digestion

can remove any impurities from eating kosher food with unwashed hands, but simply washing your hands could not cleanse the heart!

They were busy washing their hands, cups, pots, plates, and other eating utensils to make sure they were not being made ritually unclean, but their hearts were far removed from Yahweh. Again, Yahshua gets to the real "heart" of the question and attempts to set the Pharisees straight on the true meaning of uncleanness according to true Torah observance.

Let this be an admonition to us as Messianic Yisra'el. Let us not get so busy doing the "Oral Traditions" of the fathers (*Avot*) and leave undone the weightier matters of the Torah; such as love, justice, and mercy. Let us never place the traditions above Yahweh's Torah as given to Moshe and interpreted by our Rebbe Yahshua. When we wash our hands at the Shabbat table let the act of washing point toward the spiritual truth it portrays "Who can ascend to the mountain of Yahweh. He who has a pure HEART and clean HANDS." As Yisra'el let us always keep in mind that it takes both the heart and hands to be clean by the washing of the Water of Torah.

I hope this explanation makes this teaching by Yahshua a little clearer to you. May Yahweh bless you. Rabbi Edward Levi Nydle