

Deut. 14:1 ¶ Ye are the children of the LORD your God: ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead.

Deut. 14:2 For thou art a holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth.

I think it is important to note as these instructions get more specific that these commands are directed toward Israel as part of their covenant relationship with YHWH. The reasons for some are explained, while the reasons for others are not. I am convinced that some of the dietary guidelines are based on promoting good health. All are intended to distinguish God's people as unique among the nations of the earth, one in whom He takes special delight (from the Hebrew for *peculiar*).

It was evidently a custom among some of the Gentile nations to cut themselves and/or shave the space between their eyes as a sign of mourning. As stated above, God's people are to stand out as different from the world. Mutilating oneself is a picture of despair and grief without hope. Those who have placed their trust in God and submitted to Him as Lord look forward to a wonderful future life after death. There is simply no reason for such a display. Grief is expected when we are separated from someone we love due to death, but not grief without hope, not grief that declares God as insufficient to comfort, strengthen and fill that empty space in one's life.

Deut. 14:3 Thou shalt not eat any abominable thing.

Deut. 14:4 These are the beasts which ye shall eat: the ox, the sheep, and the goat,

Deut. 14:5 The hart, and the roebuck, and the fallow deer, and the wild goat, and the pygarg, and the wild ox, and the chamois.

Deut. 14:6 And every beast that parteth the hoof, and cleaveth the cleft into two claws, and cheweth the cud among the beasts, that ye shall eat.

I often question the order of things as presented in scripture and the abrupt change of direction. It's one of those things that I'm sure I'll understand more through future revelation—whether here or in heaven.

All of a sudden Moses switches the subject to address foods that are clean and unclean. He first instructs that they are not to eat any *abominable* or unclean thing. He then goes on to give a list of animals that provide clean meat—animals that part the hoof into two and chew the cud. Most on the list are recognizable; others are not. A *hart* is a stag or male deer; the *roebuck* is a gazelle. The Hebrew for *pygarg* references an antelope, and the *chamois* a gazelle.

I knew I had read or heard something somewhere regarding a spiritual application to some of these instructions. As I started searching for the source, I found an article by Ray Stedman, [The Need for a Standard](http://www.pbc.org/files/messages/3541/0512.html), at www.pbc.org/files/messages/3541/0512.html. Below are some interesting excerpts from that article.

What do these mean? What is the chewing of the cud a picture of? If you have ever watched an animal that chews its cud you know that you have before you a beautiful picture of the art of meditation, of taking in

knowledge and ideas and concepts, and tentatively swallowing them undigested at first, but then bringing them up again to rethink, re-chew, work over again. Thus there is proposed for us in the handling of the Scriptures a method for distinguishing between that which is wisdom from above and that which is wisdom from below, because both are in the Bible.

But it is not only the chewing of the cud, but also the dividing of the hoof that is important. What does that mean? That is a picture of the principle of separation, of discrimination, discernment, of the need to distinguish between that which is from above and that which is from below, to take note of the fact that the Bible reports the lies of Satan and the confused thinking of men, as well as the revelation of the mind of God.

The book of Ecclesiastes, for instance, has given rise to many false ideas which have been widely disseminated and said to come from the Bible -- which they do. But the book begins with Solomon's warning that it is a collection of the wisdom of man, gathered from under the sun. Thus it is not to be trusted but is to be tested against the revelation of God. So, in this area we are to feed, but we are to apply to the food we take in, even from such a wonderful source as the Word of God, this double practice of meditation and of recognizing the principle of separation.

Deut. 14:7 Nevertheless these ye shall not eat of them that chew the cud, or of them that divide the cloven hoof; as the camel, and the hare, and the coney: for they chew the cud, but divide not the hoof; therefore they are unclean unto you.

Deut. 14:8 And the swine, because it divideth the hoof, yet cheweth not the cud, it is unclean unto you: ye shall not eat of their flesh, nor touch their dead carcase.

In this section Moses lists the animals that are unclean because they don't possess both characteristics of chewing the cud and having a cloven hoof. Point is made that they aren't to be eaten or their dead carcass touched.

(8/08) As I was reading through this section again, I realized that I could continue to jump from Mr. Stedman's thoughts. Meditation and discernment go hand-in-hand. To try and do either with the other in relationship to God's word will lead one into heresy or false teaching.

Deut. 14:9 These ye shall eat of all that are in the waters: all that have fins and scales shall ye eat:

Deut. 14:10 And whatsoever hath not fins and scales ye may not eat; it is unclean unto you.

From land animals Moses moves on to things in the water. All creatures with fins and scales are considered clean; any without fins and scales are unclean. More excerpts from Mr. Stedman's insights.

Well, fins are that which gives a fish the capacity to move, to progress, to penetrate through the waters, to employ the element through which it moves for its own progress. And scales are that which protect it against

harm, which resist the effect of the element in which this food is found, which preserve it from harm from the element.

The Christian is to handle the knowledge of the world in this way. He is to keep moving on all the time. He is to keep asking, "Where does this lead? Where does this idea take me?" He is to penetrate to the heart of it. He is not to be content with mere superficial knowledge of a subject but is to move right into the heart of it and to carry its implications beyond the bounds of this life, to see how they affect life in the realm of the mind and heart and spirit. But he is to resist being captured or held by any human concept. He is not to be possessed by these kinds of ideas.

Deut. 14:11 *Of all clean birds ye shall eat.*

Deut. 14:12 *But these are they of which ye shall not eat: the eagle, and the ossifrage, and the ospray,*

Deut. 14:13 *And the glede, and the kite, and the vulture after his kind,*

Deut. 14:14 *And every raven after his kind,*

Deut. 14:15 *And the owl, and the night hawk, and the cuckow, and the hawk after his kind,*

Deut. 14:16 *The little owl, and the great owl, and the swan,*

Deut. 14:17 *And the pelican, and the gier eagle, and the cormorant,*

Deut. 14:18 *And the stork, and the heron after her kind, and the lapwing, and the bat.*

Next on the list Moses gives instructions regarding clean and unclean fowl. He only lists those that are unclean. Again, some of these names are unfamiliar. The *ossifrage* and *ospray* are in the eagle family. The *glede* and *kite* seem to be types of vultures. The Hebrew for *cuckow* references the gull and cuckoo. The Hebrew for *cormorant* references another bird of prey, possibly a pelican. The *lapwing* references a grouse.

Even I could see the connection in this list; they are all flesh eaters (either dead or alive). The application is obvious. We are not to indulge our flesh at the expense of others. We are not to cause harm to one another.

Deut. 14:19 *And every creeping thing that flieth is unclean unto you: they shall not be eaten.*

Deut. 14:20 *But of all clean fowls ye may eat.*

For some reason Moses didn't include the whole instruction regarding this group of creatures. Leviticus tells us more.

Lev. 11:20-23 *All fowls that creep, going upon all four, shall be an abomination unto you. 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; 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. But all other flying creeping things, which have four feet, shall be an abomination unto you.*

Mr. Stedman continues to give good food for thought, but I can't help but wonder if Moses made any of these types of applications to the people. Did they

just accept the instructions without question? (Probably would have been my response in this area.)

Leaping is a momentary linking together of heaven and earth. The Israelites were instructed to reject anything which had contact with the earth and could fly in the heavens but was not able to leap and thus to tie the two -- heaven and earth -- together. Ideas which accurately, successfully tie man's earthly life to his relationship with God may be accepted.

Were these special nuggets of application meant for discovery by future generations of believers? I think it probably falls into the same area as discovering the spiritual applications represented by the tabernacle/temple, its furnishings and its rituals. We know that everything in scripture is for our benefit.

2Tim. 3:16-17 All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

Deut. 14:21 Ye shall not eat *of* any thing that dieth of itself: thou shalt give it unto the stranger that *is* in thy gates, that he may eat it; or thou mayest sell it unto an alien: for thou *art* an holy people unto the LORD thy God. Thou shalt not see the a kid in his mother's milk.

This instruction is distinct in that Moses declares specifically that there is nothing harmful in and of the meat itself; the restrictions are intended to distinguish God's people from those in the world, Satan's kingdom. As I looked at the commentaries, I found that even a clean animal that has died naturally has not been properly slaughtered and the blood drained. God isn't condoning giving strangers and aliens food that is harmful. They are already unclean, so there's no harm in giving them food that God has declared unclean for His clean people. The Israelites weren't holy in and of themselves; they were holy because they had been specifically set apart by God. It's a reference to position, not condition.

"Thou shalt not see the a kid..." – I remember coming across this instruction when going through Exodus and looking for help. I didn't find it at the time, but later came across an interesting explanation while listening to Zola Levitt interview a Karaite Jew, Nehemiah Gordon. A Karaite Jew is one who follows the Hebrew scripture vs. the teaching of the Rabbis from the Talmud. He explained that this was a practice associated with a Canaanite fertility ritual for the goddess Ashtoreth. This would connect in my mind with the teaching of avoiding even the appearance of evil.

1Th. 5:22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.

Deut. 14:22 ¶ Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year.

Deut. 14:23 And thou shalt eat before the LORD thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks; that thou mayest learn to fear the LORD thy God always.

Moses now changes the subject to a discussion of tithing. A tithe represents a tenth of the whole. These verses state that the people were to tithe a tenth of their yearly harvest. It was to be taken to the temple and given to the priests. They were to enjoy a meal from their tithe while at the temple. This was a public recognition of the fact that their harvest was a gift of God. It was meant to be a time of thanks and fellowship.

I decided to check some commentaries and found a comment by David Guzik that caused me to go back to the Hebrew for *increase*. This is a reference to income or revenue from the sale of one's harvest. That would seem to exclude the portion used for personal sustenance.

Deut. 14:24 And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it; or if the place be too far from thee, which the LORD thy God shall choose to set his name there, when the LORD thy God hath blessed thee:

Deut. 14:25 Then shalt thou turn *it* into money, and bind up the money in thine hand, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose:

Deut. 14:26 And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth: and thou shalt eat there before the LORD thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household,

Because almost all travel was by foot or donkey, it's obvious that some people would have a difficult time getting a tenth of their harvest to the designated place, the tabernacle/temple. They were then to sell the tithe part of the harvest and take it to the temple instead. When they offered the money at the temple, they could purchase whatever they wanted to enjoy the meal of fellowship and thanksgiving.

Deut. 14:27 And the Levite that *is* within thy gates; thou shalt not forsake him; for he hath no part nor inheritance with thee.

Deut. 14:28 At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay *it* up within thy gates:

Deut. 14:29 And the Levite, (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee,) and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which *are* within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest.

We are reminded that the Levite possessed no land but was not to be left out of the fellowship. It seems that the tithe of the harvest was to be used to provide for the Levite, strangers, fatherless and widows who had nothing to bring. It sounds like the tithe only had to be brought every three years or maybe that the tithe every three years was used for this specific purpose. I could find nothing definitive about this in the other commentaries I checked. I think the main principle is that God should be recognized as the author of our blessings and joyously praised. We are to take care to provide for those who are called into full time service of the Lord so they can serve without distraction (though certainly the Levites weren't living in the lap of luxury). Neither are we to neglect taking care of our guests or those who cannot provide for themselves, such as the fatherless and widows.