

1. Zohar, Parshat Shemini pg. 41b

Whether domesticated animals, wild animals, birds or fish, all of them display right or left (mercy or justice), and any that come from the right side (the side of mercy) one may eat, and those that come from the left side (the side of justice) one may not eat, because their levels (or: bodies) are all impure, and they are all impure, and an impure spirit rests upon them and they live in it, and the holy spirit of Israel shall not mix with them and become impure from them, so that they will be found holy...

Background: What is Kabbalah?

2. Talmud, Yoma 28b

Rav said: Abraham fulfilled the entire Torah, as Genesis 26:5 says, "Because Abraham listened to My voice, and he guarded My preserve, My commands, My statutes and My teachings."

3. Midrash, Bamidbar Rabbah 14:11

Genesis 12:5 says, "And the *nefesh* they made in Charan." Abraham converted the men; Sarah converted the women.

4. Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin (18th century Lithuania/Russia), *Nefesh haChaim* I 21

Just as a person's entire body ascends and is purified by involvement in Torah and mitzvot, so all of the realms... are purified and elevated. A righteous person who truly serves [Gd] will not focus his mind and thoughts [elsewhere] while serving Gd, even to elevate and purify his body and spirit, but [he will intend] only for the purity of his thought and intent to ascend and focus above, for the repair and purification of the holy realms. This was the entire service of the *avot* and early righteous ones, who fulfilled the Torah before it was given...

5. Talmud, Sanhedrin 65b

Rava created a man and sent him before Rabbi Zera. Rabbi Zera spoke to him, but he did not respond. Rabbi Zera said: You must be from the magicians; return to your dust.

Rav Chanina and Rav Oshia sat all Friday immersed in *Sefer Yetzirah*, and they created a fat calf and ate it.

6. Professor Isaiah Tishby (20th century Israel), *Wisdom of the Zohar*, pg. 229

Kabbalistic teaching... is extremely wide-ranging, impinging on every area of existence and seeking solutions from a religio-mystical point of view to the mysteries of the world and the problems of life.

7. Professor Gershom Scholem (20th century Israel), *Origins of the Kabbalah* pg. 11

The Kabbalistic movement in Judaism cannot be described adequately according to the categories of the history of philosophy; it can only be explained in terms of the history of religions, however close its connection with philosophy...

Why is there Kabbalah for Kashrut?

8. Rabbi Shemuel ben Meir (11th-12th century France), *Commentary to Leviticus* 11:3

According to the straightforward text, and as we respond to the heretics, all of the domestic and wild animals, birds, fish, locusts and crawling creatures which Gd listed for the Jews are repulsive, and they corrupt and overheat the body.

9. *Sefer haChinuch* (13th-14th century Spain), *Mitzvah* 73

When tongs are strong and fashioned to hold vessels, the craftsmen will fashion good [vessels]. If the tongs are not good, they will never produce well-formed, attractive vessels. Similarly, when the body has a deficit of some kind, the intellect cannot function, according to that deficit. Therefore, our complete Torah distanced us from anything that could cause a deficit.

10. Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (19th century Germany), Horeb 463

The human meal, although in itself a physical function, is ennobled and elevated above other animal functions by the fact that the organ which serves it is at the same time the servant of the noblest human activity, of human speech. The mouth of man is, on account of its functions, eating and speech, also the reconciling bond between spirit and animal. Therefore our Sages dedicated the meal as the first step towards the ennoblement of the animal in man ... That is why you should approach your meal as you would a holy activity.

11. Rabbi Moses Maimonides (12th century Egypt), Guide of the Perplexed 3:46

The *Tzaba* believed that blood was most impure, but they ate it because they imagined that this would be food for the demons, and by eating it they would link themselves to the demons... Therefore the Torah, which is perfect in the eyes of those who know it – came to remove these sick, deeply rooted notions. The Torah forbade eating blood, and was strict in the prohibition exactly as it was strict regarding idolatry... The Torah only stated 'And I will place My face upon such a person' regarding one who eats blood and one who gives his children over to the *Molech* idol... for eating blood brings one to a type of idolatry – the worship of demons.

12. Philo (1st century CE), The Special Laws, IV 18 – www.earlyjewishwritings.com

Now of all the numbers beginning from the unit, the most perfect is the number ten, and as Moses says, it is the most sacred of all and a holy number, and by it he now limits the races of animals that are clean, wishing to assign the use of them to all those who partake of the constitution which he is establishing. (106) And he gives two tests and criteria of the ten animals thus enumerated by two signs, first, that they must part the hoof, secondly, that they must chew the cud; for those which do neither, or only one of these things, are unclean. And these signs are both of them symbols of instruction and of the most scientific learning, by which the better is separated from the worse, so that all confusion between them is prevented; (107) for as the animal which chews the cud, while it is masticating its food draws it down into its throat, and then by slow degrees kneads and softens it, and then after this process again sends it down into the belly, in the same manner the man who is being instructed, having received the doctrines and speculations of wisdom in at his ears from his instructor, derives a considerable amount of learning from him, but still is not able to hold it firmly and to embrace it all at once, until he has resolved over in his mind everything which he has heard by the continued exercise of his memory (and this exercise of memory is the cement which connects ideas), and then he impresses the image of it all firmly on his soul. (108) But as it seems the firm conception of such ideas is of no advantage to him unless he is able to discriminate between and to distinguish which of contrary things it is right to choose and which to avoid, of which the parting of the hoof is the symbol; since the course of life is twofold, the one road leading to wickedness and the other to virtue, and since we ought to renounce the one and never to forsake the other.

13. Midrash, Genesis Rabbah 44:1

Rav taught: The mitzvot were given only to purify people. Why would Gd care whether we slaughter an animal from the front or back of the neck? The mitzvot were given only to purify people.

The Kabbalah of Kashrut: You Are What You Eat

14. Talmud, Yoma 69b

"And they called out to Gd in a great voice" – What did they say? Rav or Rabbi Yochanan said, "Woe, woe! This is the one who destroyed the Temple, burned His sanctuary and killed all of the righteous people and exiled Israel from their land, and still he dances among us! You only gave him to us so that we could receive reward; we do not want him, or his reward!"... They fasted three days and nights and Gd gave it to them...

They said, "Since this is a time of mercy, let us ask for mercy regarding the *yetzer* for immorality." They prayed and it was given into their hands. They said, "See that if we were to kill it, the world would be destroyed!" They imprisoned it for three days and sought a fresh egg in Israel and couldn't find one...

15. Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Kook (20th century Israel), Orot haTeshuvah 15:3

Natural regret which burns in the heart is one of the traits of teshuvah, from the soul's pain at its stagnation rather than ascent, and all the more so if it feels descent within itself.

16. Zohar, Parshat Shemini pg. 41b

Come and see: Anyone who eats from these prohibited foods sticks to the other side, and contaminates his soul and body, and a spirit of impurity rests upon him, and he demonstrates that he has no share in Gd above and does not come from His side and does not stick to him, and if he leaves this world thus then all those that hold on to (or come from) the side of impurity contaminate him and judge him like a person rejected by his master, rejected in this world and rejected in the next world. Thus it says **וְנִטְמָתָם בָּם** without an **א**, for there is no cure for his rejection, and he can never leave his impurity...

17. Rabbi Yitzchak Arama (15th century Spain), Akeidat Yitzchak, Leviticus 60

The reason behind all of these [dietary] prohibitions is not that any harm may be caused to the body, but that these foods contaminate and pollute the soul, and seal up the intellect...

18. Talmud, Yoma 39a

Sin obstructs a person's heart, as Leviticus 11:43 says, "Lest you be contaminated [תִּטְמְאוּ] by them, and you shall be contaminated [וְנִטְמָתֶם] by them." Do not read it as **וְנִטְמָתֶם**, but as **וְנִטְמַתֶּם** – 'you shall be obstructed'.

19. Talmud, Gittin 7a

One must never create excessive fear in his home; once, a great man created excessive fear in his home, and they fed him a grave thing. Who was this? Rabbi Chanina ben Gamliel. But did they feed him such a thing? If Gd would not cause an error for the animals of the righteous, how much more so for the righteous themselves! Rather, they meant to feed him a grave thing. What was it? Flesh taken from a creature while it lived.

20. Talmud, Chullin 7a-b

[Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair] went to an inn and they put barley before his donkey, but it would not eat. They beat the barley, and it would not eat. They cleaned the barley, and it would not eat. He said to them, "Perhaps it was not tithed?" They tithed the barley, and it ate. He said, "This poor beast goes to fulfill its Creator's desire, and you would feed it untithed produce?!"

21. Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (19th century Germany), Horeb 454

The body should be subservient to the mind. From this point of view the ideal quality of the body would be utter dependence on the mind and a kind of quiescent neutrality... Bearing in mind this function of the body and also the fact that the physical structure of man is largely influenced by the kind of food he consumes, one might come to the conclusion that vegetable food is the most preferable, as plants are the most passive substance; and indeed, we find that in Jewish law all vegetables are permitted for food, without discrimination. Next in order of desirability as human food would come those animals which are herbivorous and therefore nearer the vegetable world.