



WHAT YESHUA DID NOT SAY

By R. Baruch, PhD

Mark 7:19

What Didn't Yeshua Say?

A common question I receive is what about the kosher laws or Kashrut? The purpose of this brief article is **not** to open up this vast subject, but to respond to one particular verse that is often quoted in regard to this subject by believers. The verse is found in the book of Mark. In the seventh chapter some Pharisees and Scribes came from Jerusalem to observe Yeshua. In doing so, they noticed that His disciples did not wash their hands prior to eating bread according to the tradition of the elders. Yeshua clearly told them that such traditions cause G-d's commandments to be transgressed (See Mark 7:9).

It is important that one pays close attention to the fact that the subject of this section is not Kashrut at all, but rather the transfer of impurity. The sages of old went into great detail concerning the transfer of impurity, well beyond anything found in the Torah. Messiah responded by teaching that it was not what went into the body that renders someone impure, but rather the impure things residing in a man's heart. To this we all would most certainly agree. Yeshua continued by saying that whatever one eats that is not appropriate for the body, does not enter the heart of a man, but exits the body going out into the latrine. It is the next phrase that has been widely translated improperly. I placed this phrase in red so it will be easily identified. Before we review how some of the major translations render this phrase, let's check out the Greek text.

καθαριζον παντα τα βρωματα

This text is according to the **Textus Receptus**. There are other texts and when examining them one finds three variants for the first Greek word in the phrase. The rest of the phrase is the same in all other texts. First, let's translate this phrase. The most literal way to render it is: "**cleansing all the foods**". The first word means "to cleanse" or "to purify". If one pays attention to the context, Yeshua is speaking about the fact that whatever is eaten, which is not appropriate for the body, the body itself expels it. **Once again it is vital that one remembers the context is not Kashrut, but the rabbinical teachings concerning the transfer of impurity.** It is a violation of proper hermeneutical techniques to ignore the fact that Yeshua was scolding the Pharisees and Scribes because their traditions caused them to transgress the Biblical commandments and then summarize Yeshua's teaching by asserting that He did away with dietary laws found in the Bible. What Yeshua actually was stating is that our bodies are wonderfully made and they themselves separate from what we digest, that which is beneficial for the body from that which is not. Hence, the ceremonial washing prior to eating bread is not necessary.

In regard to the three variants for the first word in the phrase, let's study the implications of each. The primary rendering from the **Textus Receptus** has this word as a neuter **participle**. The participle is often defined as a verbal adjective. It is employed to describe to the reader an action. It is found in the neuter gender because the word it is in relation to is the Greek word βρωματα,

which is also in the neuter gender and whose meaning is "food". Some English translations will translate it with the word "meat", which was an old English term which often simply referred to food in a general sense. The first variant is καθαριζει.

This word is not a participle, but a simple verb. It is singular. Greek verbs are not gender sensitive; however, they are reflective of number. Καθαριζει simply means that something in the third person singular must be the subject of this verb, i.e. He, She, or It. When there is no explicit subject provided, as is the case for verse 19, one must use context to determine the subject. It is the previous verse, verse 18, in which the word παν, meaning "all", appears. This word becomes the subject through verses 18-19.

*"And He (Yeshua) says to them, 'Thus also you are without understanding? Do you not know **all** (παν) which is outside that enters into a man is not able to render him unclean? Because it does not enter into his heart, but into the belly, and (then) goes out into the latrine'—..." Mark 7:18-19*

Hence, what is being described here is a process and it is this process of food entering through the mouth and making its way into the stomach where that which is not beneficial to the body is expelled outside. Therefore this process cleanses all the foods. With this in mind the phrase at the end of verse 19 would need to be translated: "it (the process that verses 18 and 19 describes) **cleanses all foods.**"

The second variant is obviously an improvement from the first. This variant καθαριζεται, is identical to the first, except instead of the verb appearing in the active voice, it appears in the middle voice. The middle voice has a reflexive quality. This quality is often illustrated by the difference between one dressing someone, i.e. the active voice, and one dressing himself, i.e. the reflexive voice. In other words, the middle voice reflects something that one does to himself. In the text in question, the variant is emphasizing the body cleansing itself from all foods. Hence the phrase would be translated, "**cleansing itself from all foods.**"

The final variant, like the **Textus Receptus**, has the word as a participle. Καθαριζων is in the masculine gender and is singular in number. Most scholars point out that if one assumes that Yeshua is the subject for the participle, then one would have to translate the phrase, "**The One who cleanses all foods.**" This rendering does not at all fit what is being described in verses 18 and 19. Yeshua did not do anything, other than to point out what the body has always done. There is no action on His part that would form a basis for a change in the dietary laws of the Bible.

Most serious Biblical scholars understand καθαριζων as a scribal error. Why is this? The answer is that καθαριζων is pronounced exactly as καθαριζον; that is, what appears in the **Textus Receptus**. The only difference is the second to last letter is a "ω" instead of an "ο". Both of these letters are pronounced the same. Therefore, because the context does not fit the participle appearing in the masculine and because ancient scribes did not always copy from sight,

but frequently were read the texts, it is highly likely that the scribe wrote and omega "ω" instead of an omicron "ο" when he heard the word being read to him.

Now, turning our attention to the various English translations, the vast majority do a poor job in rendering the Greek. Only the **King James**, **New King James**, and the **Young's Literal Translation** appropriately handle the text.

[Mark 7:19 KJV](#)

King James Version

Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, **purging all meats?**

[Mark 7:19 NKJV](#)

New King James Version

because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, **thus purifying all foods?"**

[Mark 7:19 YLT](#)

Young's Literal Translation

because it doth not enter into his heart, but into the belly, and into the drain it doth go out, **purifying all the meats.'**

Many of the other well known translations which are supposed to be very literal to the Greek, err in rendering the text. Examples are **American Standard Version**, **New American Standard**, and **Revised Standard Version**,

[Mark 7:19 ASV](#)

American Standard Version

because it goeth not into his heart, but into his belly, and goeth out into the draught? **[This he said], making all meats clean.**

[Mark 7:19 NAS](#)

New American Standard

because it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach, and is eliminated ?" **(Thus He declared all foods clean.)**

[Mark 7:19 RSV](#)

Revised Standard Version

since it enters, not his heart but his stomach, and so passes on?" **(Thus he declared all foods clean.)**

When looking at some of the other popular translations which are less literal, it is easy to see how they add words and rip the context away from the text in order to make their translations and advance their own errant theological perspective. Please read some of the notations I made concerning these.

[Mark 7:19 CJB](#)

Complete Jewish Bible

For it doesn't go into his heart but into his stomach, and it passes out into the latrine." **(Thus he declared all foods ritually clean.)**

This translation, which has strong support in the English Messianic community, is not a literal translation and does not rely upon the original

languages in rendering texts. It also lacks in many places an understanding of Jewish law and traditions. It does offer some positive renderings especially in names and makes the New Testament more sensitive to the general Jewish community than most English translations. Please note that the word "declared" does not appear in the original language, nor does the word "Thus". This is a classic example of "Messianic" leaders being incorrectly influenced by Western Christianity.

[Mark 7:19 NIV](#)

New International Version

For it doesn't go into his heart but into his stomach, and then out of his body." (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods "clean.")

The NIV is highly influenced by certain theological camps and errs in many places. In this passage the NIV adds "(In saying this, Jesus declared...)". This is a great deal to add and demonstrates that the ideas which the NIV wants to convey take priority over being faithful to the Biblical text.

[Mark 7:19 GNT](#)

Good News Translation

Because it does not go into your heart but into your stomach and then goes on out of the body." (In saying this, Jesus declared that all foods are fit to be eaten.)

The Good News Translation even adds more words than the NIV. The Greek texts have "all foods" and "cleansing". GNT changes the word "cleansing" to "fit to be" and adds seven additional words to further its agenda to declare that one can feel free to eat whatever one wants.

[Mark 7:19 NLT](#)

New Living Translation

Food doesn't come in contact with your heart, but only passes through the stomach and then comes out again." (By saying this, he showed that every kind of food is acceptable.)

[Mark 7:19 GW](#)

GOD'S WORD Translation

It doesn't go into his thoughts but into his stomach and then into a toilet." (By saying this, Jesus declared all foods acceptable.)

[Mark 7:19 CSB](#)

Holman Christian Standard

For it doesn't go into his heart but into the stomach and is eliminated." (As a result, He made all foods clean.)

[Mark 7:19 NCV](#)

New Century Version

It does not go into the mind, but into the stomach. Then it goes out of the body." (When Jesus said this, he meant that no longer was any food unclean for people to eat.)

The New Century Version adds a total of 14 words to the mere four Greek words in order to make a similar point that the "Christian Jesus" taught in this passage a removal of Kashrut.

Mark 7:19 MSG

The Message

It doesn't enter your heart but your stomach, works its way through the intestines, and is finally flushed."
(That took care of dietary quibbling; Jesus was saying that all foods are fit to eat.)

The Message demonstrates no fear of G-d, when it asserts that the very laws that Yeshua scolded the Pharisees and Scribes for transgressing are all just "dietary quibbling". Again, Yeshua is not speaking about dietary laws in this passage; but, those laws were part of G-d's commandments which The Message sees as insignificant.

The point I want to make is that so often in the believing world we do not take seriously the words of Scripture. Interpreting the Bible is not a game, but is the most important matter placed before man. True teachers of Scripture must study and learn the proper methods of Biblical interpretation. I know many men who take seriously this task and if you set under such a leader Praise G-d for him.