

## What is Kosher? - Tzedakah Ministries

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Friday, 29 August 2008 02:51

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What does it mean to be Kosher observant?

There are a lot of perceptions and misconceptions regarding what it means to be kosher and why the idea of kosher observance is important to Jewish life. The most common understanding of keeping kosher is to not eat pork because in Biblical times there was not a way to properly cook pork. And while there might be some validity to that idea, the Bible brings out the full meaning of why God commanded the Hebrew children to keep "kosher."

Lev. 11:44a states, "For I am the Lord your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy." And verse 45 reemphasizes the concept of holiness when it is written, "For I am the Lord that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy." The idea of kosher was, therefore, intended to set the Israelites apart from the other nations for the purpose of being holy and able to be used by God as a light to the nations

Today the idea of Kosher has become monopolized by rules and regulations and the idea of holiness appears to have been lost among the minutiae of observance. Separate dishes, different refrigerators for milk and meat products, and professional slaughterers (shochets) are among the methods used today to make sure that a Kosher observant individual does not accidentally eat something wrong. Unfortunately the command for "separateness" seems to have been lost in the effort to be diligent to man-made regulations.

I personally keep a modified Kosher diet in the sense that I avoid pork products and do not eat milk and meat products (i.e., cheeseburgers) in public. I do not do this because I think that I must but because I do not want my personal desire for a ham and cheese sandwich to be in any way a stumbling block to someone hearing the gospel(1 Cor. 8:1-13). And perhaps that is the truest sense of Kosher observance that we all must maintain. What do you think?