

Fables from the Jewish Tradition
By Rabbi Manes Kogan

(19)

The Hypocritical Pig

Genesis Rabbah 65:1



Background to the Fable “The Hypocritical Pig”

Leviticus 11 (1-8)

1. *And the Lord spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying to them,*
2. *Speak to the people of Israel, saying, These are the beasts which you shall eat among all the beasts that are on the earth.*
3. *What ever parts the hoof, and is cloven footed, and chews the cud, among the beasts, that shall you eat.*
4. *Nevertheless these shall you not eat of those that chew the cud, or of those that divide the hoof; the camel, because it chews the cud, but its hoof is not parted; it is unclean to you.*
5. *And the coney, because it chews the cud, but its hoof is not parted; it is unclean to you.*
6. *And the hare, because it chews the cud, but its hoof is not parted; it is unclean to you.*
7. *And the swine, though its hoof is parted, and is cloven footed, yet it chews not the cud; it is unclean to you.*
8. *Of their flesh shall you not eat, and their carcasses you shall not touch; they are unclean to you*

PIG



Encyclopedia Judaica

By Jehuda Feliks

PIG (Hebrew *hazir*). Included in the Pentateuch among the unclean animals prohibited as food is the pig which, although cloven-footed, is a nonruminant (Lev.

11:7; Deut. 16:8). It is the sole unclean animal mentioned as possessing these characteristics. There are archaeological evidences (figurines and relics of bones) that the pig was eaten by the inhabitants of Canaan before the Israelite conquest. It was also offered as a sacrifice in idolatrous worship, provoking a protest from Isaiah (66:3), while those "eating swine's flesh, and the detestable thing, and the mouse" (66:17) apparently did so in a cultic ceremony. The pig symbolized something repulsive, and hence "as a ring of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman that turneth aside from discretion" (Prov. 11:22). Other peoples, too, such as the Egyptians and the Sidonians, refrained from eating pig, which was also later prohibited to the Muslims. Abhorrence of the pig entered so deeply into the consciousness of the Jews that the expression *davar aher* ("another thing," i.e., something not to be mentioned by name) was used for it, at least as early as talmudic times (Ber. 43b; Shab. 129a) and in Aramaic as "that species." As early as Antiochus Epiphanes it was decreed that the eating of swine's flesh was to be a test of the Jews' loyalty to Judaism (II Macc. 6:18). Following the incident in the days of Hyrcanus II when, instead of an animal fit for sacrifice, a pig was sent up the walls of Jerusalem during a siege, it was decreed: "Cursed be he who breeds pigs" (Sot. 49b; TJ, Ta'an. 4:8, 68c), and this prohibition was incorporated into the Mishnah (BK 7:7). Since the pig eats everything and finds its food everywhere, there arose the saying: "None is richer than a pig" (Shab. 155b). The pig suffers from various maladies: "Ten measures of diseases descended to the world, of which the swine took nine" (Kid. 49b).

Midrash Rabbah - Genesis 63:10

AND ESAU WAS A CUNNING HUNTER, etc. Rabbi Abbahu said: He was a trapper and a fieldsman, trapping [i.e. deceiving] at home and trapping in the field. Trapping at home [by asking]: 'How do you tithe salt?' in the field [by asking], 'How do you tithe straw?'

"Lipstick on a pig"



Meaning: The act of trying to make someone or something unattractive more appealing to others even though it will obviously remain unattractive.

The Hypocritical Pig

Genesis Rabbah 65:1

מדורש רבה בראשית פרשה סה סימן א

א ויהי בן ארבעים שנה, הה"ד (תהלים פ) יכרסמנה חזיר מיער ר' פנחס בשם רבי סימון מכל הנביאים לא פירסמוה אלא שנים משה ואסף, משה אמר (דברים יד) ואת החזיר כי מפריס פרסה הוא, אסף אמר יכרסמנה חזיר מיער, למה הוא מושלה בחזיר, אלא מה חזיר הזה בשעה שהוא רובץ הוא מפשיט את טלפיו כלומר שאני טהור כך מלכות הזאת הרשעה גוזלת וחומסת נראת כאלו מצעת את הבימה, כך עשו כל ארבעים שנה צד נשי אנשים ומענה אותם וכיון שהגיע

The Hypocritical Pig

The pig, when it stretches out to rest, shows its cloven hooves as if to say, "I am pure!" (A cloven hoof is the mark of a kosher—pure—animal, which the pig is not, because it does not chew its cud. (See Leviticus 11:7)

Genesis Rabbah 65:1

In rabbinical literature, the pig is used as a symbol of Edom (Esau) and later of Rome. The author of Genesis Rabbah explains the nature of this symbolism: Esau, Jacob's brother and Isaac's son, is presented in the rabbinical literature not only as evil, but also as hypocritical. According to the rabbis, Esau always took for himself any married woman he wanted, violating them without compassion. However, on reaching the age of forty, he said to himself, "My father took a wife at age forty; I too will take wives at age forty." Thus, we read in the Torah: "And when Esau was forty years old, he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beerli the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite" (Genesis 26:34). Esau did not take these two women because he lacked company or because he wanted to have a better life, but simply to create the appearance of being an honorable man. Likewise, the pig (the symbol of Esau) shows its hooves as if to say, "I am pure!" demonstrating that he is not only impure, but also hypocritical.

Comprehension and Analysis Questions

- ?** What is unique in Leviticus Chapter 11 about the pig, which sets him aside the other impure animals?
- ?** Why, according to our story, is the pig worse than any other unclean animal?
- ?** Do you know any popular sayings about pigs?
- ?** How is Esau like a pig?
- ?** Why are people hypocritical?

Wrapping Up

- !** How are hypocritical people worse than wicked ones?

Bibliography

Feliks, Jehuda. "Pig" *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Eds. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik. Vol. 16. 2nd ed. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007. 150-151. 22 vols. *Gale*

Discussion Ideas from Rabbi Dorit Edut

K-3rd GRADES:

- 1) What do you think the pig was trying to prove by showing everyone its cloven hooves?
- 2) What else does an animal have to have besides cloven hooves in order to be considered "Kosher"? Pigs do not have this feature, so are they then kosher?
- 3) If you know the whole truth about something, why is it not okay to only tell half the truth—for example, if you accidentally broke the remote control of your tv and only told your parents that the remote control wasn't working anymore?

4th- 6th GRADES:

- 1) Why is this fable called "The Hypocritical Pig"?
- 2) Why do you think the pig may have acted like this?
- 3) Give an example of an incident in your life where you found someone behaving like a hypocrite? How did it make you feel? What do you think would have been a better way to behave in this situation?

7th-12th GRADES:

- 1) Why do you think the Rabbis chose a pig to represent hypocrisy in this fable?
- 2) If this fable is meant to help us understand the character of Esau in Gen. 26:34, what can we learn about how the Rabbis saw him from this? Why, historically, might they have felt it important to portray Esau this way? Was this a fair or unfair characterization (reread the text from Gen. 25:19-34 and Gen.27)?
- 3) False speech is something that is highly condemned in Judaism since we value speech very highly: "Lying speech is an abomination to the Lord / But those who act faithfully please Him" (Proverbs 12:22). Why do you think this is such an important value in Judaism? Why is it important for the way the world functions?

Language Arts Strategies from Dr. M. Patricia Cavanaugh

Pre-Reading Strategy: Vocabulary Development

The word "hypocritical" could cause comprehension difficulties for students. Indeed, words can ruin a story for some readers, especially very short fables such as The Hypocritical Pig.

It is important to ascertain understanding of key terms. So a combination of a Vocabulary Pre-Test and a Vocabulary Context Clue Exercise would work.

Begin with several blank lines that begin with the word in question:
Can you tell me anything about this word?

Hypocritical: _____
Hypocritical: _____
Hypocritical: _____

Depending on what students can do with the word as it stands, begin to break it apart and ask:

Can you tell me anything about these word parts?

Hypo: _____

Critic: _____

Critical: _____

Make sure that all students understand the term: "hypocritical" in general usage and as it is used in the text.