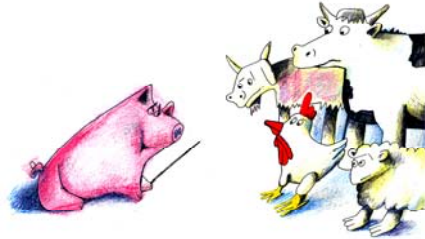


Fables from the Jewish Tradition  
By Rabbi Manes Kogan

(20)

**The Pig and the Other Animals**  
Midrash Temura 2



**Background to the Fable "The Pig and the Other Animals"**

Isaiah 45:5-7

5. I am the Lord, and there is no one else, there is no God beside me; I girded you, though you have not known me;
6. That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the Lord, and there is no one else.
7. I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I the Lord do all these things.

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בתי מדרשות ה"ב מדרש תמורה השלם פרק ד

אמרו, החזיר וכל מיני בהמה טמאה לבהמה טהורה, צריכים אתם להחזיק לנו טובה אילולי אני וחברי שאנו טמאים לא נודעתם שאתם טהורים.

**The Pig and the Other Animals**

A pig said to the pure animals, "You should be grateful to us. If it were not for me and my friends, you would not know you are pure."

Midrash Temura 2

Why did God create the impure animals? This seems to be the question our fable intends to answer. The pig, the impure animal above all others, explains to the pure animals that the purpose of impurity in the world is to serve as a contrast to purity. Impurity, darkness and evil serve as a contrast to purity, light and goodness, and

allow us to appreciate and enjoy the latter in all their importance. On a deeper theological level, the pig seems to remind the pure animals that it too was created by God and that its presence in this world, although it seems inexplicable, has a reason. This deep theological truth is emphasized in the book of Isaiah, in which God says: "I create the light and the darkness, make peace and create evil. I, the Eternal one, do all of this" (Isaiah 45:7).

### **Comprehension and Analysis Questions**

**?** What is the big theological question the author of our fable is trying to address?

**?** How is the author's answer to the above question interconnected to the main foundational principle of Judaism?

**?** How can the "pig's philosophy" help us deal with our dark moments on life?

### **Wrapping Up**

**!** A good answer and its limitations

### **Bibliography**

"Holocaust Theology" in <http://webroanoke.com/shoah/>

### **Discussion Ideas from Rabbi Dorit Edut**

#### **K-3rd GRADES:**

- 1)  
What animals are considered "pure" or "kosher" for eating according to the Torah? Which animals are not considered kosher or pure?
- 2)  
If all the animals were pure, would we be able to separate any and keep kosher?
- 3)  
Can you give an example of two things which are opposites like day and night? How does it help us to know one thing better if we have its opposite?

#### **4th-6th GRADES:**

- 1)  
Imagine you were one of the other "pure" or "kosher" animals. Do you agree or disagree with the pig's statement? Explain.
- 2)  
What are other examples of things we consider "pure" in Jewish life? In secular life? Why do you think we have these distinctions?
- 3)  
In the global society we live in, the ways of life that we have in America and the products we use are being found more and more in other countries. Do you think this is a good thing or not? Give your reasons.

#### **7th-12th GRADES:**

1)

Making distinctions between the pure and impure, the holy and the everyday, are found throughout Jewish practice. Give some other examples and explain why you think this is important in Judaism.

2)

The fable is there to help us understand not only about the distinctions but also about the value of ALL things created by God—whether pure or impure, good or evil. How does this impact your image of God, knowing first that God does create or allow for evil in this world, and secondly, that God also expects man to behave ethically?

3)

What is the value of keeping Kosher for Jewish people? Are there any modern reasons you would add to this? What is eco-kashrut?

## **Language Arts Strategies from Dr. M. Patricia Cavanaugh**

**Post Reading Strategy: Found Poetry (link this with Fable #22 “The Hen and Her Chicks”)**

**(Kirby, D., D. Kirby, and T. Liner. Inside Out: Strategies for Teaching Writing. Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 2004.)**

Found Poetry is quite literally found, located, discovered in all the text around us. The writer takes a word, a phrase, a sentence, a title, a synopsis, a caption, a small part or a medium part of any kind of text anywhere. These words are re-organized and placed in a thoughtful or thought provoking order. Possibilities from these two fables include:

Possible Words/Phrases

Possible Found Poem

Pure pig

Be grateful

If it were not

My friends

Know you not

Under her wings

Find in your own waste

When grown

Small shelter

She pecks