



MUSHROOMS: - UNCLEAR -

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Most Jewish rabbinical authorities have determined that mushrooms and other fungi (truffles) that are non-poisonous, non-toxic, and considered 'edible,' are clean and kosher fungi. This article will challenge that determination, arguing the case against mushrooms as being classified as edible clean kosher fungi, and will declare them UNCLEAR.

Most Jewish kosher certification authorities classify mushrooms as clean and kosher, even though they acknowledge that mushrooms are not green-pigmented chlorophyll herbs, they do not use sunlight to synthesize nutrition from carbon dioxide and water (generating oxygen as a byproduct), and they do not produce plant-like seeds (they reproduce with spores). Jewish rabbinical authorities have classified 'edible' mushrooms and other fungi (truffles) as clean creatures, based on the fact that Scripture does not specifically list fungi as unclear.

GENESIS 1:29-30:

And God said, "See, I have given you every herb that yields seed, which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food;" and it was so.

God's original command to man of what he should eat for food is stated in Genesis 1:29-30. Adhering to a strict application of Genesis 1:29-30, it is not reasonable to conclude that God permits mushrooms to be consumed, as well as green herbs, simply because Scripture does not specifically forbid them to be eaten. There are no subsequent Scripture verses that grant permission for man to consume mushrooms or any other form of fungi.

'Clean fungi' is a contradiction-sounding oxymoronic phrase.

God, through the Scriptures, didn't specifically forbid every possible human activity that is harmful to human health. Smoking tobacco plants (cigarettes) is something that God did not specifically prohibit in Scripture, yet smoking is known to be harmful to human health, weakens the body, causes bodily diseases, and shortens people's life spans. Since smoking cigarettes is harmful to human health, it does not need to be specifically named as a prohibited activity in order to know that God does not approve of smoking.

UNCLEAN CHARACTERISTICS OF MUSHROOMS

CHLOROPHYLL-FREE

Mushrooms are growing fungi organisms with no chlorophyll, flowers, or leaves. Fungi get their nourishment from dead or living organic matter. Mushrooms are not chlorophyll-pigmented green vegetation herbs. Green herbs receive their life-sustaining energy by photosynthesizing energy from carbon dioxide, sunlight, and water. Mushrooms do not use sunlight for energy and thrive better in dark shaded areas. Mushrooms get their nutrition by feeding off dead or living plants and trees, rather than getting their nutrients from the soil. There are some varieties of mushrooms that are green in color, but any mushroom variety that is green is due to random coloration; their color is not derived from chlorophyll, as green vegetation herbs are.

INEDIBLE, POISONOUS, AND TOXIC VARIETIES ARE NUMEROUS

There are many inedible and poisonous species of mushrooms. People often get sick by having a negative digestive reaction after eating 'edible' mushrooms. Some people are highly allergic to all types of 'edible' mushrooms as well as all other types of fungi. Mushrooms can spoil easily and become poisonous or toxic if not stored and preserved properly. Based on the known mushroom varieties, a rough estimate is that 50% are inedible – that is they can't be eaten because they are too tough to chew, 29% are considered edible, 20% are toxic and will make you sick if eaten, and 1% can kill you if consumed [1].

Mushroom poisoning (also known as mycetism or mycetismus) refers to the harmful effects from the ingesting of toxic substances present in mushrooms. Symptoms can vary from slight stomach discomfort to death. Symptoms of mushroom poisoning can include nausea, stomach cramps, vomiting, and diarrhea (which can be bloody). Symptoms may show up right after eating mushrooms or may occur several hours later. Typically, mushroom poisonings that produce symptoms within 2-hours are less dangerous than mushroom poisonings that produce symptoms later on, after 6-hours [2].

Picking mushrooms in a field at random and eating them is dangerous, as many varieties are poisonous or toxic. Only mushroom experts can tell which mushrooms are safe or not, and even the experts are fooled sometimes and have been known to get sick or die after having consumed the wrong type of mushrooms [3].

PARASITES AND SCAVENGERS

Mushrooms are parasitic saprophyte scavengers. Mushrooms obtain their nutrition from metabolizing energy from dead or living plants and trees. As parasites, mushrooms feed off living plants and trees, behaving like vampire organisms, by deriving nutrients at the host plant or tree's expense. As scavengers, mushrooms feed off dead rotting plants and trees, which is their staple diet in woodland areas. Mushrooms play an important role in the breakdown, cleaning, and renewal of the forests.

SEEDLESS

Mushrooms, unlike plants that produce visible seeds, reproduce through budding and scattering microscopic spores. It can be argued that spores are the mushroom's seeds, just as man's sperm is his seed, but microscopic spores are not plant-like visible seeds. God allows man to eat every green herb that yields [VISIBLE] seed and every tree whose fruit yields [VISIBLE] seed (Genesis 1:29). When that command was given to Adam and Eve, they didn't have microscopes to judge as to whether or not spores should be considered seeds. Adam and Eve could not have considered mushrooms as seed-bearing plants.

Mushrooms are neither seed-bearing green herbs, nor fruit-bearing trees; they are spore-budding fungi.

AMOS 4:9; HAGGAI 2:17:

I blasted (struck) you with BLIGHT and MILDEW...

Blight and mildew, like mushrooms, are fungi. When the nation of Israel rebelled against God, He cursed their crops with blight and mildew fungi. Blight and mildew are fungi plant diseases. Fungi are referred to as a curse in Scripture, not a blessing.

Some Scripture scholars believe that the manna that God fed the Hebrews in the desert, who fled Egypt in the Exodus, was a form of edible fungi. What exact type of food manna was is uncertain. Believers should not conclude that manna was edible fungi. Manna is described to be a food, like coriander seed, so it is more likely God fed the Hebrews a type of seed while they were wandering in the desert for 40-years (Exodus 16:31; Numbers 11:7). Mushrooms are not mentioned as food, nor are they mentioned at all, throughout Scripture.

MUSHROOMS ARE NOT VEGETABLES!

When dining out, and following a mushroom-free diet, it is important to note that if you order vegetable meals you may be served with mushrooms included with your vegetables. Restaurants will often include mushrooms in dishes such as vegetable omelets, vegetable fried rice, vegetable salads, etc. To ensure you are not served with a mushroom fungi-tainted meal, be sure to make it clear when ordering from a restaurant menu that you do not want mushrooms served with your veggies.

WHY ARE 'EDIBLE' MUSHROOMS UNCLEAN?

'Edible' mushrooms may not be initially as harmful as poisonous toxic mushrooms are, but their long term health effects on the human body are unknown. One can eat pork products, or shellfish, and not suffer immediate health consequences, but government and scientific studies have shown that eating these Scripturally unclean organisms is harmful to a person's long term health.

OTHER FUNGI EATEN:

Inuit and Japanese people are known to eat various forms of 'rock tripe,' which are ferns, lichens, molds, and mosses. These fungi have very little nutritional value and can be very dangerous to eat.

YEAST

Can yeast be lawfully consumed?

Consuming live active yeast would be unlawful, as this would be consuming fungi directly. It is lawful to consume products that are derived from yeast, as this is not consuming the yeast fungi, but the byproduct of yeast: either bread, a baked good, or a fermented alcohol product.

Yeast is an interesting microscopic fungi organism. Yeast is an essential component in the making of bread, vinegar, and fermented alcohol drinks: beer and wine. Active yeast, when used in the baking process to leaven bread and baked goods, becomes inactive, dies, *and* dissolves.

Beer and wine are yeast-fermented alcohol products. Stronger spirits such as vodka are distilled alcohol products that do not use the yeast fermenting process to become alcohol. Brewer's yeast is used to ferment alcohol. Brewer's yeast, after fermenting alcohol for beer and wine, is strained from the finished alcohol product, discarded, and is not consumed.

Yeast shares a function that honeybees do; both yeast and honeybees are unclean creatures that produce clean edible products for man to consume. Yeast leavens bread, other baked goods, and brews alcohol for beer and wine; bees make honey.

Consuming residual inactive yeast is not unlawful. People often inhale airborne yeast spores. Inhaled yeast can sometimes lead to a fungal infection if a person has a weakened immune system [4]. Bacteria is naturally present and consumed in many of the foods that we eat. Nutritionists have been studying good and bad bacteria for the human body for the past few decades. As it pertains to the human diet, the Scriptures do not command us to examine microscopic organisms. Mushrooms are visible growing fungi, not undetectable microscopic fungi, like yeast.

Consuming yeast-leavened bread, a yeast-leavened baked good, or a yeast-fermented alcohol product is the same as consuming honeybee made honey. Yeast-leavened bread, baked goods, and fermented alcoholic beer and wine products are good to consume, as honey is good to eat (Proverbs 24:13).

Jewish rabbinical authority is NOT the final authority on determining whether or not mushrooms and other fungi (truffles) may be eaten. Rabbinical authorities rejected Messiah. They should not be considered infallible on the topic of kosher certification or determining clean and unclean creatures.

Rabbinical kosher-certifying authorities err in classifying 'edible' mushrooms and other fungi (truffles) in the following two ways:

1. They classify 'edible' mushrooms (and truffles) as clean fungi. God, through the Scriptures, did not give man permission to consume fungi.
2. They disregard the fact that 'edible' mushrooms (and truffles) are not green vegetation herbs. Mushrooms are growing, scavenger, seedless, spore-budding fungi organisms that feed off dead or living plants and trees.

1. "How many edible/poisonous mushrooms are there?" Mushroom, the Journal of Wild Mushrooming, < <http://www.mushroomthejournal.com/greatlakesdata/TopTen/Quest19.html> >.

2. "Food poisoning / Mushroom poisoning," American Academy of Family Physicians, 04/2014, < <http://familydoctor.org/familydoctor/en/diseases-conditions/food-poisoning/mushroom-poisoning.html> >.

3. Walther, Jonathan, "GOD'S FOOD LAWS IN TODAY'S WORLD," December 29, 2003, < <http://loveandtruth.net/food-laws.html> >.

4. "Fungal Infections Also called: Mycoses," MedlinePlus, January 15, 2016, < <https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/fungalinfections.html> >.