

# **IA1. Gentiles Abstaining from What Has Been Sacrificed to Idols, from Fornication, from what Is Strangled, and from Blood.**

*Gentiles are to abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, from fornication, from what is strangled, and from blood.*

IA1a: *Gentiles are to abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols.*

IA1b: *Gentiles are to abstain from fornication.*

IA1c: *Gentiles are to abstain from what is strangled.*

IA1d: *Gentiles are to abstain from blood.*

This precept is derived from His Word (blessed is He):

## **Key New Testament Scriptures**

Acts 15:28-29

*For it seemed good to the Ruach HaKodesh and to us not to lay any heavier burden on you [Gentiles] than the following requirements: to abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from fornication. If you keep yourselves from these, you will be doing the right thing. Shalom!*

## **Additional New Testament Scriptures**

Acts 10:9-16, 15:19-20, 21:25

Romans 14:2-3

1 Corinthians 8:4, 7, 10

Revelation 2:20

## **Related New Testament Mitzvot**

IA02 Not Arguing, Judging, or Causing a Brother to Stumble Over Prohibited Foods

VA03 Not Eating Meat Sacrificed to Idols

## **Supportive Tanakh Scriptures**

Genesis 9:3-4

*Every moving thing that lives will be food for you; just as I gave you green plants before, so now I give you everything- only flesh with its life, which is its blood, you are not to eat.*

Genesis 32:25-33(24-32)

*.. and Ya'akov was left alone. Then some man wrestled with him until daybreak. When he saw that he did not defeat Ya'akov, he struck Ya'akov's hip socket, so that his hip was dislocated while wrestling with him. The man said, "Let me go, because it's daybreak." But Ya'akov replied, "I won't let you go unless you bless me." The man asked, "What is your name?" and he answered, "Ya'akov." Then the man said, "From now on, you will no longer be called Ya'akov,*

*but Isra'el; because you have shown your strength to both God and men and have prevailed." Ya'akov asked him, "Please tell me your name." But he answered, "Why are you asking about my name?" and blessed him there. Ya'akov called the place P'ni-El [face of God], "Because I have seen God face to face, yet my life is spared." As the sun rose upon him he went on past P'ni-El, limping at the hip. This is why, to this day, the people of Isra'el do not eat the thigh muscle that passes along the hip socket- because the man struck Ya'akov's hip at its socket.*

#### Leviticus 3:16-17

*The cohen will make them go up in smoke on the altar; it is food, an offering made by fire to be a fragrant aroma; all the fat belongs to ADONAI. It is to be a permanent regulation through all your generations wherever you live that you will eat neither fat nor blood.*

#### Leviticus 7:22-27

*ADONAI said to Moshe, "Say to the people of Isra'el, 'You are not to eat the fat of bulls, sheep or goats. The fat of animals that die of themselves or are killed by wild animals may be used for any other purpose, but under no circumstances are you to eat it. For whoever eats the fat of animals of the kind used in presenting an offering made by fire to ADONAI will be cut off from his people. You are not to eat any kind of blood, whether from birds or animals, in any of your homes. Whoever eats any blood will be cut off from his people.*

#### Leviticus 11:1-47

*(entire chapter)*

#### Leviticus 17:10-14

*When someone from the community of Isra'el or one of the foreigners living with you eats any kind of blood, I will set myself against that person who eats blood and cut him off from his people. For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for yourselves; for it is the blood that makes atonement because of the life. This is why I told the people of Isra'el, 'None of you is to eat blood, nor is any foreigner living with you to eat blood. When someone from the community of Isra'el or one of the foreigners living with you hunts and catches game, whether animal or bird that may be eaten, he is to pour out its blood and cover it with earth. For the life of every creature- its blood is its life. Therefore I said to the people of Isra'el, You are not to eat the blood of any creature, because the life of every creature is its blood. Whoever eats it will be cut off.*

#### Leviticus 19:26

*Do not eat anything with blood. Do not practice divination or fortune-telling.*

#### Leviticus 20:24-26

*But to you I have said, "You will inherit their land; I will give it to you as a possession, a land flowing with milk and honey." I am ADONAI your God, who has set you apart from other peoples. Therefore you are to distinguish between clean and unclean animals and between clean and unclean birds; do not make yourselves detestable with an animal, bird or reptile that I have set apart for you to regard as unclean. Rather, you people are to be holy for me; because I, ADONAI, am holy; and I have set you apart from the other peoples, so that you can belong to me."*

### Deuteronomy 12:15-16

*However, you may slaughter and eat meat wherever you live and whenever you want, in keeping with the degree to which ADONAI your God has blessed you. The unclean and the clean may eat it, as if it were gazelle or deer. But don't eat the blood; pour it out on the ground like water.*

### Deuteronomy 12:21-24

*If the place which ADONAI your God chooses to place his name is too far away from you; then you are to slaughter animals from your cattle or sheep, which ADONAI has given you; and eat on your own property, as much as you want. Eat it as you would gazelle or deer; the unclean and clean alike may eat it. Just take care not to eat the blood, for the blood is the life, and you are not to eat the life with the meat. Don't eat it, but pour it out on the ground like water.*

### Deuteronomy 14:11-20

*You may eat any clean bird; but these you are not to eat: eagles, vultures, ospreys, kites, any kind of buzzard, any kind of raven, ostriches, screech-owls, seagulls, any kind of hawk, little owls, great owls, horned owls, pelicans, barn owls, cormorants, storks, any kind of heron, hoopoes and bats. All winged swarming creatures are unclean for you; they are not to be eaten; but all clean flying creatures you may eat.*

### Comment

The issue is first described in Acts 15:1:

*"But some men came down from Y'hudah to Antioch and began teaching the brothers, "You can't be saved unless you undergo b'rit-milah in the manner prescribed by Moshe."*

The emissaries and elders who considered the matter apparently expanded the discussion beyond circumcision and salvation to a discussion of to what extent Gentiles (presumably those who lived apart from a Jewish community – e.g. like those in Phoenicia and Shomron) were responsible for keeping other aspects of *Torah* law as well. Their conclusion (summarized and spoken by James) was that Gentiles in general were not, and they gave them the instructions opined by James in Acts 15:19-20:

*"Therefore, my opinion is that we should not put obstacles in the way of the Goyim who are turning to God. Instead, we should write them a letter telling them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from fornication, from what is strangled and from blood."*

This is still an issue of discussion and debate today – not about circumcision (that has been settled as unnecessary for Gentiles), but about other aspects of the Mosaic law such as heathen practices, morality, the appointed times, and the laws of biblical *kashrut*. It is the authors' opinion, pursuant to Acts 15:19-20 and 28-29, that all Gentiles (with the interpretive help of the Holy Spirit) are obligated to abide by the biblical laws of morality (represented by "fornication") and to abstain from overt heathen practices of idolatry. Also, Gentiles who are not *k'rov Yisrael* (who are not called by God to function within and be part of a congregational Jewish community) are not required to abstain from the "foods" forbidden to Israelites (Jews) other than

from those listed in Acts. The authors are, nevertheless, of the opinion that Gentiles who live and function within and are part of a Jewish congregation should aspire to abide by the food and other cultural norms of their community.

**Note 1:** The words “what has been sacrificed to idols” in Acts 15:28-29 are understood by the authors to be referring to edibles and to Gentiles. Nevertheless, because the NKJ translates it “things offered to idols,” the reader is referred to *Mitzvah* VA3: “Not Eating Meat Sacrificed to Idols” and to the *Mitzvah* category it is under: “VA. Idolatry & the Occult,” that refer to things other than edibles and apply to Jews as well.

**Note 2:** This *Mitzvah* does not address prohibited foods that are solely rabbinical such as animals not slaughtered according to rabbinical standards, unkosher cuts of meat, and foods that contain both meat and dairy.

### **Related Mitzvot in Volumes 1 & 2**

- K1 Creatures We Are Allowed to Eat and Forbidden to Eat
- K3 Eating Fat, Meat from Strangled Animals, or Food Polluted by Idols
- K4 Eating Blood
- K5 Eating the Sinew of the Thigh