

# The Kabbala of Kosher Signs

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## Land Animals – Split Hooves and Chewing its Cud

- Speak to the children of Israel, saying: These are the creatures that you may eat among all the animals on earth: Any animal that has a cloven hoof that is completely split into double hooves, and which brings up its cud that one you may eat. (Leviticus 11:2-3)

## Water Animals – Fins and Scales

- Among all [creatures] that are in the water, you may eat these: Any in the water that has fins and scales, those you may eat. (Leviticus 11:9)
- All [fish] that have scales also have fins; there are those that have fins but do not have scales. (Talmud, Niddah 51b)

## Birds – Based on Tradition

- And among birds, you shall hold these in abomination; they shall not be eaten... (Leviticus 11:13)
- Code of Jewish Law: Yoreh Deah: 82: The identifying signs of kosher fowl aren't mentioned in the Torah. Rather it lists the 24 species of non-Kosher birds and all others are considered to be Kosher. One who is proficient in the knowledge of these species and their names may eat any fowl that is not amongst them and (the bird) does not require any examination. A Kosher bird may be eaten by tradition if it is an absolutely accepted fact that the particular species is Kosher. One who does not recognize the species or its name can check for the signs. Any bird of prey is established to be of the non-Kosher species. If one does not know whether it is a bird of prey, if the bird is placed on a rope and the claws divide with two toes on either side of the rope or if it grabs food out the air and eats it, it is established as a bird of prey. There are three signs of a kosher bird. A. An extra toe. B. if the crop and C. the gizzard peel easily by hand (without a knife). Though a bird has all three signs one should not eat it for we are concerned that it is a bird of prey unless there is a tradition from our ancestors that it is Kosher. Some say that any bird with a wide beak and webbed feet like a goose is not a bird of prey and may be eaten if it has the other three signs. Others say that one should not rely on even this and no bird should be eaten unless there is a tradition. And this is the prevailing custom. (Glosses by Rema – Rabbi Moshe Isserles)