You shall not render your souls abominable through such animals and birds...Which I have set apart for you to render unclean. You shall be holy for Me...And I have separated you from the Peoples to be Mine. (20:25,26)

Separation and differentiation are words which are synonymous with Judaism. Indeed, they define the religion. Hashem has set us apart from the nations of the world to be His. From the very beginning His master-plan was that we should be distinct. We are to distinguish ourselves by our observance of the Divine laws, as well as our overall demeanor and virtue. It is evident that the underlying purpose of the Jewish dietary laws is to separate us from the nations. We are elevated from the rest of the world by the food that we eat, the special food that Hashem has chosen for us to eat.

Furthermore, we view the dietary laws as the metaphorical wall that makes it difficult for us to mingle and socialize with others. We are to apply the dietary laws as a model for other forms of separation. **Horav Avigdor Miller, Shlita,** suggests that since the purpose of this "wall" is separation, we should be sure to erect our own barriers which will shield us from the harmful effect of outside influences.

In contemporary times, we can sit in the privacy of our homes and still be subject to the direct influence of the decadent world around us. Whether it is via the media, periodicals, or various forms of literature, we expose ourselves to the influence from which we are to run away. What good is a kosher home if it lacks a kosher attitude? A kosher home which is open to a non-kosher influence is nothing more than hypocrisy. Children growing up in such a home perceive this hypocrisy and quite often rebel against such a spurious lifestyle. The barriers we erect are not just to keep us in; they are also to keep others out. While the barriers may not initially add to our social acceptance, they will ultimately enhance our image when we demonstrate the beautiful effect that _Torah_ has on our lives.