

Beginner's Torah Lesson

How to Study the Torah

*By
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Beginner's Torah Lesson # 1

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By Rabbi Edward Levi Nydle

Ephraimites who are new to the Torah need some basic principles to help them understand how to properly study and interpret the Torah. Proper Torah study will help them to understand the *mitzvot* in the Torah and their application in our everyday lives. Let me help you by giving you a few pointers in learning Torah that will make a world of difference. Hopefully these beginner helps will prevent you from falling into the trap of misinterpreting word meanings, verses, and texts.

No communication, be it written or oral, verbal or nonverbal, can be understood without interpretation. We often interpret the communication without even being aware of how we came to that interpretation and understanding. Torah must be interpreted in order to understand it. Therefore, we have to know the rules of interpretation in order not to misunderstand the Torah and to know what it really says. Misinterpretation brings misunderstanding. Misunderstanding brings wrong doctrine!

We assume everyone reading this agrees upon the inspiration of the Torah and that Yahweh gave the Torah to Moshe. Therefore, it being from Above, every jot and tittle must be taken seriously. The Sages teach us that every passage of the Torah has 70 facets, referring to the 70 members of the Sanhedrin, whose purpose was to interpret the law. The Torah has many levels of intended meaning to the reader. Also, interpretation of the Torah must have a deep respect for the significance of every word and phrase in the text. Yahweh has placed in the Torah everything the reader needs to hear to understand the text! It is our job to dig deep within the text to find what He is saying.

The rabbis have set up four categories of interpretation of the Torah called *PDRS* or *PaRDeS*=paradise.

- ***P'shat***, the plain simple ,literal meaning of the text
- ***Drash***, the homiletic meaning (from this *MiDrash*)
- ***Remez*** , the hidden or esoterical meaning
- ***Sod***, the hidden, mysterious, gematria

P'shat is the basic meaning of a text. No Scriptural interpretation EVER abandons its *P'shat*-Plain Sense! This means\ that NO MATTER WHAT OTHER INTERPRETIVE MODES ARE APPLIED TO THE TEXT, THE TEXT ALWAYS RETAINS ITS PLAIN SENSE AND HAS TO BE RECKONED WITH IN THAT MANNER! Even *P'shat* has several levels of interpretation. This means we must apply the rules of grammar, language, compositional syntax, history, culture, geography, and just plain common sense to the text. Remember that interpretation strives for simplicity as its aim of understanding. The simple interpretation is preferred over the more complex one. An interpretation that resolves several difficulties raised by the text has a ring of truth to attach to it.

The starting point in ALL Scriptural interpretation is to know WHAT the text is saying. This seems obvious! But yet knowing what every word or sentence means is not so obvious. That means we HAVE TO WORK FROM THE ORIGINAL HEBREW TEXT. Translations are merely man's attempt to interpret the text and ALL TRANSLATIONS ARE OPEN TO DISPUTE! No translation is "inspired". This puts the person who only knows English at a great disadvantage over the beginning Hebrew student. He is left to the mercy of the translators or mistranslators, whichever the case may be. We cannot approach any text casually because we might miss the opportunity of seeing what lies underneath the text. This requires some knowledge of the Hebrew language.

Next, we must consider HOW the text is being said. That means we have to pay attention to the adjectives, nouns, pronouns, and proper nouns used in a text. We watch for word plays, repetition, word associations, verbal nuances, and the like. We may have to express this verbally to understand the text. One of the rules of hermeneutics is that we must interpret on the basis of text-in-context. That means any text must be interpreted and is dependent upon the context within which it is found. Words can change meaning when they exist in different contexts and settings. This means every part of the passage derives its meaning from its surrounding context. A text out of context is a pretext. This is called the Contiguity principal-or deriving clues to the interpretation from the neighboring text, chapter, or book. The Torah is one unified document. We must also look for similarities between texts. In order to understand one text of the Torah, one must be familiar with another section or the whole of the Torah. There are rare words or phrases that appear in different sections of the Torah. This help us to link together two seemingly unconnected verses and sections by verbal association within the two texts. I must stress that we are to take a text at face value or the Plain Sense of the text. Too many people unfamiliar with the rules of Torah interpretation try to spiritualize or allegorize the texts of the Torah!

We have to know if we are dealing with poetry, prophecy, history, songs, or legal laws or *mitzvoth*. We cannot allegorize a legal section of the Torah. We have to look at the plain meaning and put ourselves in their shoes AT THE TIME to find the meaning of the text.

There is a BIG difference between saying, “This verse MEANS such and such” and “This verse can serve as an illustration or principle to teach us about such and such”. By saying the first we are assigning a specific literal meaning to the text, while the latter might help us to come to an understanding of another text or principle within the Torah. It is so important that we understand this rule of Torah interpretation. If we do not apply this rule then we will misinterpret many of the plain legal aspects of Torah commands that Yahweh has given us and try to spiritualize them away . We can only arrive at the literal meaning of the text after careful study of the text and its original Yahweh inspired meaning. However, we can say it serves as an illustration of a principle within Scripture without declaring it to be the original meaning of the text. This is done especially when we try to bring things into our lives as practical application. PRACTICAL APPLICATION IS THE LAST STEP OF TEXTUAL INTERPRETATION! THIS IS WHERE WE BECOME DISHONEST IN THE INTERPRETATION OR HANDLING OF THE TEXT AND THE TORAH. WE CANNOT ASSIGN MEANINGS TO A TEXT OR COMMAND THAT ARE NOT THERE IN THE ORIGINAL COMMANDMENT. Let me say this about practical application- we MUST look to see HOW they applied this commandment in ancient Israel, and how they understood the text. We also need to look at HOW THE JEWISH PEOPLE APPLY THIS COMMAND TODAY! They do not have all things correct; however, they DO HAVE THE MAJORITY OF THINGS RIGHT! They have preserved the Torah for us for thousands of years! We read in the *Brit Chadasha*:

- “What then is the advantage of the Yehudite, or what is the value of circumcision? MUCH in every way! Because firstly indeed that THEY were entrusted with the WORDS OF ELOHIM. **Romans 3:1-2**

Remember that the Torah scroll was not written with any chapters and verses. Sentences are not marked off. These are Medieval “Christian” additions to the Scriptures and sometimes tend to muddy the waters more than they help! Sometimes they break up whole thoughts by the chapter divisions. In the Hebrew Scroll there are not any forms of punctuation or vowel pointing either. These were all added later by the Oral Massoretic tradition. So, we cannot always trust the vowel pointing to know the correct Hebrew word or pronunciation of the word. Many texts were changed by the Massoritics to hide the verses and words pointing to Yahshua as the Moshiach. One vowel point can change the meaning of a whole verse!

We have to become experts of the text! We have to study, study, and study! We have to familiarize ourselves with all the tools of the student of the Scriptures! We have to become ardent users of the various Concordances, Dictionaries, Encyclopedias, Commentaries, and works of the Sages. Good reference materials are a MUST for the serious student! A WORD OF CAUTION: we have to be aware of prejudices of the writers and compilers of various works.

We must also rely upon the *Ruach HaKodesh* (Set-apart Spirit) to be our teacher of the Torah.

Tehillim 119:18 says, “Open my eyes, that I might behold the wonderful things from Your Torah.”

Yahshua said, “But the Helper, the Set- Apart Spirit, whom the Father shall send in My Name, He shall teach you all, and remind you of all I said to you.”

Yochanan (John) 15:26 *the Scriptures*. Look for passages of the Torah when reading the *Brit Chadasha* (Renewed Covenant). This will help the *Ruach* to show you how the early Body of Messiah interpreted the passage, and also how they practiced the *mitzvot*. It is essential for us to see the spirit behind the commandment to understand WHY Yahweh gave it to Israel in the first place at Mt.Sinai. This means we have to know both the letter of the law and the spirit of the law. Each *mitzvah* has a literal and spiritual meaning. Yahweh wants us to know and observe both!

Study is not an end in itself. We have to become doers of the Word also. There comes a time when we have to apply the teachings we are learning to our lives in order to rise up and become Messianic Yisrael! Every Torah teacher must encourage his students to practice the Torah and apply what they are learning.

Last of all: WE MUST ALL STAY TEACHABLE AND BE WILLING TO CHANGE OUR OPINIONS WHEN SCRIPTURE PROVES US TO BE WRONG! None of us have all the TRUTH. We must be willing to look at different teachings and viewpoints to see if they have any validity based upon the Scriptural proof presented to us. I pray this first short introductory lesson on the Torah has been helpful to you as a student of the Word of Yahweh.

**May Yahweh bless your understanding and studies of His Word. And may He grant you Wisdom,
Understanding and
knowledge.**

Beginner's Torah #2

Understanding the Mitzvot

By Rabbi Edward L. Nydle-Revised 9-4-03

This is the second lesson of the beginner's Torah series. In this lesson we are going to study how to understand the *mitzvah* or *mitzvot* (pl.) of Yahweh in the Torah.

The word –*MITZVAH*–means a command that comes from Yahweh that requires an action in order to fulfill it. Perhaps you have recognized the word from the word –*Bar Mitzvah*– meaning “son of the commandment”. The source of commandments is found in the *Torah* or the first five books of the Scriptures known as the Five Books of Moshe. All the commandments are found in the Torah, although they are not numbered or even specified in the Torah. We have to look to the rabbinical interpretation of the Torah to find the enumeration of the commandments. It was Rabbi Simlai, in the third century, who first taught the 613 commandments of the Torah. He counted 365 negative commandments (the same as the number of days in the solar year) and 248 positive commandments, corresponding to the number of parts in the human body. These 613 commandments are called in Hebrew the *Taryag Mitzvot*, as the numbering (gematria) of *TaRYaG* equals 613.

Categories of Mitzvot

- Positive and negative *mitzvot*–The positive commands (*mitzvot aseh*) are the commands which require a person to actually do something, such as wear tzit-tzit, give charity (*tzadeka*), keep Feasts, etc. The negative commands (*mitzvot lo ta'aseh*) are commandments that tell a person to refrain from doing something, such as not to steal, bear false witness, etc.
- Time-bound and non-time bound commands.the time-bound commandments are laws that must be observed at a certain time of the day, month, year, etc. According to Jewish tradition, women are exempt from many of these commands due to the responsibilities in raising children and keeping the home. Non-time bound commandments are laws that are not related to any time of the day, week, year, etc. These may apply to helping the poor, care of animals, keeping of vows, etc.
- Light and serious commandments–The light commands (*mitzvah kallah*) are laws such as tithing, Feasts while the heavy or weightier (*mitzvah chamurah*) laws are love, compassion, belief, etc.
- Rational and nonrational commands –Honor your parents and love your neighbor are ethical rational commands (*mishpatim*), but the nonrational (*chukim*) are commands such as *kashrut* (the dietary laws). More on this later.
- The commandments that guide us in our relationship with our fellow man (*mitzvot bay adam lechayvaro*) and our relationship with Yahweh (*mitzvot bayn adam laMakom*). The laws pertaining to our fellow man are the laws of –not to steal etc. and the laws pertaining to our relationship with Yahweh are laws that help establish identity as Yisrael such as Tzit-Tzit, mezuzah, the Feasts, etc.
- Non-Torah related commands such as washing the hands before eating, lighting Shabbat candles, reading the Scroll of Hadassah at Purim, the saying of blessing before partaking of food, making an *eruv* are all traditional commandments.

In the classification of the commandments we must also include the following list:

- Laws that pertain to all Yisrael, everywhere, and all the time, laws that pertain only to the Levitical Priesthood (*kohenim*), laws that pertain only to women (*niddah*) and laws that pertain only to men, Temple laws, laws binding upon all mankind, laws that apply to the whole community and laws that apply only to the individual Yisraelite, laws that pertain only to a specific time and place (*the lulav*), obligatory commands that only are to be observed when the occasion or circumstances arise (the hired laborer), the laws that applied only to the King of Yisrael, and laws that are constant-such as love Yahweh and your neighbor. If we understand some of these classifications, and categories it will help us to properly interpret the Torah and its obligatory nature upon Yisrael.

Mishpatim, Edot, and Chukim

First, we have to understand that the word TORAH does not mean LAW! It means instruction or teaching. The word LAW has negative connotations to the Western and Greek mind-set. Greek only has one word for the Torah-*nomos* or law. Hebraic thought understands that Torah is instruction given by a loving Elohim to His children, Yisrael, as a life-style to protect them and bring His blessing into their lives. It is the accepted life-style of the redeemed people of Yisrael.

- “And this is the *TORAH* which Mosheh placed before the children of Yisrael (*b'nai Yisrael*). **Devarim (Deut.4: 44)** *the Scriptures* I.S.R.

- “These are the witnesses (testimonies KJV) *EDOT*, and the laws (statutes KJV) *chukim*, and the right rulings (judgments KJV) *mishpatim* which Mosheh spoke to the children of Yisrael after they came out of Mitsrayim.” **Devarim 4:45** *the Scriptures* I.S.R.

This verse tells us that there are three major categories of the Torah commands in the Scriptures:

EDOT-CHUKIM-MISHPATIM.

- The *mishpatim* are all the moral and ethical laws (right-rulings –judgments) within the Torah that require no explanation or even justification to obey. In Greek the word is *krimata*, a word meaning carrying a bundle of associations to the Greek mind of punishment and condemnation. This is because to violate a *mishpatim* usually held a penalty attached to the instruction.

- The *edot* or witnesses and testimonies are the Feast Days, Sabbaths, or any other instruction that communicated to the Hebrew mind a deep spiritual truth. The Greek word is *marturia*. This word is found in its singular form in **Yehoshua (Joshua) 22:34** “And the children of Reuven and the children of Gad called the altar –*ED* A Witness between us that Yahweh is Elohim.” These witnesses are REMINDERS or remembrances that Yahweh is faithful, to Yisrael and *kadosh*- set-apart. When we observe these commandments they serve to strengthen us and to reinforce our identity as Yisrael, and also reveal to us the attributes, character of Yahweh.

- The *chukim* are laws or statutes that do not seem to have any rational reason behind them. These are laws like *kashrut* and *Kil'ayim*. The Greek word is *dikaïomata* meaning decision, requirements, and regulations. The reasons behind these laws are not stated in the text and require one to dig deeper into the Torah to find the hidden truth in them. These are the instructions from the torah people seem to have the most trouble with keeping, as they see no rational reason behind the law.

ALL are included in the RENEWED Covenant

- “And I will put my *Ruach* (Spirit) within you. And I shall cause you to walk in my laws-*Chukim* and guard My right-rulings –*Mishpatim*-and shall do them.” **Yechezqel 36:27**
- “So that they walk in my laws, and guard my right-rulings, and shall do them. And they shall be My people and I shall be their Elohim.” **Yechezqel 11:19**
- “..And I shall put my TORAH in their inward parts...”**Yirmeyahu 31:33**

Those who teach we should obey only the moral laws and dismiss the *chukim* and *edot* as non-binding upon Believers in Yahshua need to understand that the Torah that was placed in their hearts by receiving the RENEWED Covenant (*Brit Chadasha*) which contains all three categories of instruction. Also, the reason we are given the *Ruach Hakodesh* is to enable and empower us to walk out ALL the Torah. When we reject both the *EDOT* and the *CHUKIM*, and think only the *MISHPATIM* (the moral and ethical laws) apply after the death, burial, and resurrection of Moshiach Yahshua, we then justify the changing of the *Shabbat* from the Seventh Day to SUNDAY, eating pork and shellfish, rejecting circumcision, and not wearing fringes or keeping the Feast Days.

We do not obey the Torah because everything needs to make sense, be logical, or have reasons behind it. The fact that an instruction may not have a rational reason behind it makes the obedience to it even more a step of belief. It shows Yahweh that we are placing the Torah of Yahweh ABOVE our own mind and reasoning faculties, to walk in belief and obedience before Him as our father Avraham did. His ways are not our ways, and His thoughts are not our thoughts! Rav Shaul wrote in **1 Corinthians 1:25**, “For the foolishness of Elohim is wiser than men, and the weakness of Elohim is stronger than men.” In our obedience to all three- *edot-mishpatim-chukim*- we show our love for Yahweh and His Torah.

**I pray this teaching helped to being more understanding to you concerning the Torah of Yahweh.
May He grant you Wisdom, Understanding,
and Knowledge of His
Torah.**

Beginner's Torah Lesson #3

“Renewing the Mind to Hebraic Thought”

By Rabbi Edward Levi Nydle-Revised 9-3-03

‘And do NOT be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the RENEWING of your mind, so that you prove what is that good and well-pleasing and perfect desire of Elohim.’ Romans 12:2 *the Scriptures* 2Stop allowing yourself to be conformed to the Olam Hazeh, but be transformed by your hitkhadeshut haDa'as (regeneration/renewal of knowing), so that you may (individually and corporately) ascertain what is the ratzon Hashem (the will of Elohim), what is good, acceptable, and perfect -OJBC

Perhaps one of the biggest stumbling blocks to the new Messianic Yisraelite is that fact most of them have been subjected to the mind control conditioning and thought processes of the Greek/Roman “church” system. Therefore, they interpret all Scripture through the “stained-glass” eyes of the “Reform Protestant Church Fathers” INSTEAD of our Hebraic AVOT (Fathers) who penned all the Scriptures. We have to remember that ALL the writers of the *TaNak* (Hebrew Scriptures) and the *Brit Chadasha* (RENEWED Covenant) were Yisraelites. They wrote as the *Ruach HaKodesh* (Set-Apart Spirit) moved upon them using their Hebraic perspective. Let us look at the above verse (**Romans 12:2**) in more depth.

- Conformed #4964 –to be fashion alike, molded into a mold, CONFORM to a pattern
- Age #165 –a perpetuity, world, course, a period of time
- Transformed #3339 –to be changed, transformed, transfigure
- Renewing # 342 – renovation, renew RENOVATE means according to Webster’s; to make new, alive, to restore to a better state by cleaning and repairing
- mind # 3563 –the intelligence, UNDERSTANDING
- prove # 1381 –to test, approve, allow, discern, examine
- desire #2307- determination, choice, DECREE
- perfect #5046 – to complete, to make perfect the MORAL and MENTAL character

Whether we accept it or not, each one of us need our minds renewed in order to gain a better understanding of the Scriptures from the Hebraic point of view. Our minds have been programmed for years by spiritual buzz words that have been defined by a “church” that cut itself off from the Olive Tree of Yisrael. Scriptural words therefore need to be understood according to their original meaning as recorded in Hebrew. Words are mind pictures and carry with them bundles of associations and meanings. Therefore they are interpreted through our minds by our previous teachings. So, to effectively communicate Scriptural concepts requires us to understand the words and ideas in their original context. Words must be understood in the original context and language-HEBREW. A wrong understanding of one word can lead us astray into a false teaching or into accepting a FALSE GOOD NEWS and a FALSE MESSIAH (**Galatians 1:6-8**). We cannot REDEFINE words to suit our theology or prejudices, but must search out their true meanings from Scripture, Hebrew thought, their use in the culture and times, and their context. Thus to truly understand the words used in the *Brit Chadasha* then one has to turn to the dictionary of the *TaNak* to obtain the true definitions of the word meanings. We cannot look to the Greco-Roman philosophers and clergy for understanding. The TORAH is the foundation of all thought (**2 Tim.3: 15**).

EXAMPLE: GRACE. This is perhaps the most misunderstood word in the Scriptures. First we must know that the *D'var* Yahweh or Torah is TRUTH (**Yochanan 17:17; Tehillim 119:151,160**). Now, is GRACE the opposite of Torah?

If it is, then all the above passages are FALSE. No, we see from Scripture that GRACE is synonymous with Torah or law. Grace in Hebrew is #2580/81 *CHEN* or *CHESED* #2616/17. In the *Brit Chadasha* the word is *CHARIS* or *ELEOS*. *CHEN* means charm, beauty, lovely, and favor and is found around 70 times in the *TaNak* and 233 times in the *Brit Chadasha*. *CHARIS* means the EXACT same thing in the GREEK. Both are translated by the English word GRACE/FAVOR in the Scriptures. It never means to be set FREE or liberated through undeserved kindness or favor. Whoever has received GRACE/*CHEN* from Yahweh (**Gen.6: 8; Mishle –Prov. 31:30; Luke 2:52**) is also shown favor by Yahweh in the sense He says to them, “YOU are precious in My sight and eyes.” *CHESED* / *ELEOS* means undeserved favor in the sense of grace, pity, loving-kindness, or mercy. *CHESED* is used around 251 times in the Hebrew Scriptures and only 50 times in the *Brit Chadasha*.

SO, THE CORRECT USE OF THE WORD UNDESERVED FAVOR IS USED MORE IN THE TaNaK THEN IN THE BRIT CHADASHA IN THE PROPER MANNER AND DEFINITION! David Biven (a modern Hebrew scholar) says this, “What Christians think of when they read the word grace is something close to the sense that *chesed* carries, that is [Yahweh’s] unmerited favor.” What he is saying is that the word GRACE in the Renewed Covenant more often means “beauty, charm, lovely” THAN unmerited favor as they think. In every place then where GRACE appears (*CHARIS*) it should be understood as preciousness or lovely according to the idea of *CHEN* in Hebrew. Where MERCY appears in the Renewed Covenant, it should be understood to mean the same as *CHESED* or unmerited favor. GRACE is wrongly doing the work that MERCY should be doing! So, the Torah is GRACE and GRACE is TORAH (Tehillim **103:11,118:4**)

Yochanan 1:17-18 then reads: “For the Torah (law) was given through Mosheh; grace (*chen*-loveliness, beauty, favor) and truth (TORAH) were realized through Yahshua HaMoshiach.” It DOES NOT SAY this, “The law was given through Mosheh and NOW we have GRACE and truth through Yahshua HaMoshiach.” With the proper understanding it reads like this, “The Torah was given through Mosheh and the Torah’s beauty, loveliness (*CHEN*) and truth was realized through the Moshiach.”

Hebrew Thought Patterns

First we have to understand that to the Yisraelite TRUTH is not an abstract idea but rather an experience to be lived out and practiced. Hebrew is a language of ACTION. All words are actually rooted in VERBS. Hebrew is the richest language and best language in the world in communicating Yahweh’s thoughts and will. Hebrew sentence structure is made so the VERB most often comes at the beginning of the clause, then the noun. So in Hebrew the position of emphasis is usually at the beginning of the verse. The reader is confronted immediately with a verbal form even before the subject is designated in the sentence. The Yisraelites are a people of action and great feeling thus Hebrew is a language of the senses and not abstract metaphysical thought. We therefore have Hebraisms that express abstract ideas placed in verbal forms such as “he lifted up his eyes” or “to burn in one’s nostrils”. Also, Yahweh is referred to in the use of anthropomorphism (representations of Deity with human attributes). Yahweh is never reduced to mere impersonal abstract ideas.

To the Hebrew, the idea of doctrinal formulation is foreign to their minds. The essence of TRUE set-apartness is tied to a relationship, and not a creed or doctrinal statement. The Torah then gives direction of how the people of Israel can relate to Yahweh and each other through ACTION, not thought. Thus, their relationship with Abba Yahweh was expressed in obedience to the Torah not doctrines. Their love for Him (**Deut.6: 4-5**) and each other (**Lev.18: 19**) is action oriented rather than mere words (**Ya’akov –James 1:21-27, 2:14-26**).

Hebraic thought then looks at the INSIDE of a man -the HEART (*lev*), the bowels (*me'eh*), liver (*kabed*) and kidneys (*kelayot*) as the center of the will, mind, emotions, and spiritual powers (**Romans 10:10, Rev.2: 23**). To be WHOLE meant for one's psychological, physical, and spiritual functions to be made *ECHAD* (one) or one complete SOUL / being entity that was indivisible.

The Hebrews fully affirm their total humanity. They are not ashamed of their emotions or feelings and express them by crying, laughing, dancing, singing, clapping, loving, and shouting! They rejoice and celebrate at the Feasts of Yahweh. WE are a passionate people! The drinking wine is a symbol of joy and that should accompany our celebrations and Feasts (**Tehillim 104:15, Yochanan 2:1-11**). We toast each other with "*L'Chaim!*" The "church" teaching of total abstinence to wine is contrary to Scriptural Hebraic thought. The annual calendar of Feasts and celebrations shows that the Yisraelites are not afraid to release their emotions before Yahweh and one another. They are not halfhearted, dead, or reserved in the approach and the living of life. What a message to Ephraim today! We need to break FREE from the ascetic way of life taught by the GREEKS!

We shall never hear (*SHEMA –to hear and do*) the words of the TaNaK rightly unless we embrace it all and hear it all! We are told, "The WORD became flesh and dwelt among us." Yahshua is the example of Hebraic living and thought. He laughed, cried, danced, sang, loved, and shouted.

The Hebrews also make no distinction between the set-apart and the secular parts of life. All of life is a unity. All of it is Yahweh's domain and submitted to Him. Every circumstance of life-the good times and bad times- are not mere chance but under the sovereign control of Yahweh. Every part of our life is to be set-apart to Him-eating, working, your family, sex, worship, and relationships. We find then that Hebraic thought is that everything is related to your relationship to Yahweh. There is no "secular" and sacred! ALL is submitted to Yahweh. That is why there are blessing for every aspect of life. Religion then is defined to the Hebrew as his daily life in terms of a journey her upon the earth, not a system of creeds, ideology, or theology. These are all inaccurate descriptions of Scriptural thought. To a Yisraelite, his religion is the WAY he has chosen to walk out his redemption. It is all relationship; it is walking with Yahweh in His path of shalom, righteousness, service, and wisdom-the Torah.

Yahshua taught this in **Matt.7: 13-14**.The early congregations called their walk –THE WAY (**Acts 9:2, 19:9, and 22:4**). This is what we mean then by *halakah*- "the way of walking, proceeding or going". *Halakah* provides a roadmap from the start (birth) to the finish (death) of one's journey through life. History to the Hebrew mind is linear, durative, and progressive. To the Roman mind history is circular and tied to the cycles of nature. Hebrew history is not a cycle of purposeless happenings. Nor is time viewed as a race towards death in which you try to escape the clutches of time. No, in the Hebrew mind, time and history are going somewhere; it is a route to a goal, a race to be run to its fullest. The consummation of time will be the *OLAM HABA*, or age to come (**Zech.14: 9**). Yahweh brings meaning to Hebrew history and the Yisraelites journey through life. Yahweh is actively present in time and history. The Hebrews have learned to sanctify TIME.

But, That's not Logical Captain!

We recall the show "Star Trek" and how Mister Spock (Leonard Nimoy a Levite) would say, "That's not logical!" What is known as BLOCK LOGIC is a part of Hebrew thought. The Western world thinks in Greek logic. It is a step by step logic that argues from premises and arrives at a logical conclusion. It is done in a coherent, rational, logical sequence. Therefore, THE CONCLUSION IS LIMITED TO ONE POINT OF VIEW! THAT CONCLUSION THEN IS THAT PERSONS VIEWPOINT OF REALITY. In contrast, the Hebrew mind uses BLOCK LOGIC or concepts that are expressed in one unit or block of thought. These blocks do not necessarily fit together in a rational harmonious pattern of thought. As Yisraelites we understand that one unit or block represents man viewpoint or perspective of truth and the other block is from Yahweh's perspective.

This results in what appears to be a contradiction of thought or paradox that is held together by tension-or even illogical relationship to the other block of thought.

This concept creates great difficulty to the “gentile” mind whose thought patterns run after the Greeks and Romans more than the Hebrews. Ephraim’s minds were conditioned this way in the assimilation into the nations (*goyim*). Now you can understand why Rav Shaul wanted our minds renewed to the Torah! Block logic reconciles the Scriptural ideas of predestination/election and free will/human freedom. We must understand that Divine Sovereignty and human free will are not incompatible as the ‘church’ has argued for centuries. Yisrael knows there is no violation of their free will as Yahweh accomplishes his purposes upon the earth and in history. There is no such thing as “fate” (a false deity in **Is.65: 11**). Fate is a blind force, which dictates to man, what was to happen to him. It was inescapable. The Hebraic view is that the future is not totally unalterable, for this viewpoint (the pagan one) limited Yahweh’s mercy and omnipotence. Rabbi Akivah said, “All is subject to providence, yet man possesses free will.” This is the correct view; otherwise prayer does not make sense at all and is an exercise in futility and fighting against Yahweh. The Hebrew mind then can handle this tension that exists in block logic.

The Hebrew mind does not claim to be a” know- it- all “either. Everyone thinks they have to have answers to all their questions and expects the rabbis to know it all. All things concerning Yahweh and His Word do not have to be rational. The Hebrew mind then will accept truth that is taught on both sides of the paradox in block logic.

Yahweh cannot be put in a box or charted out on charts for all to understand as some would try to have us believe. Yahweh has an unpredictability about Himself that sometimes defies all reason (**Is.55: 9**) and human logic. We learn as Yisraelites to experience TRUTH not to just think truth. TRUTH is an ENCOUNTER with Divine reality through DOING the *mitzvot*. DEED IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN CREED TO THE TRUE YISRAELITE! We do not need to reconcile all that seems to be reconcilable in the Scriptures. Walking in TRUTH and experiencing TRUTH is more important than rationally analyzing truth. Most questions are unsolvable in block logic. We should not fear contradictions we seemingly find in the Scriptures. That means we accept the fact that the irreconcilable is reconcilable only to Yahweh. We search to see and understand what Yahweh wants us to DO more than studying Him in dead seminaries. Building great theological theories and systems is just plain risky business. As we study the Torah then we need to understand that there will come up apparent paradoxes in logic and unanswerable questions. We need to learn that to the Hebrew –that is all right.

A Renewed Mind is a Terrible Thing to Waste

Now we can understand why Rav Shaul told us to RENEW-RENOVATE-CLEAN OUT our minds that have been defiled by the teachings of the GRECO-ROMAN system of religion. Ephraim has perished for a lack of knowledge of Torah (**Hoshea 4:6**). Until minds are renewed then Ephraim will “regard the Torah as a strange thing” (**Hoshea 8:12**). Ephraim then will continue to walk in the ways of the *goyim*.

We praise Yahweh that He is calling Ephraim BACK to Torah. BUT it is going to take a major effort on the part of Ephraim to renew their minds to the Torah by adopting the Hebraic mind-set and discarding the GREEK/Roman mind. THEN and only then Ephraim will KNOW or discern what the DECREE of Yahweh is for their lives. His ways will be made known to them and they shall walk in it.

• “Who is wise and understands these words, discerning and knows them? For the ways of Yahweh are straight and the righteous walk in them, but the transgressors stumble in them.” **Hoshea 14:9** Please, do not be one who stumbles over the ways of Yahweh. Learn discernment by renewing your mind to His Torah and the Hebraic mindset.

Return O Yisrael-Return to Yahweh. (Hoshea 14:2).
Rabbi Edward L. Nydle
Levi bar Ido

Beginner's Torah Lesson #4

More Dynamics of Torah Study

By Rabbi Edward Levi Nydle-Revised 9-5-03

“And this is the parable: The SEED is the Word of Elohim” Luke 8:11

This is part four in the series of Torah lessons for Beginners. The purpose of these lessons is to aid the beginning student of the Word with the Hebraic principles of Torah study so that the student does not find himself misinterpreting the Torah and holding onto the false doctrines of Christianity or the Reformed Protestant belief system.

The Torah Teacher Sows SEEDS

In Hebrew the word –*TORAH*– should be translated “teaching or instruction” and not “law” as found in most translations of the Scriptures. It is etymologically related to the Hebrew root-verb HEY- RESH- HEY- HRH. In the reflexive, therefore, *TORAH* means to “be impregnated or to receive SEED into oneself.” We can now see why Rebbe HaMoshiach Yahshua used the concept of teaching Torah to His audience was to “impregnate “the listener with SEEDS or SPERM (*Zera*) of ideas, concepts, and themes from the Torah concerning the *MALKUT HASHAMAYIM* (Kingdom of Heaven).

I suggest the reader stop now and read from the *BRIT CHADASHA* (Renewed Covenant) in **Mattithyahu 13:1-9,18-23; Mark 4: 1-9,13-20; Luke 8:5-15**. Like a SEED the Torah is implanted in a receptive, fertile, nurturing environment in order to bring forth the fruit of the Kingdom in the life of the Yisraelite. The Torah's ideas, concepts, and ideals will flourish in the hearts and minds of the people in whom they have been “implanted” or sown! They are nourished in the womb of the heart (like a fertilized egg or seed) to come forth later bearing thirty, sixty, or even hundredfold in the life of the Yisraelite. The Torah has the POWER to motivate in order that the Kingdom can be actualized and expressed in the thoughts, emotions, and behavior just as the SEED is destined to grow and bear fruit. Yahshua said even if it is as small as a grain of a mustard SEED (**Matt.13: 31-32**) it will grow larger. A SEED is planted in order to bear fruit or to actualize its full potential and to enable the continuation of the good fruit or characteristics of its forebears into the future generations.

The ideal dynamic of true Torah teaching is to implant SEEDS that are to be nourished within the heart of the listener, who then becomes integral to the maturing process and ultimately expresses the Torah's “genetic” code or concepts and truths through mature thoughts and actions in the *mitzvot*. We could say that they begin to live the Kingdom life-style taught by HaMoshiach Yahshua. It is all dependent upon the condition of their hearts (soil) and minds.

Now this metaphorical teaching is very important as it implies that the Torah's teachings are not presented to the listener as finished ideas that are mindlessly accepted by the recipient of the SEED. The true teaching of the Torah can withstand the tests of critical thinking and reasoning by study of the intellect. The more study we put into the Torah, the more profound wisdom of Yahweh is revealed to us. True Torah living is not mindless, ritualistic living of a religion. This “SEED” principle that Yahshua spoke of in the parable of the Sower imparts to us the truth that Torah study and practice of the *mitzvot* requires a personal incorporation active participation of the student's heart and mind, in the growth of ideas, concepts, and thoughts.

We learn that the ritual commandments, expressed by our behavior, are symbolized concepts that need to be understood as well as practiced. True Torah based behavior or life-style is a very meaningful expression of Yahweh's whole purpose for the nation of Yisrael.

Seek Purpose not Reason

In our observance of the Torah commands, we need to know the difference between the reason for a command and the purpose of a command. The search for the reason behind a *mitzvah* answers the question of "WHY?"- Or the explanation of causes. Why did Yahweh give us certain commandments? What caused Him to legislate that command? Every one of these questions is directed to REASON. The seeking of the purpose of a command is directed to answering the question of finding the meaning behind a commandment. This approach of study accepts the existence of the *mitzvah* and tries to define its meaning by finding the PURPOSE that it is to be observed by the Torah observant Yisraelite.

To help you understand the concept of *kashrut*, *niddah*, *brit milah*, *tefillin*, and *tzitzit*—we should NOT ask "WHY?" a person should observe them, but rather ask the question to ourselves what is the true PURPOSE or MEANING that is expressed by these commandments or *mitzvot*.

We cannot answer the question of "WHY?" Yahweh gave certain commandments. The answer is not always given, especially in the *chukim*, but we are beings that need to understand WHAT we need to DO to develop and also maintain our relationship with ABBA Yahweh through Torah observance. Thus, our task is to uncover the PURPOSE of the *mitzvah* so that we may practice it in the true spirit and meaning of the Torah.

Every commandment that Yahweh gave has a purpose behind it. Our ignorance of the purpose of a *mitzvah* does not cancel its purpose for our lives. Our ignorance of the *mitzvah* can lead to its abuse or misuse. Therefore we can only find the purpose of the commandment in the mind of Yahweh or in His Torah, the blueprint of all creation. It is His plan for all His purposes. Once we know its purpose then we can fulfill the meaning Yahweh has placed behind its observance. Pursuing the purpose of the command dictates its performance and therefore contains the satisfaction of doing the command.

Finding the purpose is THE KEY to its fulfillment in your life. It gives significance and meaning to the Torah commands and provides the perspective that gives meaning to your life and conduct. Without knowing the purpose of the commandment we seek to observe we cannot enjoy the true *SHALOM* and *SIMCHAH* of doing it! The potential of the *mitzvah* is equal to its purpose in your life. The covenants that Yahweh made with our forefathers are what maintains, sustains, and also produces the purpose of the Torah. Now you can see why the lack of Torah observance does not negate the PROMISES that Yahweh gave to Avraham (**Galatians 3:16-21**). Purpose is a priority to the promises because the promises are made to enable Yisrael to fulfill Yahweh's plan or purpose for them as a people.

Torah in Today's Society

The Torah gives Yisrael a moral system within which a person or community can function to fulfill its creation to fulfill its full potential and purpose for its conception. The Torah clearly teaches what is right and wrong, good and bad, and laws of a just nation. What makes the Torah distinct from the laws of the *goyim* is that its Giver is Yahweh, the Master of the Universe. When we live within the boundaries of Torah we counteract the oppression, sin, moral relativity, and chaos resulting from mankind perceiving itself as the source of all power separate from the Creator. Torah is THE SOLUTION to the world's problems. Yisrael was chosen to represent this Divine moral and ethical system to the rest of the world, by being the models or the blueprint in their interpersonal, social, and national relationships. To put it another way, Yisrael was to be a model for all civilization. Therefore, in EVERY GENERATION we are to live within the modern society and world while at the same time imposing the Torah commands on areas of life of our lives that Torah presents in its ritualistic, moral, and ethical standards.

We are to set boundaries on our lives by the Torah. Therefore, while we are still in the world-we are not of the world, as we are maintain the true perspective of Yahweh as the Master of the Universe and the Master of our lives. We will not be at the center of the universe as the world thinks. Yahweh and His Torah will be at the center of all our thoughts and actions.

Thus we can accept those aspects of society that meet the ethical requirements laid down by the Torah, while rejecting those that violate its standards. Now, you can understand why we then need to be educated in the Torah and its *HALAKHIC* standards. By walking in the Torah Yisrael sets the moral and ethical standards as a model within today's society.

We as Yisrael can re-experience, regardless of time and space, the true purpose and meaning of the commands and rituals by maintaining the Torah based values and RITUALS-but within a modern experience. So we need not dissociate ourselves from today's society nor do we reject the Torah and its traditions and commands in favor of today's world. We can enjoy the true *SHALOM* of Torah observance while encountering the world we live in today.

Torah and Symbolism

The student of the Torah has to learn to OBJECTIVELY collect data from the text of the Torah. One cannot impose his own SUBJECTIVE perspectives, intentions, or interpretations to the Torah text .All texts have to be studied *sui generis*, out of the text itself, with the reflection of the writers intentions. If we do not do this, then the Torah we learn and implant as a SEED is not from Yahweh, but is a reflection of our own SUBJECTIVITY IMPOSED CONCEPTIONS on the text and not from the SOWER- *BEN ADAM*. Now a symbol can be used to obtain information from the text. A symbol may be an object, behavior, or a pattern that represents a TRUTH. Symbols are very powerful in the communication of ideas because words are limited in their ability to supply the data needed to form a final concept.

The Torah then has many symbols (such as SEED) in the *mitzvot* in order to impress their image upon us. The symbols allow the reader to preserve the underlying concept even if the cognitive understanding of the symbol may be forgotten. Thus we have ritual objects and symbols to continually reveal to us the symbolic nature of some of the *mitzvot*. *Tzit-Tzit* and *Tefillin* are good examples. In Biblical times a tassel was a symbol of status or even ones tribal affiliation. Now, very few men are aware of that symbolic meaning of the tassel. However, once that symbolism of the tassel is revealed to a person, then the true symbolic meaning behind the *mitzvah of Tzit-Tzit* will never be forgotten. So symbols can help us "decode" the true intentions of the Creator, to the best of our understanding. A symbol can never truly fully be understood, as symbols always contain an element of mystery behind them. When we do understand it, the best we can, it can help increase our relationship to that *mitzvah*, and through the symbol draw us closer to Yahweh. The symbol must touch us emotionally and super-rationally to truly draw us supernaturally to Yahweh. Symbols then reveal to us the true depth of Yahweh's Torah. In understanding symbols, it is important to understand that facts unknown to the recipient of the SEED can never be revealed through symbols, only by new relationships between known ideas. Or to put it in simpler terms- we cannot impose a meaning onto a text that may be meaningful to our contemporary mid, but that were entirely unknown to the ancient Yisraelites to whom the Torah was given. However, new ideas or revelations of the symbols and actions may be found in the text thereby bringing to us a new relationship to the symbol or action in the text.

We must also interpret symbols by the conditions of time and place, and any explanatory text that accompanies the symbols given in the text. The significance of a symbol must also be related to the CONTEXT of its natural, social, cultural, or historical features, as well as taken into account who is doing the speaking or who is being addressed. Given the above rules for interpretation, ritual objects such as *tzit-tzit*, *tefillin*, *shofar*, *the four species*, *offerings*, etc. can be then understood so that their true meaning and purpose can be imparted to us by the *Ruach HaKodesh*, and observed in a meaningful way as they were purposed by Yahweh. Thereby imparting to us the spiritual power to connect us on a higher spiritual level or supernaturally with Yahweh.

In the same manner, circumcision, eating *matzah*, *Shabbat*, and the *Seder* are ALL very symbolic acts or rituals that represent ideas and concepts that must be understood out of the Scriptural symbolism to be meaningfully understood and practiced so they may impart to us as Yisrael their true purpose as intended by Yahweh. Remember that we are to seek the meaning and purpose of the symbol rather than the reason “WHY?” of a symbol. By seeking purpose we can truly experience a deepening in our relationship with ABBA Yahweh and His Torah. It is by observing these commands we water the “soil” of our heart fertile for the SEED to grow and bring forth fruit in our lives.

Rebbe Yahshua HaMoshiach’s Words

Yahshua taught, “And that sown on GOOD SOIL is he who HEARS the word (TORAH) and understands it (or knows its true purpose and meaning in his life), who indeed bears fruit and yields –some hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.” He also said, “He who is sowing the good SEED is the Son of Adam, and the field is the world. And the GOOD SEED, these are the *BNAI MALKUT* (sons of the reign)...” We read in **BERESHITH 26:12**, “And Yitzchaq sowed in that land, and reaped in the same year a hundredfold, and Yahweh blessed him.” Rebbe Yahshua then understood this concept of Torah being a SEED (*zerah*) that was sown by the speaker into the hearts of the listeners or his *talmidim*. His words (which were ALL Torah and from the FATHER) could fall on various types of hearts. Whether the words took root and bore fruit was dependent on the listener’s ability to truly HEAR (*Sh’ema*) the parables and TRUTH He spoke.”Hearing you shall hear and by no means understand, and seeing you shall see and by no means perceive. For the HEART of this people has become thickened, and their ears hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed...” Now, this quote from Yeshayahu HaNavi is followed by; “But still there is a tenth part in it, and it shall again be fore a burning, like a terebinth tree and like an oak, whose stump remains when it is cut down.

The set-apart SEED is its stump.” Yahshua’s parables were intended for the SEED who could hear and understand His words. They were to become the *B’nai Malkut*! “Because it has been given to you to KNOW the secrets of the reign of the heavens, but to them it has not been given.” Let’s look deeper. In Hebrew the gematria of the letter q -Qof is 100. It is a symbol of “growth cycles” and “holiness (*kedushah*)”. All the cycles (*haqafot*) of the universe teach man that everything in the universe has purpose and a plan. We have the cycle of seven repeated in the Torah. The gematria of 100 is a cycle of 10x10. The Millennium is on the same cycle of seven –the seventh Millenium. The millennium of KINGDOM AGE is a cycle of 10 also 10x10x10=1,000 years.

A SEED then must follow its natural cycle in order to bear fruit in the life of the Yisraelite. It must be sown, watered, grow, bear fruit, and harvested. The SOWER-*Ben Adam* is NOW sowing the SEED of Torah into the fertile hearts of Yisrael; it needs to be watered by prayer, hearing the Torah, doing the commands, and studying the Torah to grow.

We will then bear the GOOD FRUIT of the *RUACH HaKodesh* (**Gal.5: 22-26**) which is a Torah based walk of setapartness (holiness). The end result will be a harvest in the last days of the *B’nai Malkut* into the KINGDOM of Yahweh by the *malakim* of Yahweh.

**I pray that Yahweh will bless your understanding of this Torah lesson.
Rabbi Edward Levi Nydle**

Beginner's Torah Lesson # 5

Interpretation of Torah

By Rabbi Edward Levi Nydle /B'nai Avraham

“The Jews insist upon a LITERAL interpretation of the Scripture based on thirteen laws, but we know that the spiritual interpretation is far superior.” Jerome

What did Rebbe Yahshua really say in the Hebrew or Aramaic language when He spoke to the people? What did the words mean to those who heard Him? This is a question of HERMENEUTICS. Hermeneutics is the science of applying basic laws of interpretation to the Scriptures in order to understand what is being said in the document or scroll. This reveals the biggest difference between Hebraic thought and Greek-Roman Christian thought. In Hebraic thought there is an agreed upon system of interpretation of the Scriptures that has kept the Jewish people united upon the question of interpretation, even if they are divided upon the question of authority and observance. The differences are in the question of observance of the Torah commands (*Halakah*) not what Moshe meant when he said something. The Hebraic principles of interpretation have helped to maintain the unity of the Yisraelite people and the Torah for around 4,000 years.

Since Clement of Alexandria, Christianity has rejected these Hebraic principles of interpretation and substituted the principles of the Greek mythology and their philosophical logic. This was done with no premise of any system or laws of Scriptural interpretation; therefore they rejected the literal interpretation of the Scriptures as “Jewish” and substituted the spiritual interpretation of the Scriptures as valid. Dogma after dogma was written until the theological system had the appearance of pagan Greek mythology rather than the historical faith of Yahshua and His talmidim.

These dogmas and creeds were enforced and anyone who did not agree with them was branded a heretic, an apostate, a blasphemer, or an infidel. In order to achieve this departing from the original faith of the talmidim, it required the “church” to depart from the Hebraic meaning of certain words. The result was redefinition of certain words, so much so that the vocabulary of the Hebrew and the Christian are worlds apart. Words such as –the Word, grace, Messiah, redemption, and salvation have entirely different meanings to the Hebrew mind than they have for the average Christian.

Theology is an accommodation of particular truths based upon the given meaning of terms into a system of dogmatic expression. It is easy to educate a community in that system and ignore the true inspired meanings of certain terms. This is why Christianity has become divided and fragmented over doctrine. Satan/Helel has used theology as a tool that has been used to create division, and a very poor substitute for study and understanding of the Torah. There is no such thing as theology to the Hebraic mind. They have a system for Scriptural interpretation, so the development of theology was not only unnecessary but also impossible. With the correct method of interpretation, any given passage or word could NEVER be restricted to ONE interpretation. Unfortunately, the average Christian has been taught that there is one-and only one meaning to each prophetic Word or passage. He also thinks that the *Ruach HaKodesh* is an exclusive “Christian revelation” and totally unknown to the Hebrews.

• “Knowing this FIRST¹, that NO prophecy of Scripture came to be of one’s own interpretation², for prophecy never came by the desire of man, but men of Elohim spoke, being moved by the Set-Apart Spirit.” **2 Kepha 1:20-21**

• **20** Knowing this first: that every nevu'ah (prophecy) of the Kitvei Hakodesh is not of one's own interpretation.

21 For no nevu'ah was at any time brought by the ratzon haAdam (will of Man), but men being carried along by the Ruach Hakodesh spoke from HaShem. **OJBC**

The word-*HERMENEUTIC* –comes from the meaning “speaking by the Spirit.” In Greek mythology, *HERMES* was the speaker for the “gods”. He was the one who brought their messages to men and he also interpreted it to them. *PNEUMA* is Greek for spirit; hence *HERMENEUTICS* is “speaking or interpreting the message of YHWH by the spirit.” It is not a systemless interpretation by –I THINKISM of America!

1 G4412 Neuter of G4413 as an adverb (with or without G3588); *firstly* (in time, place, order, or importance): - before, at the beginning, chiefly, (at, at the) first (of all).

2 G1955 *explanation*, that is, *application*: - interpretation.

The *Ruach HaKodesh* or BREATH of YAHWEH is a Hebraic concept, and is NEVER at variance with the written Torah. Each interpretation cannot violate the laws of the system. These laws work in harmony not in opposition to each other.

The result is a vast depth of possibility and expansion of meaning of words and Scripture with the operation and use of these laws in the Hebraic system of interpretation.

The reason these laws were rejected by the “church fathers” was the fact that they were viewed as too “JEWISH”. Thus the rejection of the system of interpretation required a substitution to accommodate the spiritual interpretation of Scripture in place of the literal. Church councils were called to redefine words to fit the new spiritual interpretation of Scripture. The words and phrases from Hebrew took on a new meaning totally unrelated to their Hebrew origins and meanings. The result was a “dogmatic theology” that was based upon Greek logic, which separated the “church” from the Olive Tree of Yisrael even further. These laws of Hebraic interpretation are divided into four levels called *PRDS* or *PaRDeS* “paradise, orchard, or Gan Eden.” [See Beginners Torah lesson #1]

Another reason the replacement theologians rejected this Hebraic system was that it created students that learned to think for themselves. Seminaries that would develop their students to think in the parameter of Hebraic thought would create a clergy that was more interested in asking questions than giving their dogmatic cookie cutter answers. This would then diminish the denominational schools of thought that brainwash clergy and do not allow them to think at all. What and how the clergy think is reflected in the people (laity), “like priest, like people.” A thinking clergy would produce a thinking laity. A thinking laity would have more appreciation for their Hebraic roots and study of the whole body of Scripture.

Many thinking Believers today are leaving the “church” because they have discovered the TRUTH about the Torah and have attempted to restore Hebraic thought into their minds. They are in the process of renewing their minds to think scripturally and Hebraically. They are rejecting the views of the Protestant “Church Fathers”. The man (Martin Luther) who led the Protestant Reformation was an avid Anti-Semite and prepared the blueprint for the Nazis. He recommended the burning of Jewish books, homes, synagogues, and suggested such refinements as forcing the Jews to labor for Christians. If all that did not work then he suggested concentrating them (the Jews) into certain areas so they would not infect the purity of Christianity. I find it hard to believe that people who call themselves “Messianic” actually are recommending that we adopt this viewpoint of the Scriptures, and are fearful that Ephraim will become too “Jewish”. The biggest enemy Ephraim has is the Separate Entity/Replacement theology of the “church” and the “Church Fathers” - not the Torah of Yahudah.

THINKING IN HEBRAIC THOUGHT PATTERNS AND THE USE OF THE HEBRAIC SYSTEM OF INTERPRETATION WILL RESULT IN THE SACRIFICING OF THE GOLDEN CALF OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY THAT WILL BRING A REVEALING OF THE HEBRAIC ORIGINS OF THE SCRIPTURES AND A REDISCOVERY OF THE VALIDITY OF THE TORAH BY BELIEVERS

IN YAHSHUA! AS THEY PROPERLY INTERPRET THE BRIT CHADASHA THEY WILL HAVE AN ENCOUNTER WITH THE TRUE JEWISH / YISRAELITE MOSHIACH-YAHSHUA! THEY WILL LEAVE THE HARLOT MOTHER AND HER DAUGHTERS AND REALIZE THEY ARE PART OF THE PEOPLE OF YAHWEH-YISRAEL!

The Four Levels

The name of the four levels of Hebraic interpretation is called *PaRDeS*: *Pashat* (simple), *Remez* (hint level), *Drash* (exegetical level), and *Sod* (secret level or hidden level). These levels are placed in the order of lowest to highest. They do not conflict with one another nor negate one another but are complimentary to each other. The *Sod* level does not negate the *Pashat* level of the passage, but gives a deeper meaning and perspective into the interpretation. *Bereshith* (Genesis) is the book of Beginnings. The other four books of the Torah- *Shemot*, *Wayyiqra*, and *Devarim* contain the Torah given to all twelve tribes of Yisrael at Mt. Sinai. They contain the Law of Moshe. There are four books- four levels of interpretation.

There are four books containing the life of our Rebbe Yahshua. There are four writers of the Good News. Each one of the writers and his account of the life of Moshiach Yahshua correspond to the four levels of interpretation: John Mark –the simple or *Pashat*; Luke is the *Remez* or allegorical account; Mattithyahu is the *Drash* or Midrash –parabolic account of the life of Yahshua; and Yochanan is the *Sod* or hidden account. Just as each level of interpretation requires its own emphasis, so does each one of the writers of the life of Yahshua. Each account has its own order of presentation and each writer has chosen to express it in the vocabulary of his strata of life, and the proper words in describing any given event. As the four levels of interpretation were to develop CONTRAST and to multiply meanings of words of the Torah, so the four accounts were given to show multiplicity of meaning to the readers of each level. Each gives us a different viewpoint or perspective on the life of Yahshua.

- **The *Pashat* level is for the “simple man”** and is the plain literal meaning of the text. We ask, “What does the Torah ask of me? What must I do to fulfill the Torah in my life?” This simple level gave a guide to the actions and conduct of the common person. The good News according to Mark is on the *Pashat* level. He wrote a short precise account of the life of Yahshua. He wrote with simple precise facts. He actually wrote in somewhat of the Mishnaic style. He presents the Moshiach as the Suffering Servant for the common people.

- **The *Remez* level is the allegorical or hint level.** This level has a higher aim, and is nobler in its content. It was for the doctors, teachers, lawyers, and those of the noble class. This level does not replace the *Pashat* level, but adds grace and seasoning to it. Luke is a physician and an aristocrat. His account in his Good News is more flowery and noble. He uses more technical terms and words in his writing. His writing is very similar to the *Gemara*. He presents Yahshua as the “Son of Man”. Every word is *Remez*, or hint, to another higher parallel. Luke is more intricate in his treatment of the Torah and *Halakah*. Luke could not have been a “Gentile” as he uses more Hebraisms and rabbinical terminology than any other author of in the *Brit Chadasha*.

- **The next level is *Drash*, or *Midrashic***. It means “to thresh”. It is parabolic in nature. It bases its symbolism on the entire narrative rather than on word-phrase level. This is where “suggestive possibility” comes into play in interpretation. Mattithyahu is from the tribe of Levi. He sees Yahshua through the eyes of the “Kingdom-*Malkut Hashammayim*”. We can see this in his genealogy of the Moshiach tracing him through the line of David. He presents Yahshua as the “King”. His account is the most lengthy of all the Good News. Mattithyahu stresses the parables of the Rebbe Yahshua as no other writer does in the *Brit Chadasha*. A parable can be given as much to conceal a truth as reveal one.

A parable is a suggestive supposition in the form of a narrative and is preceded by a statement that it is a parable or be the terms: “Such and such is like unto...” Most of the parables of our Rebbe Yahshua have never been interpreted to their full Midrashic tenor. They will never be until we begin applying the rules of Hebraic interpretation to them and place them in the Hebrew text from which they originally came.

- **The fourth and last level is *Sod***, meaning the secret or concealed meaning. This is the highest and most complicated level of interpretation. It is more otherworldly or actually prophetic in nature. The writer sees the material world through the miraculous, rather than seeing the miraculous world through the material. This focuses upon the word and letters of the Torah. Yochanan is writing the “hidden” life of Yahshua. His narrative focuses around seven miracles in the life of Yahshua. The key to his book is chapter 20:30-31. He presents Yahshua as the “Son of Elohim”-the Moshiach. He speaks of “LIGHT” shining out of darkness in the vernacular of Sons of Zadok at Qumran. Yochanan is a man of dreams and visions. He is the Daniel of the *Brit Chadasha*. He even opens his account with a quote from the Oral Tradition: “and the Torah became flesh, dwelling among us, and we beheld His glory...” This written in the vocabulary of the “mystic”. Yochanan does not even make an effort to make his account synonymous with the other narratives.

The Problem

With this understanding of the Good News accounts and the Hebraic manner they were written, we have the solution to the ‘synoptic ‘ problem in the *Brit Chadasha*. The synoptic problem claims that each narrative is a copy of a former source for the Good News. For example- Luke copied from Mark, and Mattithyahu copied from Luke, etc. The problem with the synoptic approach is the negative attitude towards the Hebraic origin of the language of the Good News (or the fact that all were recorded in Hebrew originally) and the abandonment of the four levels of interpretation. This does not mean that we do not use textual analysis and criticism. On the contrary, comparative analysis is necessary and profitable to the student of Scripture. It can only be when synoptic mechanics of study are subjected to the four Hebraic methods and laws of interpretation will the synoptic problem be solved. The very spirit of the synoptic problem is the basis of Replacement Theology in the “church”. It cannot coexist with the Hebraic laws of interpretation.

Since the “church” has divorced itself from Yisrael, and from understanding Yahshua in the framework of the Hebraic way of interpretation of Scripture (*PaRDeS*), they had to substitute the Greek philosophical logic way of dogmatic theology to the four Good News accounts by Yisraelite writers. The result has been the invention of “Jesus Christ” the anti-Torah, anti-Jewish, pig eating, long haired, white robed, blue-eyed, white, Sunday going, Xmass born, Bible toting “Christian”, Who died on a “cross”, and rose on Easter SUNday (Ishtar) to set us free from the Law of Yahweh.

This is a pagan man-made image that has been substituted for the TRUE Yahshua and *Brit Chadasha* (a Renewed Covenant) apart from the Olive Tree of Yisrael and Hebraic thought and laws of Scriptural interpretation and study. We cannot substitute the Hebraic methods of studying Scripture for the Greek pagan methods of logic. One new translation after another, one new commentary after another, each saying the same thing-just new clichés and spins on the same old lies.

Each one is more Anti-Semitic and Anti-Torah than the preceding one. Those who claim to have a love for Yisrael have an Anti-Semitic undercurrent and foundation in the Greek theological system of hermeneutics. As history has proven-Ephraim is still substituting what it thinks is better so Yisrael will not follow the Torah and worship Yahweh. They are satisfied with a cheap substitute rather than the real thing. The sin of Yarobaom continues in Yisrael.

- “Thus Yisrael revolted against the house of David to this day.” **1 Melakim 12:19**

We praise Yahweh that more Believers are saying –“What did Yahshua really say and what did His words really mean?” Returning to the Hebraic laws of interpretation of the Scriptures – *PaRDeS*- will swell His every Word with the pregnancy of His message for Messianic Yisrael. It will result in a myriad of new meanings and a greater understanding of His mission to find the Lost Sheep of the House of Yisrael. It will enrich the lives of every Yisraelite as he seeks to serve his Master and Rebbe Yahshua HaMoshiach by observing the Torah of Yahweh.

- Thus said Yahweh of hosts, “In those days ten men from ALL languages of the goyim (the Lost Sheep of Yisrael) take hold, yea, they shall take hold of the tzit-tzit (representing the Torah and the Name) of a man, a Yahudite, saying, “ Let us go with you, for we have heard that Elohim is with you.” **Zekaryah 8:23**

There awaits each one that is willing to think for himself and abandon the Greek logic and the theology of the “church fathers”, and study the Torah and *Brit Chadasha* in the Hebraic method of interpretation a crown of Wisdom, Understanding, and Knowledge. You will experience the *Ruach Hakodesh* (THE Spirit of TRUTH) leading you into all truth. You shall know the TRUTH and the TRUTH will set you FREE!

**May Yahweh truly bless your study of His Torah with understanding.
Rabbi Edward Levi Nydle**

Beginner's Torah Lesson #6

How the "Church" went Wrong!

Greek Dualism verses Hebrew Unity

By Rabbi Edward Levi Nydle- B'nai Avraham

"But YOU, speak what is fitting for sound teaching." Titus 2:1

This is the sixth Torah lesson and a very advanced lesson for the student. I pray you will study it with an open heart and mind to gain a greater understanding of the Hebraic mind-set. I have tried to provide enough Scripture and resource documentation to support what this teaching is presenting to the student of the Torah. One of the biggest challenges we have faced in proclaiming the Two House Truth is that fact that "Christians" are totally ignorant of "church" history and the major players in the reinterpretation game played with the Hebrew *TaNak* and the *Brit Chadasha* (Renewed Covenant). They have no knowledge of the influence of the Greek philosophical schools and the Hellenists on the Yehudim and the early "church fathers". They believe "Christians" have always lived, believed, and interpreted the Scriptures as they do today. The purpose of this lesson is to unmask the influence of the Greek-mindset on the "church fathers". How did the "church" go wrong in its interpretation of the Scriptures that resulted in the severing of the TRUE FAITH from its Hebraic roots? Why has it corrupted the ancient belief that our Rebbe Yahshua and His talmidim taught to Yisrael? What is the difference between Greek thought and Hebraic thought? How has it affected our thinking and our interpretation of the Scriptures? I hope to help you, as the student of Torah, to answer this dilemma by this teaching from the Scriptures and other sources of historical importance.

Rav Shaul instructed his student Timothy:

- "But you, stay in what you learned and trusted, having known from whom you have learned, and that from a babe you have known the Set-Apart Scriptures (the Torah), which are able to make you wise for deliverance (salvation) through belief in Moshiach Yahshua." **2 Tim.3: 14-15.**

Rav Shaul also admonished Timothy to entrust the words he had learned and heard to men who were competent to teach the Torah:

- **2 Tim.2: 2,** "And what you have heard from me among many witnesses, ENTRUST these to TRUSTWORTHY men who shall be competent to teach others as well."

This admonition is a pure rabbinical practice to pass the teachings you have received and learned from your Master or rabbi on to your personal students. This is exactly what our Rebbe Yahshua HaMoshiach did with His 12 *talmidim*. He spent time with them in order to correctly impart His Torah and *Halakah* to them as His disciples or students.

- The school of Hillel taught, "One ought to teach every man, for there were many sinners in Israel who were drawn to the study of Torah, and from them descended righteous, pious, and worthy folk."

- In the **Wisdom of the Fathers** we read, "Provide thyself with a teacher, get thee a comrade..."

- Simon the Just said, "Let your house be a meeting house for the wise [in Torah]; sit amidst in the dust of their feet, and drink their words with thirst."

- “And she [Martha] had a sister called Miriam, who SAT AT THE FEET OF YAHSHUA and HEARD HIS WORD.” **Luke 10:39**.

We know from Scripture that Timothy’s father was a Greek and his mother was from Yehudah. He had been taught the Torah in his home from a youthful age, as the *Brit Chadasha* did not exist at that time. Rav Shaul, knowing full well that Moshiach had come, still gave Timothy the charge or instruction to impart to future generations of Yahshua’s *talmidim* sound Torah doctrine and teachings. This means Timothy, as Rav Shaul’s student would teach them from the Hebraic mind-set of the Torah and the fathers. He was not to teach any doctrines contrary to what He learned in the Torah of Yahweh.

Over the last 2000 years, what has been called the “church” left the original Yisraelite Olive Tree and cut itself off from the Semitic culture that was prevalent in the *ekklesia* of Yahshua from the beginning. Rav Shaul tells us this is because of UNBELIEF (**Romans 11:17-24**). The so-called “church fathers” did not heed the exhortation that Rav Shaul gave to Timothy to continue in what they had learned from the beginning which was the Torah taught in the context of Hebraic thought. The Believers in Yahshua as the Moshiach became more and more Hellenized and were led away by strange teachings (**Ivrim-Hebrews 13:9**) as Greek thought crept into the congregations. A Greek spirit entered into the Body of Moshiach and the result was the birth of heretical teachings based upon Greek philosophical teaching rather than the Torah of Yahweh. That fact they left the Hebraic thought patterns and the Torah left them vulnerable to these doctrines of demons and anti-Torah theology of the Greeks. When the Body of Moshiach (Yisrael) left its roots, then a new religion “Christianity” was birthed out of the womb of Greek thought and culture. It became a religion separate from the Torah based belief of Yahshua and the original Good News proclaimed by His *talmidim*. It was a religion ABOUT Yahshua, but not the religion OF Yahshua! Rav Shaul gave many warnings to the congregations that this would happen:

- **Galatians 1:8**: “However, even if we, or a messenger out of heaven, bring a Good News to you beside what we announced to you, let him be accursed.”

- **1 Timothy 4:1**: “But the Spirit distinctly says that in LATTER TIMES some shall FALL AWAY from THE belief, paying attention to MISLEADING spirits, and teachings of demons.” Because we have not heeded Rav Shaul’s warnings in the Scriptures we are still reaping the harvest of that separation (**Gal.6: 7-8**) from the Olive Tree of Yisrael and the Torah. We are now faced with the dilemma of people are trying to read and understand a Hebraic book through Greek culture and thought. This Greek viewpoint is so entrenched in the minds of people that unless we pull out the ROOT, it will continue to bear fruit and reproduce tares among the wheat (**Matt.13: 24-30**).

- “Leave them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into a ditch.” **Mattithyahu 15:14**.

The tragic result has been a “spiritual schizophrenia” in the Body of Moshiach. There is an unholy MIXTURE (*shatnetz*) of trying to combine the Greek and Hebraic thought patterns into one “new” religion. There are three main areas that need immediate correction in order for the Body to return to the true faith once delivered to the set-apart ones by the TRUE FATHERS OF THE FAITH- THE *TALMIDIM* OF REBBE YAHSHUA HAMOSHIACH (**Yehudah-Jude 3**).

ECHAD not Dualism

First, we must begin to view ourselves in terms of a total unity or *ECHAD*. Greek thinking is dualistic in nature. It comes from the Greek philosophers like Plato. Platonism believes in a duality of worlds: the material and the immaterial, spiritual world. It views this material world as inferior to the immaterial and therefore it is evil and corrupted.

- **The Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary: dualism**: “a theory that considers reality to consist of two irreducible elements or modes... A doctrine that the universe is under the dominion of two opposing principles one of which is good and the other evil.b. A view of man as constituted of two irreducible elements.”
- **The Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary: irreducible**. “Impossible to bring into a desired, normal, or simpler state.” Plato believed that the human soul had its origin in the heavens and therefore longed to return to that celestial realm called “heaven”. The human soul needed a release from the body to be truly FREE. The two (body and soul) could never be reconciled in a total unit once again. The soul was viewed as set-apart while the body or material was corrupted and incapable of being reconciled to the purity of the soul. The body was viewed as a prison for the soul and salvation could not be experienced until the death of the body. The soul then escapes the body and flies away to heaven into the realm of the spirits to live forever in a life of bliss free from this evil and corrupt world. We must make careful note that the father of “Christian” thought, Origen, was an avid student of Plato in the Alexandrian school.
- **The Funk and Wagnall's New Encyclopedia Vol.19 page 441**: “ He [Origen] taught the principle of the threefold sense, corresponding to the threefold division of the person into body, spirit, and soul, which was then a common concept. He was a PLATONIST and ENDEAVORED TO COMBINE GREEK PHILOSOPHY AND THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.”
- **The New Unger's Bible Dictionary page 44**: Alexandria, “In the third century A.D., the city became an important center of Christianity as a result of the work of Clement and ORIGEN.During the fourth century both the heretical leader Arius and the great Orthodox theologian Athanasius came from Alexandria. It was also a great center for the production of the copies of the Scriptures, and several NT manuscripts evidently were produced there.”
- **Funk and Wagnall's New Encyclopedia Vol.21 page 73-74**: “Plato's impact upon Jewish thought is apparent in the work of the 1st century Alexandrian philosopher Philo Judaeus.Neoplatonism (q.v.), founded by the 3rd century philosopher Plontinus, and was an important later development of Platonism. The theologians Clement of ALEXANDRIA, ORIGEN, and St. Augustine were early Christian exponents of a platonic perspective, and Platonic ideas have had a crucial role in the development of Christian theology, Medieval Islam thought also was strongly influenced by Plato.”
- **The Jewish Encyclopedia Vol.1 pages 364-366**: “The philosophers whose views were accepted by a few of the highly educated Jews were PLATO, Aristotle, and the Stoics. Under such influence the Jews of Alexandria produced extensive and varied literature...Among the less intelligent, Jewish and pagan witchcraft joined hands, as did Jewish faith and GREEK PHILOSOPHY among the more enlightened. This blending of religious ideas prevailed more or less wherever Jews and gentiles came in direct contact, but was especially strong and marked in Alexandria.”
- **Christianity Through the Ages by Earle Cairns page 262**: “They (the humanists) studied the Biblical documents in the original tongues as much as or more then they studied the writings of PLATO or Aristotle...They were more interested in man as a human being WITH a soul than they were in him as a rational creature... Marsillo (Ficino) translated Plato's writings into LATIN from 1463-1477.These HUMANISTS wished to integrate the Bible with GREEK PHILOSOPHY, PARTICULARLY THAT OF PLATO.” The Greek philosophy influenced not only the early Believers in Yahshua through those from the nations (Ephraim), but also filtered into the assemblies through the Greek/Hellenistic Yehudim that came to belief in Yahshua as the Moshiach (**Acts 6:1;Acts 9:29**). Hellenists were Yehudites that spoke and lived culturally as GREEKS. We find that *ANTINOMIANISM* (opposition to the Torah) actually helped some “church fathers” believe in this dualistic thought of the Greeks.

• **The Jewish Encyclopedia Vol.1 page 631:** "...the Gnostic Marcion (who taught in ROME around 150 CE) whose DUALISM, unlike that of the other Gnostics, is not the cause but the RESULT, of his pronounced antinomianism. Marcion proceeds from the strong Pauline antithesis: Law and Gospel, wrath and grace, works and faith, flesh and spirit, sin and righteousness, death and life; and these opposites seem irreconcilable, he arrives at the DUALISTIC doctrine of the just and angry [Elohim] of the OT, and the [Elohim] of the Gospels who is only love and mercy [sounds like most "churches today doesn't it? Rabbi Ed]... The influence exerted by antinomianism on the conduct of life proved to be of a two-fold nature; while Marcion and Tatian were led by it to extreme ASCETICISM, with the Gnostics it resulted in libertine practices.. Especially notorious in this regard were the Nikolatians..." [see **Rev.2:15**] Marcion was heavily influenced by the dualistic thinking of Plato and Gnosticism. He believed the world was created by an evil Demiurge (a term the Gnostics borrowed from Platonism) who was a "god" of battle and demanded bloody sacrifices of animals to satisfy his anger.

Marcion believed this "god" was revealed in the pages of the TaNaK. He viewed the TaNaK as an inferior book and an antithesis of the "NEW TESTAMENT". He insisted the "NEW" revealed the true "god" in the "Christ" and was a "god" of love and mercy. Marcion exalted the writings of "Paul" and held that "Christians" were "free from the law". He was believed that the "church" was wrong in trying to combine "Christianity" with Judaism. He held one supreme goal in his thoughts and motives- to rid Christianity of TRACE of Judaism. He became the archenemy of the "Jew's Elohim-Yahweh!" His doctrines are alive and well today in the Neo-Marcionism of the "church". See "The Ghost of Marcion" at www.yourarmstoisrael.org. So we can see how dualism brought about the concept we know today as the "Old Testament" and the "New Testament" as two different covenants or books that are irreducible. We view the "New" as superior and taking the place of the "Old".

The Hebraic mind sees the Scriptures (the *TaNaK* and the Renewed Covenant) as ONE-ECHAD book given to Yisrael not a separate entity called the "church". The *Brit Chadasha* is a RENEWAL of the previous covenant made with BOTH Yehudah and the House of Yisrael (Ephraim) according to **Yirmeyahu 31:31-40**. Hebraic /Scriptural thought viewed the world as good, even though it was fallen and needed redemption, Yahweh, who called it good, had created it (**Bereshith-Genesis 1:31**). Therefore, Yahweh had created the world for man and for his good. This was to be his habitation or home. It was IN THE WORLD that man could fellowship, commune, worship, and serve Yahweh. There was no dualism to the Hebrew mind. The body and soul were ONE single unity, as were the material and immaterial worlds. The Yisraelite was called to serve Yahweh with his whole being which included his heart, soul, and might. It was within THIS world where he could obey and perform the mitzvot. He COULD have his body (flesh) obey his soul's desire to please Yahweh by the Torah. Through the *mitzvot* he could develop and improve his soul as he performed the commands in obedience (**Philippians 2:5-16**).

He could make an impact on his world IN THE NOW of life! To the Hebrew, through observance of the commandments in the Torah he would be involved in pulling the "spiritual" DOWN to the earth into the world of his work and social interaction, so that the pursuit of them no longer were a distraction to him in his pursuit of Yahweh, but it became a full part of them.

This is the Scriptural pattern or *tabnit*. His pursuit of material goods and his social life was not to detract from his pursuit of Yahweh, but to be an integrated into that pursuit of spirituality.

The Hebrew liturgy and *Siddur* would NOT have included the singing of the popular hymns such as –"I'll fly away", "Heaven is sounding sweeter all the time" or "I got a mansion just over the hilltop" by the early Believers in Yahshua. This type of Platonic thinking was ridiculous and absurd and viewed as a cop-out to their responsibilities to serve Yahweh in the here and now. Their songbook was the Tehillim (Psalms). Their desires were not focused upon the future life, but learning how to serve Yahweh and their fellow man in the here and now with the knowledge they were accountable before Yahweh for their works done in His Name. Yahshua Himself told many parables about stewardship of what Yahweh had given you (**Luke 12:42; 16:1-8**).

A steward (*oikonomos* Greek) was a manager, overseer, or administrator of a HOUSEHOLD or estate. This is exactly what Yahweh gave Adam over the earth at creation. The Tehillim tell of Yahweh as *Melek* (King) over ALL the earth but also the earth was given to man as a home and inheritance. This is the Hebraic tension in thinking. Romans tells us the culmination of the promise to our father Avraham was the WHOLE EARTH (**Romans 4:13**). He and his seed were to inherit it from Father Yahweh (**Gal.3: 16-29**). This is mind staggering to even comprehend!

Two Heresies

Dualistic Greek thought brought about the heresies of asceticism and Gnosticism. Asceticism is a life-style where all fleshly pleasures are to be forsaken as evil and appealing to the flesh. One must learn to restrain oneself from them and mortify the flesh according to this doctrine. There were man-made dietary restrictions, seclusion into monasteries, forfeiting of all possessions, vows of celibacy and silence, and other man-made doctrines (**1 Tim.4: 1-5; Col.2: 8, 21**).

The Gnostics taught that one gained salvation in escaping the body by esoteric or hidden knowledge (it comes from the Greek word-gnosis, which means knowledge). They also practiced asceticism in order to flee the evils of the world. Both these ideas have their origins in Greek dualistic thought.

- ASCETIC **Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary**: adj. GREEK asketikos, lit.laborious 1. Practicing strict selfdenial; as a measure of personal and esp. spiritual discipline 2.auster in appearance, manner, or attitude.
- **The Jewish Encyclopedia Vol.2, pages 165-166**: Asceticism: "It is thus seen that both the term and the IDEA which the term expresses are of non-Jewish origin and implications. Judaism cannot be said to encourage Asceticism, even in the restricted sense of discipline...At all events Judaism is a temper which is fatal to asceticism; and the history of both Judaism and the Jews is, on the whole, free from ascetic aberrations...the appeal to mortify the flesh for the sake of pleasing Heaven could not find voice in the synagogue...Asceticism is indigenous to the religions which posit as fundamental the wickedness of this life and the corruption under sin of the flesh. Buddhism, therefore, as well as Christianity, leads to ascetic practices. Monasteries are institutions of Buddhism no less than of Catholic Christianity."
- Gnosticism: under INCARNATION, **The New Unger's Bible Dictionary**: "A name indicating the assumption of superior capacity for knowledge (GR. Gnosis, "knowledge). Gnosticism in its diverse forms received its impulse, and in the main its guidance, from PAGAN PHILOSOPHY. In different ways it denied the humanity of [Messiah], even to the extent of denying the reality of His human body."

The Scriptural/Hebraic way of thinking teaches that physical pleasure is not the highest good or goal in the life of the Believer, BUT one should receive it in an attitude of thankfulness and gratefulness to Yahweh for His provision.

We are to be careful not to let our possessions possess us nor are we to abuse them. They can become idols if they come between Yahweh and us. But the Scriptural solution is NOT asceticism and denial of all pleasures, but rather we are to dedicate all these to Yahweh and become good stewards over what He has blessed us with in this world.

The Scriptures are very "worldly" oriented. Man is given a charge to establish civilization not escaping it. All things upon the earth come from Yahweh's hands (**Yeshayahu 44:24**). We are accountable to our Creator for all He gives us to enjoy. We are to take the material world He created and set it apart for His use by using it to fulfill the mitzvot. Even our Rebbe Yahshua enjoyed the pleasures of Yahweh's creation.

He never called his talmidim to escape this world (**Yochanan 17:15-19**) but rather to be wise and faithful stewards who were accountable to Yahweh for their service to Him IN the world. Yahshua Himself was accused of being a drunkard and winebibber.

Also, our Rebbe's teachings and parables are full of the rich images of weddings, Feasts, farming, celebration, nature, family, and eating and drinking. These are all things that occupied the everyday life of the Yisraelite and common ideas that they could relate to rather than otherworldly teachings and concepts. Today's Believers have become too focused on singing, teaching, and waiting for the land of heaven and the pleasures of the *olam haba* instead of focusing upon the importance of setting apart THIS world and their opportunity to bring esteem to Yahweh right now (**1 Cor.6: 20**). In this world we serve Yahweh with our whole being, even the body (**Romans chapter 6**). We are to offer it up daily as an offering, as a priest before Yahweh (**Romans 12:1-2**). Whatever we do IN this world we are to bring esteem to Yahweh (**1 Cor.10: 31**). Since the body and soul were at enmity to one another according to Greek thought, then marriage and family were also viewed in a negative light. Marriage became an inferior way of live, thus ignoring Yahweh's FIRST command to multiply and replenish the earth (**Gen. 1:28; 2:18**).

The Scriptures clearly teach that marriage is set-apart, honorable, and undefiled (**1 Tim.4: 3-4; Ivrim-Heb. 13:4**). The book *Shir Hashirim* (Song of Songs) is perhaps the most sensual book of the Scriptures celebrating the sexuality and human relationship of marriage as a type of Yahweh and his relationship with Yisrael. To the Hebrew mind celibacy was a form of paganism practiced by the *goyim*. We can see then how the 'church fathers' views of marriage (Jerome, Augustine, Luther, and Thomas Aquinas) perverted the Scriptures to show marriage and family relations in a bad light. They established a priesthood that practiced celibacy. This also resulted in the Catholic doctrine concerning the Immaculate Conception, perpetual virginity of Miriam, and her bodily assumption into heaven. The Gnostics called marriage, "a foul and polluted way of life"

- "He who loves his own wife too ardently is an adulterer" **JEROME (5th Century)**

Does this sound like Hebraic Torah thinking? How can the SEED of Avraham fill the earth if we all practiced celibacy and did not marry? How can Yahweh bring about all the prophecies concerning ALL Yisrael if they do not fill the earth with SEED? Why does the *TaNak* always speak of children as a blessing from Yahweh (**Tehillim 127:3; 128:3**)?

- **THE SCRIPTURES : 1 Timothy 4:1-3**: " But the Spirit distinctly says that IN THE LATTER TIMES some shall FALL AWAY from the belief, paying attention to MISLEADING spirits, and teachings of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having been branded on their own conscience, FORBIDDING TO MARRY.." Notice how the "church fathers" ascetic Greek doctrines of marriage and family are in complete opposition to the Torah and its teachings!

- **Christianity Through the Ages by Earle Cairns page 112**:" ORIGEN lived a simple ASCETIC life that included sleeping on bare boards."

- **Christianity Through the Ages by Earle Cairns page 151**: "Several influences contributed to the rise of monasticism within the ancient church. The DUALISTIC view of flesh and spirit, with its tendency to consider flesh evil and spirit good-so characteristic of the Orient - influenced Christianity through the Gnostic and Neoplatonic movements. Retirement from the world, It was thought, help the individual crucify the flesh and to develop the spiritual life by meditation and ASCETIC ACTS...The early Church Fathers such as ORIGEN, Cyprian, Tertullian, and Jerome urged CELIBACY as the correct interpretation of such Scriptures..." From page 155-"Too often monasticism merely pandered the spiritual pride as monks become proud of their ASCETIC acts performed to benefit their souls."

- **The Jewish Encyclopedia Vol.3 pages 636-637**: In post-Biblical literature Jewish opinion stands out clear and simple: marriage is a duty, and celibacy is a sin.Gen.1: 28 is taken as a command.

Hebraic thought must hold everything in a dynamic UNITY not dualistic thought. Because of the influence of the Greek Plato and other philosophers, our minds became entrenched in the twisted Greek dualistic doctrines. This ALL came about because of the “church” severing itself from the Olive Tree of Yisrael and Hebraic thought.

The “I’ll Fly Away” Mentality

[NOTE: This section is not meant as a refutation or put down of those who believe in the spirit going to heaven after death nor an affirmation of the soul sleep doctrine. There are good people on both sides of this non-salvation issue. This section is calling Messianic Yisrael back to a proper Hebraic/Scriptural balanced view of living a life focused here upon this earth, and serving Yahweh with all one’s heart, mind, and strength instead of gazing into the heavens Acts 1:10-11.]

We must correct the mistake of focusing upon other-worldliness and staring into the heavens. This is the false doctrine of otherworldly spirituality. Today’s “spiritual person” is pictured as always looking into the heavens and praying. They are so spiritual that they do not have time for “worldly pleasures” and relationships in the world. To be super spiritual in Western thought means to be life denying. They try to detach themselves from this world and transcend into a higher existence. They become totally consumed with “soul winning” and “ministry”, so their loved ones can “go to heaven”. It is almost as if they are fire-insurance salesmen. Rather than really caring about people and their needs they look for another notch to put on their “gospel gun”. Any activity that seeks to take care of the concerns of this world—the physical, material needs of other people is looked upon as non-spiritual and inferior to the spiritual work of the “ministry”. They are also under the false Greek doctrine that “heaven” is to be their eternal home. Yet our Rebbe Yahshua HaMoshiach spent most of His time with people IN THE WORLD. Their needs moved Him with compassion to act on their behalf to ease their pain and suffering while pointing them to the Torah and the Father. He ministered to the sinners so much so the religious and pious said; and when the scribes and Pharisees saw Him eating with the tax collectors and the sinners, they said to His taught ones, “Why does He eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?” **Mark 2:16.**

This false assumption of being spiritual comes from the Greek concept and view of the psyche —*psuche* or “soul” and “spirit” or the dividing of the triunity of man. The Greeks viewed the soul as an immaterial, non-physical, immortal part of the person. They taught that the soul (not the spirit) was the immortal part of man. They always divided the person into spirit, soul, and body and did not view man as a whole BEING or unity. They taught at death the SOUL would leave the body and go to heaven. The *Brit Chadasha* never views salvation and full redemption apart from the bodily resurrection (**Rom.8: 21-23.**). It speaks of the person as a whole UNIT that needs to be made whole again by having a bodily resurrection with the “spark of life” or *ruach* coming back into the body to quicken it (**Yochanan 6:40; Rev.20: 5-6**) thereby receiving salvation/healing/redemption for the whole body and soul. Scripturally man is viewed as a total *ECHAD* unity or a whole person with the spirit, soul, AND body as one “package”.

• **The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary page 1213 SOUL:** The Heb. term (*nephesh*) may indicate not only the entire inner nature of man, but also his entire personality, i.e., all that pertains to the person of the man; in a sense of person; somebody, everybody (**Deut.26: 16;cf.Josh.11: 11,14**)...but man is *nephesh* “as a self-living nature by the power of the spirit that proceeds from [Yah], and is in the form of [Yah], and is therefore personal, the operation of which spirit is his endowment with soul.” (**Delitzsch, Bib.Psych, pp.181-182.**... Another meaning of *psuche* is the soul as an essence that differs from the body and it is not dissolved by death (**Matt.10: 28**); the soul freed from the body, a disembodied soul (**Acts 2:27; Rev.20: 4.**)

• **The Jewish Encyclopedia Vol.11, pp.472-476:** “ Only through the contact of the Jews with Persian and GREEK thought did the idea of a disembodied soul, having its own individuality, take root in Judaism and find its expression in later Biblical books, as for instance, in the following passages: **Prov.22: 27; Job 32:8; Eccl.12:7**)...there are no direct references in the Bible to the origin of the soul, its nature, and its relation to the body; but these questions afforded material for the speculations of the ALEXANDRIAN JEWISH SCHOOL, especially Philo Judaeus, who sought the allegorical interpretation of biblical texts the confirmation of his psychological system.

In the three terms “ruach”, “nefesh”, and “neshamah” Philo sees the corroboration of the PLATONIC view that the human soul is tripartite having one part rational, a second more spiritual, and a third the seat of desire...the Rabbis hold that the body is NOT the prison of the soul, but, on the contrary, its medium of development and improvement...Nor do they hold the Platonic view regarding the pre-existence of the soul.”

• **The Jewish Encyclopedia Vol.6 page 340:** “The book [The Wisdom of Solomon] follows the PLATONIC PHYSIOLOGY, according to which the soul has an independent existence, living only for a time in a body that crumbles again into dust. The author probably is an Alexandrian Hellenist who took up the thought that was subsequently further developed by Philo.”

Hebraic thought has the understanding that the “soul” is the BEING or person. People are viewed as a UNITY, a single UNIT- a whole person.

• “And may the Elohim of peace Himself set you completely apart, and your ENTIRE spirit, being, and body-be preserved blameless AT THE COMING OF OUR MASTER YAHSHUA MESSIAH.” **The Scriptures from South Africa ISR 1 Thess.5:23**

• “Be preserved sound and complete [and found] blameless...” **The Amplified Bible**

• WHOLE or ENTIRE: #3648 *holokleros* meaning, “Complete in every part, perfectly sound, -entire, whole.”

• PRESERVED: #5083 *tereo* meaning, “To guard, keep, watch over, and hold fast, to keep from loss or injury by keeping an eye upon.”

Yahweh’s plan is to have the WHOLE person as ONE UNITY preserved until Yahshua returns. In the resurrection we will be made WHOLE with complete redemption or salvation for the entire man. Only after the *ruach* comes back into a man is the soul and the body are “quickened or made alive again” (**Romans 8:11**). Then and only then do we experience true complete salvation or deliverance. The body MUST be included in the redemptive process in order for man to be a WHOLE UNIT in the plan of Yahweh. Our Rebbe Yahshua always spoke of healing of the body as making a person WHOLE (**Matt.9: 21-22; 14:36; 15:28, 31**). This word is *SOZO* or various forms of the word meaning, “To save, deliver, make whole, preserve”. Divine healing is a “flash forward” to experience a small foretaste of the resurrection. The damaged part is made “whole” or “saved” from sickness or disease in this world! The SOUL or BEING also needs “saved” by belief (**Ivrim-Hebrews 10:39**). A part of the soul (*nephesh*) and the body die and “sleep” until the *ruach* makes it alive again in the total redemption of the person (**Yechezqel 18:4**). The whole soul (all 5 parts) and body does not possess immortality until the resurrection (**1 Timothy 6:16; 1 Corinthians 15:53-54; 1 Timothy 1:17**) as the *ruach* reenters the BODY AND SOUL.

A person is NOT a soul that inhabits a body. The soul or “being” stands for the person himself. The Torah teaches that man is an animated body rather than an incarnated soul. This is why I like the translation of *The Scriptures by the ISR* from South Africa.

It uses the word BEING instead of “soul”. In Hebrew a “living being” is *nephesh chayyah*. Man’s soul is the vitality of his life-never a separate part of a man. The Hebrew word *ruach* means wind or breath (air in motion). It is Yahweh’s power that created and keeps all things (**Yeshayahu 31:3; 40:7; Tehillim-Ps.33: 6; 104:29-30**). *Nephesh* and *Ruach* carry the idea of ANIMATION and LIFE. The function of breath or wind is to bring alive or energize a whole person, his body, and soul (**Acts 2:2**).

We can know understand why the Torah is “spiritual” as Rav Shaul taught (**Romans 7: 12, 14**). It can quicken or make alive (**Tehillim –Psalm 119:25, 40,107,154,156,159; Romans 8:11**) because it breathed on by the *Ruach HaKodesh* (**2 Tim.3: 16**) and it is actually alive! It was the *Ruach* blowing upon the bones of all Yisrael that began the process of bringing them together on Shavuot 33 CE. It is a partial fulfillment of Ezek.37. Yahweh’s *Ruach* is the “life-giving force” that quickens or revives His people Yisrael.

Knowing Yahweh

Also, it is interesting to note that the Hebrew idiom “to know (*YADAH*) Yahweh” is NOT about having an intellectual knowledge of Him. Rather it means to experience in THIS LIFE UPON THE EARTH the real POWER and presence of Yahweh through His acts of compassion, love, and *chesed*. It is a knowing by experience, just as a husband and wife know each other by intimate contact with one another and becoming ONE. It is a revelation of Yahweh as Mosheh experienced in **Shemot (Exodus) 34:1-7**.

So, to the Hebrew mind true spirituality was not to turn INWARD, but it meant to be fully human, fully alive, and empowered by Yahweh’s *Ruach* to serve Him and our neighbor through the Torah and the *mitzvot* by LOVING YAHWEH AND OUR NEIGHBOR AS OURSELVES. The Hebrews KNEW and experienced the reality of Yahweh IN their everyday experiences and by walking in obedience to His Torah. They affirmed creation by bringing and finding a sense of set-apartness in the here and now or what we call the material world. There was no separation of the set-apart and the “secular” areas of life. There was no DUALISM of worlds.

Every aspect of life was to be set-apart to Yahweh. Work AND worship were both an expression of our life before Yahweh. We are to live in this world and yet use all of the creation in the instructive manner in which Yahweh has given us in His Torah (**Col.3: 23; Titus 1:15**). We can look to the heavens and yet keep both feet on the ground! This TRUTH is reflected in the Scriptural manner of Hebraic blessing found in the *Siddur* (Prayer Book). We do not “bless things”, as is the “Christian” practice. Things do not need to be blessed, as they were all created good. We as Messianic Yisrael BLESS YAHWEH THE KING OF THE UNIVERSE WHO HAS CREATED ALL THINGS! This is the pattern of our Rebbe Yahshua and the Torah (**.26: 26; Luke 24:30; Deut.8: 10**).

Yahweh alone is worthy of blessing and praising for the good gifts that He gives us as Yisrael. The ancient Hebrews NEVER would have thought to bless the food and wine they ate and drank. It was a completely foreign (pagan) concept to them. Why would one imply the creation was bad or unholy when Yahweh declared it was good (**Gen.1: 31**). That is an insult to Him. To bless the gift rather than the GIVER of the gift is strange Hebraic theology. It suggests what Yahweh has declared clean is profane and must be blessed by a “magic” prayer that makes it set-apart. No, the Torah has already set it apart by declaring it clean and good. If the Torah sets it apart then we bless Yahweh Who gave us the food (**1 Tim.4: 4-5**).

The practice of saying “grace” before a meal is a Greek dualistic thought that is saying that material things must be made “holy” by a special prayer. Thus, we have the Roman consecration of the Eucharist by the “priest” and the false doctrine of transubstantiation. We are told in the Torah to thank Yahweh AFTER we have eaten and are satisfied (**Deut.8: 10**). The Torah tells us to bless Yahweh for the good land which He has given Yisrael and its bounty He has provided by His *chesed*.

NOTE: The first thing Yahweh set-apart in the Torah IS NOT A MATERIAL OBJECT, BUT IT WAS SPACE IN TIME-the Shabbat or 7th day (**Gen.2: 3**). Scriptural history is NOT about how Yisrael celebrated space, but the revelation of how they learned to set-apart TIME and events. In this WE AS YISRAEL CAN LEARN THE VERY PRESENCE OF YAHWEH IN OUR LIVES AND HIS QUICKENING POWER OF THE RUACH HAKODESH RIGHT HERE ON EARTH IN OUR DAILY ACTIVITIES AS WE LIVE OUT HIS TORAH THROUGH THE MITZVOT!

True Deliverance (Salvation)

During the time of the Middle Ages, the doctrine of salvation became centered on escape from this world. One was not truly “saved” until they left this world. The “good life” was looked upon one that one longed for escape from this mortal life and this world’s problems and pressures. If we look around today we can see this in the “church”. Everything focuses on “the sweet by and by” and the joy that awaits them in “heaven”.

Unfortunately, their whole salvation experience is focused on some future life in the heavenly realms where they will be freed from this “sinful world”. The word salvation was redefined in Greek terms to fit the dualistic system of thought within the “new religion of Christianity.”

- “Because firstly indeed, that THEY (the Yehudim) were entrusted with the Words of Elohim” **Romans 3:2** If they were entrusted with the Words of Yahweh, WHY do we turn to the Greeks for their interpretation and meaning?

- **Christianity Through the Ages by Earle Cairns page 98-101**: Gnosticism: “ Salvation, which was only for the soul or spiritual part of man, might begin with faith, but the special gnosis, which [Messiah] imparted to the elite, would be far more beneficial, according to the Gnostic, in the process of the salvation of the soul. Since the body was material and was destined to be cast off, it might be kept under strict ascetic practices or given over to libertinism. . .It had no place for the human body in the future life. In this respect it resembled the thinking of GREEK mythology and philosophy that it had no future for the human body beyond this life. Its asceticism was a contributing factor to the medieval ascetic movement that we know as monasticism.” In contrast to this Greek dualistic thought, the Hebraic mind viewed salvation as experiencing Yahweh’s power and presence IN THIS WORLD. They would know Yahweh, and this salvation would change their lives and society. It was practical application of the Torah and its principles in this world that would transform society. There was a link between “redemption” as an individual and the community as a WHOLE UNIT.

To the Hebrew mind, one was to affirm His presence in EVERY experience of life, and trust in His *chesed* and grace to deliver them IN it. Their identity was found in COMMUNITY, not in isolation from others. The earth was to be their home and was given to man forever. Their lives were to bring esteem to Yahweh through their worship and work IN this world. Once again we MUST return to the *TaNak* and the Hebrew original to obtain our word definitions. The Torah and NOT the *Brit Chadasha* is our word dictionary to find our word meanings. *YASHA*, the Hebrew verb “to save or to deliver”, is NEVER used in the *TaNak* in the sense of escaping to heaven. It means to liberate, to deliver from evil, to have victory, to be free from oppression, and welfare in THIS WORLD! Yahweh SAVES (*YAHSHUA*) or SALVATION is seen as saving His people Yisrael from evil (**Deut.20: 4**), even by human agency if necessary..... (**1 Sam.11: 9**).

This concept of salvation is also found in the *Brit Chadasha*. The prophecy over the Moshiach Yahshua by Zechariyah in **Luke 1:71-74** includes the concept of a NATIONAL deliverance of Yisrael from their enemies. The Exodus itself teaches us that salvation involves concern for a physical well being in THIS world as well as the spiritual well being of the nation. **Tehillim (Psalm) 72** is speaking of David *Melek Yisrael*, but it is also speaking of the Moshiach. The Moshiach is to be BOTH Savior and King.

We can see, therefore, that the ministry of our Rebbe Yahshua HaMoshiach was a picture of this Hebrew verb – *YASHA*. He healed the sick, set free the oppressed, and saved them from their Torah breaking (sin) IN ORDER TO PREPARE THEM FOR THE MESSIANIC AGE TO COME (*olam haba*) **Luke 4:16-21**. Our Rebbe taught us as His *talmidim* to be involved in the lives of people in order to set them free and to bring WHOLENESS to them in this world. He is YAHWEH'S SALVATION HERE UPON THE EARTH!

Belief (faith) - An action word

The second concept that needs correction is a Scriptural view of belief or what is commonly called “faith”. To the average Believer “faith” is a mental activity that involves intellectual assent to the truth found in the Scriptures. It remains in the realm of the mind with no action attached to it. We say a prayer and you are “saved” by faith. This is NOT the Hebraic or Scriptural concept of belief. (**Ya’akov-James 1:19-25; 2:12-26**). We have allowed the Greeks to redefine our Scriptural words to fit their philosophy. Let us return to the Hebrew once again to obtain our word definitions and meanings to the Hebrew mind-set.

The Hebrew verb- *AMAN* means “faith, trust, believe, support, nourish, make firm or lasting”. Notice it is a VERB. It is interesting that the Hebrew words-*OMENET* (nurse) and *OMENOT* (pillars) come from this root. The Hebrew word –*EMUNAH* means “faithfulness, trust, firmness, stability, support, to be reliable”. It is first used in Shemot (Exodus) 17:12 concerning Mosheh hands being *EMUNAH* or steady or firm so the battle could be won over the Almalikites. This required an action on the part of Mosheh for deliverance to come to Yisrael. We can see by the law of first usage it refers to being steady, firm, reliable, or faithfulness. **Habakkuk 2:4** sates that, “the righteous one lives by his steadfastness.” This is quoted by Rav Shaul in **Romans 1:17** and **Galatians 3:11**. IN THIS CONTEXT THEN WE CAN SEE THAT THE SITUATION THE YISRAELITES FOUND THEMSELVES IN WOULD REQUIRE THEM TO HAVE A DEEPLY ROOTED DEPENDENCE UPON YAHWEH AND HIS WISDOM. THEY WOULD NEED “FAITH” TO STAY STEADY, FAITHFUL, TO OUTLAST THE IMPENDING DAY THAT WAS COMING. Our Rebbe Yahshua repeated this same concept in **Mattithyahu 24:13**, “But he who shall have ENDURED to the end SHALL BE SAVED” also see **Matt.10: 22**. Another word derived from the root *AMAN* is *EMET* or truth. It means steady, firm, sureness. Yahweh is abounding in *AHAVAH* and *EMET* (**Ex.34: 6; Num.14: 18**). His Word is truth.

The Torah is steadfast or reliable (**Yochanan 17:17**). Therefore Scriptural belief MUST be based upon the TRUTH of the Torah (**Romans 10:8-21**) and its steadfastness. We can now understand that to the Hebrew mind FAITH meant confidence or trust in Yahweh and His Word. It required one to step out into LIFE to act on that trust or belief that he had in Yahweh and the Word he received from Him by prophecy, dream, *malakim*, or the TaNaK (**Ivrim-Heb.11**). What he had in his heart was translated and affirmed by his actions IN LIFE. It was not playing mental gymnastics or theory. It was a sure reality IN LIFE. A person who had belief was committed to Yahweh, and could venture into the unknown in full assurance and expectation that Yahweh would be there. It required ACTION! We can step into tomorrow knowing that Yahweh will be waiting for us there. A person without belief in Yahweh will cling to the past in fear, thinking Yahweh will not be there in the future. This is what happened to our forefathers in the wilderness journey of 40 years. They kept looking back to *Mitzrayim* (Egypt) and were fearful of what tomorrow would bring.

In contrast to the Yisraelites unbelief, every one of our Elders in **Ivrim/Hebrews 11** ACTED because they had belief. The Word tells they obtained witness by their belief. Fear (which is the opposite of belief) will paralyze you into nonaction and passivity. Our Rebbe taught us NOT to be fearful of what tomorrow will bring, and that Yahweh would provide for us if we seek His kingship and righteousness (**Matt.6: 24-34**). In fact, He says we are men of little or small belief if we worry and fret about these material things and His provision for the future.

- “But without belief it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to Elohim HAS to believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them who earnestly seek Him.” **Ivrim 11:6**

True belief is a leap of action rather than a leap of thought. Therefore Scriptural belief or faith MUST operate in the realm of TODAY and this world. Faith will confront the wrongs in this world and transform lives NOW to prepare us for the age to come.

A Sense of Community

The final concept that the “church” has twisted in its thinking is the individual versus the community. Dualism fosters the idea of seclusion and withdrawal from society as a whole. It becomes self-oriented and seeks its own welfare rather than the good of the community.

The Hebrew word –*ADAM* can mean a man as an individual or mankind as a whole UNIT. The Torah was given to each Yisraelite as an individual but yet to ALL Yisrael as a community. We are *MISHPACHAH* or family. A family includes not only the immediate family but also the NATION AS A WHOLE COLLECTIVE UNIT. How can we tell that we are part of the Elohim family? Let us turn to the words of our Rebbe Yahshua HaMoshiach.

- “And He [Yahshua] answered them, saying, “Who is My mother, or My BROTHERS?” And looking around on those sitting round Him, He said, “See My mother and My BROTHERS! For Whoever DOES the desire of Elohim is My brother and My sister and mother.” **Mark 3:33-34**. Here we find that the true brothers and sisters of Yahshua our Master are DOING the Torah, which is the will of the Father in Heaven.

- “Because through Him [Moshiach Yahshua] we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. So then you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the set-apart ones, AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSEHOLD OF ELOHIM.” If we are IN Messiah Yahshua then we are part of Elohim’s HOUSEHOLD or family.

- “Therefore, “Come out of from among them and be separate, says Yahweh, and do not touch what is unclean, and I shall receive you. And I shall be a FATHER to you, and you shall be SONS and DAUGHTERS to Me, says Yahweh Almighty.” **2 Cor.6: 17-18**. Separated ourselves from the unclean and darkness will also qualify us as part of the family of Yahweh.

- NOTE: The Hebrew word-*b’nai* is children. Its root is *banah*–“to build”. It has the very same root (*banah*) as *beit* or HOUSE. *BEIT* CAN ALSO MEAN TO HAVE CHILDREN OR TO BUILD A FAMILY! If we are part of the household of Elohim then we are also His children. His true Dwelling Place cannot be separate from His true children! The Hebrew words-*AM* (people) –*CHAVURAH* (community) - and *KEHILLAH* (assembly or congregation) emphasize accountability and togetherness as a community of Believers.

We are our brothers keeper (**Gen.4: 9**). As Messianic Yisrael we need to take responsibilities such as *tzedakah* (charity or alms), abstaining from *lashon ha-ra* (gossip), *hevra kadisha* (burial of the dead), visiting the home-bound and sick *-bikor holim*, kindness to animals, and Zionism or support of the Nation of Israel. In the *Brit Chadasha* the book of Ya’akov (James) covers all the community aspects for the Believer in HaMoshiach Yahshua our Rebbe. It is the most “Hebrew” book in the *Brit Chadasha* (Renewed Covenant) as it stresses life and behavior within the community of Believers. Ya’akov gets down to the practicality of our walk (*halakah*) in Yahshua and the inter-personal relationships within the Messianic Community. His book is a commentary on the teachings or Torah of his half-brother Yahshua HaMoshiach found in the Sermon on the Mount in **Mattithyahu 5-7**.

Ya'akov's teaching shows that belief is expressed within the community by action and not just words. Belief and works are not conflicting values as commonly misunderstood but complimentary. It is a faith that works within this world by observance of the Torah mitzvot in the Messianic Community that is an expression of our truly believing in Moshiach. He is our example to follow (**I Yochanan 1:6**). His love is expressed through us to our neighbor as He lives IN us and THROUGH us as Yisrael.

• “For as the BODY without the ruach (spirit) is dead, so also the belief is dead without the works.”
Ya'akov 2:26

• “My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in DEED and in TRUTH.” **I Yochanan 3:18**

Messianic Yisrael is the BODY of Moshiach and each individual is a member of that Body. We are the SEED (family) of our Father Avraham. We are all ECHAD or ONE corporate personality (**Yochanan 17:18-26; 1 Cor.12: 13; Rom.4: 11, 16; Gal.3: 26-29**). The group identity becomes our own, yet we are individuals. We seek out each other's best interests considering others better than ourselves (**Philippians 2**). We are to be a community of living, loving, learning, worshipping, praying, assembling (Ivrim-Hebrews 10:25), and study. Yisrael will only be as strong as the sum of the individual members of the BODY. When one is suffering, we all are suffering (**1Cor.12: 26; Gal.6: 1- 6**). True spirituality is oriented towards the community. When we sever our ties with Hebraic thinking and focus on “our salvation” we become selfish and self-centered and fail to be community focused. This great Restoration of ALL Yisrael through Moshiach Yahshua is a NATIONAL RESTORATION that will come through individuals laboring IN COMMUNITY to bring about the return of the “Lost Sheep of the House of Yisrael”.

Conclusion

If we carefully study this “Beginners Torah Lesson”, we will understand that it is imperative that Messianic Yisrael returns to the Hebraic mind-set and forsake the Greek Platonic dualism of the “church”. It has resulted only in misapplication and misinterpretation of the Word of Yahweh (**2 Kepha –Peter 3:15-18**). It is ONLY by the renewing of the mind to Torah based thinking that we can return to Yahweh and His Torah (**Romans 12:1-2**). Greek Philosophical thought was the vehicle that heresies entered the Body of Moshiach and only scripturally renewed minds would help us to return to the Torah and Yahweh. Let us as Yisrael not continue in the lies and mistakes of our fathers (**Yirmeyahu 16:19**).

**May Yahweh bless your understanding of this teaching.
Rabbi Edward Levi Nydle B'nai Avraham, Ottumwa, Iowa**

**“O Yahweh, why do You make us stray from Your ways, and harden our heart from Your fear?
Turn back, for the sake of Your servants, the TRIBES of Your inheritance.” Yeshayahu 63:17**

**“Do not be conformed to this world-this age, fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial customs. But be transformed (changed) by the (entire) renewal of your mind-by its new ideals and its new attitude-so that you may prove (for yourselves) what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of [Elohim], even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect (in His sight for you).
Romans 12:2 Amplified Bible**

Beginner's Torah Lesson #7

The TaNaK: HaYesod-

THE FOUNDATION!

By Rabbi Edward Levi Nydle – B'nai Avraham

“...to make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but by EVERY word that comes from the mouth of Yahweh.” Devarim 8:3b

“DO NOT THINK that I have come to destroy the TORAH or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to complete. For truly I say to you, till heaven and the earth pass away, one jot (yod) or one tittle (ornamental flourish) shall by no means pass from the Torah till ALL be done.”

Rebbe Melek Yahshua HaMoshiach

Mattithyahu 5:17-18

In this challenging seventh Beginners Torah Lesson, we are going to explore the significance of the TaNaK and its connection and application to our walk in Moshiach Yahshua. Why is the study of Torah so significant in order to interpret the Brit Chadasha? What Scriptures did our Rebbe Yahshua and His talmidim look to for wisdom and the setting of the Rebbe's Halakah? Is it possible that we have inappropriately imposed a Western –Greco understanding to the Brit Chadasha because we do not understand the TaNaK or the traditional teachings at the time of Yahshua? Perhaps we need to examine how the early talmidim and Yahshua viewed the TaNaK and the teachings of the Yahudim of the Second Temple Period? I expect to answer these and other various concerns in this teaching. So, be prepared to have your current belief system challenged and questioned in this Seventh Beginner Lesson.

Built on a Rock-The TaNaK!

The foundation upon which the RENEWED (it is NOT a new covenant-*Brit Chadasha*) Covenant of Yirmeyahu 31:31 rests upon is the Hebrew Scriptures (Yeshayahu 28:16; 1 Cor.3: 10-12; Eph.2: 20) generally called the TaNaK –the Torah-Nevaim-Ketuvim. According to Scripture, this RENEWED BRIT was with the House of Yahudah and the House of Yisrael, and NOT the “church”! This Renewed Covenant belongs only to ALL Yisrael. In the context of Yirmeyahu 31 we are not yet walking in all the fullness of this Renewed Covenant.

- “The liberating and system-shaking message of love was given its RENEWAL by [Yahshua]. In Horsely and Silberman's useful formulation, what we have here is a “RENEWED COVENANT” more than a new one.” Constantine's Sword by James Carroll page 118.
- “The phrase “New Covenant” which has come to define Christianity's status as the superseding religion has its origin, in fact in Jeremiah, but the Hebrew word the prophet used carried exactly this connotation of RENEWAL, a notion that does not open into the DEADLY DICHOTOMY between new and old. For Jeremiah, and for [Yahshua], there was only ONE covenant. So we are not talking about Judaism's being brought to a fulfillment in the discontinuous message of a different movement. The point, again, is the [Yahshua] offers a Jewish renewal and it is tied to love. [Yahshua's] message was rooted not only, say, in the opening chapters of Genesis, but in the piety of Judaism as such.

I read it as a Christian, yet the record of the Torah seems clear: before [Elohim] gave commandments, [Elohim] gave blessings. Before the law there was the rescue from Egypt. Hosea, Isaiah, and other prophets strike the theme repeatedly: If Israel behaves like a faithless wife, sometimes provoking [Elohim's] rage, [Elohim] nevertheless takes her back, every time. Nothing Israel does can undo His love." **Constantine's Sword** by James Carroll page 118.

Rebbe Melek Yahshua is the chief cornerstone of the foundation to Yahweh's Dwelling Place-the people of Yisrael. He is the embodiment of the Torah or the WORD (D'var) of Yahweh. The Torah was clothed in the garment of His flesh on this earth. Unfortunately, we refer to the Hebrew Scriptures with the inapplicable designation of the "Old Testament." The Yahudim know it as the TaNaK. It is THE foundation from which the Renewed Covenant Yisrael derives its belief AND practice. Everything in the Brit Chadasha MUST be filtered through the Hebraic glasses of the TaNaK in order to have an unclouded understanding of the Rebbe Yahshua's teachings, His mission, and the TRUE purpose of His atonement on the stake for the sins of His people. It was NOT to abrogate the law as most "Christians" assume and are taught in the "church". It was to bestow forgiveness and atonement FOR breaking the Torah (**Ivrim – Heb.9: 15**) and to FREE US FROM THE SIN OF BREAKING THE TORAH (**1 Yochanan 3:4, 5:2**)

We must NEVER view the Torah as LAW as generally translated in the Brit Chadasha, but let us regard the Torah as 613 different ways to attach ourselves to our Father. We have been given 248 positive ways to connect and 365 negative ways to make that connection. Or to put it another way, by doing certain mitzvot or by abstaining from doing certain things, we can create a UNION with Yahweh. The Torah is more than just the "letter of the law". The Torah is alive and spiritual. It can impart holiness to our lives. Every element of our life is to be set-apart to Yahweh by His Torah, which is the blueprint for all his creation.

- "So that the Torah truly is set-apart, and the command set-apart, and righteous, and good." **Romans 7:12**
- "For we know that the Torah is spiritual, but I am fleshly, sold under sin." Rav Shaul **Romans 7:14**
- "Set them apart in your TRUTH (the Torah)-Your WORD (the Torah) is TRUTH." Yahshua **Yochanan 17:17**

It was a disastrous day when the "church" started referring to the TaNaK as the "Old Testament". Such language implies that the TaNaK is antiquated and has passed away. It has connotations of irrelevance, lack of importance, and deadness. Many sneer and call it the "dead letter of the law". Nowhere in the Scriptures does Yahshua HaMoshiach or any of His talmidim proclaim the TaNaK has passed away or of no importance to the Yisraelite. Most people feel that the primary significance and relevance of the TaNaK is exhausted once its task of pointing to the Brit Chadasha and being "fulfilled" by the Renewed Covenant has been accomplished. What Scripture REALLY teaches is diametrical opposed to what the "church" subscribes to in its seminaries, writings, and pulpits:

- "The tags "old" and "New" institutionalized the Christian habit of Jewish denigration. More than that, the creation of the New Testament amounted, in Koester's words, to the creation of "an authoritative instrument...that would establish Christianity as a separate religion." **Constantine's Sword** by James Carroll page 146.
- "And from a babe you have known the Set-Apart Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for deliverance through belief in Moshiach Yahshua. ALL SCRIPTURE is breathed by Elohim and PROFITABLE FOR TEACHING, FOR REPROOF, FOR SETTING STRAIGHT, FOR INSTRUCTION IN RIGHTEOUSNESS, that the man of Elohim might be fitted, equipped for every good work (the mitzvot)." Rav Shaul **2 Timothy 3:15-17**

We cannot emphasize enough that the only way to have an accurate understanding of the Brit Chadasha is by an intelligent reading of the TaNaK. Unlike the Brit Chadasha, the TaNaK is exempt of Hellenistic Greek influence, thereby entering into a world and thought process completely unaffected by that deadly virus of paganism and Greek Philosophy that has conformed the thought processes of the “church”. In fact, most the “church scholars” agenda have been to serve the needs of the ecclesiastical institution rather than to simply seek the TRUTH. By prejudicially suppressing the Hebraic origins of the Good News and wrongly interpreting the TaNaK and its message, the whole “Christian theological system” is tottering and close to collapsing because the foundation it is built upon is sand!

- “Do not be conformed to this world—this age, fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial customs. But be transformed (changed) by the entire renewal of your mind—by its new ideals and its new attitude—so that you may prove (for yourselves) what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of Elohim, even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect in His sight for you.” **Romans 12:2**
Amplified Bible

- “The early church had no other sacred books than those in use in the synagogue, and on those were based the claims of the Messiahship of [Yahshua] to fulfillment of Scripture.” **The Jewish Encyclopedia Vol.IX page 246**

We again note that the only Scriptures Yahshua’s talmidim had were the scrolls of the TaNaK. The Brit Chadasha, in relating the life of our Rebbe Yahshua, holds before us the IDEAL life we should live. The TaNaK speaks of our daily experiences in this world and how to relate to them according to Elohim’s instructions. The Brit Chadasha must be supplemented by the TaNaK’s depiction of the diversity of life experiences. This fact is proven by the fact that the Book of Tehillim (Psalms) is usually printed with a “New Testament”. We offer one very important hermeneutical rule: that the “Good News” of Messiah manifested in the Brit Chadasha is the SAME “Good News” made known by Yahweh to Yisrael in the Torah, and in the Prophets. The WORD of Yahweh as manifested in Yahshua is not some historical novelty to which the “Jew” must convert; it is only new in precisely the sense of being the primordial WORD to Yisrael and therefore always new or renewing. The “Good News” is that Yahweh’s love is manifested to all men through the Moshiach, and the fact that we are so loved that we turn to Yahweh with ALL our heart, soul, and might and love our neighbors of ourselves. The TaNaK is not an antiquated book of Scripture; it is needed by the Believer to live in this world and to establish his walk in Moshiach.

- “And Yahshua said to him, ‘You shall love Elohim with all your heart, and with all your being, and with your entire mind. This is the first and great command. And the second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commands hang ALL the Torah and the Prophets.’ ” **Mattithyahu 22:37-40**

- “Your father Avraham was glad that he should see My day, and he saw it and did rejoice.” **Yochanan 8:56**

- “And the Scripture (TaNaK), having foreseen that Elohim would declare right the nations (goyim) by belief, announced the Good News to Avraham beforehand, saying, ‘ All the nations (goyim) shall be blessed in you.’ ” **Galatians 3:8**

Blind leading the Blind

“Is a blind able to lead the blind? Shall they not both fall into a pit?” Luke 6:39

For 2,000 years the “Christianity” has avoided the TaNaK as a matter of “benign neglect”. In most “churches” very few sermons, Sunday school lessons, or group Bible studies have focused upon the teachings of the TaNaK. Most “Christians” believe it is boring and irrelevant to their walk with the man-made representation of “Jesus”. This has nurtured an attitude that learning the Torah, the Hebraic mindset, cultural settings, traditions, and the Hebrew language is optional for today’s Believer in Moshiah. This type of erroneous thinking can be traced to their seminaries and Bible Colleges, who crank out cookie-cutter clones who are more like parrots than pastors. Most Bible colleges require more New Testament courses, psychobabble, and “Church Growth 101” than courses on the TaNaK and Hebraic thought. They make the study of Greek a requirement, but the learning of Hebrew optional. Most of this type of thinking goes back to the heresy of Marcion (see Beginner Lesson #6). The result has been the Hebrewphiles who suffer from Judaiphobia have been put in positions of teaching and leading congregations (unfortunately we are also seeing this Anti-Judaic spirit recently rising up in the Messianic Israel Movement.) A book that is a standard work for “Church History 101” in most Bible Colleges says the of the Acts 15 council:

- “The liberation of Christianity from the observance of the ceremonial Jewish law was the long-range result of the council...Christianity is freed from THE DANGER OF BECOMING ONLY A SECT WITHIN JUDAISM...The new law of love, which leads to the keeping of the Jewish moral law out of love to [Elohim] rather than out of a sense of duty, becomes the basis of Christian ethics.” **Christianity Through** The Ages by Earle E. Cairns Even not long ago a well-known Sacred-Name group in Missouri (who claim to be “Messianic”) in a recent booklet called anyone who wears tzit-tzit, a headcovering, and requiring circumcision of the flesh as “Jew wanna-be’s”. This places a cover of religious respectability on behavior that reveals enormous and overt hostility to anything considered “Jewish”! This kind of angry religion usually becomes so extreme and excessive that it burns itself out by the prejudices of its people.

The tragic result has been what is called “Replacement Theology” or displacement theology that concerns the critical question of “Who is Yisrael?” Replacement Theology primarily says that Yisrael has been permanently cast aside and replaced with a new separate entity called the “church” that was “birthed” on Pentecost 33CE. It is the Roman teaching that the “church” is the “New Israel” and the true “Bride of Christ”. THIS is THE root of Anti-Semitism with a Biblical justification for the genocide of the Jewish people. It basically eliminates the Jewish people with theology rather than the sword. This is in total opposition to what Rav Shaul writes in **Romans 11:1** (also see the Restoration Series Part #3 by Rebbe Moshe J. Koniuchowsky at www.yourarmstoisrael.org). They have severed the Yisraelite root from their faith. A branch separated from the TREE soon withers and dies and is only good throwing into the fire (Yochanan 15:1-11). These branches are barren of the good fruit of Torah, the Tree of Life. From the *Etz Chayim* comes the fruit of LIFE (**Revelation 22:1-2**) and more abundantly!

After the Second Century CE, “Christian” literature took on a tone of the rejection of the Yisrael, based upon the false claim that Elohim had rejected Israel because of their rejection and killing of Messiah. The “church” claimed to be the TRUE Yisrael. This has become the typical theology of the Twentieth Century “church”. Also, this heresy gave birth to a great undercurrent of Anti-Semitism and Anti-Zionistic movements now within “Christianity”. The former Platonist Justin (in the middle of the Second Century CE) wrote, “Christianity had superseded Judaism”. He called anyone who insisted on Torah observance for Believers as “wicked and uncomprehending and will not be saved.” He was the very first to claim that all the ‘church’ was the True Israel (**Dialogue 11,123,124**).

He taught that the Jews “killed Christ”. For Justin, circumcision served as a negative identity designator and WAS NO LONGER A SIGN OF THE COVENANT BETWEEN ELOHIM AND HIS PEOPLE! This contradicts the Torah, which is TRUTH! Yahweh teaches that circumcision is an eternal *brit* for every generation of Yisrael.

- “This (*brit milah*) is MY covenant (not for just the Jews but all the seed of Avraham) which you guard between ME and you, and YOUR SEED AFTER YOU: EVERY MALE CHILD AMONG YOU IS TO BE CIRCUMCISED.” **Bereshith 17:10** Yahweh speaking to our father Avraham
- “And if you are of Moshiach, then you are SEED of Avraham, and heirs according to the promise.” Rav Shaul **Galatians 3:29**
- “Know, then, that those who are of belief are the sons of Avraham.” Rav Shaul **Galatians 3:7**
- “And when the stranger sojourns with you and shall perform the Passover to Yahweh, let ALL HIS MALES BE CIRCUMCISED, and THEN let him come near and perform it, and HE SHALL BE AS A NATIVE OF THE LAND. BUT LET NO UNCIRCUMCISED EAT OF IT. There is ONE TORAH for the native born and for the stranger who sojourns among you.” **Shemot 12:48-49**
- “For all the people who CAME OUT had been circumcised, but all the people who were BORN IN THE WILDERNESS ON THE WAY as they came out of Mitsrayim had not been circumcised.” **Yehoshua 5:5** [This verse has a lot of meaning if we take it beyond the PASHAT level and apply it to today-Rav Ed]
- “Thus said the Master Yahweh, ‘No son of a foreigner, uncircumcised in heart OR uncircumcised in flesh, comes into My set-apart place, even any son of the foreigner who is among the children of Yisrael.’” **Yechezqel 44:9** [Note that BOTH are required to enter the Dwelling Place of Yahweh-Rav Ed]

I ask you one question. DO YOU REALLY BELIEVE YOU ARE THE PHYSICAL SEED OF AVRAHAM AS THE TWO-HOUSE MESSAGE TEACHES? Have you ever noticed that the first thing Yisrael did in being assimilated into a pagan culture is to stop circumcising their children? Also, when they were conquered or under the subjection of other pagan nations, they were forbidden to practice circumcision. Why does this seem to be THE point of contention within the Messianic Movement? If we are not really Yisrael then let’s hang up our tallit and kippah and all go back to the kirche system! Another Second Century writer, Melito of Sardis, invented the “Christian Passover” which was held on the 14th of Aviv (he was what is called a Quartodeciman).

The Roman usage that was to later prevail called for the observance of Easter on the Sunday following Passover so that the celebration of the resurrection was always on a Sunday. He claimed the “Christian Passover” was superior to the Hebrews Pesach, and that the observance of the Passover in the Hebraic manner had lost any usefulness it once held for the chosen people of Elohim. Tertullian [165CE to 225 CE] was thoroughly Romanized in his education. He was the founder of LATIN THEOLOGY. Tertullian was the first to state the false theological doctrine of the Trinity and to make use of that term in Against Praxeas chapters 2-3. He was the first to argue for two separate persons (gods) of the Father and Son. He also believed that any post-baptismal sins were mortal sins. He argued that all the mitzvot of the Torah, which the pagans and Christians alike regarded as “degrading and unworthy of an enlightened people”, were abrogated. He taught the Torah was given to Israel to curb their tendency towards idolatry, sensuality, and greed-which he claimed was a tendency unique only to the Jews and not shared with the rest of mankind. According to him, the Jews engaged in worthless ritual and that their religion was sterile and incomplete. He wrote that the “Jews” had never properly understood that Elohim was a Father, because they had never known Him as one.

He went as far to say that the rejection of the Yisraelite people was the deliberate plan of Elohim. “Anti-Judaism is in G-d’s blood” he wrote in “Against Marcion” on page 146. He also wrote that “Jesus” is, “the giver of a new law, the heir of the new testament, the priest of new sacrifices, the purifier of a new circumcision, and the observer of a new Sabbath-one, that is, who would suppress the old law, establish a new covenant, offer new sacrifices, repress the antiquated ceremonies, and suppress the old circumcision with its Sabbath” see *Adversus Judaeos*, 6:1-2. To make way for this “new law”, he conceives the “old law” as abolished or abrogated. Spiritual circumcision, the circumcision of the heart, which only the “Christians” have received, spiritually fulfills this new law. According to him, “Christians” now celebrate the divine and eternal Sabbaths, and offer spiritual offerings. For him, as with later Catholic thought, the “church” has a new and better law than the Torah, or the one given by Yahweh at Mt.Sinai to Yisrael.

- “O Yahweh, my strength and my stronghold and my refuge, in the day of distress the goyim shall come to You from the ends of the earth and say, “Our fathers have inherited only FALSEHOOD, FUTILITY, AND THERE IS NO VALUE IN THEM.” **Yirmeyahu 16:19** As a result of the instruction of “church” leadership in colleges where this Anti-Hebraic/Torah mindset is taught, anti-Torah thinking has filtered down to the quintessential pew sitter today.

Because they have been taught by their stone-blind leadership that the “Christ” (not the Jewish Messiah called Yahshua) came to do away with the heavy burden of the “law” by “nailing it to the cross”, they fail to incorporate its teachings and commands to their discipleship programs and foundational teachings. They become “a quarter-of-the Bible” adherents (the Brit Chadasha has 260 chapters compared to the 929 of the TaNaK). Little do they know that the Torah has 613 commands while the Brit Chadasha has 1,050! So which one has more “commands”? They have once again detached themselves from the Hebraic thought by reasoning they have something better in the “New Covenant”. They express to the “synagogue” the attitude that “you have nothing to offer us but a dead, ritualistic, legalistic system of religion” while we have the true “spirit” and do not need the “law, rituals, or liturgy”. Any mention of the Torah ends in a conversation that says, “you are trying to put us back under the law”. All this is a subtle disguised type of Neo-Marcionism. They regard the Torah as perverted legalism or refer to it as “a salvation by works religion.” Good works or the *mitzvot* do not figure into their salvation equation (**Matt.5: 14-16; Rev.22: 14**).

They do not have the understanding that by performing the *mitzvot* we are not trying to merit salvation, but we are taking every moment of our life and are setting it apart by the Torah (**Yochanan 17: 17**). Unknowingly, they have eroded the full authority of all the Scriptures. If they truly knew Yahshua as the Yisraelite Moshiach, who was of the tribe of Yahudah; their minds could begin to be renewed to the importance of the Torah and the *mitzvot*. They need to ask themselves-“How did Yahshua view the Torah?” They proudly wear their “W.W.J.D” bracelets, not understanding what YAHSHUA (the JEW) would REALLY do as an Orthodox Jew. They do not understand that the ethical teaching of Rebbe Yahshua HaMoshiach are what the rabbis call “li-fenim mi-shurat hadin” or a withdrawing within the line of the law as behooves the esoteric circle of the Chasidim. Yahshua’s parables follow what is known as “meshalim” or illustrative stories of some ethical truth or similitude’s called “mashal le-mah ha-dabar domeh” (example-To what may this be likened?). He was a Jewish rabbi or teacher using rabbinical teaching methods of the Second Temple period to teach the way of TRUE TORAH OBSERVANCE BY THE SPIRIT AND THE LETTER! His teachings were never opposed to the Torah, but the hypocrisy displayed by the Pharisees and the Saducees in their legalistic observance of the Torah. Our Rebbe Yahshua was NEVER opposed to the Oral tradition and traditional observances of His day, as is commonly taught even in Messianic circles. What Yahshua criticized was the elevating of the Oral Tradition OVER the Torah so that the Torah was broken in order to observe the Traditions, and the pretense of piety of the leadership.

- “Well do you set aside the command of Elohim, in order to guard your tradition.” **Mark 7:9**

• “The older and the more genuine the records, written and unwritten, of the doings and teachings of [Yahshua], the more they betray close kinship with and friendly relations to the Jews and Judaism; but the more remote they are from the time and the scene of the activity of [Yahshua], the more they show hostility to the Jewish people and of the antagonism to the Mosaic Law.” **The Jewish Encyclopedia Vol.IX page 247**

• “Men, brothers, though I have done none at all against our people or the practices of our fathers, I was delivered as a prisoner from Yehrushalyim into the hands of the Romans.” Rav Shaul **Acts 28:17b**

• “And I praise you, brothers, that you remember me in every way and keep the traditions as I delivered them to you.” Rav Shaul **1 Corinthians 11:2** also see **Avot 1:1** and **Acts 6:13-14** (customs *ethos=usage,habit,law*)

• “So, then brothers, stand fast and hold the traditions (*mesora*) which you were taught, whether by WORD or by our letter.” Rav Shaul **2 Thessalonians 2:15**

• “But we command you, brothers, in the Name of our Master Yahshua HaMoshiach, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly (*ataktos*- slack in duty, irregular, living as a shirker) and NOT ACCORDING TO THE TRADITION WHICH YOU RECEIVED FROM US.” Rav Shaul **2 Thessalonians 3:6**

• TRADITION: Strong’s #3862 *paradosis* from #3060 *paradidomi* – “transmission, a precept, spec. The Jewish TRADITIONALY laws-ordinance, tradition; intrust, transmit, deliver up, recommend, commit.”

• TRADITION: Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary:

1. The handing down of information, beliefs, and CUSTOMS by word of mouth or example from one generation to another WITHOUT WRITTEN INSTRUCTION
2. An inherited pattern of thought or ACTION (as a religious practice or a social custom)
3. Cultural continuity in social attitudes and institutions.

The Brit Chadasha confirms that Rav Shaul DID communicate some or part of the Oral Law from the Second Temple Period that he had been taught by his teachers to the talmidim of Moshiach at Corinth and Thessalonica. These had to be the Torah based-traditions he had previously learned as a Pharisee from his Rebbe Gamaliel.

Contrary to what some are teaching, we do have scriptural proof that the early talmidim of our Rebbe Yahshua knew and observed some of the Oral Traditions from Second Temple Period Judaism. Our Rebbe Yahshua celebrated Chanukkah (**Yochanan 10**), the water drawing ceremony at Sukkot (**Yochanan 7**), and in His teaching *seudah* about Pesach He used wine and several cups. None of these TRADITIONS are commanded in the Torah, yet our Master Yahshua participated in them and used them to teach about Moshiach. He never said they were wrong if observed in their appropriate appurtenance. Rav Shaul wrote that we should even withdraw (GREEK-*stello*, which means to abstain from associating with, to avoid,) from those who do not walk in traditions taught by him. I. Howard Marshall, a well-known Christian scholar, has said (referring to **Acts 6:13-14**), “ The customs are NO DOUBT the ORAL TRADITIONS giving the scribal interpretation to the law; these were regarded as stemming from Moses, just as much as the written law was. An attack on the oral law was thus tantamount to an attack on the law as a whole.” The Oral Traditions are like the “rabbi’s brains on paper”, but not inspired as are the Scriptures.

A picture paints a thousand words!

This anti-TaNaK (Hebrew) mindset has also shaped “Christian Art” which downplays the Jewishness of Yahshua and His talmidim. Yahshua is usually depicted as a white-Aryan hippie-type with long blonde hair and blue eyes, which wears a toga and has a halo (sun-circle), around his head. Many sculptures and paintings even depict Yahshua as uncircumcised, not wearing fringes, or even sitting rather than reclining at the “Last Supper”. Christian artists have stripped Him of His Jewish appearance and identification with Yisrael and the Torah. Unfortunately the movies have even been worse in presenting a scriptural Messiah to the world.

Truth is stranger than Fiction!

The truth is that the early Nazarene movement was at the first a strictly Jewish movement within Second temple Period Judaism that sought to prove that their Rebbe Yahshua was the Moshiach prophesied of in the TaNaK. The struggles between the Nazarene’s and the Jews were focused upon WHO the Moshiach was, even as it is today. It was not based upon how to live their lives in the light of the Messianic Redemption and His Coming. They BOTH claimed the Torah as the standard of observance for the Yisraelite. The Nazarenes insisted on the interpretations and Halakah of their Rebbe Yahshua, while the Jews held to the Halakah of Hillel and Shammai (order my tape called YAHSHUA’S HALAKAH) .As the Nazarene movement became filled with Ephraimites (those from the nations who were really Ephraimites assimilated into paganism); the ground of the conflict began to shift. The conflict was no longer so much between two views of the nature and mission of the Moshiach, as expressed by the life of Yahshua or even two different views of Yahweh’s dealing with mankind in history.

The writers of the period began to claim that Elohim had rejected His people Yisrael, a claim made even today by the “church”. But the real conflict came from the way that Scripture (the TaNaK) was read and interpreted. This involved a total rejection by the “church” of Yahweh’s covenant with Yisrael at Sinai (the Torah) and the Yisraelite commitment to the mitzvot. They claim that circumcision, fringes, the feasts, the Shabbat, kashrut, and the other 613 mitzvot are no longer applicable since Moshiach has come and “fulfilled the law”. This is why so-called “Christian scholars” today largely ignore the Jewish writers and the Hebrew method of hermeneutics (PRDS). In the absence of the legal and ethical system arising from Sinai, the TaNaK no longer bore its original meaning. It was read as prophecy, not as Torah (instruction). It was interpreted as pointing to the “church” that would be “birthed at Pentecost”. The “church” was

viewed as a separate entity from the Yisrael of the TaNaK. Any part of the Torah not pointing to the Messiah or the “church” was simply ignored and treated as obsolete. It was even given a new name –the “Old Testament”. Since it was abolished, its only meaning was for topological and prophetic meaning; not practical living for the Believer. The “Old Testament” had to read and interpreted in the “light” of the “New Testament”, not the other way around.

- “Then beginning with Mosheh (the Torah) and (throughout) all the Prophets, He went on explaining and interpreting to them in all the Scriptures (the TaNaK) the things concerning and referring to Himself.” **Luke 24:27** Amplified Bible [NOTE: Yahshua used only the TaNaK to teach the Yahudim about the Moshiach. The was not any “New Testament” to quote. So anything written after the TaNaK HAD to be interpreted by using the TaNaK!]

Unfortunately, this type of Anti-Torah thinking has also recently infiltrated the Messianic Israel Movement. Clinging with tenacity to their old “church” doctrines and ways of interpretation, some have spiritualized the mitzvot of the Torah. As a result, they no longer advocate the Hebrew Passover, circumcision, the wearing of fringes, keeping kashrut, and even the Shabbat. They have rejected the “stacking” of the Covenants of Yahweh with Yisrael.

Like Tertullian, they are now keeping a better “New Testament” Passover, proclaiming that tzit-tzit no longer need to be worn since they have the Rauch HaKodesh, and believe only a circumcised heart is required by Yisraelites. All the outward mitzvot that identify us as Yisrael has been internalized and the physical mitzvot have been downplayed as “Phariseitcal keeping of the commandments”. Yet Scripture teaches that TRUE belief in Moshiach is expressed to the world by doing the *mitzvot* since doing of the mitzvot actually perfects our belief.

- “My brothers, what use is it for anyone to say has belief but does not have works? This belief is unable to save him[Can such faith save his soul ?-Amplified Bible]” **Ya’akov 2:14**
- “So belief, if it does not have works, is in itself DEAD [destitute of power-inoperative].” **Ya’akov 2:17**

As long as the TaNaK and the Brit Chadasha are read, taught, and interpreted only by Ephraimites, the ancient Hebraic meanings (that the Yahudim know) and connections will remain unknown and untaught to Messianic Yisrael. The TaNaK will continue to be looked upon as a book that is assumed to be only a foreshadowing of Messiah and useless to the Believer. The result will be that Ephraim will continue to be ignorant of the true teachings of our Rebbe Yahshua and what the early assemblies really believed practiced, and taught as commanded by the Torah. Their minds will remain unrenewed to the Hebraic thought of Yahshua and the early talmidim, as they continue to interpret Scripture through the Anti-Torah teachings of the “church”.

A Hidden Treasure

**“Again, the reign of the Heavens is like treasure (otzar) hidden in a field, which a man having found, hid, and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.” Rebbe Yahshua
Mattithyahu 13:44**

There are several factors that have lead to the apathy by Believers for the TaNaK.

First, the size of the TaNaK has become an intimidation to the average Believer. Even though the English version is shorter; the full Hebrew text (*Stuttgartensia Edition*) contains over 1,500 pages. Also the TaNaK contains several hundreds of characters and places. There are numerous lists of tribal affiliations, nations, and genealogies. The time period also covers several thousands of years (even before time existed). The time period and the language of the era seems so remote and strange to today’s Believer. They have been told the lie that the TaNaK is for the “JEWS” and all about the “JEWS”. Since they are poor “gentiles” simply grafted into the “Jewish Olive Tree”, this part of the Scriptures does not apply to them or their life-style. Without the revelation of the TRUTH of the TWO HOUSES, they do not see the relevance for their lives or belief system of the Torah. They see the TaNaK as a book filled with strange idioms, metaphors, and unfamiliar Hebraic thought forms that they think are too difficult for them to grasp or understand.

Many Believers seem to stumble over the Torah based concepts taught by the TaNaK. These seem foreign to “Christianity” and Western-Greek thought. They question and cannot grasp the accounts concerning polygamy, slavery, ritual cleansing, Torah observance, and the violence and blood shedding that is prevalent in the TaNaK. The “church” has been guilty of stressing the differences between the Brit Chadasha and the TaNaK. It has over emphasized the so-called antithetical relationship of the two Covenants rather the RENEWAL of the former by the latter. It is an ancient problem tracing back to the influence of Greek culture and the pagan influence on the early “church” that created and stressed the contradictions and contrast rather than the similarities, roots, and relatedness of the two Covenants that make up ONE BOOK for ONE PEOPLE! The TaNaK is called a “book of wrath” while the “New Testament” is a “book of love and grace”.

The TaNaK is called the “law” while the “New Testament” is called the “gospel of Christ”. They have Yisrael AND the “Church” (separate entities), promised and fulfilled B.C. and A.D. (rather than B.C.E. and C.E.). But the biggest fabrication, contrasted to the word of Yahshua our Master, is that the “New Testament” replaced, abrogated, or superseded the “Old Testament”. That the “New” is better than the “Old”, and the “Old” came before the “cross” and the “New” after the “cross” and it is now the dispensation of grace. The result is that Believers have viewed the Scriptures as two separate books for two separate groups of people—the Jews and the “Christians”.

- “In fact, he (Yahshua) urged the sacrifice for the leper. It was the ABUSES of the law and the HYPOCRISY of the Pharisees that he rebuked in scathing language, while DEMANDING A HIGHER STANDARD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS OF HIS DISCIPLES. He expressly stated that he had been sent to “the LOST SHEEP OF THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL.” **The Jewish Encyclopedia Vol.IX page 248**

Renewing Your Mind!

How can we overcome this apathy towards the TaNaK and the neglecting of this great treasure that Father has given us as Messianic Yisrael? What steps must be taken to combat this anti-Hebraic influence that is invading Messianic Yisrael because of the negative influence of the baggage from the “church”?

One of the first things we can do is to adopt the perspective of Yahshua and His talmidim towards the Torah. All of them gave full authority and inspiration to the TaNaK (**Matt.5: 17-18; John 10:35; 2 Tim.3: 14-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21**). There was only ONE document that was authoritative for them for Scripture. All things were done “according to Scripture”. The only “Bible” they knew was the TaNaK! The Brit Chadasha did not exist at the time and the teachings of the Rebbe YAHshua were first transmitted orally before being written first in Hebrew. The TaNaK was the only source they had for teaching and the setting of halakah for the early Believers. The book of Tehillim (Psalms) was their only songbook, and they had the prayers from the synagogue and our Master’s prayer (**Matt.6**). The Jewish scholar David Flusser once wrote, “From ancient Jewish writings we could easily construct a whole gospel without using a single word that originated with [Yahshua].”

- “The gospels do not claim to have been written by any of the apostles, but only to have been transmitted orally as tradition emanating from them [NOTE: see Luke 1:1-4 Rabbi Ed] **Jewish Encyclopedia Vol.Ixpg 247**
- “...That Matthew had made a collection of the sayings of Jesus in the HEBREW without the historical framework, which was given differently to each commentator.” **The Jewish Encyclopedia Vol.IX page 247**
- “That the sayings of [Yahshua] were collected and grouped together by several writers before they were embodied in the first and third gospels; and they were circulated in many forms afterward as “LOGIA” or Oracular Sayings of Christ. This accounts for the repetition and dislocation of some of them. As they were handed down originally in the Aramaic language, traces of which are still preserved in Mark.” **The Jewish Encyclopedia Vol.IX page 249**

We also note that the proclamation of the good news of Moshiach was done by the quoting from the TaNaK, NOT the Brit Chadasha! Yahshua began His ministry by reading from the scroll of Yeshayahu in the synagogue at Nazareth. The early talmidim in Acts used only the TaNaK to teach and preach Messiah to the multitudes. Maybe all Messianic Yeshivas should train their students in teaching “Evangelistically” from the TaNaK rather than the Brit Chadasha? We are NOT taking the inspiration away from the Brit Chadasha nor think of it as merely a commentary.

They are BOTH Scripture and inspired by the Ruach HaKodesh. The next thing we need to do is stress that the Scriptures are not complete without the Torah-Prophets- and the Writings. We need to see the Scriptures as a play in two Acts and without Act #1; Act #2 does not make any sense nor can it be understood. You cannot even identify the characters, the background, the plan, and the blueprint. The Brit Chadasha has over 1,600 quotations from the TaNaK. This builds a UNION that is similar to a suspension bridge with all its cables that combine to make the bridge to join both shores together into one complete cable! Without the TaNaK we are trying to build a House without any foundation or walls to place the roof upon.

- “Therefore everyone who hears (*SH’MA*-to hear and do) these words of Mine (the Torah), and DOES THEM, shall be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.” Rebbe Yahshua **Mattithyahu 7:24**

In the TaNaK we find the all the concepts that the Brit Chadasha speaks of such as sin, sacrifice, atonement, priesthood, the Moshiach, the ONE Elohim of Yisrael, grace, mercy, redemption, salvation, and forgiveness. We learn the concepts of clean and unclean, food offered to idols, marriage, modesty and clothing, the Feasts, creating a Dwelling Place, and all the teaching or instructions of Yahweh.

The TaNaK becomes our dictionary of Hebraic word definitions used by the writers of the Brit Chadasha, and an encyclopedia of the types and shadows alluded to in the writings of Rav Shaul and especially the Revelation. We need to interpret Scripture with Scripture and allow the Hebraic meanings of words form our doctrines and theology. We have allowed the Greeks and Romans define our words and interpretive skills through the Greek philosophers. We have to remember that the TaNaK makes up 80% of the Scriptures and ALL the writers of the Brit Chadasha were Yisraelites /Hebrews and not Greeks!

We need to keep with Scriptural interpretation of the TaNaK and stop trying to spiritualize every text. The “Church” has been guilty of trying to interpret everything allegorical or even Christologically thus spiritualizing the text and forgetting the Pashat meaning. Theologians look for the *sensus plenior* (fullest or deepest meaning) which results in going beyond the plain meaning of the text without clear Scriptural warrant!

The result is a swamp full of excessive spiritualization of the text ignoring the basic hermenutical law of allowing the text to speak for itself and in its own Scriptural genre.

We need to remember that revelation is a progressive unfolding over centuries resulting in a variety of theological emphasis over time. A careful contextual study of the verses should lead us to the author’s original intention. A maxim is the Scriptural interpretation is an art rather than a science. It takes years of study to master even the original languages. The Ruach does not work in a vacuum as every interpretation requires an obligation on the part of the student to engage himself in deep personal study and truly seek out the true meaning of the text free from bias and prejudices.

It is necessary that those True Believers in the Moshiach rediscover the Jewishness of Yahshua HaMoshiach. Fredrick Delitzsch (a son of the O.T. scholar Franz) denied the Jewishness of the Brit Chadasha and also denied that Yahshua was a Yahudite! He had the arrogance to even propose that Yahshua was a goy! Also in an internationally known University a well-known New Testament scholar said, “The first thing you must do to be a good Christian is kill the Jew inside of you.” We praise Yahweh that modern scholars are now affirming the Orthodox Jewish faith of Yahshua and His Torah observance, because a Messiah robbed or removed from His Jewish setting results in much misunderstanding about Him and his mission. Rebbe Yahshua spoke within the framework of the Judaism of His time and all His teachings are based upon the Torah and their foundation in Yisraelite thought. The setting in which he taught was the Torah rooted faith in One Elohim and the strong sense of national identity. Therefore, it is necessary for us to interpret His teaching in that context of the Second Temple. It is the only way to analyze His teachings! The Good News never suggests that He came to start a New World religion disconnected from the Torah rooted faith of Yisrael and its people.

- “...See the Lion of the Tribe of Yahudah, the Root of Dawid...” **Revelation 5:5**

The next guideline is that we need to familiarize ourselves with the early Jewish sources to provide us with linguistic and historical truths into all the Scriptures, especially when it comes to the teaching of our Master Yahshua. We must familiarize ourselves with the basics from the writings of the sages and rabbis of His time period, to understand rabbinical thought and teaching methods. We need the historical knowledge of the evolution of the Yisraelite faith from the Patriarchs to Rabbinic Judaism. They all are different as circumstances changed and the practice of the Torah had to adapt to the situations and the times. The faith of the First Temple Period differs from the practice in the Exile, just as the restoration under Ezra differs from the practice of Torah and traditions of the Second Temple Period. Rabbinical Judaism of today differs from Second Temple period Judaism and practice.

Many people do not want to acknowledge the impact that the Oral Traditions of the period had upon Yahshua and His talmidim, including Rav Shaul (a Pharisee). Although most the teachings of the Jewish rabbis were not written and compiled until after the Second Temple, we have to recognize the common thread of teachings between rabbinical writings and the Second Temple Period. Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls from Qumran, and the apocryphal writings help us understand the various sects and practices of the time of Yahshua. It is vital that we understand the workings of the synagogue, the Sanhedrin, and the importance of the work of the itinerant rabbi. Also, His parables have been clarified through rabbinical writings and literature. Rabbinical teachings have over 5,000 parables and over 800 are King parables, which was a favorite subject of our Rebbe's parables. Yahshua used Hebrew idioms and rabbinical principles in His teachings to the multitudes and His talmidim (such as middah keneged or measure for measure from Matt.7: 2). Without such insight, Ephraim has come up with ridiculous meanings of the terms such as "binding and loosing" and "to fulfill and destroy". Both are known rabbinical terms.

- A good example is the term "weightier matters of the law" in **Mattithyahu 23:23**. It appears that Yahshua is saying that the ethical aspects of the Torah (love, justice, mercy) are more important than the ceremonial observance of the Torah, such as tithing.

- This is not a Scriptural conclusion if we truly understand Yahshua's teachings and rabbinical teachings of the day. Yahshua taught that the so-called lighter matters of the Torah were NOT to be neglected. The understanding then is that all the Torah is important and none of it should be neglected, as a follower of Yahshua. We cannot pick to do the ethical commands and leave the ceremonial undone. Yahshua was simply stressing the importance of inner obedience and devotion to Yahweh and the Torah, which legalism cannot produce.

Conclusion

The early Nazarenes were all JEWS or Yisraelites. Their beliefs about their Rebbe Yahshua were shaped in a Hebraic matrix, even when they were unorthodox. They differed from their fellow Jews only in believing that their Rebbe Yahshua was the Moshiach, who did not fit the expectations of the Jewish people, as a whole. They neither cast aside their Torah observance nor departed from the Hebraic thought of historical redemption, though it was modified by their supplementary beliefs.

By misinterpreting the TaNaK and the personage of Moshiach, the "church" disconnected itself from the Torah belief of Yisrael by an unbridgeable gap. The person and purpose of the Messiah had to be radically transformed. Yahshua established He had only been sent to the Lost Sheep of the House of Yisrael. He was subsequently changed into a Greek speaking "Christ" that came to free the Jews from the law and establish a "church". "Christianity" would be a new religion antagonistic to Judaism. They forgot He came to "save His people (Yisrael) from their sins (lawbreaking)" and gather the Lost Sheep of Yisrael into ONE RENEWED MAN INTO THE COMMONWEALTH OF YISRAEL. This transformation fabricated a religion with a completely altered conception of salvation firmly established upon Greek philosophical duality (see Torah lesson #6 at www.bnaiavraham.net).

This different religion used Hebraic themes, words, and symbols to set forth an entirely contrary structure from anything understood by Yahshua and His talmidim. He would not recognize anything that is taught there today. We are indebted to the Jews for the conception of the canon of Scripture that directs all the areas of our walk in Moshiach. “What Would Yahshua Do?” He would walk out the Torah in spirit and truth. The TaNaK is the *HaYesod* on which to build our spiritual Dwelling Place for Elohim. Joseph Klausner wrote, “There is nothing in the words of Paul, as there is nothing in the teachings of [Yahshua], which is not grounded in the Old Testament, or in the Apocryphal, Pseudepigraphical, and the Tannaitic literature of his time.” The Torah was the belief of Yahshua not a religion about Him. The Believer who refuses to study it denies his own ancestry and past. The TaNaK must be placed pivotal in the being, belief, meditation, and walk of the Messianic Yisraelite. As long as we continue to filter the Good News through Western civilization, instead of the Hebraic view of the Torah, Yahshua will completely be neglected and His teachings greatly misunderstood.

- “What then is the advantage of the Yahudite, or what is the value of the circumcision? MUCH in every way! Because firstly indeed they were entrusted with the Words of Elohim.” **Romans 3:1-2**

Beginner's Torah Lesson # 8

By Rabbi Edward L. Nydle-B'nai Avraham

The Seven Rules (*Middot*) of Torah Interpretation as Taught

by Rabbi Hillel

“Do your best to shtel zich (apply yourself), to present yourself to Elohim as one approved, a po’el (workman) without bushah (shame), keeping on a derek yasher (straight path) the D’var HaEmet”
2 Timothy 2:15 (Orthodox Jewish Brit Chadasha)

In understanding how to interpret the Torah, we as Messianic Yisrael and trustworthy students of the D’var Yahweh need to be proficient in the regulations as taught by our Yahudim Brethren from the Second Temple Period of our Master Yahshua. These rules would have been well-known to our Rebbe, Yahshua min Natsareth, and all His early talmidim. My prayer for you in this teaching is: “That the Elohim of our Rebbe, Melek HaMoshiach Adoneinu Yahshua, the Avi of Hakavod, would give you a ruach of wisdom chochmah, and hisglus in knowledge (*Da’at*) of Moshiach.” Eph. 1: 17 Rav Shaul.

A Little Background

The Seven Hermeneutic Rules of Rabbi Hillel the Elder (late First Century BCE to the early First Century CE) existed long before they were ever recorded on paper for future generations of Torah scholars. Rabbi Hillel was the first sage to write them down. Rabbi Hillel was one of the leading rabbinical authorities during the Second Temple Period. Hillel studied under Shemaiah and Avtalyon. He along with Rabbi Shammai constituted the last pair of the *zugot* sages. Rabbi Hillel was a master at teaching the “spirit of the Torah” and Shammai the “letter of the Torah”. He was known for his love for people and his patience. He taught, “Be like disciples of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing it, loving human beings and bringing them close to the Torah.” There was a saying in his day, “Let a man always be humble and patient like Hillel, and not passionate like Shammai.” Later Rabbi Ishmael, a *tanna* (Torah teacher) from the late first and second Century CE, would expand Hillel’s rules to thirteen and Rabbi Eliezer ben Yose ha-Gelili would enlarge the code to a total of thirty-two to connect the laws to morals, ethics, and etiquette.

Our Rebbe Yahshua’s teachings and *Halakah* more closely resembled the teachings of Rabbi Hillel rather than the *Halakah* handed down from the House of Shammai. The essence of his teachings were a love for mankind, and leading Yisrael to a knowledge of the Torah. The teaching of Rabbi Hillel in b. Shabbat 31a reads, “What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor that is the whole Torah.” This is the fundamental principle of the Yisraelite moral law in the Torah AND *Brit Chadasha*. “Do not hate your brother in your heart. Reprove your neighbor, for certain, and bear no sin because of him. Do not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the children of your people. and you shall love your neighbor as yourself-*V’ahavta l’rayahcha kamoecha.*” Wayyiqra 19:17-18. Our Rebbe Yahshua taught in Mattithyahu 7:12, “Therefore, whatever you wish B’nai Adam to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Torah and the Neviim.” This is also expounded upon in Mark 12:31 and Luke 10:27. Rav Shaul also wrote in Galatians 5:14, “For the entire Torah is completed in one word, in this, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Also in Romans 13:8, “Owe, Be indebted/obligated nothing to anyone except a choiv (debt) of ahavah (love), for he who has ahavah has fulfilled the Torah.” Yochanan also teach this in 1 Yochanan 3:11, “Because this is the divrei Torah which we heard from the Beginning, that we have ahavah for one another...” and in 1 Yochanan 4:21, “And we have this mitzvah we have from Him, that one having ahavah for Elohim should have ahavah for ach (brother) b’Moshiach of him.”

Hillel later became head of the *Sanhedrin* and was called the *Nasi* (prince). He was the master of the great school or *Beit*, at first associated with Menachem and afterward Shammai, his peer. His School advocated the milder *HALAKHIC* rulings. His influence as a restorer of Scriptural exegesis is his most significant contribution to the Yisraelite world. He lived as a great teacher who lived what he taught-the practice of *tzedakah*, fear of Elohim, and humility. After Hillel's death the mantle of his rabbinical leadership fell upon his son, Simeon. Later, it was passed on to Rabbi Gamliel, who was Rav Shaul's teacher and Gamliel supported the early talmidim of Yahshua.

Gamliel was the first to carry the title "Rabban" (our master or great one), rather than the more common title "rabbi" (my teacher). His name means "El is also for me". He was the grandson of Hillel and a leader of a yeshiva. He was a *Parush* (Pharisee) and a great Torah scholar. According to the Mishna he was greatly respected (see Sotah 9:15). Gamliel paved the way for a more liberal Pharisism by his *takkanot* (Rabbinical regulations-or improvements). His counsel for moderation was accepted in Acts 5:35-39, but was later abandoned in Acts 7:51-58. Tradition holds that he later became a Believer in HaMoshiach Yahshua but there is no clear evidence from history of this report from "Christian Tradition".

- "I am an ish Yahudi, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but having been brought up in a yeshiva in this city of Yahrushalayim at the feet of Rabban Gamliel, having learned with irreproachable frumkeit according to all machmir chumra strictness the Torah of avoteinu and I have kinat Elohim just as all of you do today." Acts 22:3
- 'And Rabban Gamliel said to them, "Anshei Yisrael, pay attention to yourselves what you are about to do with these anashim...And now I say to you, stay away from these anashim, and leave them alone, because if this cheshbon (plan) or this matter is of B'nai Adam, it will be overthrown. But if it is from Elohim, you are not able to overthrow them-in that case you may even be found to be fighting kenegeg (opposing) Elohim" And they were persuaded by Rabban Gamliel.' Acts 5:35-39

Rav Shaul wrote to Timothy his pupil in 2 Timothy 2:15 "Do your utmost to present yourself approved of Elohim, a worker that does not need to be ashamed, RIGHTLY HANDLING THE WORD OF TRUTH (*EMET*)."

Rav Shaul was indicating that there was a appropriate way and a improper way to handle and interpret the Torah. Since Rav Shaul sat at the feet of Gamliel to learn the Torah, then I am sure in this letter to Timothy he was referring to the methods he had been taught as a yeshiva student of Hillel's grandson. When we closely investigate his letters in the *Brit Chadasha*, we will find that they are filled with usages of these Seven Rules-*Middot* of Hillel the Elder.

The Seven Rules of Hillel the Elder

ONE

Kal V'Khomer (the light and the heavy): The kal v'khomer is used to make an argument from a lesser weight based on one of the heavier or greater weight. The philosophers called this *a fortiori* (Latin for "with even greater strength"). Example: If X is true of Y then HOW MUCH MORE X must be true of Z (this would be where Z is of the greater weight than Y). Watch for the phrase "HOW MUCH MORE THEN-*kol sh'khen*" There are two forms of kal v'khomer: **KAL V'KHOMER MEFORESH-** This is where the kal v'khomer argument is explicitly apparent in the text. **KAL V'KHOMER SATUM-** This is when the kal v'khomer argument is implied by the teaching given by the rabbi. EXAMPLE in the TaNaK: "See, the righteous in the earth shall be rewarded, HOW MUCH MORE the wrong and the sinner!" Mishle 11:31; "If you run with the footmen, and they have wearied you, then HOW do you contend with horses?" Yirmeyahu 12:5a; Also look up Devarim 31:27; 1 Shemu'el 23:3; Yechezqel 15:5; Hadassah (Esther) 9:12.) EXAMPLES of the implied: Bemidbar 12:14 & b. BK25a; Devarim 21:23 & m.San.6: 5;

Wayyiqra 21:16-21 & Bemidbar 8:24-25 & b.Hul.24a. The limitation of the kal v'khomer argument is the *dayo* principle or enough principle. This is that the conclusion of an argument is satisfied when it is like the major premise. The conclusion is equalized to the premise and neither a stricter nor a more lenient view is to be taken. This principle is used over 21 times in the *Brit Chadasha*. Our Rebbe Yahshua used the kal v'khomer in Yochanan 7:23, "If a man receives brit milah on the Shabbat, so that the Torat Moshe should not be broken, are you angry with me because I made a man entirely well (refu'ah shleimah) on the Shabbat?" also in Mattithyahu 12:11-12, And He said to them, "What man is there among you who has one sheep (keves), and if it falls into a pit on the Shabbat, shall not take hold of it and lift it out? HOW MUCH MORE worth is a man than a sheep! So it is mutar (permissible) to do hatov (the good) on the Shabbat." Our Rebbe used this principle in His teaching in these other verses: Mt. 6:26, 30; Mt.7: 11; Mt.10: 25; Mat.12: 12; Luke 12:24, 28; Luke 11:13; Yochanan 15:18-20; Yochanan 7:23. Rav Shaul used this argument in Romans 5:8-10, "But Elohim proves His own ahavah (love) for us, in that while we were still chote'im (sinners), Moshiach died for us.

HOW MUCH MORE THEN, having now been declared right (yitzdak im Elohim) by His dam (blood), we shall be saved from wrath-burning anger of Elohim (Charon Af Elohim) through Him. For if, being enemies (oyevim), we were restored to favor with Elohim through the death (mavet) of His Son, HOW MUCH MORE, having been restored to favor, we shall be saved by His life (Chayyim)." Also look up: Romans 11:12, 24; 1 Cor.9: 11-12; 1Cor.12: 22; 2 Cor. 3:7-9, 11; Phil.2: 12; Phil.1: 16; Ivrim 2:2-3; Ivrim 9:13-14; Ivrim 10:28-29; Ivrim 12:9, 25.

TWO

G'zerah Shavah (Equivalence of expressions): This is when an analogy is made between two separate texts based upon a similar phrase, word, or root word in Hebrew. EXAMPLE from the TaNaK of Shemu'el: 1 Shemu'el 1:10, "And let no razor come upon his head." Shofetim 13:5 of Shimshon, "And let no razor come upon his head, for the youth is a Nazirite to Elohim." We can conclude then Shemu'el was a Nazirite as was Shimshon (Samson) by comparing these two related verses. In the *Brit Chadasha* the writer of Ivrim (Hebrews) compares Ivrim 3:6-4:13 to Tehillim (Psalms) 95:7-11. Ivrim 3:7-11 is compared to Bereshith 2:2. Ivrim 4:4 uses the word "works-*ma'asim*" and "day/today -*hayom*". So the writer concludes that there will a 1,000-year REST-*Shabbos menuchah* following a literal 6,000 years of this world for those who are obedient (*mishma'at*) to the Torah (Ivrim 4:11-13) and Moshiach.

THREE

Binyanab mikathub echad (Building of the father from one text): One explicit text serves as a foundation or a starting point so as to constitute a rule or FATHER for all similar texts or cases. From the *Brit Chadasha*: Ivrim 9:11-12, "But when Rebbe, Melek HaMoshiach came as the Kohen HaGadol of the coming tovot (good things), he entered through the Mishkan Gadol, the greater and more perfect Mishkan, not made with hands, that is, not of this B'ri'ah (creation); not through the dam of se'irim (goats) and of agalim (bulls) but through his own dam he entered the Kodesh HaKodashim once and for all, having secured for us the Geulah Olamim (Eternal Redemption)". The writer applies the word "blood"-*dam* from Shemot 24:8 to Ivrim 9:20 then compares it to Yirmeyahu 31:31-34 in Ivrim 10:16-17.

FOUR

Binyab ab mishene kethubim (Building of the father from two or more texts): This means two texts or provisions are a text to serve as a foundation for a general conclusion. EXAMPLE from the TaNaK: Shemot 21:26-27, "And when a man smites the eye of his male or female servant, and destroys it,

he is to let him go free for the sake of his eye. And if he knocks out the tooth of his male or female servant, he is to let him go free for the sake of his tooth.”

In the PASHAT these texts provide for only an eye or tooth, but we can conclude it may also be applied for other body parts as well. In the *Brit Chadasha* book of Ivrim, the writer in 1:5-14 sites from the TaNaK Tehillim 2:7 and compares Ivrim 1:5; 2 Shemu’el 7:14; Ivrim 1:6 is compared to Devarim 32:43 and Tehillim 97:7; Tehillim 104:4 is compared to Ivrim 1:7; Tehillim 45:6-7 is compared to Ivrim 1:8-9; Tehillim 102:25-27 is equal to Ivrim 1:1-12; and Tehillim 110:1 is equal to Ivrim 1:13. All this is to build an argument that Rebbe Yahshua Ha Moshiach is of a higher order of being than the *malakim* (angels).

FIVE

Kelal uferat (the general and the particular): A general statement is first made and is followed by a single statement that particularizes the general principle stated. EXAMPLE from the TaNaK: Bereshith 1:27, “And Elohim created the man in His image, in the image of Elohim created him-male and female He created them.” Then in Bereshith 2:7, 21 we have this general statement particularized.

SIX

Kayotze bo mimekom akhar (analogy made from another passage): This is where two passages that seem to contradict each other are resolved by a third passage that solves the apparent conflict. EXAMPLE from the TaNaK: Wayyiqra 1:1, “And Yahweh called to Moshe, and spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting, saying...” But Shemot 25:22 says, “And I shall meet with you there, and from above the lid of atonement, from between the two kerubim which are on the Ark of the Witness, I shall speak to you all that which I command you concerning the Bnai Yisrael.” This seems to be a contradiction in Scripture. When we look at Bemidbar 7:89, “And when Moshe went into the Tent of Meeting to speak with Him, he heard the voice of ONE speaking to him from above the lid of atonement that was on the Ark of the Witness, from between the two kerubim. Thus He spoke to him.”

This reconciles the apparent conflict and we realize that Moshe entered the Tent of Meeting to hear Yahweh speak to him. 1 Dibre ha Yamim (Chron.) 27:1 explains the numerical conflict between 2 Shemu’el 24:9 and 1 Dibre ha Yamim 21:5. Shemot 19:20, “And Yahweh came down upon Mount Snai, on the top of the mountain.” This appears to disagree with Devarim 4:36, “From the heavens He let you hear His voice, to instruct you, and on earth He showed you his great fire, and you heard His words out of the midst of the fire.” Shemot 20:19-22 reconciles these two accounts by stating that Elohim brought the heavens down to the Mount and spoke with Yisrael. In the *Brit Chadasha* Rav Shaul shows that Romans 1:17 (Hab.2: 4), “For the righteousness of Elohim (*Tzedek Olamim*) is revealed from belief (*emunah*) to belief, as it has been written, But the just shall live by belief-*V’tzaddik be’emunato yiche’yeh*.” Seems to conflict with Tehillim 14:1-3; Tehillim 53:1-3; Qoheleth (Ecc.) 7:20 in Romans 3:10, “As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one-*Ein Tzaddik Ba’aretz!*” Then He uses Romans 2:6 (Tehillim 62:12; Mishle 42:12), “Who shall render to each one according to his works-*k’ma’a’sai hu*.” With Romans 4:7-8 (Tehillim 32:1-2), “Blessed (*ashrey*) are those whose lawlessness (or lawless deeds) is forgiven, and whose sins are covered over, blessed is the man to whom Yahweh shall by no means reckon sin-*Ashrey Adam Lo Yakhshov Yahweh Lo Avon*.” This apparent conflict is resolved by quoting Bereshith 15:6, “And he believed in Yahweh, and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.” Rav Shaul as a rabbi resolves the conflict by showing that under certain circumstances, BELIEF /trust-*Emunah* can act as a substitute for righteousness or being just.

SEVEN

Davar hilmad me'anino (Explanation obtained from the context): This means that the total context of the verse in question must be considered for an accurate exegesis of the verse. Otherwise stated, you cannot isolate a verse from its context or the book in which it is written to arrive at the full meaning of the text. A verse out of context ends up as a pretext. This is where most commentators make mistakes.

• **Context:** *Contextus*-connection of words, coherence. 1. the parts of a discourse which surround a word or passage and can throw light on its meaning 2. the interrelated conditions in which something exists or occurs. Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary

In the *Brit Chadasha* in Romans 14:14 Rav Shaul writes, "I know and am persuaded in the Master Yahshua that none at all is common (*tamai*) of itself (*beetzem*-intrinsically). But to him who regards whatever to be common, to him it is common-profane." Rav Shaul, from the tribe of Binyamin, a Yahudite would NOT be teaching against the Torah of *Kashrut* (clean and unclean foods). Nor is he advocating moral relativism. He knew Wayyiqra 11-17 and the laws of ritual uncleanness. These are *chukim*-or commandments without any apparent reasons. He is merely pointing out to the congregation at Rome that things are unclean not of themselves but because Elohim said they are unclean in His Torah then they are indeed unclean. This is very similar to a statement in the Talmud N'darim 15a, "It was taught: If there are things which are allowed but which some treat as prohibited, you must not permit them in their presence." They must also be aware of their behavior and the deliverance of the unbelieving Yahudim who are watching their Torah observance, as they are looking at the Ephraimites coming back to the belief of Yisrael to be acting in an inappropriate manner as a true test of Rav Shaul's ministry to the lost Sheep of Yisrael and also the Messiahship of our Rebbe Yahshua.

Conclusion

By looking at these Seven Rules of Rabbi Hillel we can conclude that both our Rebbe Melek HaMoshiach Yahshua and Rav Shaul used and were taught these Seven Rules. Rav Shaul clearly uses them in his exegesis of Scripture.

This proves from Scripture that the men who penned the *Brit Chadasha* participated in the Hebraic thought pattern of the sages and rabbis of their time period in interpreting the Hebrew Scriptures. We cannot justify ignoring the culture, historical, religious, social, and intellectual ambiance of this time (Second Temple Period), and try to isolate Yahshua and His talmidim from this environment. The *Middot* were part of everyone's background in how to approach the Torah and Scripture. It is gratuitous to assume our Rebbe Yahshua and all the writers of the Renewed Covenant constituted the exception from the traditional rabbinical viewpoints. If these Rules were used by Rav Shaul and our Rebbe, then we as Messianic Yisrael must also use these same rules to teach, study, and interpret the Scriptures. It will allow us to follow the command given to Timothy to "rightly divide the Word of Truth (*D'var Emet*).



**May Yahweh bless your study of His holy Torah.
Rabbi Edward Levi Nydle B'nai Avraham**

Beginner's Torah Lesson #9

The 13 Torah Interpretation Rules of Rabbi Ishmael

By Rabbi Edward L. Nydle B'nai Avraham

"But you remain in the *shiuirim* you have learned and things you were convinced of, knowing under which rabbi you have sat." 2 Timothy 3:14

There are three fundamental principles in Torah hermeneutics:

- **Logic**
- **Analogy**
- **Comparison**

These are the underpinnings of all Torah interpretation by the sages and Torah scholars of Yehudah. These are the same foundations that we also need to incorporate into our exegesis of the Scriptures. When we try to implement the Greek thought pattern of logic alone to the Scriptures, then we lose the Hebraic way of thinking and Torah understanding. The goal of these Beginner Torah Lessons is to reintroduce to Ephraim the Hebraic-thinking pattern and renew our Greek programmed minds to true Torah interpretation. We cannot use the "Church's" methods to arrive at Hebraic conclusions concerning the Scriptures as they are based upon Greek thought and patterns (see all the previous lessons under ASK THE RABBI at our website).

A Quick Review

We have studied in the previous Torah Lesson Number 8 the "Seven Rules of Rabbi Hillel". Let us review for a few moments. The Seven rules of Hillel are important to us as Messianic Yisrael because:

- They were written by Hillel BEFORE Moshiach Yahshua
- The Moshiach and the other writers of the Brit Chadasha used them.

Rav Shaul speaks of "rightly dividing (interpreting) the Torah". He was a student of Rabbi Gamaliel (the grandson of Hillel) and he used the Seven Rules, so it is obvious that Shaul was referring to these Torah skills. The 13 Rules of Rabbi Ishmael were written after the First Century CE (but they existed orally before that time). These rules are of great value, and we must be able to follow the Hebraic mind of the rabbis and the writers of the Mishnah and Talmud, as they relied upon these Torah rules in all their application of the Torah. The dilemma in the Restoration of Yisrael is that we have too many "Ephraimite" leaders and rabbis trying to set Halakah (the way to walk in Torah) without any scholarship and knowledge of the traditional rabbinical accouterment and Hebraic mindset that is needed to rightly divide the Word of Yahweh. The purpose of Lessons 8 and 9 in this series are to equip the advanced student of the Torah with the interpretive skills they will need to set Halakah and make righteous judgments. These are for the more advanced student of Torah and will require much study in order to apply these in your studies.

Rabbi Ishmael B. Elisha

Rabbi Ishmael was a Tanna (Torah scholar) of the first and second centuries CE. He was born to a priestly family in the Northern Galilee area of Eretz Yisrael. As a young man his colleagues recognized him as a brilliant Torah scholar.

Rabbi Ishmael's teachings were calculated to promote good will and shalom among all mankind, and he practiced what he taught. He was a father to the down and outcasts (as our Master Yahshua was), particularly the poor and plain people. He was a prominent member of the Sanhedrin at Yavneh and Usha. Rav Ishmael developed a system of interpretation and exegesis of the Torah that was more logical than that of Rabbi Akiba. He established a logical system by which the laws of the Torah may be deduced from laws and decisions founded upon the PASHAT (plain meaning) of the text.

Unlike Rabbi Akiba, he required more than a mere jot or letter as a basis for making important rulings. His opinion was that the Torah was given in the language of man and that therefore a seemingly redundant word or syllable can not be taken as a basis of new deductions. The PASHAT level of the text, irrespective of its verbal figures, was the only safe guide for him to make his halakic rulings. He based his laws upon the Seven Laws of Hillel and added his own method of logical deduction of textual evidence to it.

The 13 Rules of Ishmael

Rule #1 is the same as rule #1 of Hillel

Rule #2 is the same as rule #2 of Hillel

Rule #3 is the same as rule #3 of Hillel

Rule #4 is the same as rule #4 of Hillel

FIVE

Perat Ukhelal (particular and general): If the general instances are stated FIRST and they are followed by the general category, instances other than the particular ones mentioned are included. **EXAMPLE:** Shemot (Ex.) 22:9 "an ass, or an ox, or a sheep, or any beast" therefore ANY BEAST other than those mentioned ARE included.

SIX

Kelal uferat ukhelal I atah dan ella ke-ein haperat (general, particular, general): You may derive only things similar to those specified. **EXAMPLE:** D'varim (Deut.) 14:26 "Other things than those specified in verse 26 may be purchased, but ONLY if they are food and drink like those that are specified by the text.

SEVEN

Kelal she-hu tzarik liferat uferat she-hu tzarik li-kheal (the general requires the particular and the particular requires the general): Specification is provided by taking the general and the particular together, each requiring the other. **EXAMPLE:** D'varim (Deut.) 15:19 "Set-apart to Me all the firstborn (MASCULINE)." With Shemot (Ex.) 13:2 "whatsoever opens the womb".

A firstborn male would have been understood to be included in the term "ALL the firstborn" even if a female had previously been born to that particular mother. Therefore the particular limiting of the term "whatsoever opens the womb" is stated. But this term would NOT have excluded one born AFTER a previous csection birth, hence general term "all the firstborn" (see Talmud: b.Bek.19a).

EIGHT

Davar she-hayah bi-khelal veyatza min hakelal lelammed lo lelammed al atzmo yatza ella lelammed al hakelal kullo yatzo (if a particular instance of a general rule is singled out for special treatment, whatever is postulated of this instance is to be applied to ALL the instances embraced by this general rule): EXAMPLE: Vayikra (Lev.) 20:27 "A man, also, or a woman that divines that by a ghost or a familiar spirit shall surely be put to death; they shall stone them with stones." Divination by a ghost or any familiar spirit is include din this general rule against the practice of witchcraft (see D'varim 18:10). Since the penalty in this verse is stoning, then the very same penalty applies to any other instance within the same general rule (see Talmud: b.San.67b).

NINE

Davar she-hayah bi khelal veyatza liton to'an echad she-hhu khe-inyano yatza lehakel ve-lo lechachmir (when particular instances of a general rule are treated specifically, in details similar to those included in the general rule, then only the relaxations of the general rule and not its restrictions are to be applied in those instances).

EXAMPLE: Vayikra (Lev.) 13:18-21 The law of the boil and the burn (Lev.13: 24-28) are treated specifically even though these are particular instances of the general rule regarding the spots of the plague in Vayikra 13:1-17. Therefore the general restrictions of the law of the second week (13:5) and the quick raw flesh (13:10) are NOT applied to them (see Talmud m. Sifra 1:2).

TEN

Davar she-hayah bi-khelal veyatza liton to'an acher she-lo khe-inyano yatza lehakel-leachmir (When particular instances of a general rule are treated specifically in details dissimilar from those included in the general rule, then BOTH relaxations and restrictions are to be applied in those instances). EXAMPLE: Vayikra (Lev.) 13:29- 37 on the details of the laws of plagues in the hair and beard are dissimilar from those of the general rule of plague spots. Therefore both the relaxation regarding the white hair mentioned in the general rule (Lev.13: 4) and restriction of the yellow hair mentioned in the particular instance of Lev.13: 30 are applied (see Talmud m. Sifra 1:3).

ELEVEN

Davar she-hayah bi-khelal veyatza lidon ba-davar he-chadesh I-atah yakhol lechatziro li khelalo ad sheyachazirenu hakatav li-khelalo be-ferush (When a particular instance of a general rule is singled out for a completely fresh treatment, the details of the general rule must not be applied to this instance unless Scripture does so specifically). EXAMPLE: The guilt offering for the leper requires the placing of the blood on the ear, thumb, and toe, see Vayikra (Lev.) 14:14. The laws of the guilt offering, sprinkling blood on the altar (Lev.7: 2) would not have applied in this case IF it had not been for the Scripture in Lev.14: 13 "For as the sin offering is the priest's so is the guilt offering", i.e. that is the same as the other guilt offerings (see Talmud b.Yev.7a-b).

TWELVE

Davar halamed me-inyano vedavar halamed mi-sofo (The meaning of a passage may be deduced from 1.its context or 2.from a later reference in the very same passage). **EXAMPLE:** This first part is the same as Rabbi Hillel's Seventh rule. "You shall not steal" Shemot (Ex.) 20:13 must also refer to the death penalty offense of kidnapping, since the other two offenses mentioned WITH it "You shall not murder" and "You shall not commit adultery" are both death penalty offenses (Mekh.BaChodesh 8,5).

THIRTEEN

Shenei khetuvim hamakhchishim zeh et the ad she-yavo hakatuv hashelishi veyakhira beineihem (Two verses contradict one another UNTIL a third verse reconciles them). **SEE SIXTH RULE OF RABBI HILLEL IN BEGINNERS TORAH LESSON #8.**

OTHER VARIOUS RULES

Among the other rules are ribbui (inclusion) and mi'ut (exclusion). The School of Rabbi Akiba uses these rules from the premise that every letter has significance. An example would be the particle "et" begins the verse "You shall fear Yahweh your Elohim" in Devarim 10:20. This implies application of that verse is extended to include reverence for Torah scholars (Pes.22b). According to Rabbi Akiba, the use of the infinitive absolute (which repeats the verb) implies amplification. An example of this is "That being shall utterly be cut off" (Bemidbar 15:31) - "hikkaret tikkaret" in Hebrew. Rabbi Akiba therefore said, "Hikkaret in this world, tikkaret in the world to come." But, Rabbi Ishmael says, the duplication of the verb is according to regular Hebrew usage and therefore carries no other significant implication. The Hebrew word "KOL (all)" is treated as a ribbui. **EXAMPLE:** "All the days of your life" in Devarim 16:3 devolves upon one at night as well as the day (Ber.1: 5).

Sometimes dots called nekuddot are found over certain letters calling the reader's attention to certain special features of that word or phrase. **EXAMPLE:** "And he kissed him (Hebrew – va-yishakehu)" in Bereshith 33:4, to teach that Esau was sincere in what he did. Gematria refers to the numerical equivalent of a word or phrase. **EXAMPLE:** The name ELIEZAR has the same numerical value as soldiers (318). The Midrash therefore states that Avraham only had to send ELIEZAR into battle. Notarikon or shorthand means the letters of a word represent the initial letters of other words. **EXAMPLE:** Nimrezet (grievous in 1 Melakim 2:8) alludes to **No**'ef or adulterer, **Mo**'avi (Moabite), **Ro**zeah (murderer), **Zor**er (enemy), **To**'evah (abomination). Two general rules are "ein mukdam u-me'ubar baTorah" (The Torah does not precede in a chronological order) and "ein mikra yoze mi-ydei feshuto" (a Scripture verse NEVER loses its plain PASHAT meaning regardless of other interpretations).

Beginner's Torah Lesson #10

Gematria

By Rabbi Edward Levi Nydle

“Here is chochmah: the one having binah, let him do the GEMATRIA and get the mispar (number) of the Chayyah (Anti-Moshiach), for it a mispar of a man and the mispar of it is shesh-me’otv’shishim vashesh (666).” Hisgulas –Revelation 13: 18

As the earnest pupil of Torah advances in the study of the Torah, the student will eventually have to confront the truth of the SOD level interpretive skills involved in the art of Gematria or finding the numerical value of Hebrew letters, words, and phrases in order to attain at the deeper understanding of the Torah and the appropriate interpretation of its wisdom on the SOD level.

Gematria provides a technique of converting the Hebrew words into numbers or even numbers into words, thereby revealing the relationships between various words or phrases.

There are many ways to use the art of Gematria. Not only can the numerical value of words be used to determine the Gematria, but the number of letters of a word contains may also reveal something about the word itself. The methods of computing Gematria are varied. The value of Elohim's Names can be computed so greater insight can be obtained about Yahweh. EXAMPLE: *YAH* -יה = 15. The 15th letter of the Torah Scroll is *ALEF* א= 1. *YaHWeH* (יהוה) equals 26. The 26th letter of the Torah Scroll is א *ALEF*=1 .EL ל

א equals 31. The 31st letter of the Torah is א *ALEF*=1. *Elohim* אלהים equals 86. The 86th letter of the Torah Scroll is א *ALEF*. Therefore we can conclude that the *ALEF* א is placed in the Torah Scroll ilocations by the Almighty, and a pattern is revealing that “Yahweh is ONE”! Even *Halakah* can be revealed by Gematria. The sages declare that if a man becomes a *Nazir* and doesnot state how long the vow is for, then his vow will be a minimum of 30 days because of the phrase “He will be a Nazir” in the Torah Scroll. “He will be” יהיה equals 30!

Words that appear to have just the opposite in meaning can have the same Gematria. This does not reveal a defect in the art of Gematria, but simply indicates an inability of the student to as yet make the connection between the words. Gematria as a Torah Tool is well defined and discussed in many volumes written by the sages of old. I have included in this study the laws and various methods of calculating Gematria from the Hebrew.

Standard Gematria

Standard Gematria is calculated by adding the numerical values of the individual letters of a word or phrase in Hebrew. The first 10 Hebrew letters have values of 1-10; the next 10 letters have the values 10-100. And then the letter values increase by hundreds until the final letter *TAW* ת which has a value of 400

At-Bash

At-Bash gematria is calculated by substituting each Hebrew letter in the word or phrase with its “opposite” letter and adding the Gematria of the resulting “opposite” phrase. “Opposite” letters are determined by substituting the first letter of the Hebrew Alef-Bet- *ALEF* (א) with the last letter-*TAW* (ת), the second letter (ב) *BET* with the next to the last letter *SHIN* (ש), and so on.

HaKadmi Gematria

In Mispar HaKadmi the Gematria of each letter is the sum of the standard Gematria of all letters preceding it. EXAMPLE: According to Mispar HaKadmi Gematria, *ALEF* א is 1, the Gematria of *BET* ב is $1+2=3$, the Gematria of *Gimmel* ג is $1+2+3=6$, etc.

HaMeruba HaPerati Gematria

In Mispar HaMeruba HaPerati, the Gematria of each letter is the SQUARE of its standard Gematria. EXAMPLE: According to this method, the Gematria of *ALEF* א is $1*1=1$. The Gematria of *BET* ב is $2*2=4$, *Gimmel* ג is $3*3=9$, and so on.

HaMeruba HaKellali

In Mispar HaMeruba HaKellali, the Gematria of a word or phrase is the square of its standard Gematria (unlike HaPerati where each letter is squared). EXAMPLE: therefore according to this method of Gematria, the Gematria of *SHALOM* (שלום) is $(300+30+6+40)**2=141,376$.

HaMeugal (Mispar Katan) Gematria

In Mispar HaMeugal, also known as Mispar Katan, the Gematria of each letter is its standard Gematria with all trailing 000 (zeroes) truncated. EXAMPLE: *CHET* ח is 8, *TET* ט is 9, *YUD* י is 1, etc. You take off all the zeroes of the numerical values.

Mussafi Gematria

According Mispar Mussafi, the Gematria of a word or phrase is its standard Gematria plus the number of letters in the word or the phrase. EXAMPLE: The Gematria of *SHALOM* שלום is $(300+30+6+40)+4=380$.

Shemi Gematria

In Mispar Shemi, the Gematria of each letter is equal to the Gematria of its name. Several letters can be spelled in more than one way. EXAMPLE: The Gematria of *ALEF* א is $(1+30+80)=111$, *BET* ב is $(2+10+400)=412$, etc.

An Exciting Challenge

Gematria is an exciting challenge to the student and teacher of Torah. However, it opens up a whole new avenue of study and teaching as the student begins to make the connections between words and phrases.

• **EXAMPLE:** In Bereshith (Gen.) 28:16 Ya'akov exclaims, "There is Elohim in this place!" Since the Torah calls Elohim "THE PLACE", Ya'akov would know that Elohim is "in THIS PLACE". BUT WHY DOES HE SAY THAT? By using the art of Gematria the teacher or student can arrive at a fascinating discovery. The Gematria of "There is Elohim in this place" is 541. Words that have the same Gematria are "and submit yourself". This reveals a "hidden SOD level" interpretation about the "place" in which Elohim is to be found. Elohim in "that place" promises to give the Land to Ya'akov and his seed forever as He promised Avraham. The word Yisrael (אלרש"י) has the Gematria of 541. "The commandments" (המצוות) *HaMitzvot* also has the Gematria of 541. This then makes the connection we need to come to the conclusion that in the Land of Yisrael and in the Mitzvot Elohim is the place Elohim can be found!

**May Yahweh the Elohim of all Yisrael bless you in your Torah studies.
Rabbi Edward L. Nydle**

Beginner's Torah Lesson #11

The Hebraic Understanding of Learning

By
Rabbi Edward Levi Nydle (Levi bar Ido) /B'nai Avraham

“The wise one hears and increases learning” Proverbs (Mishle) 1:5a

“Thus said Yahweh, ‘DO NOT LEARN (*tilemadu*) THE WAY (*derek*) OF THE GENTILES (*goyim*), and do not be awed by signs of the heavens, for the gentiles (*goyim*) are awed by them. For the prescribed customs of these peoples are worthless, for one cuts a tree from the forest, work for the hands of a craftsman with a cutting tool. They adorn it with silver and gold, they fasten it with nails and hammers so that it does not topple.” Yirmeyahu (Jer.) 10:2-3

“Yahshua sent these twelve out, having COMMANDED them, ‘DO NOT GO INTO THE WAY (*derek*) OF THE GENTILES (*goyim*), and do not enter the cities of the Shomerites, but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Yisrael.” Mattithyahu (Matt.) 10:5-6

This teaching is number eleven is a series of twelve Torah lessons for Beginners and students whose desire is to share the Torah and the Hebraic teaching methodology of our Master Yahshua to other *talmidim*¹. The lesson deals particularly with the contrasting of two systems - the Greek philosophical schools, that which the Western Civilization has embraced and used as the foundation of their educational systems, and the Scriptural/Hebraic methodology of education.

The Hebraic point of view understands that knowledge (*da'at*) and wisdom (*chokmah*) are interrelated concepts and they are both emanations flowing from Yahweh Elohim and are embodied in the person of the Moshiach, the Son of Yah² (also known as the central pillar of the Tree of Life) Wisdom and knowledge are the application of learning to the life experience here upon this earth. A person cannot do until he first learns and acquires knowledge. In contrast to the Hebrew mindset, the Greek/Roman/Western mind has restricted the concepts of knowledge and wisdom to conceptual thoughts and theoretical principles in the intellect of the student.

The Biblical Hebraic mind has the understanding to “know” something means to experience a precept in a relationship and individual manner within a personal intimate connection rather than to intellectualize it. The Hebrew word “*yada*”, to know, means to “have an intimate encounter, experience, or sharing with another person.” To “know” or *yada* means “an act of concern, inner engagement, and attachment to a person.” A man may know a woman and a woman may know a man in a most intimate method:

- “And Adam knew his wife and she conceived and bore Qayin.” **Genesis (Bereshith) 4:1**
- “And now, slay every male among the little ones. And every woman that has known man by lying with a man.” **Numbers (B'midbar) 31:17**

Knowledge embraces the whole person and not just the mind. It is not just the accumulation of data and information as the Western thought belief system declares. The goal of education is not to provide us with more input of data and facts.

- “..They are forever inquiring and getting information, but never able to arrive at a recognition and knowledge of the Truth.” **2 Tim.3:7**

* ¹ A disciple of a teacher or rabbi

* **2 Col.2:3**

To know means that the information you have studied is applied to your behavior, thought, and morals. **Proverbs (Mishle) 12:10** states:

- “That a righteous man knows (*yode’a*) the life of his beast.”

This informs us that a man that possesses wisdom is concerned for the well-being of his animals and livestock.

- “Do you reign because you enclose yourself in cedar? Did not your father eat and drink, and do right-ruling and righteousness (*mishpat u-tzedakah*)? Then it was well with him. He defended the cause of the poor and needy-then it was well. Was this not to KNOW (*da’at*) Me? declares YHWH.” **Jeremiah (Yirmeyahu) 22:15-16**

We can comprehend from the above verse in the *TaNak* that social action, good works, and good moral character are the end result from “knowing” Yahweh by His revealing Himself to us. Hebraically, to “know” Yahweh is to walk in faithfulness (*emunah*) to His covenant (*brit*) and to live out the terms of that covenant. It means BOTH an internalizing of the concepts of truth (*emet*) and walking them out in our actions on a daily basis and is reflected in our reaction and interaction with other people. Hebrew is an action language of verbal root words, thus to “know” was to “do”!

Our Master, Yahshua established this concept in **Matthew (Mattithyahu) 7:21**

- “Not everyone who says to Me, Master, Master, shall enter the reign of the heavens, but he who is DOING [practicing] the desire [will] of My Father in the heavens.”

His *talmid Yochanan* (John) repeated the teachings of his Rabbi Yahshua:

- “And by this we know[discern daily by experience] that we are coming to know[to perceive, recognize, understand and become better acquainted with] Him, IF we guard[observe, practice] His commands. Whoever says, ‘I know[perceive, recognize, understand and acquainted with] Him,’ and does not [fails to keep and obey] guard (*shomer*) His commands[instructions], is a liar (*shakran*), and the truth (*HaEmet*) is not in him.” **1 John (Yochanan) 2:3-4**

Once Again Hebrew vs. Greek

We are able to gain an enhanced understanding of the Hebraic view of “to know” by a study of the Hebrew verb “*YADA*”. This word is more often than not translated “to know”, but in seven passages of the *TaNak* the *NIV* uses “to teach, instruct, or to lead.”³ According to the *TaNak*, “to know”, went further than the intellect; it was deed! It was the practical application of personal knowledge to the various realms of life here on the earth. The goals of education in the Hebrew mind may be broadly summed up:

- (1) To transmit knowledge and skills from one generation to another or from one person to another;
- (2) To broaden the range of man's knowledge and skills; and
- (3) To concretize cultural values into the form of accepted group and individual behavior.

In each of the three main orders of study in ancient Israel—religious education, the learning of occupational skills, and military training—these goals were pursued to varying degrees. Each type of instruction had its own specific goals, methods of study, and pedagogic institutions. Occupational and military training were subject to social and technological changes.

³ The NIV renders *yada* as “to teach” in Deut.4:9;Judg.8:16;Job 32:7;Ps.90:12;Prov.9:9; “to instruct” in Is.40:13;and “to lead” in 2 Chron.23:13

For example, with the appearance of professional soldiers, military training for the average man became less important and at times nonexistent. On the other hand, religious education was conservative, retaining its goals and some of its methods well after the biblical period.

- R. Tarfon and the Elders were once reclining in the upper storey of Nithza's house, in Lydda, 18 when this question was raised before them: Is study greater, or practice? R. Tarfon answered, saying: Practice is greater. R. Akiba answered, saying: Study is greater, for it leads to practice. Then they all answered and said: 19 Study is greater, for it leads to action.²⁰ **Kiddushin 40b Talmud**

- “Therefore, we also, from the day that we heard, do not cease *davening* (praying) for you and offering *tefillos* that you be filled with the *da'at* (knowledge) of the *ratzon* (will) Yahweh in all *chochmah* (wisdom) and *binah* (understanding) in the Ruach HaKodesh. AND THIS IS THE PURPOSE: THAT YOU WALK *HITNAHAGUT* (walk in the customs and traditions of Torah) WORTHY OF ADONEINU IN EVERY *MITZVAH*, BEARING *P'RI* IN THE *DA'AT* OF YAHWEH.” **Col.1:9-10**

The Greek thought patterns and those of the Hebrew people are not the same by any means. Because of this difference in thought, their world-views are poles apart. The object of the Hebrew *yada* is *da'at Elohim*. The goal of the Greek/Roman system is *gnothi seauton* (Know thyself).

There is no conciliation on these world views of diametrically opposed systems of accepted wisdom and learning. The Hebrew method starts with Elohim. They acknowledge that the only true wisdom comes from Yahweh and His Torah⁴.

- “The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and discipline.” **Prov.(Mishle) 1:7**

Ya'akov (James/Joshua) the half-brother of our Rebbe Yahshua *HaMoshiach* reaffirms this:

- “But the wisdom from above is first clean[pure,undefiled], then peaceable,gentle,ready to OBEY, filled with compassion and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy[free from doubts, wavering].And the fruit of righteousness[conformity to Elohim's will in thought and deed] is sown in peace by those who MAKE peace[in themselves and others].” **James (Ya'akov) 3:17-18**

According to the Yisraelite mindset a man can never know who he is, his relationship to others and the world until he first learns of Yahweh and submits himself to His will and Kingship.

On the contrary, the Greek system starts with man and seeks to rise up to know the ways and Elohim's nature through a secret knowledge of “man's higher nature”. It does not require a birthing from above by the *Ruach Hakodesh*, which is contrary to Scripture:

- ‘Yahshua answered and said to him, ‘Truly, Truly, I say to you, unless one is born from above, he is unable to see [perceive, discern] the reign of Elohim.’” **Yochanan 3:3**

The Greek System

In this tradition, it is the Sophists⁵ who first challenged the certainty of human knowledge. Fundamental to the Sophistic way of thinking was the idea that "man is the measure of all things," as Protagoras put it.

⁴ Torah primarily refers to the Pentateuch, but also has a wider meaning, which includes the whole Bible and even the entire range of Jewish teaching, both study and practice. *Mas.Chagigah 2b Talmud (notes)*

5 Sophists (GR. *Sohpistes*, expert, master craftsman, man of wisdom): A name applied to teachers who provided instruction in the higher branches of learning for a fee. They believed that truth and morality were matters of opinion

This meant that human knowledge, rather than conforming to some objective reality, in fact imposed itself and its own interpretations on the outside world. The Sophists were, however, less concerned with natural sciences than they were with ethics and politics; they would argue that there was no such thing as absolute or objective morality.

The Sophists were professional teachers who, for a fee, would undertake to teach their students how to get ahead in the world. Socrates was often allied with them by his contemporaries, but his purposes were, in some respects, different.

The best-known Sophists were Protagoras, Gorgias, and Hippias, who were significant original thinkers. To get a position of importance, especially in a democracy, one had to have oratorical skill, strength in debate, and a knowledge of law and politics; one would need to know how to manage property and maybe run the State, and know something of music, astronomy, math, physics, and so on. The Sophist equipped one to be a leading citizen, and supplied answers to help people live in a world whose reality had been somewhat undermined by the Pre-Socratics. Philosophers of antiquity have nothing but bad things to say about the Sophists (even though it is extremely likely that Thucydides adhered to Sophistic principles).

However, despite all we say about the origins of the modern university in Plato and Aristotle, the modern university owes more to Sophistic principles than any other philosophical school. Perhaps the most important Sophistic idea is a brand of skepticism: human affairs, ethics and politics, do not admit of certain knowledge so that good arguments can be made on either side of an argument. This view will dominate later antiquity and modernity and the exercise of arguing on both sides of the question (called in Latin, *in utrumqem partem*) is one of the principal aspects of Western education from the Roman Republic to the twentieth century.

A big question that concerned the Sophists and their critics was: how is virtue acquired? Can it be taught? These aren't ivory tower questions, such as the nature of *Nous*, but were vital in a society where power was shifting from the "well-bred" aristocrats to the less educated masses. Answers involved two different principles which are essential for understanding Greek thought: *physis*, "the unchanging," "fundamental existence," or "nature" (we get the word "physics" from this term: physics in the Greek world is primarily the study of "the unchanging" and secondarily the study of "nature") and *nomos*, "custom," "the changing," "convention," or "law," and includes morality, tradition, and state laws, all of which are subject to change or revision. This is exact Greek word used for the Torah in *the Brit Chadasha*. The Greeks looked upon *nomos* as the ever changing morality or customs that could be revised or changed, therefore the Torah, the unchangeable instruction from Yahweh, appeared as "legalism".

This dichotomy is a little like that between "nature" and "nurture." However, what the Greeks meant by *physis* is a bit different from our idea of "nature" or "natural." *Physis* designated what remained constant (like the gravitational constant) and so could not be changed; however, sometimes the Classical Greeks use this term to mean something like "nature." From the third century onwards, *physis* will mean something closer to our idea of "natural law."

For the Greeks the scope of the dichotomy between *nomos* and *physis* applied to practically everything, and it entered into questions such as: do "gods" really exist (*physis*), or are they only a conventional human belief (*nomos*)? Are class divisions or gender divisions natural (*physis*) or artificial (*nomos*)? Is justice an inborn characteristic of humanity (*physis*), or a convention invented by the weaker as a defense against the stronger (*nomos*)? Is it natural for the stronger to rule the weaker? Is it "natural," or merely self-evident, for all men to be created equal . . . ?

Both *nomos* and *physis* may be considered good or bad. *Nomos* brings progress in society; but if laws

are only valid by *nomos* they may be changed with circumstances, and may conflict with *physis*.

Rather than from Deity. They specialized in the art of rhetoric to achieve success in life by persuasion. They were the first to systematize education.

Physis justifies universal laws ("honor thy father and thy mother") and the equality of rich and poor, men, women, and slaves; but can also justify considering the laws of the State an unnatural limitation on individuals, to be observed only when transgression is likely to be found out. For instance, I could justify breaking the law by appealing to some universal right or some universal law; when governments defend "freedom fighters" rebelling against other governments, they are appealing to some universal, unchanging law that is greater than the laws of an individual state. This tradition was carried on by Socrates, although neither he nor his pupils thought of him as a Sophist. However, Socrates carried the Sophistic concern with knowledge to a radical extreme. He claimed that he knew one and only one thing: that he knew nothing. So he set about questioning people who claimed to have knowledge, ostensibly for the purpose of learning from them. His method of questioning, called *elenchus*, imitated a cross-examination in a court of law. He would keep questioning his listener until he had forced him into a contradiction.

As in a court of law, this contradiction proved that the speaker was lying in some way, in this case, did not really know what they claimed to know. Socrates, then, was the first in a line of skeptics that questioned whether or not human beings can know anything at all. While Socrates never claimed that knowledge is impossible, still, at his death, he never claimed to have discovered any piece of knowledge whatsoever. Socrates, then, radically shifted the concerns of Greek philosophy.

After the death of Socrates, the two major philosophers of Greek history, Plato and Aristotle, had to address the question of human knowledge, for neither were willing to be as radical as Socrates and claim no knowledge whatsoever. For Plato, knowledge corresponded to the nature of the object: objects which really exist produce certain knowledge, while objects that only partly exist, or don't exist at all, produce uncertain knowledge. Therefore, since your knowledge of the phenomenal world is defective, that is, since you can't know the phenomenal world with certainty, that means that the phenomenal world only partly exists. Aristotle took a similar view but refused to tie the certainty of human knowledge to the existence (or lack of existence) of the objects of human knowledge.

Instead, Aristotle proposed that some objects of human knowledge, such as mathematics, allow for certain knowledge, while other objects of human knowledge, such as ethics and politics, because there are so many variables involved, only allow for *probably* knowledge. Certain knowledge is knowledge that was *always* true; probable knowledge is knowledge that is true *most of the time*.

Much of the classical tradition following Aristotle focuses on the nature of probable knowledge. Hellenistic and Roman philosophy almost overwhelmingly rejected the notion that human beings can know anything for certain; the most radical of these thinkers were called Skeptics and Cynics. Their concern was largely with the nature of probable knowledge: how do you arrive at that knowledge? How do you apply it? And most importantly, how do you convince others? The latter question dominated the science of rhetoric, which took as its starting point the idea that all ethical and political questions yielded probable, and hence uncertain, knowledge.

Much of the history of early "Christian" philosophy is an attempt to paste Greek and Roman philosophical methods and questions onto the new world religion; the first thing that had to go was the insistence on probable knowledge to the exclusion of certain knowledge. Early "Christian" thinkers such as Augustine and Boethius took on the epistemological traditions of Greece and Rome to demonstrate that one could arrive at certain knowledge in matters of "Christian" religion.

The Scriptural Purpose of Education

NOWHERE in the Scriptures do we find the Greek approach to knowledge. Both the *TaNak* and the Renewed Covenant (*Brit Chadasha*) is deeply-rooted on the foundation of Hebraic thought and attitude. The aspiration of true education and learning in the Hebrew culture was to become holy, set-apart (*kodesh l'Yahweh*) to Yahweh as a distinctive people.

The Yisraelite was to be a non-conformist to the civilization, culture, traditions and society around him, no matter in what four corners of the world he found himself living. He was not to be assimilated into its culture, religion, and dress. This was the true purpose of his existence and faith. He was to be separate from the nations (*goyim*) around him.

The goal of religious education was to produce "a kingdom of priests, a holy people" (**Ex. 19:6**). Wisdom literature stated the corollary, *reshit hokhmah yirat Adonai* ("The essence of knowledge is fear of the Yahweh"; **Ps. 111:10; Prov. 1:7**).

- "And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation [set-apart to the worship of Yahweh]" **Ex. (*Sh'mot*) 19:6**

- Guard yourself that you are not ensnared (*naqash*-to become snared, trapped) to follow them (the nations), after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire about their mighty ones saying, 'How did these nations serve their mighty ones? And let me do so too.'

Deut. (*D'varim*) 12:30

The means of achieving this goal were twofold: First, the recognition of the divine will in the laws of the Covenant; and second, the study of Yisrael's history, which reflected Yahweh's concern for His Chosen people. Learning Yahweh's law and Israel's history became the basic means of receiving a peculiarly Yisraelite religious education.

In the books of Ezra and Nehemiah the Scribal Schools began to study, copy, and interpreting the Torah. They were recognized as "teachers of the Law". The word "school" appears first in Sirach (*Ecclesiasticus*) around 180 BCE. Sirach had students come and learn at his *Bet Midrash* (House of Study). Many other sages then established "houses or schools" of study. The local synagogue eventually become the center of the community as a house of Study for that village or city.

The Talmud credits the Pharisees for establishing the first school district for children. It was called a *bet sefer* (House of the book). The BOOK meant the Torah. The early phase of learning the Torah was the Sh'ma, the Hallel, the law of fringes, the Creation account, and the essence of the Levitical laws. The first book of the Torah to be memorized was *Vayyiqra* (Lev.). Josephus (1st Century CE) said, "We pride ourselves on the education of our children."⁶

After an elementary education the youth (around the age of ten) graduated to a *bet Talmud* (House of Learning). Then at the age of thirteen they would attend a *bet midrash* (House of Study). The studies conducted in these "houses" were later written down and used for the formulation of the Oral Law in the Talmud.

The Torah was regarded as the conditions of the *berit*, or covenant, between Yahweh and Yisrael (**Ex. 24:7**). Near Eastern vassal and parity treaties help to clarify many aspects of the *berit* as it is found in the Scriptures. Since the covenant at Mt. Sinai was accepted by all those present when they said "We will do and obey" (**Ex. 24:7**), it followed that the whole nation would have to be taught the laws incumbent upon

them.

It is for this reason that Moshe, Yisrael's first teacher, is repeatedly commanded to "Speak unto the Children of Israel saying . . ."

How was the Torah to be taught? Some Near Eastern treaties contained a "document clause," i.e., a clause providing either for the public display of the treaty document or for its deposit in a temple, where it was read at regular intervals before the vassal king and citizens. Parallels are found in the Torah. The text of the covenant was read at the time of the agreement (**Ex. 24:7**) and an authentic copy was kept in the holy ark guarded by the priesthood (**Deut. 31:9, 26**). The covenant was to be reread publicly once every seven years during the Feast of Sukkot (**Deut. 31:10–11**); this was the earliest prescription for mass education in ancient Yisrael: "Gather the people—men, women, children and the strangers in your communities—that they may hear and so learn to revere the Yahweh your Elohim and to observe faithfully every word of His Teaching.

⁶Josephus, Against Apion 1:12

Their children, too, who have not had the experience, shall hear and learn to revere the Yahweh your Elohim as long as they live in the land which you are about to cross the Jordan to occupy" (**Deut. 31:12–13; II Kings 23:1–3; Neh. 8:1–8; Sot. 7:8**).

The second means of acquiring a religious education was through the study of Yisraelite history. The belief in an Elohim acting in events, coupled with a high regard for oral tradition, made the telling of history a most effective *pedagogical*⁷ method. These communal memories took the literary forms of songs, poems, and story that made up so large a part of Biblical literature.

The basis of education is, according to Talmudic sources, the study of the Torah, an all-embracing concept which includes means and ends alike. Two basic educational principles followed from the sages' regarding Torah as the very substance of their lives:

- (1) Education is not to be treated as distinct from the inner content of life but as one with it;**
- (2) Accordingly, Torah study is not to be limited to a certain age but to continue throughout one's life under the guidance of a teacher/rabbi.**

The prompting of Rabban Gamaliel, "Provide yourself a teacher" (***Avot 1:16 cf. also 1:6***), was intended for everyone, without regard to age or social standing. The unique character of Jewish education finds expression in the phrase "Torah for its own sake," a concept which sets before the student of Torah two goals: the disinterested fulfillment of the commandment itself—as it is written (**Josh. 1:8**): "Thou shalt meditate therein day and night" (***Maim. Yad, Talmud Torah, 1:8***)—and the orientation of his studies to observance of the *mitzvot*. Torah study was actually regarded as greater than observance in that the first, aside from its intrinsic worth, led to the second by its very nature (***Kid. 40b***). The sages, in what was apparently designed to serve as a model for educators in all generations, defined the ideal man as one who studies the Scriptures and the Mishnah, attends upon scholars, is honest in business, and speaks gently to people (***Yoma 86a***).

Even as the supreme goal of study was Torah for its own sake, so was the general aim of education, "Let all your actions be for the sake of Heaven" (***Avot 2:12***), an epitomization which brings all actions, even those seemingly removed from Torah and *mitzvot*, into the sphere of man's central purpose—the service of Yahweh.

To the end that a man support himself by his own labors and not become a burden on society, the sages

declared: "All study of the Torah that is unaccompanied by work is ultimately futile" (*ibid.*, 2:2).

Accordingly, the permission granted parents to make arrangements on the Shabbat for the education of their children was extended to include arrangements "for teaching him a trade," both activities being regarded as "the affairs of Heaven," i.e., religious duties (*Shab. 150a*). One sage even declared that whoever fails to teach his son a trade encourages him to become a brigand (*Kid. 29a*). A child was also to be taught swimming, undoubtedly for the preservation of life. As for other subjects, astronomy and geometry were regarded as aids to the study of the Torah, philosophy ("the wisdom of the Greeks") was not approved, and foreign languages, though discouraged for fear of contaminating cultural influences, were apparently, in view of the number of non-Hebrew words that found their way into Talmudic literature, not entirely prohibited. Moreover, Abbahu allowed girls to be taught Greek as "a social accomplishment" (*TJ, Pe'ah 1:1,15c*), while Rabban Gamaliel established a school in which 500 pupils were taught philosophy so that they might be able to maintain contacts with the ruling authorities.

The Greek world never made the connection of education and scholarship to the goal of set-apartness of life-style. Instruction by the teacher was a simple transference of knowledge in the intellectual realm, such as music, art, reading, and sports. The teacher educated his disciple the rules which hopefully would develop any attitude the pupil might possess. To develop his reasoning powers certain intellectual exercises were given to him; if his body needed development, then sports and athletics were provided. The secular Greek teacher (*didaskalos*) designed to develop the talents of his student.

(7 *pedagogical* : of, relating to, or befitting a teacher or education)

The Greek teacher did not focus upon the development of the whole personality and character. Here is the English definition (notice the Greek influence) of the word "study":

• **study / noun**

- 1 a: state of contemplation: REVERIE
- 2 a: application of the mental faculties to the acquisition of knowledge
- B: such application in a particular field or to a specific subject
- C: careful or extended consideration
- D (1): a careful examination or analysis of a phenomenon, development, or question
- (2): the published report of such a study
- 3 a building or room devoted to study or literary pursuits
- 4 PURPOSE, INTENT
- 5 a branch or department of learning: SUBJECT

Look at the definition for the English word "learn":

• **Learn:—v.**

- 1. To acquire knowledge of or skill in by study, instruction, or experience:
- 2. To become informed of or acquainted with; ascertain:
- 3. To memorize:
- 4. To gain (a habit, mannerism, etc.) by experience, exposure to example, or the like; acquire:
- 5. (Of a device or machine, esp. a computer) to perform an analogue of human learning with artificial intelligence.
- 6. *Nonstandard*. To instruct in; teach.

—**v.i.**

- a. To acquire knowledge or skill:
- b. to become informed (usually fol. by *of*):

Both words in our usage of the English reflect the Greek influence upon our limiting the Western designation of learning and study to the realm of the intelligent. Also, our word “knowledge” according to the dictionary seems to be isolated from actions and deals only with the gathering of information by the mind:

• **Knowledge:**

1. Acquaintance with facts, truths, or principles, as from study or investigation; general erudition:
2. familiarity or conversance, as with a particular subject or branch of learning:
3. acquaintance or familiarity gained by sight, experience, or report:
4. the fact or state of knowing; the perception of fact or truth; clear and certain mental apprehension.
5. Awareness, as of a fact or circumstance:
6. something that is or may be known; information:
7. the body of truths or facts accumulated in the course of time.
8. The sum of what is known:

Greek Learning Only For the Rich and Elite

In the Greek society, very much like America today (since our culture’s foundation is built upon the Greek philosophical system), only the wealthy and elite could afford this enlightenment offered in the higher institutions of learning.

The English words “scholar” and “school” come from the Greek word “*scholazo*”, which means “to have leisure, to have spare time, to have nothing to do”. The English word “school” means “to be employed in the leisure of learning.” It must be noted that this Greek word does not have a corresponding word in the Hebrew vocabulary. The Hebrews considered this a definition of learning “idleness”.

Plato (speaking through Socrates) divides human beings up based on their innate intelligence, strength, and courage. Those who are not overly bright, or strong, or brave, are suited to various productive professions: farming, smithing, building, etc. Those who are somewhat bright, strong, and especially courageous are suited to defensive and policing professions. Those who are extraordinarily intelligent, virtuous, and brave, are suited to run the state itself; that is, Plato's ideal state is an Aristocracy, a Greek word which means "rule by the best." The lower end of human society, which, as far as Plato is concerned, consists of an overwhelming majority of people in a state, he calls the "producers," since they are most suited for productive work. The middle section of society, a smaller but still large number of people, makes up the army and the police and is called "Auxiliaries."

The best and the brightest, a very small and rarefied group, are those who are in complete control of the state permanently; Plato calls these people "Guardians." In the ideal state, "courage" characterizes the Auxiliaries; "wisdom" displays itself in the lives and government of the Guardians. A state may be said to have "temperance" if the Auxiliaries obey the Guardians in all things and the Producers obey the Auxiliaries and Guardians in all things. A state may be said to be intemperate if any of the lower groups do not obey one of the higher groups. A state may be said to be just if the Auxiliaries do not simply obey the Guardians, but enjoy doing so, that is, they don't grumble about the authority being exercised over them.

- “And does not eat the bread of idleness.” **Mishle 31:27b**
- “Because of laziness the framework tumbles, and through idleness of hands the house leaks.”
Ecc. (Ooheleth) 10:18

- “..She and her daughter had pride, sufficiency of bread, and unconcerned ease. She did not help the poor and needy” **Ezek.16:49**

The Hebrews never considered manual labor menial or degrading to the individual student of the Torah. To the Greeks; however, manual labor was only for slaves and the underprivileged. Aristotle regarded manual labor as unworthy for those that were aloof, and was only for those of an inferior intellect who were incapable of being educated (sound familiar? Rav Ed). The *Mishnah* states that no one should use the Torah for a spade for the digging of wealth (**Avot 4:5**). This is why various teachers are linked to various occupations or skills. Rabbi Hillel was a woodchopper, Rabbi Shammai was a surveyor, Rabbi Joshua was a blacksmith, Rabbi Ishmael was a tanner, Rabbi Huna was a water-carrier (*see **Avot 2:2***), and even Rav Shaul from Tarsus was a leather worker (**Acts 20:34; 2 Cor.11:7-8; 1 Thess.2:9; 2 Thess.3:8**).

- “An excellent thing is the study of the Torah combined with some worldly occupation, for the labor demanded by them both makes sin to be forgotten. All study without work must in the end be futile and become the cause of sin.” ***Pirke Avot 2:2***

The Hebraic education system was for all the people and it was concerned about the total person. Every person had the responsibility to learn the Torah, whether he was young or elderly. From the beggar on the street to the working man, all were obliged to set time aside for the study of the Torah.

Teaching was communicating the Torah and its principles to the student and then having the student implement the principles into his behavior and life-style. The goal of the rabbi was to have the student submit to the authority of the Divine Will as revealed in the Torah, which the rabbi communicated orally to the student. It was a call to radical obedience to the Divine Reality outside oneself. The Greeks learned to comprehend, and the Hebrews learned in order to obey and reverence Yahweh.

- “See, I have taught you laws and right-rulings, as Yahweh my Elohim has commanded me, TO DO thus in the land which you go to possess. And you shall guard and DO them, for THIS IS YOUR WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING BEFORE THE EYES OF THE PEOPLES who hear all these laws, and they shall say; ‘Only a wise and understanding people is this great nation.’” **D’varim 4:5-6**

Authority of the Rabbi/Teacher/Shepherd

The role and responsibility of the teacher or rabbi in the Hebrew culture was to impart true wisdom and knowledge to the people under his charge. This same principle should hold true today, just as it did in the time of Yahshua. During the Second Temple Period Yisrael had many itinerant teachers and their disciples (such as Yochanan the Immersor). Rebbe Yahshua was one of these itinerant rabbis who traveled the land of Yisrael. The Four Gospels use the Greek word *didaskalos* (teacher) 41 times and the term “rabbi” 16 times. Rebbe Yahshua sits in the synagogue on Shabbat, sits down to teach the Torah, and expounds in depth on the Hebrew Scriptures.

- “And Rebbe Yahshua HaMoshiach went about all the cities (*shtetlach*) and villages, teaching in their congregations (exercising the role of a *moreh*), and proclaiming the Good News (*Besuras HaGeulah*) of the reign (*Malkut*), and healing every disease (*machla*) and every bodily weakness among the people. And having seen the crowds, He was moved with compassion (*rachmei Shomayim*-heavenly compassion) for them, because they were weary and scattered, as sheep having no shepherd (*Ka-Tzon Asher ein Lahem Roeh-Num.27:17*).” **Matt.9:35-36**

The Hebrew term “rabbi” was a title of honor meaning “my master or my great one”. In the Second Century CE the actual rite of ordination (*s’mikhhah*-the laying on of hands) set apart one as a teacher or

rabbi.

- “Joseph Shulam, a Messianic Jewish leader in Jerusalem, points out that modern scholars believe the Scribes were neither rabbis nor Pharisees but “sages of the *am ha' aretz*”, Torah Teachers without *s' mikhah*. For this reason they could not bring *chiddushim* (introduce new interpretations) or *posek halakah* (make legal judgments). According to Shulam, this is why the people were in shock that Yeshua taught like a rabbi and not a scribes.” *JNT Commentary; David Stern pg.10*

- “And they were astounded at the Moshiach’s Torah teaching, for He was teaching them as one having authority (*samchut*), and not as the *Sofrim* (Scribes/Rabbonim)” *Mark 1:22*

- “But this *am ha' aretz* crowd has no *da'at* of Torah and is cursed.” *Yochanan 7:49*

- **RABBI, RABBINATE.** The title rabbi is derived from the noun *rav*, which in biblical Hebrew means "great" and does not occur in the Bible; in its later sense in mishnaic Hebrew, however, the word *rav* means a master as opposed to a slave (e.g., "does a slave rebel against his *rav*"—*Ber. 10a*; "It is like a slave who filled a cup for his *rav* and he poured the water over his face"—*Suk. 2:9*). It was only during the tannaitic period, in the generation after Hillel, that it was employed as a title for the sages. The passage in the New Testament (*Matt. 23:7*) in which the Scribes and Pharisees are criticized because they "love... to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi" probably reflects the fact of its recent introduction. The word "rabbi" therefore means literally "my master," although the Sephardim point it and pronounce it *ribbi*, the suffix therefore not being a pronominal one. In any case it lost its significance, and rabbi became simply the title accorded to a sage. Since the title was accorded only to those who had been properly ordained, and such ordination was not granted in talmudic times outside Erez Israel (see *Semikhhah*), it was not borne by the Babylonian sages (the *amoraim*) who adopted, or were granted, the alternative title of *rav*. In the *Talmud*, therefore, the title rabbi refers either to a *tanna* or to a Palestinian *amora*, while *rav* refers to a Babylonian *amora*. The rabbi of the Talmud was therefore completely different from the present-day holder of the title. The talmudic rabbi was an interpreter and expounder of the Bible and the Oral Law, and almost invariably had an occupation whence he derived his livelihood. It was only in the Middle Ages that the rabbi became—in addition to, or instead of, the interpreter and decisor of the law—the teacher, preacher, and spiritual head of the Jewish congregation or community, and it is with this meaning of the word that this article deals. For the talmudic rabbi see Sages. In modern usage the word "rabbi" in Hebrew has sometimes become the equivalent of "mister." Thus every Jew called up to the reading of the Torah is invited to do so as "Rabbi So-and-So the son of Rabbi So-and-So," and for the rabbi as spiritual head the title *harav* is employed. *Encyclopedia Judaica Cd ROM*

The Torah relates that Moshe ordained Yehoshua by placing his hands on him, thereby transferring a portion of his spirit to Yehoshua (*Num. 27:22, 23; Deut. 34:9*). Moshe also ordained the 70 elders who assisted him in governing the people (*Num. 11:16–17, 24–25*). The elders ordained by Moshe ordained their successors, who in turn ordained others, so that there existed an unbroken chain of ordination from Moshe down to the time of the Second Temple (*Maim. Yad, Sanh. 4:2*). For many centuries the tradition of ordaining by the laying of the hands was continued, but the rabbis later decided to ordain by merely conferring the title either orally or in writing. Ordination was required both for membership in the Great Sanhedrin, and the smaller Sanhedrins and regular colleges of judges empowered to decide Torah legal cases. During the time of Judah ha-Nasi it was decreed that any religio-legal decision, including decisions relating to purely ceremonial law, could only be given by those properly authorized (*Sanh. 5b*). While any qualified Jewish person could serve as a judge in civil cases, only Jews of pure descent were eligible to adjudicate in criminal matters involving capital punishment (*Sanh. 4:2*). Ordination was also required to judge in cases involving corporal punishment and fines, to intercalate months and years, to release the firstborn animals for profane use by reason of disqualifying blemishes, to annul vows, and to pass the ban of excommunication (*herem*).

Only a transfer of the *Ruach Hakodesh* which originally rested on Moshe empowered the ordained person to make decisions in these crucial areas. Ordination could be limited to only one or some of these various functions.

The lowest degree of ordination entitled the rabbi to decide only religious questions, while the highest degree entitled him to inspect firstlings, in addition to deciding religious questions and judging criminal cases (*Sanh. 5a; Maim. loc. cit. 4:8*). The complete formula of ordination was "*Yoreh Yoreh Yaddin Yaddin. Yattir Yattir*" ("May he decide? He may decide. May he judge? He may judge. May he permit? He may permit").

The ordination itself, which required the presence of three elders, one of whom was himself ordained, was originally performed by every ordained teacher upon his pupils (*Sanh. 1:3; TJ, Sanh. 1:3, 19a*).

Nevertheless, as the influence of the Babylonian exilarch increased, it became necessary for the ordinants to obtain his authorization before serving as judges in Babylonia (*Sanh. 5a*). In Erez Israel it also became necessary for individual scholars to obtain the consent of the patriarch before ordaining their pupils.

On account of the high regard entertained for the patriarchs of the House of Rabbi Hillel, who were the recognized heads of the Jewish community of the Holy Land during the centuries subsequent to the demise of Rabban Johanan b. Zakkai, no ordination was considered valid without the patriarch's consent. The patriarch himself was at first permitted to confer it without consulting the Sanhedrin. Later the patriarch could only grant the degree in cooperation with the court (*TJ, Sanh. 1:3, 19a*). The term used in the Holy Land in the days of the *Jerusalem Talmud* for ordination was *minnui* (literally "appointment" to the office of judge). In Babylonia the designation of *semikhah* (*semikhuta* in Aramaic) was retained. On the day of ordination, the candidate wore a special garment (*Lev. R. 2:4*). After the ceremony, it seems that the ordinand delivered a public discourse on a specific topic. *Semikhah* could only be granted by scholars residing in Erez Israel to scholars present in the Holy Land at the time of their ordination. The ordinand did not have to be present at the ordination; it sufficed if the ordaining teachers sent a message to him, as long as they all were in Erez Israel (*Maim. Yad, Sanh. 4:6*). It is related that Johanan was grieved because he could not ordain Hanina and Oshaya since they did not reside in Palestine (*Sanh. 14a*). Nevertheless, to expedite justice, the Babylonian scholars were empowered to adjudicate all monetary cases as the "agents of the judges in Israel" (*BK 84b*). Once ordained in Palestine, a scholar could exercise his full authority even outside its borders.

• "And after Rebbe Yahshua Hamoshiach had gone into the *Beit HaMikdash*, while He was bringing forth His Torah, the *Rashei HaKohanim* and the *Zekenim* of the people approached Him, saying; ' By what *samchut* (authority) do you grant these things? And who granted you this *samchut*?' " **Matt.21:23**

After the *Bar Kokhba Revolt* (132–35 C.E.), the Roman Emperor Hadrian attempted to end the spiritual authority still wielded by the Sanhedrin, which had been shorn of all government support, by forbidding the granting of *s'mikhah* to new scholars. It was declared that "whoever performed an ordination should be put to death, and whoever received ordination should be put to death, the city in which the ordination took place demolished, and the boundaries wherein it had been performed uprooted" (*Sanh. 14a*). R. Judah b. Bava was executed for ordaining several of his pupils in a no-man's-land between Usha and Shefaram. It is not clear when the original *s'mikhah* with the powers described above was discontinued. Majority opinion favors the latter part of the Fourth Century CE during the time of Hillel II. According to Nahmanides this happened before the fixing of the permanent calendar by Hillel in 361 C.E. Some date it with the extinction of the patriarchate at the death of the last patriarch, Gamaliel VI, in 425 C.E. Others set the time as late as 1062 CE with the death of Daniel b. Azariah, the *Gaon* of Palestine. Still others cite proof that this traditional ordination continued until the time of Maimonides.

The Shepherd's Role

The Teacher's role is to "tend the flock" or "feed the sheep". The Hebrew word is *ra'ah*. A shepherd is called a "*ro'eh*" of the people. Yirmeyahu uses this term for the leaders of the nation of Yisrael who supposed to call the nation back to Yahweh:

- "Then I will give you shepherds (*ro'im*) after My own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding." **Jer.3:15**

- "The lips of a good man teach (*ra'ah*) many." **Prov.10:21**

This term "teach" suggest to the Yisraelite mind the edification, protection, and personal guidance that the teacher/shepherd must have for his flock. They also must provide good food and nourishment for the sheep to grow healthy and strong. Teaching and nourishment go hand and hand.

- "But Yahshua answered him saying, 'It has been written, Man shall not live and be sustained by bread alone, but by every word and expression of Elohim.'" **Luke 4:4 quoting Deut.8:3**

- "My food [nourishment] is to DO the desire of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish and completely finish His work." **Yochanan 4:34**

- He (Yahshua) said to him (Kepha), 'FEED MY LAMBS...He said to him, SHEPHERD MY SHEEP..He said to him, FEED MY SHEEP'. **Yochanan 21:15-17**

In the *Brit Chadasha* a "pastor" is a shepherd (*poimen*) and actually combines the roles of pastor/teacher. He is not to be a standup-comedian who tickles the ears of his listener with jokes, anecdotes, and golf stories.

- "For there shall be a time when they shall not bear, tolerate, or endure sound and wholesome teaching, but according to their own desires, they shall heap up for themselves one teacher after another to a considerable number tickling the ear [chosen to satisfy their own liking and to foster the errors they hold], and they shall indeed turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside [wander off] into myths and man-made fictions." **2 Tim. 4:3-4**

High-quality teaching should provide nourishment, solid meat, and substance to the listeners. Like the manna that fed the Yisraelites in the wilderness, so the teachings of the rabbi should provide all the essential daily vitamins and minerals that the student needs. Teacher/shepherds must spend time feeding and sustaining the student.

- "And He Himself gave some as emissaries (*shlukim*), and some as prophets (*nevi'im*), and some as evangelists, and some as shepherds (*roim*) and teachers (*morim*) for the perfecting of the setapart ones, to the work of service to a building up of the body of the Messiah." **Eph.4:11-12**

Hebrew Words for Learning

Another Hebrew word is “*bin*”, and comes from a Semitic root meaning “to discern, distinguish, to separate.” The Hebrew preposition “*ben*” meaning “between” is related to this word. The word “*bin*” is usually translated “to understand, distinguish, and discern”. It also is rendered as “to teach or instruct” in several passages.

- “And they cast lots for their duty, the small as the great, the teacher (*mebim*) with the student” **1 Chron.(1 Dibre haYamim) 25:8**

The word in Hebrew has the connotations of pulling an argument or idea apart. It carries the image of the ability to think critically by explaining something in great detail. In **Dani’el 8:16** the word “*bin*” means explain:

- ‘And I heard a man’s voice between the banks of Ulai, who called, and said, ”Gabri’el make this man understand (explain) the vision.”

A teacher has the ability to explain the issues and to solve the problem. In Yisrael, one of the duties of the teacher was to bring understanding, as well as knowledge to his students. He taught them to evaluate arguments and to sort out the actual question. The student’s ability was expressed by answering the question with wisdom rather than to understand problems. The truth is that the valid test of the student is to ask the right questions. Perhaps tests should be given supplying the answers and letting the student supply the question (like the TV game-show Jeopardy). This is the Hebraic method of answering a question with a question.

- And Yahshua answering, said to them, “I shall ask you one question, and answer Me, and I shall say to you by what authority I do these:” **Mark 11:29**

There is a very graphic word in Hebrew called “*shanan*” which means “to sharpen”.

The Hebrew word for tooth “*shen*” comes from this root word. *Shanan* is used for swords and arrows in **Deut.32:41** and **Isa.5:28**. In **Tehillim (Psalm) 73:21** it means “..And I was pierced in my kidneys.” True Torah teaching will pierce the heart and assist to engrave the words of Yahweh upon the tablets of the heart. We also recite this everyday in the *Sh’ma*:

- “And you shall impress (*shanan*) them upon your children..” **Deut. 6:7** We are to impress, pierce, teach diligently the Torah to our children.

The Word of Yahweh is to be an instrument by which the teacher can pierce or impress its principles upon his pupils as he drives home his points. These points are to be engraved upon the mind and heart of the student. Only Hebraic teaching methods can make that kind of impression upon the student’s mind.

- “For the Word of Elohim is living [*chai*], and working-full of power, active, energizing and effective [*chazak*], and sharper than any two-edged sword [*cherev*], cutting through even to the dividing of being [*nefesh*] and spirit [*ruach*], and of joints and marrow [deepest part of our nature], and able to judge, expose, sift, and analyze the thoughts and intentions of the heart [*kavanat halev*].” **Hebrews (Ivrim) 4:12**

The last Hebrew word we will look at is *lamad*. In 50 passages in the *TaNak* it is translated “to teach”. But the verb can also be rendered “to learn.” It means to “get accustomed to, exercise in, or train”.

The Hebrew *lamed-mem-dalet* 727 is an acronym for “a heart that understands wisdom –*lev meviyn da’at*. *Lamad* seems to have the meaning of “to practice or discipline”. Thus the student of the rabbi knows that in order to learn the lessons the teacher is trying to convey to him, he must become disciplined in his studies of the Torah and teachings.

The Hebrew letter *lamed* 7 looks like an ox goad that is used for urging and prodding the ox to move along. The Hebrew word *malmad* “ox goad” literally means “the thing that teaches”. Yisrael is called a “trained” people in **Hos.10:11**:

- “And Ephrayim is a trained (*melummadah*) heifer, loving to thresh grain..”

During the Second Temple period the Hebrew word “*talmid*” was used for scholar in the sense that the scholar was always a student, pupil, or disciple. A teacher of the Torah was known as a “*talmid*” and his students were called “*talmidim*.” They sat at the feet of their rabbi and learned the Torah from him. He was to disciple them in the Torah and its instructions. This is why the Oral law in Judaism is called the “*Talmud*” - meaning literally “learning or study.”

Everyone is to be a student of the Scriptures. The *Mishnah* asks, “Who is wise? He who learns from all men.” (**Avot 4:1**).

- “Let your house be a meeting-place for the sages, and sit in the very dust of their feet, and thirstily drink in their words.” (**Avot 1:4**)
- “If you have learned much, do not think highly of yourself for it, since for this you were created.” (**Avot 2:8**)

Among the *Hasidim* in America the boys begin their Hebrew learning at the age of three. At the age of four they begin to study the Torah. For six days a week the child awakes at 3 A.M. to go to the *mikveh*, and are in school from 6 A.M. until sundown.

After supper they return to the synagogue for their nightly studies. On the *Shabbat*, they are in the *shul* all day! This shows a great commitment to learning that Ephrayim is lacking. We as Messianic Yisrael need to rethink our attitudes towards learning and study.

Becoming a True Talmid of the Master

The Great Commission of our Master Yahshua HaMoshiach makes it a command of every *talmidim* to be a teacher of the Torah and His teachings as the Master:

- “Therefore go and make taught ones (*talmidim*) of all the nations, immersing (*tevilah* in a *mikveh*) them into the reality of the Name of the Father (*HaAv*) and of the Son (*HaBen*) and of the Set-Apart Spirit (*HaRuach HaKodesh*), TEACHING them to guard all that I have commanded you..” **Matt.28:19-20a**

This commission gives each of us a responsibility and method for making other disciples of our Master Yahshua. The term “to make disciples or taught ones” in the Greek (*matheteusate*) is grammatically an imperative stressing an obligation to perform a certain task. The noun “*mathetes*” or taught one is used nearly 250 times in the *Brit Chadasha*.

• **dis•ci•ple noun**

1 : one who accepts and assists in spreading the doctrines of another: as

A: one of the twelve in the inner circle of Messiah’s followers according to the Gospel accounts

B: a convinced adherent of a school or individual

⁸ This is not a “baptismal formula” as taught by many. The Greek reads immersing into the Name” NOT “IN” the Name. The Greek word “*onoma*” does not describe a literal act. The Hebrew is “*La’Shem*” meaning “for, for the sake of, with reference to”.

Unfortunately, the English loses the richness of the Hebraic term “*talmid*”. The Hebrew word represents the interpersonal relationship between a rabbi and his students. The disciple gave himself totally over to his teacher (not in a mind control way as the cults but as in a student–teacher relationship).

At the core of this relationship was the trust in every area of life, and the goal of the relationship was to shape the *talmid* into the image of his Rebbe in knowledge, wisdom, and moral behavior. They received their authority from their teacher to spread his doctrines and teachings to others. That is what is meant by the “Hebraism” of “In My Name”. It is not a catchy little sign off in prayer, but means that what is said or done is done with all the authority of the teacher himself, as if he was there in person himself. (See my audio teaching “In My Name” and “Yahshua’s Halakah”)

• “Until now you have asked nothing in My Name. Ask, and you shall receive, in order that your joy might be complete.” **Yochanan 16:24**

• “And having brought them, they set them before the council (*Sanhedrin*) and the High Priest (*Kohen HaGadol*) questioned them saying, ‘Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this Name (say *shiuirim b’shem hazeh*)? And look, you have filled Yerushalayim with your teaching (*torah*), and intend to bring the blood of this Man upon us!” **Acts 5:27-28**

The making of taught ones should result in making other teachers.

• “And what you have heard from me among many witnesses, entrust these to trustworthy men who shall be competent to teach others as well.” **2 Timothy 2:2**

Timothy had been instructed in the Torah as a young man (**2 Tim 3:15**) from other family members such as his grandmother and mother (**2 Tim.1:5**).

Our Challenge

We as Messianic Yisrael have been too passive in our manner and methods of teaching the Torah to Yisrael. Each of us must renew our commitment by our actions not just our words to personally know Yahweh, the Elohim of all Yisrael. It is one thing to proclaim that you are Yisrael; it is a completely different thing to LIVE as Yisrael. Until we are willing to embrace the study and practice of the Torah with all our hearts, as Yisrael, we will never see the learning of the Scripture as an obligation given to us from the Master Teacher. We are commanded to study the Scriptures not just read them. Reading is not studying!

• “**Study** [#4704-*spoudazo*, to use speed, to make effort, to be prompt and earnest, to be diligent, to labor] and be eager and do your utmost to present yourself to Elohim approved [tested by trial], workman who has no cause to be ashamed, correctly analyzing and accurately dividing-rightly

handling and skillfully teaching-the Word of Truth.” **2 Tim.2:15**

Exploring the Scriptures is to be a challenge and requires us to contemplate, meditate, and practice its truths. Each end becomes a new beginning and each answer a new question. As long as Ephrayim is satisfied with the intellectual facts of their “Hebrew Roots”, they will never begin to actually DO the Torah and guard its commands. They will continue to sit and “learn” for years but never taste of the richness of the Torah. Torah study per se is insufficient unless it is transformed into action and obedience. Study is not the goal, rather the deeds. If one’s deeds exceed his knowledge then his knowledge will endure. But if one’s knowledge exceeds his deeds, then his knowledge will not endure. As we lay tefillin every morning we recite:

- “And I shall TAKE you as a bride unto Me forever, and TAKE you as a bride unto Me in RIGHTEOUSNESS, and in right- ruling, and kindness and compassion. And I will take you as a bride unto Me in trustworthiness [faithfulness], and you shall KNOW Yahweh.” **Hoshea 2:19-20**
- “Little children, let no one lead you astray. The one DOING [practicing] righteousness (*tzedek*) is righteous (*tzodek*), even as He is righteous (*Tzaddik*).” **1 Yochanan 3:7**

The time is NOW for Ephrayim to take hold of the Hebraic concept of education and once again become a set-apart people to Yahweh.

May Yahweh blessed be He, bless your studies of the Scriptures and the words of our Master Yahshua HaMoshiach.

Beginner's Torah Lesson #12

Hebraic Teaching Methods

By Rabbi Edward Levi Nydle (Levi bar Ido) –B'nai Avraham

This is the final installment in the teaching series of “Beginner Torah Lessons”. The student after reading the first eleven articles should have become familiar with Hebraic thought and the various methods of Torah interpretation. In this concluding session, you as a student and future teacher, will learn more Hebraic teaching methods that you may incorporate into your lessons for your students.

Oral Teaching

The first copy of the “Bible” was in 1453 by Guttenberg. Before that time Torah scrolls were laboriously copied letter by letter by hand by a scribe. It took just about one year to complete a scroll of the Torah. And during the time of the Second Temple they were not widely available to the average Yisraelite. Scrolls could only be found in the synagogues and houses of study. This is why the Torah teaches us to:

- “Tell your son...” **Shemot 13:8**
- “Talk about them when you sit in your home.” **Devarim 6:7**

The Scripture lessons were exclusively learned by the students by constant repetition. The Hebrew word *Mishnah*² means “repetition or review”. The *Talmud*³ talks about the importance of repeating the lesson learned from your teacher or rabbi.

- “He who studies the Torah and does not review is like the one who plants and does not harvest.” **Talmud, Sanhedrin 99a.**
- “I planted, Apollos watered, but Elohim was giving growth.” **1 Cor. 3:6**
- “He who repeated his chapter a hundred times is not to be compared with him who repeated it a hundred and one times.” **Talmud, Hagigah 9b**

What Ephraim has not understood is that the people of the Middle East have always relied upon Oral Tradition or spoken lessons to teach Scriptural truths. As a result, they have rejected the oral teachings and traditions that help us do the *mitzvot*. Thus they have rejected the Hebraic thought pattern of teaching students and of obtaining a Torah education. The *TaNakh*⁴ itself is the collection of early Hebraic sources that were meant to be spoken and read aloud to others by repetition. In the time of Yahshua, the teacher was expected to listen as the students constantly repeated the lesson back to him word for word. One of the most prized possessions of a scholar was a well trained and retentive memory. After the lesson or saying was learned by sitting at the feet of their master, the student then could teach it to others “in the name of” the teacher.

The written accounts in the Messianic Scriptures about our Master Rebbe Yahshua HaMoshiach are good examples of Oral Traditions that at a much later date were written down for others to read and learn. A number of years passed, possibly up to twenty years according to some scholars, between the resurrection and the actual writing of the first account of Yahshua's life and ministry.

Before the first account was written, the early *talmidim*s of Yahshua kept His teachings alive by means of the Hebraic education method of repetition by Oral Tradition. The early *talmidim* had keenly trained memories that were prompted by the *Ruach HaKodesh* to tell others about their Master and His sayings. The late scholar William Foxwell Albright argued that the reliability and trustworthiness of the accounts in the Good News were due to the trained memory techniques of the Yehudim students of the Master. He summarized his research with, "Writing was used in antiquity largely as an aid or guide to memory, not a substitute for it."⁶

1 The first 5 books of Moses

2 Part of the Oral Law

3 the teachings of the sages and rabbis about the mitzvot

4 Torah Nevi'im Ketuvim

5 disciples

6 William F. Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity?*, 2nd Ed.p.64

The Hebrew people used many aids to help develop their memories. Almost one third of the TaNaK is poetry. Biblical poetry uses what is called parallelism, balance of thought, and figures of speech which made the memorization easier for the Yisraelite. Teachings were tightly and tersely worded. Another aid to memory was the Alef-bet acrostic, such as Tehillim (Psalms) 119, Echa (Lamentations) and Mishle (Proverbs) 31. Other teachings were sung as songs so the singer would memorize the teachings. Examples are Shemot (Ex.) 15 and Judges (Shoftim) 5. These songs were set to music and dances to aid the memory. Repetition, alliteration, tautology, onomatopoeia, and word plays were widely used teaching techniques.

The rabbis insisted that the student have a scheduled time of study. This was considered a great mitzvah. Oral Tradition teaches one of the first questions you will be asked at the judgment is, "Did you fix times for learning?"⁷ Set times of study were important especially during the Talmudic period.

- Rabbi Hiyya did not eat breakfast until he reviewed the previous days lesson with the child and added another verse. **Talmud, Kiddushin 30a**

The local assembly or synagogue became the center for study and prayer. It was the study hall where all members of the community gathered to engage in the study of the Torah and Talmud. Another name for the synagogue was "House of Study".

However, during the second Temple period there were times of spontaneous teaching. Yahshua was an itinerant rabbi. At the time of the Exodus, Moshe taught the Yisraelites to use the question-answer method of learning:

- "In the days to come, when your son asks you, 'What does this mean?' say to him.." **Shemot 13:14**

The father, as the spiritual head of the home, was expected to always be ready to give a *Haggadah* (telling, narration) about the Exodus from *Mitzrayim*. This method is still used today at *Pesach* in the Passover *Seder*. In the *Brit Chadasha* this method is also used by Philip to answer the questions of the man from Kesh who was a Yehudim:

- "And the eunuch answering Philip, said, 'I ask you, about whom does the prophet say this, about himself or about some other?'" **Acts 8:34**

The fact that most Orthodox Jews send their children to a private school to learn helps to prevent assimilation. A solid Torah education is imperative for a mature Believer. There is no short cut to a well grounded Torah education. It takes years of commitment. So many want to be teachers and leaders of others before they receive an education at the feet of another teacher or rabbi. Learning requires commitment and time!

• “His delight is in the Torah of Yahweh, and on His Torah he meditates day AND night.” **Tehillim 1:2**
The Talmud says:

• “The words of Torah are firmly held only by one who kills himself for it.” Talmud , **Berakhot 63b**

Study brings self-respect. It is the honorable pursuit of *chokmah* (Wisdom) that has kept the Jewish people throughout the centuries of persecution.

• “In almost every Jewish home in Eastern Europe, even in the humblest and poorest, stood a bookcase full of volumes... They possessed whole treasures of thought, a wealth of information, of ideas and sayings of many ages. When a problem came up, there was immediately a host of people, pouring out opinions, arguments, quotations... The stomachs were empty, the homes barren, but the minds were crammed with the riches of Torah.”⁸

⁷ Talmud, Shabbat 31a

⁸ Avraham J. Heschel, *The Earth is the Lord's*, pp.42-44

Visual aids and symbols were employed as aids for the memory. Covenants were visual aids to the memory. Blood was usually shed in the sealing of the *brit*. Blood was the object lesson. It was a bonding by blood. It impressed the mind of the Yisraelite to remind him that a covenant was serious business and could not be broken. Even the grasping of the genitals was a visual token of a covenant bond (**Bereshith 24:2, 9**):

• And Avraham said to the oldest servant of his house, who ruled over all that he had, ‘Please, put your hand under my thigh.’ **Bereshith 24:2**

• “Then the servant put his hand under the thigh of Avraham his master, and swore to him concerning this matter.” **Bereshith 24:9**

This was the foundation (*YESOD*) of reproductive power and continuation of seed, therefore to touch it or hold onto it in making a *brit* would convey to the parties involved that failure to carry out the terms of this covenant would result in the sterility or the destruction of his seed after him. This is the root of the English word “testify”. A witness would take the oath by clutching his reproductive organs⁹. This signified the seriousness of the oath. Not only was your reputation at the stake but also the lives of your children and children’s children.

The Passover Seder is another example of visual learning aids. The Seder contains many symbols that stir the memory of the participants in understanding the meaning of the Exodus and Liberation from *Mitzrayim*. Those who reject the *Seder* as “rabbinical” are missing one of the greatest learning experiences of the Festival Year. Piles of stones as a witness could also provoke future generations to remember different events of their ancestors (Yehoshua 4:20-23). Our Master Yahshua used symbols and visual aids in his teachings. He used a coin, rocks, seeds, pearls, and other visual aids to teach His lessons to His *talmidim*.

The Brit Chadasha refers to the TaNaK as “Sacred Writings” or the “Set Apart Scriptures”.¹⁰ They were sacred and worthy of respect as they contained the very words of Elohim spoken by the prophets. The TaNaK was the WORD of Yahweh. The ark or *Haaron HaKodesh* was holy because it contained the tablets that Elohim gave to Moshe. In our synagogue today, we have an ark that contains the Torah Scroll. When the ark is opened the people stand in reverence. This is in accordance with Scripture:

• “And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people. And when he opened it, the people stood up.” **Nehemyah 8:5**

The Torah is then taken in a procession throughout the assembly, and it is the custom for the congregation to touch the Torah with their Tzitzit, Scriptures, or Siddur. The Tzitzit or sefer is then kissed in a gesture of honor and respect for the Torah. The Torah is dressed like the Kohen HaGadol with a mantle, breastplate, girdle, and a crown. When a scroll becomes old or the scribe is unable to repair it properly, it is given a burial, just like a person. The Scriptures are not just a “book”. We as Yisrael must learn the lesson of its sacredness and reverence the Word. One way to begin is to have the congregation stand when the Torah is being read. Study is the ultimate act of worship (*avodah*). The word in Hebrew means work and worship. Study as well as prayer is called by the name of the service of the altar by the Levites (*Avodah*). For this reason the synonym for education is “heavenly work”.

Rav Shaul, from the Tribe of Binyamin, a *P'rushim*, never separated secular and sacred. He taught that all life is in the arena of service to Elohim. Every detail of our life must be set apart to Yahweh. Every area of our lives must reflect the

Master and His Kingship over our hearts and minds. Study too must be elevated into a spiritual experience.

- “Whatever you do, do it all for the esteem of Elohim.” **1 Cor.10:31**

The Hasidim have taught that a person worships and serves the Creator not simply from the depths of his soul but with his body and mind as well. A person is to worship Elohim with his whole being.

- “I have set YHWH always before me.” **Tehillim 16:8a**
- “In all your ways acknowledge Him.” **Mishle 3:6**

9 Daniel Polish, Witnessing G-d after Auschwitz, N.Y. Paulist Press, p.134
10 2 Tim.3:15

- “Genuine reverence for the sanctity of study is bound to invoke in the pupils the awareness that study is not an ordeal but an act of edification; that the school is a sanctuary, not a factory; that study is a form of worship.” **Avraham J.Heschel, Insecurity of Freedom, page 42**

Today many Believers have excuses as to why they do not study the Scriptures. Anyone making any excuses has yet to understand and take seriously the heritage of Hebraic learning and education that has been bequeathed to us from our *Avot* (fathers). By a complete return to the heritage of the Torah the next generation of Yisraelites will be sustained.

- “As the fishes of the sea immediately perish when they come out of the water, so do men perish when they separate themselves from the words of Torah.” **Talmud, Avodah Zarah 3b**

Education and Torah study are not preparation for life, it is life! Learning is life and life is for learning. We have two choices: study the Torah in the Hebraic manner and embark on the adventure of living or remain ignorant of the Scriptures and fall prey to the deceptions of religion and lose our identity as Yisrael.

- “Hold on to instruction, do not let go, guard it well, for it is your life.” **Mishle 4:13**

Please study all twelve lessons and review them every so often to refresh your mind to Hebraic thought.

**May Yahweh
bless your studies.**

Rabbi Edward Levi Nydle –Levi bar Ido / B'nai Avraham