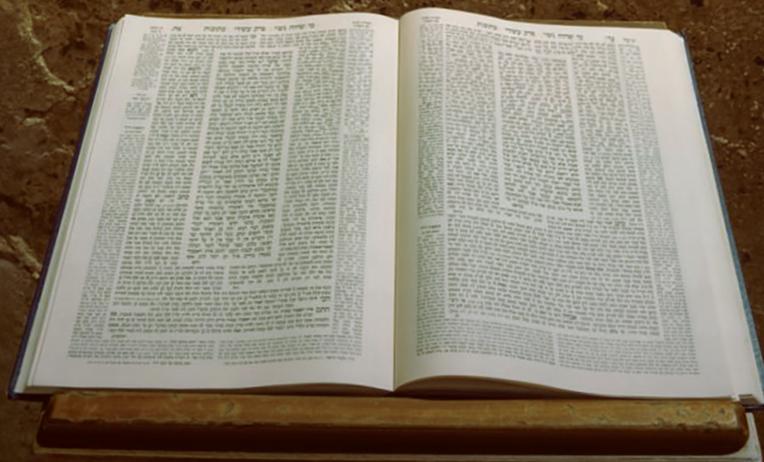


Teaching *from* Zion

"...for out of Zion shall come forth Torah
and the word of the Lord from
Jerusalem." – Isaiah 2:3

YESHUA in the TALMUD



*"For many falsely testified against Him,
but the testimonies were not identical." Mark 14:56*



Netivyah נתיביה
Teaching from Zion

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Feel free to contact us at tfz@netivyah.org or by mail at
Mordechai Narkis St. 16, Jerusalem 9246208, ISRAEL
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About Netivyah

Netivyah in Hebrew means "the Way of the Lord." "The Way" was one of the names by which the early community of believers was known in the Brit Chadashah (New Testament). Paul says, "I worship the God of our fathers in accordance with the Way (which they call a sect). I continue to believe everything that accords with the Torah and everything written in the Prophets." (Acts 24:14 CJB). As followers of "the Way," we believe in the God of Israel, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We try to be faithful to God's law (the Torah) and to the rest of Scripture—the Prophets and the Writings. We believe that the Messiah promised in God's word is Yeshua (Jesus), the one who "saves His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

More Information: www.netivyah.org

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News from Netivyah

Indeed, 2023 went out with a bang, and we pray that 2024 will be a more peaceful year. We pray for a peace that surpasses all understanding and that the Lord will move mightily in Israel, strengthening the unity among God's people (Jews and Christians) that the tragic events of October 7th caused. Furthermore, we pray for unity among the religious and secular, among the political left and right, among sects within Judaism, and among the different ethnicities of Jews. We also pray for those outside of Israel who stand for life, love, freedom, democracy, and Judeo-Christian values and stand against the forces of darkness.

Since October 7th, Netivyah has fully mobilized to give aid, support, and comfort to the IDF, to the needy of Israel, and to promote Israel among the nations! We have provided over 100 Kevlar vests, 400 helmets, 1500 tactical clothes sets, 500 winter jackets, 400 mobile battery chargers, 50 kneepads, 500 Leatherman toolkits, 30 drones, 10 go-pro cameras, 30 shipping containers, 200 personal medical kits, 50 gun-lights, 50 gun handles, 50 holsters, 100 tactical gloves, 300 camelbacks, dozens of coffee kits, a dozen snowsuits, thousands of lighters, thousands of batteries, hundreds of nail clippers, dozens of hair clippers, a few TVs, a dozen radiators and hot water coolers, hundreds of thousands of shekels of top secret gear to specific units, and so much more. WE EVEN BUILT A FORT!

Half of our staff has been called up for reserve duty and has been out of the office and at the front since October. Please continue to pray that the Lord's angels protect them!

We have done our best to share accurate, relevant content about the situation, some news, some encouragement, some teachings, and anything we can do to help! Those are available on our YouTube channel.

Throughout this terrible time, we continue to do what we can to provide comfort and hope to those on the home front as well. Our food distribution center continues to operate each and every week, providing much-needed relief to struggling families.

We had the tragic privilege of providing critical financial aid to a family whose father and husband was at the Nova dance party at Reim and has since been missing.

During Hanukkah, we hosted a festive meal for Holocaust survivors and additionally participated in another event to bring cheer and emotional support to survivors of the Nazi atrocities of the 1940s.

Please pray for continued guidance and wisdom for the military and political leaders of Israel and the West and for comfort for the families of the fallen, wounded, and captives. Most of all, pray for protection for our brave soldiers, that this event may bring them and all of Israel closer to the Messiah Yeshua!

Daniel Stern & the Netivyah Staff

AN UNWANTED MESSIAH

By Moshe DaCosta

The first thing we should notice about Jewish Rabbis who are serious students of the Bible is that they take the word of God very seriously: they believe in the inerrancy of the Bible, and they actually have faith in what they do as the correct way to serve the Almighty. But then the natural question that comes to mind when we meditate on the subject of Messiah is, “Why can’t Jewish scholars believe that Yeshua is the promised messiah? Why do they have such limitations to see all the signs and the influence that His Presence has had on the whole world?” The Jews are not called the People of the Book without reason.

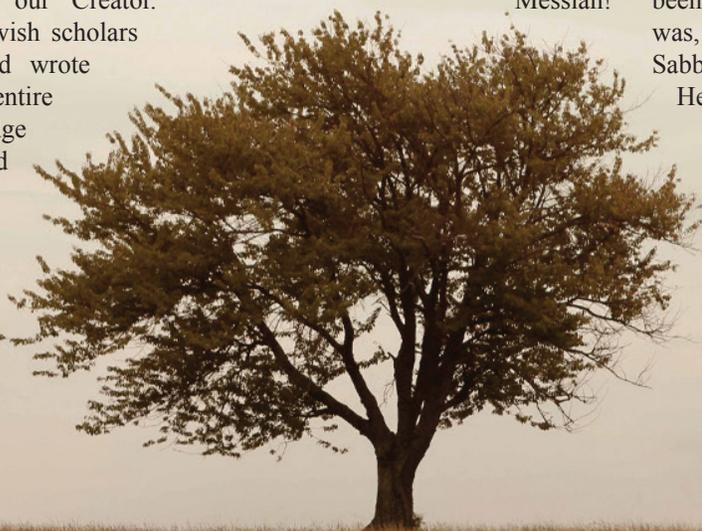
Throughout the centuries, men devoted themselves to serving and understanding His deity, His instructions, and our responsibilities towards our Creator. Entire generations of Jewish scholars memorized, studied, and wrote their interpretations in an entire library of Jewish knowledge on our culture, values, and traditions.

So why? What are the reasons they can’t believe in what we, lesser men and women, so easily understand?

In this issue of Teaching From Zion, we’re discussing Yeshua in the Talmud, a subject that is crucial to understanding the opposition and rejection from Jewish orthodoxy to the Good News about the Messiah, Yeshua. Without understanding the mind and the reasoning of the sages of Israel, one cannot clearly visualize the full picture and delineate the correct apologetics to approach and testify to our Faith. And that should be our main goal, isn’t it, to fulfill the Great Commission, given directly by our Rabbi? As Yeshua said, “Go and make disciples!” And I truly believe that He called the people of Israel to be His main disciples. We have not yet seen what Israel will be able to do when filled with power from the Spirit. That’s my prayer—that we’ll be able to see erudite Jewish men understanding and sharing the news about their Messiah!

However, that’s not the case yet. The rejection of the Gospel by Jewish rabbis is an underlying part of rabbinical Judaism. And the reason for this hostility towards Yeshua from Natzeret is always the same. It’s never different. In two thousand years of Jewish history, rabbinical Judaism always rejects Yeshua for the same reason, and my objective with this article is to give you the tools to understand and prepare yourselves to pray and testify to orthodox Jews, who have been indoctrinated by their traditions to automatically reject any mention or suggestion that Jesus Christ, “the God of the Gentiles”, could be the expected Messiah of Israel. But to understand that, let’s first hear Yeshua’s words, as described in Luke:

So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind,



The rejection of the Gospel by Jewish rabbis is an underlying part of rabbinical Judaism. And the reason for this hostility towards Yeshua from Natzeret is always the same. It's never different.

to set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." Luke 4:16-21

Imagine that you're there, in that synagogue, listening to what has just been said. Until not long ago, secular agnostic Jews didn't exist, so imagine that you're one of those religious Jews who saw a man standing in front of the whole kehila and telling them that he

was the fulfillment of the prophecies mentioned in the Law, and described in the Haftarah, and taught and discussed in an incalculable number of study sessions since the moment you learned to read the Scriptures. Now you're starting to understand what those people felt that particular morning. And yet, without any previous announcement, the Messiah, the Son of David, appeared right in front of them, reading from their own Haftarah scroll, teaching them about the exact subject they studied thousands of times before!

They had obviously heard about Yeshua's reputation as a Torah scholar and rabbi, and exactly because of that, they invited Him to preach that morning. We learn that "news on Him went out" to the villages and cities in the Galilee during His first year of ministry, and there were probably several communities interested in His teachings, and in every one of them He would recognize relatives, friends, and even family customers. Familiar faces were everywhere. But this morning changed everything since He took upon Himself a role that was not expected from one of them. To be a scholar among Jewish people is a motive for praise. To be a rabbi is a respected position, but to be the long-awaited Savior, Redeemer of Israel, and Anointed of the Almighty God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that's purely unthinkable.

And that's why, when we look for references about Yeshua in Jewish literature, we find few but incisive rejections of His Messianic claims. Talmudic probable references to Jesus address Him as a heretic sorcerer who brought spells from Egypt, a bastard son of an unfaithful mother, a person whose teachings could not be taken seriously (Shabbat 104b). It's interesting to me that this reference comes from a point in this tractate when those sages were discussing the Halakha of writing as a

cause for Shabbat desecration. As a scribe myself, I understand the importance and holiness of Jewish writing and its connection to a pious life, and pursuing the sanctity of the Shabbat was always paramount to pharisaic (and later rabbinical) Judaism. And that is how the rabbis saw His person, as a traitor who started as a famous scholar but deviated to be a mekhallel (a blasphemer) of the Shabbat.

In Sanhedrin 43a, we follow the rabbinical interpretations on blasphemers' punishment by lapidation (stoning someone to death), how the process should be judged and supervised, and how the defendant could be acquitted of his sentence. The Gemara said that in the case of Yeshua the Nazarene, it was "more difficult" to pass the sentence since Yeshua apparently had strong ties with the Romans, and the government had intent on His acquittal. The text describes the process: "Ulla said, And how can you understand this proof? Was Jesus the Nazarene worthy of conducting a search for a reason to acquit him? He was an inciter to idol worship, and the Merciful One states with regard to an inciter to idol worship: "Neither shall you spare, neither shall you conceal him" (Deuteronomy 13:9). Rather, Jesus was different, as he had close ties with the government, and the gentile authorities were interested in his acquittal. Consequently, the court gave him every opportunity to clear himself, so that it could not be claimed that he was falsely convicted." Here we can see how Jewish sages avoided the guilt of condemning a tsadik (just man) by questionable ways. First, they accused Him of idolatry and of being a false teacher. Then they defined him as a blasphemer, and God Himself obligated the Pharisees to expose the sins of such a man. Next, they tied Yeshua's actions to the Roman oppressor, the hated and idolatrous invader, and without anyone

To be a scholar among Jewish people is a motive for praise. To be a rabbi is a respected position, but to be the long-awaited Savior, Redeemer of Israel, and Anointed of the Almighty God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that's purely unthinkable.

capable of defending the case, it was their responsibility to “stone” the blasphemer and hang the dead body outside of the city walls. They literally changed everything that actually happened, as

we can read the narrative in the Gospels through eyewitness testimonies of the facts.

Another example of how Jesus is seen by the orthodox can be found elsewhere in Jewish legislation. The Tractate of Sotah mainly addresses the laws concerning married women, and when exploring the challenges involved in judging daughters of Israel for harlotry and impure behaviors, several men are mentioned. Again, the sages discussed the attitude of one of the Pharisees towards Jesus the Nazarene, including him among the bastard sons of Israel, and how devout Jews should rebuke them (Sotah 47a). Yehoshua ben Perahya pushed the young Jesus with both hands, and a few paragraphs later, we understand that he did it because he (probably) misunderstood or misheard a commentary made by Yeshua about a married woman. In the text, while Yehoshua ben Perahya was praising the owner for his beautiful guesthouse, Yeshua mentioned, in a very empathetic way, how tired the owner's wife looked to Him. Yehoshua ben Perahya immediately accused Jesus of looking towards the woman with unclean eyes and, in an aggressive demonstration of insensitivity, attacked his young student, identified in the text as Yeshua, who in the future would be considered a heretic. Here we see the pharisaic justification that a bastard would “obviously” repeat carnal inherited behaviors, suggesting that Jesus' punishment years later was a natural consequence of Mary's sins.

There are a few other references that we could look at and analyze, but returning to the Scriptures, one can infer that the reason why Yeshua was so blatantly rejected by the Pharisees and, much later, rabbinical Judaism, is revealed in the prophecy given by Simeon in Luke chapter 2. In addition to all the positive things he saw regarding Yeshua's future,

he also declared that “this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel” (Luke 2:34). Going back to the text we were analyzing in the fourth chapter of Luke's gospel, we now realize why that initial surprise was so quickly replaced by wrath when He refused to perform the miracles they heard He was doing in other places. They became filled with rage when He didn't do what he was told by the people He knew so closely. They wanted to control Yeshua. They wanted to say, If He is the promised Messiah, He will bless us first!

What was Yeshua preaching to Israel? That Salvation had come, and He was there to redeem. But only to those who acknowledged their spiritual poverty, their bondage to sin, and their carnal behaviors. He was the Bridegroom who finally arrived to the long-awaited ceremony, but the seats at the party were available only for His friends. They were blessed; among all nations, they were the ones whom He chose; they were the ones who would be finally touched by holiness. That generation was especially blessed with His message of forgiveness, redemption from sin, and acceptance into an abundant and eternal life with God. But that message was actually shocking to all of them. The initial approval faced the inevitable human tendency for disbelief and skepticism.

Israel was eager for the Messiah's coming. They were honestly waiting for the Messiah to come and carry out vengeance on their Gentile enemies, ultimately generating salvation for Israel. They hated their oppressors and probably were very disturbed when Yeshua didn't say anything about the day of vengeance. They surely were aware of John the Baptist's message: “When the Messiah comes, He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire,” and they expected fire, the fire of justice against oppression. Even Yohanan (John)



That's my prayer - that we'll be able to see erudite Jewish men understanding and sharing the news about their Messiah!

the Immerser (Baptist) was surprised eventually. After his violent arrest by Herod, he was surely expecting that His Redeemer, Yeshua, would find a way of opening the prison gates and setting him free. Yeshua never did that; He actually never proposed vengeance to ungodly people, Romans or Jews. John even sent his own disciples to ask Him about it; after all, if He is the Messiah, where was the justice? Yeshua had scheduled the day of vengeance to come after the day of salvation.

That little synagogue in the Galilee received Yeshua's words with disrespect. They acknowledged His talent as a teacher and His powerful oratory. They could not disagree with His interpretations and His accurate applications of the Law. They could not resist His authority and the majesty of His presence. They saw His miracles and

the effect that He had on the lives of the people following Him, but they simply couldn't accept one thing: that Yeshua was different from them and that He was much more than they would ever be. They didn't even take into consideration His superiority when the Father said out of heaven, "This is My beloved Son." They just kept repeating, "Is this not Joseph's son?" Their familiarity generated contempt.

That's something they never overcame. They never understood that He was not really one of them. They never did. After His year and a half of ministry in the Galilee, Yeshua returned to the same synagogue in Nazareth, and again they repeated, "This is Joseph's son, and we know His mother, and we know His sisters, and we know His brothers. This can't be the Messiah!" Yeshua was very clear in His teachings, and they



understood perfectly what He meant. Salvation is available for the poor, the prisoners, the blind, and the oppressed. But they did not realize they were the poor; they were the prisoners; they were the blind! And they continued in oppression. They received the message: to achieve salvation, they had to acknowledge their spiritual destitution, their spiritual poverty, their spiritual blindness, their spiritual bondage, and their spiritual oppression.

Acknowledging their sin was probably the last thing they would ever do. They were the Goy Kadosh (Holy Nation), they were the Am Segulah (Chosen People). They were Tsadikim (righteous) and had Ma'asim Tovim (good deeds). And they were the only ones who worshipped the true Living God. They weren't the poor, the prisoners, the blind, or the oppressed. "Yeshua was talking about someone else, yes, certainly... The famous rabbi was surely talking about Gentiles."

In their assessment, 400 years after the last prophecies were given to the people

of Israel, they thought Yeshua turned out to be more than an unexpected prophet; He became the unwanted Messiah. In Luke 4:24, Yeshua acknowledged their rejections and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country." The Scriptures mention the same perception in Matthew 13:57, Mark 6:4, and John 4:4, and even give more details. He felt rejected by His own family in His own house, and our Mashiach (Messiah) marveled at their unbelief.

One thing is sure: there's nothing worse than spiritual pride, and unfortunately, when we search for honest appraisals made by the sages of Israel a few centuries later, we notice that His Messiahship was still the stumbling block for Rabbinical Judaism. We find only slander and misrepresentation. In the book *Jewish Antiquities*, we find a surprisingly objective assessment. The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus, contemporary to the early Church and unquestionably impartial (since he never participated in the Christian stream

Unfortunately, Jewish intellectualism has been buried in self-righteousness and entrenched in its own interpretation of God's Word for quite some time.

Yeshua's disciples in Israel and abroad need to understand that only through a degree of effort and self-dedication will it be possible to reach and have an effective impact on Judaism.

of Judaism that was blooming in the region at the time), wrote the following statement:

”Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call Him a man; for He was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to Him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was Messiah. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, had condemned Him to the cross, those that loved Him at first did not forsake Him; for He appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other things concerning Him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from Him, are not extinct to this day.” (Jewish Antiquities, book 18 chapter 3, 63-64)

Until today, there's been an active pursuit by some Jewish intellectuals to erase this passage from Josephus' book, affirming that it was deceitfully inserted by the Catholic Church in order to solidify their claims about Jesus. To this date, we have never found evidence of Pharisees or Talmudic sages who had anything positive to say about the rabbi who changed the world. In Luke 4:28-29, we read about the religious reaction to Yeshua: “So all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was

built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff.”

Unfortunately, Jewish intellectualism has been buried in self-righteousness and entrenched in its own interpretation of God's Word for quite some time. However, there is much evidence that is possible to present and testify about the real Yeshua to our people when a Jewish believer manages to build a solid foundation of knowledge about Jewish Law and tradition. Although the people of Israel are undoubtedly the recipients of God's promises of redemption, our legalism and attachment to the Jewish mainstream viewpoint prevent orthodoxy from accepting what they think is a false messiah.

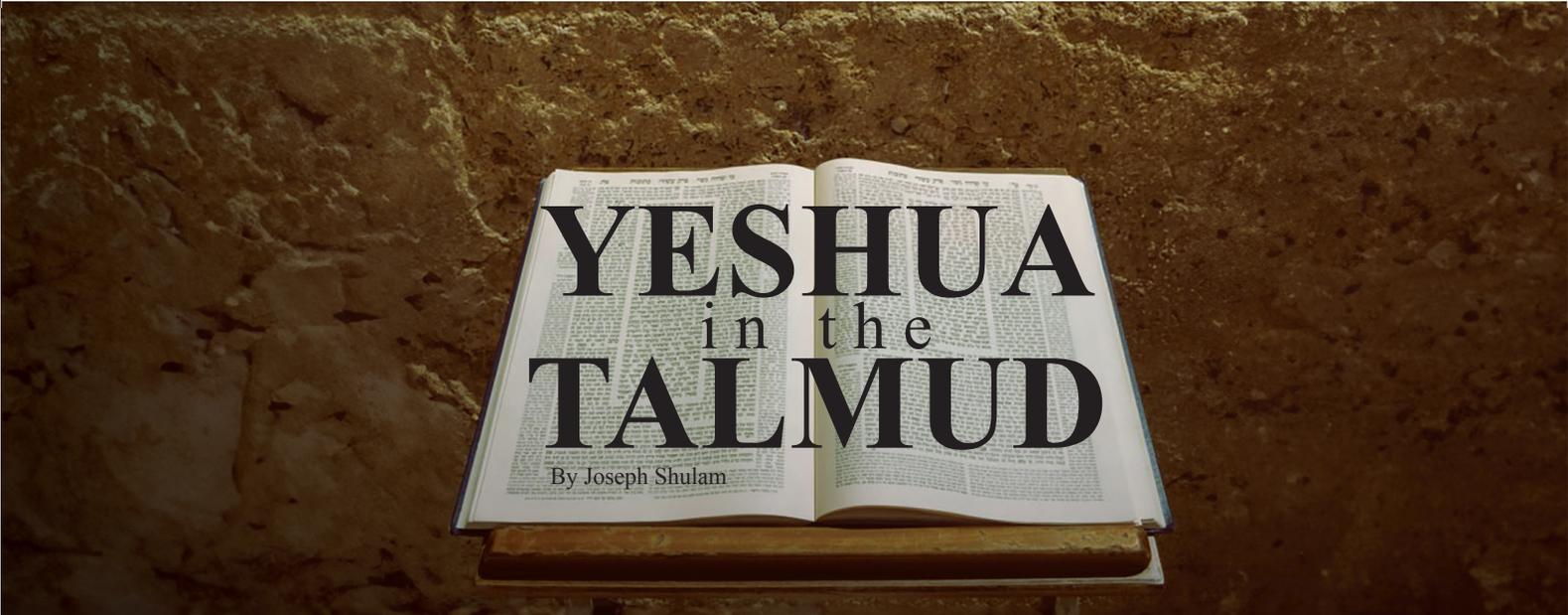
The real challenge now is that Christians over the centuries have given a sad and damaging testimony to the Jewish people about the Jewish rabbi and messiah they learned to follow. Replacement theology is still practiced among Christians, although more recently some good theologians have started to review their positions in regards to Israel. This is really helping. But looking through Jewish lenses, we understand that Israel sees itself as the true children of God. We're the legitimate recipients of the biblical covenants. The Gentiles, even when represented by sound and healthy churches, will always be idol worshippers, regardless of their few good deeds according to the Jewish Torah. We saw in the last three or four decades a

noticeable emergence of Messianic Jews with academic potential, but those men were not able to establish a respected movement in Israel, such as the Reform and Conservative Judaism that arose in the last century.

Yeshua's disciples in Israel and abroad need to understand that only through a degree of effort and self-dedication will it be possible to reach and have an effective impact on Judaism. Orthodoxy is completely shielded against the “poison of the Gentiles,” and the People of the Book have many competent intellectuals that can shred to pieces a superficial (and especially a charismatic) exposition about Yeshua, the promised Messiah. That's a role that we Israeli Messianics have to take accountability for and prepare ourselves accordingly. It's ultimately the work of the Spirit to convince Israel about our current spiritual leprosy. However, if we have to compete with trained minds, then the least we can do is not present ourselves as untrained, counting solely on Grace to back us up. Men like Paul Levertoff, Isaac Lichtenstein, Abram Poljak, Daniel Zion, and more recently, our very own David Stern and Joseph Shulam, did their part as Jewish academics, understanding and translating Yeshua's message to a Jewish contemporary audience. Now it's your time to immerse yourself in Jewish literature and Talmud and succeed in sharing the Jewish Messiah from an authentic Jewish perspective.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Moshe is a husband, father, and servant at Roeh Israel congregation. He has a background in Business Consulting and Advertising, but always longed for the Ministry. As a Messianic Jew, he developed interests connected to Jewish traditions and with time became a Hazan (liturgical cantor), a Sofer STaM (trained scribe), and a certified Mohel (circumciser). He has been serving the messianic community for 11 years in Israel and has joined Netivyah's team with a desire to build ways of communication and mutual support between observant and non-observant believers in Israel.



YESHUA in the TALMUD

By Joseph Shulam

Introduction:

I would have difficulty believing in the truthfulness of the story of Yeshua (Jesus) if He were not mentioned anywhere in Jewish literature. What if a fantastic story like the story of Yeshua (from his birth to his resurrection from the dead to his ascension to heaven) were not mentioned anywhere else except in the texts of what is commonly called “The New Testament”? A person like Yeshua was a stone of contention, an Archimedes point, a pivotal point of human history, and a controversial personality. He was King of the Jews, as it was written on a plaque on top of the cross of His crucifixion.

We are fortunate that we have a vast store of literature from the Pharisees of Yeshua’s day. They collected and preserved the discussions and controversies of the time. Most Christians are not educated in the literature of the Pharisees. This literature is divided into three different forms. The first is the Mishnah, a collection of Rabbinical sources and quotations from Rabbis who lived in the 2nd century BC until the middle of the 2nd century CE. The second is the Jerusalem Talmud, a collection of similar discussions from the 5th century CE. The third is the Babylonian Talmud, which was finished in the 6th century CE and dealt with

material similar to that of the Jerusalem Talmud.

We are fortunate that Josephus Flavius, the Jewish historian of the first century, mentions Yeshua in his books. We are also fortunate that we have the Midrashic literature, a collection of various homiletic material and quasi-commentaries of the Torah. These commentaries include those of Rabbis from before the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, through to medieval Rabbinical commentators. Understand that most of the material that was written in this Rabbinical literature was written against Yeshua and His disciples. However, what was written against is also a witness to what was real and important for the Jews in the diaspora, who were opponents of Yeshua and his disciples. Often, these Rabbis referred to Yeshua in order to oppose Him, but by opposing Him, they affirmed Him. What was intended to negate Yeshua turns out to affirm the positive. The Jewish rabbinical opponents of Jesus and his disciples did not write about Him for several centuries after His death, burial, and resurrection. But, when they began to discuss Yeshua, Rabbis attributed stories to Him that affirm the historical Yeshua. The story’s origins date back to the 2nd century B.C. The records of this material written against Yeshua by the Pharisaic Rabbis

The birth of Yeshua is the point of Archimedes for the Rabbis, the pivotal point that, if undermined, destroys the whole gospel.

are preserved in the rabbinical materials in the Mishnah, Midrashic Literature, and in both the Jerusalem Talmud and the Babylonian Talmud.

In this article, I will attempt to capture the most interesting stories about Jesus in Rabbinical literature and try to make lemonade from the rotten lemons grown in rabbinical gardens in the dark

valleys of religious prejudice, hate, and ignorance. What was meant for evil will turn out to be for good!

One can learn about any topic from both those who are positive and those who are negative. This is also the case with Yeshua in the Rabbinical literature that was composed well after Christianity became the religion of the Roman Empire. The Rabbis of the late 2nd century CE developed a strong opposition to the development of the newly born sect and felt obliged to oppose it with the tools that they had at their disposal. I don't blame them for trying to protect themselves from a new religion that was born in their own womb but turned against them and against Judaism itself.

Therefore, it is most important for us to know the truth and understand what the will of God is, and that we understand that what we are dealing with here is a Jewish Messiah and a Jewish New Testament that have been held captive in the hands of the Roman Church. The Roman Church wanted to "improve" the ancient text and make it clear that the Jews are the villains. I confess that the very minor changes, or so to speak, "improvements" that these not-so-well-meaning priests made could not mask the Jewishness of Yeshua, alienate him from His Jewishness, or cut Him off from His own people. Yeshua was born a Jew, circumcised on the 8th day, died King of the Jews, and will return as the King of the Jews to sit upon the throne of David.

To combat the Roman church, those of the Pharisaic party in Judaism created rabbinical material dealing with Yeshua, generally written to oppose Him and His movement, in an attempt to vaccinate the Jewish population in the Roman Empire from contracting the Jesus "virus" in the Byzantine Empire. The Rabbinical

literature is 99.9% dealing with all aspects of Jewish life, from shoestrings to cooking pots, and is not fully dedicated to Yeshua or His movement. But those few references to Yeshua or to His followers are very valuable when we analyze and study them like good detectives to understand them in their context and background.

As it was stated above, the Jewish literature that we are referencing belongs to the centuries after Yeshua resurrected and ascended to sit at the right hand of the LORD. The Rabbinical literature is a vast ocean of writings that spans seven hundred years and a vast expanse of geography, from the land of Israel to Babylon and later to regions of Europe.

Jewish Rabbinical literature deals with stories of the birth of Yeshua.

Those who opposed the Good News (the gospel) sought to prove that Yeshua was not born of a virgin. Rabbis in the second century worked to discredit the story of the birth of Yeshua as false so the rest of the story of Yeshua would be questioned, thereby ending Christianity. The birth of Yeshua is the point of Archimedes for the Rabbis, the pivotal point that, if undermined, destroys the whole gospel. The Rabbis had more than one story of Yeshu's (in Rabbinical language) birth.

There are three stories related to the birth of Yeshua in the Talmudic literature. The first one is that his mother, Miriam, was a hairdresser. The second one is that his mother was Stada, the wife of Pappos, son of Yehuda. The third story is that Yeshua was the son of a Roman soldier named Pandera. All three of these stories are found in the Babylonian Talmud.

In one story, Jesus lived in the days of Rabbi Jehoshua ben Perachyah, and he was one of Rabbi Jehoshua ben Perachyah's favored disciples. In

We see that negative anti-Christian propaganda is understood by the medieval Rabbis as impossible to the truth.

another story in the Talmud, Jesus was a child (toddler) in the time of Rabbi Akiva, Rabbi Eliezer, and Rabbi Maier. For context, here is the chronology of these Rabbis:

Rabbi Jehoshua ben Perachyah was Nasi of the Sanhedrin and lived in the years 134–104 B.C.

Rabbi Akiva, Rabbi Maier, and Rabbi Eliezer lived at the beginning of the 2nd century A.D. Rabbi Akiva died in the year 135 A.D. and was executed by the Romans. How could Jesus be a disciple of Rabbi Jehoshua ben Perachyah and a toddler in the days of Rabbi Akiva at the same time?

We have the very same problem with the mother of Jesus. Assuming that the mother of Jesus was the wife of Pappos ben Yehuda, this man also lived in the second century A.D.

Examine the following:

Tosaphoth Shabbath 104 b: "The Son

of Stada.” Rabbenu Tam says that this is not Jesus the Nazarene, for as to the Son of Stada, we say here that he was in the days of Pappos ben Jehuda, who lived in the days of Rabbi Akiva, as is proved in the last chapter of Berakhoth (61 b), but Jesus lived in the days of Jehoshua ben Perachyah, as is proved in the last chapter of Sota (47 a): “And not like Rabbi Jehoshua ben Perachyah, who pushed away Jesus the Nazarene with both hands,” and Rabbi Jehoshua was long before Rabbi Akiva. “His mother was Mirjam, the women’s hairdresser,” and what is related in the first chapter of Chagiga (4 b): “Rab Bibi—the angel of death was found with him, etc., he said to his messenger: “Go and fetch me Mirjam, the women’s hairdresser.”

We read that Jesus lived in the days of Rab Bibi and “Mirjam,” the women’s hairdresser. It was another (Mirjam), or the angel of death was also relating to Rab Bibi a story that happened a long, long time before. This medieval commentary on the Talmud sees these problems and concludes that the story of Jesus’s birth in the Rabbinical literature can’t be true because it is not possible that one person will have so many different mothers and fathers that lived hundreds of years apart. We see that negative anti-Christian propaganda is understood by the medieval Rabbis as impossible to the truth.

Here is a Rabbinical text about Jesus (Yeshu) from the early second century CE:

Examine the following:

BARAITHA

“The elders were once sitting in the gate when two young lads passed by; one covered his head and the other uncovered his head. Of him who uncovered his head, R. Eliezer remarked, ‘He is a bastard’;



R. Joshua remarked, ‘He is the son of a niddah’; R. ‘Aqiba said, ‘He is both a bastard and the son of a niddah’. They said to R. ‘Aqiba, ‘How did your heart induce you to contradict the opinion of your colleagues?’ He replied, ‘I will prove it concerning him’. He went to the lad’s mother and found her sitting in the market selling beans. He said to her, ‘My daughter, if you answer the question which I will put to you, I will bring you to the World to Come’. She said to him, ‘Swear it to me’. R. ‘Aqiba, taking the oath with his lips but annulling it in his heart, said to her, ‘What is the status of your son?’ She replied, ‘When I entered the bridal chamber, I was niddah, and my husband kept away from me, but my best man had intercourse with me, and this son was born to me’. Consequently, the child was both a bastard and the son of a niddah. It was declared, ‘R. ‘Aqiba showed himself to be a great man when he contradicted his teachers’. At the same time, they added, ‘Blessed be the God of Israel Who revealed His secret to R. ‘Aqiba b. Joseph’.

This text is significant because it shows how confused these attempts at defaming Yeshua’s birth story are. The Rabbis invented these lies. Rabbi Akiva lied in the story and was also praised by the other two Rabbis for deceiving and trapping the woman in the market of Zippori. When you look at all these stories supposedly

The great Medieval Rabbi Rashi, one of the great Bible and Talmud commentators, realized that one person cannot have three different sets of parents who lived in different periods of time and that these stories about the birth of Yeshua in the Talmud are fake, written for the purpose of propaganda.

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about Jesus of Nazareth and see to what length the Rabbis of the 2nd century CE had to go to fight the early disciples of Yeshua, you can understand the Rabbis were under great pressure to fight and defame Yeshua and His disciples. It was an attempt to stop the growth of the early Christian movement inside Judaism.

As difficult as it is to believe the birth story of Yeshua with a virgin mother and God as His father, it is easier to accept and believe that than it is to ignore biblical truth and accept that one child has three different mothers and several different fathers. The Biblical pattern of our forefathers found in Genesis tells us that our forefathers Isaac, Jacob, Esau, and Joseph were born from mothers who were not able to give birth naturally. God had to intervene and open their wombs before they were able to give birth to Isaac, Jacob, Esau, and Joseph. The most dramatic case of birth was the creation of Adam from a lump of clay that God breathed life into, without a mother or an earthly father. A God who can create Adam from a lump of clay has no problem sowing a seed in a virgin's womb.

The three stories of the birth of Yeshua fall apart in the face of logic and therefore are historically confusing to what the Talmudic Rabbis said (Yeshua was already seated on the right hand of the Heavenly Father a long time!) These made-up stories are all the Rabbis had at their disposal in order to keep their people away from the Roman and Byzantine churches.

The great Medieval Rabbi Rashi, one of the great Bible and Talmud

commentators, realized that one person cannot have three different sets of parents who lived in different periods of time and that these stories about the birth of Yeshua in the Talmud are fake, written for the purpose of propaganda. Rabbis like Rabbi Jacob Emdin, a chief Rabbi of Germany, understood this, showed deep appreciation for Yeshua, and encouraged religious Jews to not only respect but also look at Yeshua with a different attitude than traditional European Christians did.

The rabbis who lived in Europe in the 13th and 14th centuries CE realized that the Talmudic stories about the birth of Yeshua didn't hold water. Their determination that these stories were wrong shows integrity and fear of God, and possibly fear of Christians being angry with their Jewish neighbors for teaching such derogatory stories about Jesus.

Jewish people and orthodox Rabbis of modernity write and publish derogatory material against Yeshua and call him a bastard, all based on these false stories. The beginning of Nazi persecution of the Jewish population of Germany was in part because of these Talmudic passages about Jesus. Kristallnacht, the Night of Broken Glass, occurred on the night of November 9–10, 1938. This night witnessed the burning of books, especially Rabbinical literature, and the burning of synagogues throughout Germany. Nothing justifies such behavior as burning books and synagogues.

In the Talmud, Yeshua is a healer well into the second century CE.

Examine the following:

The Jerusalem Talmud Tractate Aboda Zara 40b

“His grandson (the grandson of Jehoshua ben Levi) had swallowed something. A man came and whispered to him (a spell in the name of Jesus' son of Pandera, and he got well. When he went out, he (Jehoshua' ben Levi) asked him: What did you say over him? He answered according to the word of somebody. He said: What had been his fate had he died and not heard this word? And it happened to him, “as it were an error which the ruler made.” (Eccles. 10:5).” The disciple of Yeshua answered with an intelligent answer. Like a typical Rabbinical Jew with any question asked: “What had been his fate, had he died and not heard this word?” Yeshua's disciple is smart because he answers with a question: What would have been had I not said these words in the name of Yeshua?

This text is about an event from the 2nd century CE. A true story of the healing of a grandson of one of the great Rabbis of the Talmud. The boy is ill, and a disciple of Yeshua comes and prays for the child, and the child is healed.

This story shows that the Talmudic Rabbi who has several interludes with Yeshua, Rabbi Jehoshua ben Levi, had received the disciple of Yeshua to come and pray in Yeshua's name for his grandson, who was healed. This is a great witness to the continuation of the power of Yeshua's name for healing even into the second century CE. This is not the only story in the Talmud that witnesses the power of the name of Yeshua in healing the sick.

The deep hatred that existed in the 2nd century CE between non-believing Jews and the Jews who accepted Yeshua as Messiah was so deep that Rabbi Ishmael preferred his friend and fellow Rabbi to die rather than be healed by the name of Yeshua.

Another story about Rabbi Jehoshua ben Levi.

“R. Joshua b. Levi met Elijah standing by the entrance of R. Simeon b. Yohai’s tomb. He asked him, ‘Have I a portion in the world to come?’ He replied, ‘if this Master desires it.’ R. Joshua b. Levi said, ‘I saw two, but heard the voice of a third.’ He then asked him, ‘When will the Messiah come?’ – ‘Go and ask him himself’, was his reply. ‘Where is he sitting?’ – ‘At the entrance (of the city).’ – ‘And by what sign may I recognize him?’ – ‘He is sitting among the poor lepers: all of them untie [them] all at once, and rebandage them together, whereas he unties and rebandages each separately, [before treating the next], thinking, should I be wanted, [it being time for my appearance as the Messiah] I must not be delayed [through having to bandage a number of sores].’ So, he went to him and greeted him, saying, ‘peace upon thee, Master and Teacher.’ ‘Peace upon thee, O son of Levi,’ he replied. ‘When wilt thou come Master?’ asked he, ‘To-day’, was his answer. On his returning to Elijah, the latter enquired, ‘What did he say to thee?’ – ‘peace Upon thee, O son of Levi,’ he answered, thereupon he [Elijah] observed, ‘He thereby assured thee and thy father of [a portion in] the world to come.’ ‘He spoke falsely to me,’ he rejoined, ‘stating that he would come to-day, but has not.’

He [Elijah] answered him, ‘This is what he said to thee, To-day, if ye will hear his voice.’

Another story of the power of healing in the name of Yeshua the Messiah:

Examine the following:

Jerusalem Talmud Shabbat 14:4:12

“It happened that Eleazar ben Dama was bitten by a snake and Jacob from Kefar-Sama came to heal him in the name of Jesus ben Pandera, but Rabbi Ismael prevented him. He told him, I shall bring a proof that he can heal me. He could not bring proof before he died. Rabbi Ismael said to him, you are blessed, ben Dama, that you left this world in peace and did not tear down the fences of the Sages, as it is written, he who tears down a fence will be bitten by a snake. But did not a snake bite him? But that it will not bite him in the Future World.”

A second case of a disciple of Yeshua from the village Sama in the Galilee who heals Rabbi Eleazar ben Sama who was bitten by a snake. Rabbi Ishmael prevents Jacob the disciple of Yeshua to heal Rabbi Eleazar ben Dama, and he dies from the snake bite. Rabbi Ishmael blesses the dear Rabbi Eleazar ben Dama with the following words: “you are blessed Ben Dama, “that he was not

healed by the name of Yeshua.

Both Rabbi Eleazar ben Dama and Rabbi Ishmael are aware of the power of the name of Yeshua for healing. Rabbi Eleazar ben Dama is willing to allow Jacob, the disciple of Yeshua, to exercise the power of the name of Yeshua to heal him, but Rabbi Eleazar is prevented by Rabbi Ishmael from allowing Jacob, the disciple of Yeshua, to heal Rabbi Eleazar from the bite of a poisonous snake, and Rabbi Eleazar dies. At this point, Rabbi Ishmael praises Rabbi Eleazar for dying rather than being healed by Yeshua’s name.

The deep hatred that existed in the 2nd century CE between non-believing Jews and the Jews who accepted Yeshua as Messiah was so deep that Rabbi Ishmael preferred his friend and fellow Rabbi to die rather than be healed by the name of Yeshua. It was clear to both Rabbi Eleazar and Rabbi Ishmael that there is a power of healing in the name of Yeshua and that Rabbi Eleazar would have been healed if Jacob, the disciple of Yeshua, had prayed over Rabbi Eleazar’s snake bite in Yeshua’s name. The Talmud affirms that Yeshua’s name was powerful for healing, even from a bite of a deadly poisonous snake!

There are more stories in the Rabbinical texts highlighting the bitter hatred in

the 3rd and 4th centuries CE. The Jews reacted against the persecution and discrimination of Gentile Christians in the Eastern Roman Empire. This deep hatred and separation between Jews and Roman Gentile Christians were a result of the Bar-Kochbah revolt of the early 2nd century CE, ending in 135 CE. With the execution of the leaders of the Revolt, including Rabbi Akiba and many Rabbis in the Land of Israel, the disciples of Yeshua integrated into Roman society, and by the middle of the 2nd century, they melted into Roman society, emulated their language and culture, and adopted anti-Jewish attitudes. We, as Jews, need to learn the simple principle that when seed is sown in the field, that is what will grow for us to eat. One of Yeshua's great teachings is from Proverbs 24:17 and 25:21: "Don't rejoice when your enemy falls; don't let your heart be glad when he stumbles. If someone who hates you is hungry, give him food to eat; and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink."

Talmudic stories of the condemnation of Yeshua.

The following story is popular in Rabbinical Literature because it brings the condemnations of Yeshua in several different formats, and what proves interesting is that not all the versions of this story corroborate, and in a court of law, such testimonies would be immediately cast out and rejected.

Examine the following:

Babylonian Talmud Aboda Zara 16 b. And Ecclesiastes Rabba to Eccles. 1:8 (Pesaro, 1519). And in Tractate Shabbath 104 b, and in Sanhedrin 67 a

"And for all capital criminals who are mentioned in the law, they do not lay an ambush, but (they do) for this (criminal)." How do they act towards him? They light the lamp for him in the innermost part of

the house, and they place witnesses for him in the exterior part of the house, that they may see him and hear his voice, though he cannot see them. And that man says to him: Tell me what you have told me when we were alone. And when he repeats (those words) to him, that man says to him: How can we abandon our God in Heaven and practice idolatry? If he returns, it is well; but when he says: Such is our duty, and so we like to have it, then the witnesses, who are listening without, bring him to the tribunal and stone him. And thus, they have done to the Son of Stada at Lod, and they hanged him on the day before Passover."

This text, Babylonian Talmud Aboda Zara 16b, affirms that Yeshua was "hanged" on the day before the Passover. This is a detail that positions the writers of this text as knowledgeable of the gospel narratives of the crucifixion of Yeshua. The protagonist writers of this text are Talmudic Rabbis living in the 3rd to 5th centuries CE who were aware of the details of the New Testament Gospels about the crucifixion of Yeshua and affirmed it in their discussion. The question is, why are these Rabbis in such a late time dealing with this issue. One, they can't deny what is written in the Gospels. Two, they want to show that Yeshua's death was by due process of a Jewish legal trial.

Examine the following:

Babylonian Talmud Tractate Sanhedrin 43a.

This is the most significant text in the Talmud dealing with the crucifixion of Yeshua outside of the Gospels. It is based on the Mishnah of Sanhedrin. The Mishnah was collected by Rabbi Judah the Nasi, the President, who lived in Zippori, the Jewish capital city in the Galilee, located about three miles from Nazareth. Rabbi Judah died in the year



210 CE. The Mishnah was finished just before the year 210 CE.

MISHNAH.

"IF THEN THEY FIND HIM INNOCENT, THEY DISCHARGE HIM; BUT IF NOT, HE GOES FORTH TO BE STONED, AND A HERALD PRECEDES HIM [CRYING]: SO, AND SO, THE SON OF SO AND SO, IS GOING FORTH TO BE STONED BECAUSE HE COMMITTED SUCH AND SUCH AN OFFENSE, AND SO AND SO ARE HIS WITNESSES. WHOEVER KNOWS ANYTHING IN HIS FAVOR, LET HIM COME AND STATE IT."

GEMARA - Talmud

"Abaye said; It must also be announced: On such and such a day, at such and such an hour, and in such and such a place [the crime was committed], in case there are some who know [to the contrary], so that they can come forward and prove the witnesses Zomemim. AND A HERALD PRECEDES HIM. This implies, only immediately before [the execution], but not previous thereto. [In contradiction to this] it was taught: On the eve of the Passover, Yeshu the Nazarene (Deut. 18:9) was hanged. For forty days before the execution took place, a herald went forth and cried, 'He is going forth to be stoned because he has practiced sorcery



Yeshua had 12 disciples, but the Talmudic Rabbis of the later centuries (4th or 5th centuries CE) had memories or even earlier texts that used this pattern of five disciples.

and enticed Israel to apostasy. Anyone who can say anything in his favor, let him come forward and plead on his behalf.' But since nothing was brought forward in his favor, he was hanged on the eve of the Passover! — 'Ulla retorted: Do you suppose that he was one for whom a defense could be made? Was he not a Mesith [enticer], concerning whom Scripture says, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him? With Yeshu, however, it was different, for he was connected with the government [or royalty, i.e., influential]."

What does it mean that Yeshua was connected with royalty or with the government? To which royalty was he related? The only possibility is to go to the house of David. It was unfathomable to imagine that Yeshua was related to the house of Herod. From the very beginning, Yeshua was born according to prophetic predictions in Bethlehem. Yeshua visited Jerusalem several times during the three years of his ministry, but the story of the entrance on a donkey is associated only with Yeshua's coming with his disciples for the last Passover feast before his crucifixion, also in fulfillment of prophecy. Yeshua's burial in a rich man's grave is also a fulfillment of prophecy.

The text continues with a strange story about the disciples of Yeshu.

"Our Rabbis taught: Yeshu had five disciples: Matthai, Nakai, Nezer, Buni and Todah. When Matthai was brought [before the court] he said to them [the judges], Shall Matthai be executed? Is it not written, Matthai [when] shall I come and appear before God? Thereupon they retorted; Yes, Matthai shall be executed, since it is written, When Matthai [when] shall [he] die and his name perish. When Nakai was brought in, he said to them; Shall Nakai be executed? It is not written, Naki [the innocent] and the

righteous slay thou not? Yes, was the answer, Nakai shall be executed, since it is written, in secret places does Naki [the innocent] slay. When Nezer was brought in, he said; Shall Nezer be executed? Is it not written, And Nezer [a twig] shall grow forth out of his roots? Yes, they said, Nezer shall be executed since it is written, but thou art cast forth away from thy grave like Nezer [an abhorred offshoot]. When Buni was brought in, he said: Shall Buni be executed? Is it not written, Beni [my son], my firstborn? Yes, they said, Buni shall be executed since it is written, Behold I will slay Bine-ka [thy son] thy firstborn, and when Todah was brought in, he said to them; Shall Todah be executed? Is it not written, A psalm for Todah [thanksgiving]? Yes, they answered, Todah shall be executed, since it is written, whoso offers the sacrifice of Todah [thanksgiving] honored me."

One of the fascinating things about this song about five disciples of Yeshua is a pattern in ancient Talmudic and Pharisaic literature that was used to defame or reject a disciple who had left the acceptable track. The pattern had a standard example of five disciples of the great Rabbi and described how the five disciples fell into sinful or deviant lifestyles and hence were rejected by the great Rabbi that they served and followed. There is a pattern in the text above of condemnation of Yeshua and his disciples. There is a name of a disciple of Yeshua and a condemnation of that disciple. Then came the justification of the condemnation and the approval for the execution of that disciple. The text used by the accusers is, of course, a text used out of context with no direct connection with the substance of the accusation. This is a kind of Rabbinical court, and the condemnation is fabricated with a clear prejudicial use of the biblical texts. The Talmudic Rabbis go through every one of the supposed disciples of Yeshua and condemn them to death. However,

In a tacit way, the Talmud and its great Rabbis admit and confess the Torah wisdom that Yeshua had in his teaching.

this text is a polemic text that is produced as a fabrication, a fake courthouse, a fake condemnation, and a fake accusation with a fake death verdict. Contrary to the plain use of this negative propaganda, this is a paradigm that repeats itself with other cases of Rabbinical condemnation of disciples of famous Rabbis.

The story of the execution of Yeshua in The Talmud (tractate of Sanhedrin, page 43) has the Sanhedrin judging Yeshua and executing him after a trial. There are neither Romans in the story nor a cross in this Rabbinical fabrication. The story does have some interesting points that add to our understanding of how Yeshua was viewed by the Rabbis in later centuries.

An example of this pattern is found in the story of Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai who lived in the time of Yeshua and also predicted the fall of Jerusalem and the temple 40 years before the event.

Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai had five disciples, and they were these:

Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus, Rabbi Joshua ben Hananiah, Rabbi Yose, the priest, Rabbi Shimon ben Nethaneel, and Rabbi Eleazar ben Arach.

A specific outstanding virtue was attached to each of Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai's disciples that was later turned into a negative.

Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus is a plastered cistern that loses not a drop.

Rabbi Joshua ben Hananiah, happy is the woman who gave birth to him.

Rabbi Yose, the priest, is a pious man.

Rabbi Simeon ben Nethanel is one who fears sin, and

Rabbi Eleazar ben Arach is like a spring that [ever] gathers force.

It is interesting that great Rabbis are reported in the Talmud to have five disciples, and each disciple is reported to have positive qualities that make him worthy of being a disciple of the great Rabbi. It is clear that the Talmud is following a set tradition and not a true historical reality. Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai had many more than five disciples; we know this from his departing from Jerusalem in a coffin, as was permitted by the Romans to take the dead out of the city for burial during the siege of the city. Rabbi Ben-Zakkai was in the coffin pretending to be dead, and his disciples accompanied him from Jerusalem to Yavne (Jamnia south of Jaffa on the road to Gaza).

Yeshua had 12 disciples, but the Talmudic Rabbis of the later centuries (4th or 5th centuries CE) had memories or even earlier texts that used this pattern of five disciples.

The text about the execution of Yeshu's disciples is absolutely fascinating, and it reveals the five building blocks of our faith in Yeshua. Revealed through the five names of the disciples is a song of praise of Yeshua, praise for the five things that he did for us, presented as the core of the Good News.

1. Mattahi – it is a Hebrew word indicating the time that translates as "When!" - In the

right time, Yeshua appeared on the stage of Israel's history.

2. Nakai – a Hebrew word, translates as clean, not guilty, or innocent.

3. Nezer – A Hebrew word translating as "branch." Used in the following context in the Hebrew Bible: "There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots." (Isaiah 11:1 NKJV) The word "BRANCH" in Isaiah 11 is clearly used as a messianic text! The Hebrew word for Christian is Notzri, which is from the same root as NETZER in Isaiah. So, this text clearly points to the Messiah. In this early song, we see the attributes of the Messiah, and Yeshua fulfills them all, including that he is the branch of Jesse, King David's family. We see the same relationship in Jeremiah 23:5, "Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth." In this messianic text, we see a repetition of the same motif of Branch as related to King David.

4. Buni – a Hebrew word that translates as either Son or Builder. The Talmudic text here brings the verse, "My Son my First Born!" This text corresponds to "Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.'" (Psalm 2:6-7 NKJV)

5. Todah – a Hebrew word that translates as "Thank You" or "Thanksgiving"! The thanksgiving is for all of the earlier

In the generation when the son of David will come, scholars will be few in number, and as for the rest, their eyes will fail through sorrow and grief.

four aspects of the Messianic advent. Sacrifices of Thanksgiving were not commanded specifically, but instead were performed from a person's free will: "And when you offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the LORD, offer it of your own free will." (Leviticus 22:29 NKJV). The crucifixion of Yeshua was not something that was organized and commanded by God, but it was the free will and design of the people to deliver Yeshua to the Romans and to ask the governor Pontius Pilates to sacrifice this man, even though he didn't understand why or for what reason but was willing to please the Pharisees for political reasons. There are two verses that are interesting in this context: Psalm 50:14: "Offer to God thanksgiving, and pay your vows to the Highest. 23 Whoever offers praise glorifies Me; And to him who orders his conduct aright I will show the salvation of God." (Psalm 50:14, 23 NKJV)

Great Rabbis in the Talmud are deeply impressed by the Torah teachings of Yeshua.

Examine the following:

Babylonian Talmud Tractate Aboda Zarah 16b - 17a

"The Sages taught: When Rabbi Eliezer was arrested and charged with heresy by the authorities, they brought him up to a tribunal to be judged. A certain judicial officer [hegemon] said to him: Why should an elder like you engage in these frivolous matters of heresy? Rabbi Eliezer said to him: The Judge is trusted by me to rule correctly. That officer thought that Rabbi Eliezer was speaking about him; but in fact, he said this only in reference to his Father in Heaven. Rabbi Eliezer meant that he accepted God's judgment, i.e., if he was charged, he must have sinned against God in some manner. The officer said to him: Since you put your trust in me, you are acquitted [dimos]; you are exempt. When Rabbi Eliezer came home, his students entered to console him for being accused of heresy, which he took as a sign of sin, and he did not accept their words of consolation. Rabbi Akiva said to him: My teacher, allow me to say one matter from all of that which you taught me. Rabbi Eliezer said to him: Speak. Rabbi Akiva said to him: My teacher, perhaps some statement of heresy came before you and you derived pleasure from it, and because of this you were held responsible by Heaven. Rabbi Eliezer said to him: Akiva, you are right, as you have reminded me that once I was walking in the upper marketplace of Tzippori, and I found a man who was one of the students of Jesus the Nazarene, and his name was Ya'akov of Kefar Sekhanya. He said to me: It is written in your Torah: "You shall not bring the payment to a prostitute, or the price of a dog, into the house of the Lord

your God" (Deuteronomy 23:19). What is the halakha: Is it permitted to make from the payment to a prostitute for services rendered a bathroom for a High Priest in the Temple? And I said nothing to him in response. He said to me: Jesus the Nazarene taught me the following: It is permitted, as derived from the verse: "For of the payment to a prostitute she has gathered them, and to the payment to a prostitute they shall return" (Micah 1:7). Since the coins came from a place of filth, let them go to a place of filth and be used to build a bathroom. And I derived pleasure from the statement, and due to this, I was arrested for heresy by the authorities because I transgressed that which is written in the Torah: "Remove your way far from her, and do not come near the entrance of her house" (Proverbs 5:8).

The text from Aboda Zarah 16b-17a centers around Rabbis who lived in the Galilee after the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. Rabbi Eliezer was arrested by the Romans for some heresy (against the Romans), and he was taken to the Roman court. The judge was surprised to see a famous honorable Rabbi being brought to court to be judged.

Rabbi Eliezer was walking in the market of the city of Tzippori (two miles from Nazareth) and found a man who was a disciple of Jesus the Nazarene (from Nazareth) by the name of Jacob from the village of Sekhanya, today an Arab village named Sakhnin. Jacob asked Rabbi Eliezer a halachic question from the Torah:

"It is written in your Torah: "You shall not bring the payment to a prostitute, or the price of a dog, into the house of the Lord your God" (Deuteronomy 23:19). What is the halakha? Is it permitted to make, from the payment to a prostitute for services rendered, a bathroom for a High Priest in the Temple? And I said

nothing to him in response. He said to me: Jesus the Nazarene taught me the following: It is permitted, as derived from the verse: “For of the payment to a prostitute she has gathered them, and to the payment to a prostitute they shall return” (Micah 1:7). Since the coins came from a place of filth, let them go to a place of filth and be used to build a bathroom.”

Jacob, the disciple of Yeshua, asked the question, and the Great Rabbi Eliezer was left speechless from the wisdom of Yeshua’s answer. Yeshua solved the legal problem that seemed like a contradiction in the Torah with a verse from the book of Micah 1:7: “For of the payment to a prostitute she has gathered them, and to the payment to a prostitute they shall return.” Yeshua teaches to use the tithe of a prostitute to build a bathroom for the high priest. As Micah the prophet states, what came from the filth returns to the filth. In a tacit way, the Talmud and its great Rabbis admit and confess the Torah wisdom that Yeshua had in his teaching. There are several of Yeshua’s statements in the Gospels that have filtered into the Talmudic literature. In this story, we see the social dynamics that were in existence in the early 2nd century CE among the Jewish communities in the Galilee. For context, it needs to be mentioned that Rabbi Akiva was not a born Jew. He was a pagan shepherd who didn’t know how to read or write. He married the daughter of one of the richest men in Jerusalem. She insisted that he should become a Rabbi and sent him to study in the city of Lod. The combination Akiva used of Hellenistic culture and philosophy with the Hebrew Torah set him apart from the other Jewish Rabbis of the time. By applying Greek Pagan philosophy to the Torah, he was able to incorporate another attitude into Jewish Torah. R. Akiva brought militant attitudes that radicalized and weaponized Rabbinical Judaism in the 2nd century CE, which led to the

second revolt against the Romans, which caused the great destruction of the land of Israel and the exile of the majority of the Jewish population out of Israel.

Here is one last text written about Yeshua in the Talmud.

Examine the following:

Babylonian Talmud Baba Bathera 60b [1]

“Whoever mourns for Zion will be privileged to behold her joy, as it says, Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, etc. It has been taught R. Ishmael ben Elisha said: Since the day of the destruction of the Temple, we should by rights bind ourselves not to eat meat nor drink wine; only we do not lay a hardship on the community unless the majority can endure it. And from the day that a government has come into power which issues cruel decrees against us and forbids to us the observance of the Torah and the precepts and does not allow us to enter into the ‘week of the son’ (according to another version, ‘the salvation of the son’), we ought by rights to bind ourselves not to marry and beget children, and the seed of Abraham, our father, would come to an end of itself. However, let Israel go their way; it is better that they should err in ignorance than presumptuously.”

וכל המתאבל על ירושלים זוכה ורואה בשמחתה שנאמר (ישעיהו סו, י) שמחו את ירושלים וגו’

תניא אמר ר’ ישמעאל בן אלישע מיום שחרב בית המקדש דין הוא שנגזור על עצמנו שלא לאכול בשר ולא לשתות יין אלא אין גוזרין גזרה על הצבור אא”כ רוב צבור יכולים לעמוד בה ומיום שפשטה מלכות הרשעה שגזרת עלינו גזירות רעות וקשות ומבטלת ממנו תורה ומצות ואין מנחת אותנו להיכנס לשבוע הבן ואמרי לה לישוע הבן דין הוא שנגזור על עצמנו שלא לישא אשה ולהוליד בנים ונמצא זרעו של אברהם אבינו כלה מאליו אלא הנה להם לישראל מוטב שיהיו מוטב שיהיו שוגגין ואל יהיו מזידין:

The translation of the original phrase as it appears in the Hebrew in the same passage in the Talmud: For the week the son and tell her to Yeshua the son.

As you look at the English translation, what I colored Green is also green in the Hebrew text, and what I colored Red is also red in the Hebrew text.

Google Translate gave the exact same translation, “Yeshua the SON!”

As you can see, the English translation has brackets around these phrases, and in the green it adds a strange comment, “according to another version”—what “another version”?

When I was a student in the Yeshiva on Mt. Zion in Jerusalem, I read two books about Yeshua in the Talmud, Midrash, and Zohar. The first book that I read was

It is true that the Pharisees and the other Elitist sects in Jerusalem opposed Yeshua, and that opposition was not solely based on religious reasons.

Gustaf Dalman's "Jesus Christ in the Talmud, Midrash and Zohar, and Liturgy of the Synagogue." The second book that I read on this subject was "Christianity in Talmud and Midrash" by R. Travers Herford. I must have missed this text from Babylonian Talmud Baba Batra 60b in these books, or they must have missed this text because the writers of these books probably read the Talmud in their native languages with the flawed translation purposefully changing the Hebrew text from "Yeshua the Son!" to "Salvation of the son!"

How did I discover this text in the Talmud? I was one Sunday evening alone in the office of Netivyah on Narkis Street working on my computer. A big man, clothed in the garments of Toldot Aaron Hassidic sect, silver-colored caftan with black stripes and a big mink hat on his head, knocked on my door. My first reaction was fear. I have been attacked, beaten, and threatened with attempted murder more than once. The people who wear these clothes belong to a sect that is one of the most radical groups in Me'ah Shearim, an ultra-orthodox neighborhood in Jerusalem. The Hassid asked politely to come into my office, and I overcame the fear and invited him in, and I went to the kitchen and fixed tea for both of us.

He said that someone sent him to me with a question! He asked if I had a Talmud in the office. He saw that I had more than one version, and I asked which versions he was interested in. He answered, "Any edition that you would like," so I brought down the Hebrew-English Soncino Talmud. The Rabbi said, "Open the volume of Baba Batra, page 60b. Read the statement of Rabbi Ishmael close to the bottom of the page. I start reading in Hebrew and see Rabbi Ishmael is giving the same advice that the Apostle Paul gave in the letter of 1st Corinthians, that it is better because of the times not to get married now. This is an interesting point because orthodoxy always accuses Paul

of being anti-Torah. I keep on reading, and I almost fall off my chair. "Yeshua the Son!" "What is this?" I ask the Rabbi. He came to me, and he had been thinking about this text for a long time. He had read most of the Jewish commentators on the Talmud and also the "Questioning and Answer" Orthodox Jewish literature on this text. I had found no satisfactory answer. Someone send him to me, thinking I might have an answer on this text. Being the first time that I had seen this text, I really didn't have a clue where to look for answers. I asked for one week to study and try to understand this text. The Rabbi very graciously understood, and after a few minutes of talking about family and work, he left my office. I was elated but also, at the same time, anxious. This very learned, ultra-orthodox Rabbi has studied this for some time and has not found a satisfactory answer!

The next day, I prepared a teaching on another text from the Talmud, from the tractate Sanhedrin, page 97a, about the events that would precede the appearance of the Messiah. In the book of Revelation, chapter 15:1ff, the seven angels have seven days of wrath for the world.

The top of page 97a in Sanhedrin reads:

"He replied, 'Thus hath R. Johanan said: in the generation when the son of David [i.e., Messiah] will come, scholars will be few in number, and as for the rest, their eyes will fail through sorrow and grief. Multitudes of trouble and evil decrees will be promulgated anew, each new evil coming with haste before the other has ended.' Our Rabbis taught: In the seven-year cycle at the end of which the son of David will come—in the first year, this verse will be fulfilled: And I will cause it to rain upon one city and cause it not to rain upon another city; in the second, the arrows of hunger will be sent forth..."

This text from Sanhedrin 97a seems to correspond clearly with Revelation 15:1 forward in the discussion of the return of the Messiah. Therefore, the text of Yeshua the Son fits right in place with that of the Talmudic text from Baba Bathra 60b, placing the coming of Yeshua the Son of David and the Son of God in the time when those seven days of punishments on the Earth will end. This is called, in Christian terminology, "Tribulations!" Rabbi Ishmael's prediction is correct; that is, the Messiah does not come with the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, but after seven prophetic years of Angels of God pouring bowls of wrath upon the Earth. And Rabbi Ishmael identifies who is the one that is coming in the generation when the Son of David is returning to Jerusalem: it is Yeshua the Son!

Conclusions:

It is true that the Pharisees and the other Elitist sects in Jerusalem opposed Yeshua, and that opposition was not solely based on religious reasons. Much of the opposition against Yeshua and his disciples was because they hailed from the Galilee and were not a part of the establishment of Jerusalem's elite. However, when we see the amount of late 1st century CE post-destruction rabbinical literature dealing with Yeshua and his disciples, we can recognize that Yeshua occupied the minds and consciousness of the Jewish population. We see the texts in the Talmud that preserve the importance of Yeshua's teaching about halachic issues like the tithes of a prostitute and the price of a dog. We also see the power of Yeshua's name for healing Rabbis and their sons! We see how even in the texts that speak of the condemnation of Yeshua to death by the Sanhedrin, special attention is given to Yeshua, unlike other condemned criminals. The reason given why the announcement of his execution was announced in the streets of Jerusalem 40 days prior to the date of his crucifixion is

The Rabbis of the Talmud, like Balaam, came to curse, but their curses turned out to be blessings.



that he was related to royalty.

I will end this paper on Yeshua in the Talmud with a personal experience with Hugh Schoenfeld in 1985. Hugh Schoenfeld was the author of the book “The Passover Plot.” The book’s thesis was that Yeshua knew the Messianic prophecies and engineered His life to fulfill them. Dr. David Stern, who was an elder in our congregation in Jerusalem, participated in a conference in New Market, England. At the end of the conference, Dr. David Stern suggested we go and visit Hugh Schoenfeld in his home. Hugh Schoenfeld wrote two important books; the first was “The History of Messianic Judaism.” He wrote the second, The Passover Plot, out of a deep disappointment from the Hebrew Christian Community in England. Hugh Schoenfeld confessed that he regretted writing the Passover Plot and asked us to pray for him to live long enough to write a sequel that would correct the impression that his “Passover Plot” gave to people. Reading the Gospels many times through, even after reading the Passover Plot, never gave me the impression that anything that Yeshua did himself or with his apostles was

contrived, pre-planned, and engineered.

The material about Yeshua in the Talmud that I included in this paper is not comprehensive. There is much more that could have been included in this article. It is clear that the Rabbis of the 2nd to 5th centuries CE were not looking to praise Him but to defame Him. But like it happens many times in history, those who came to curse and blacken the Holy Name of Yeshua and the Father, the Almighty God of Israel, ended up instead affirming and confirming that Yeshua was and is even now the King of the Jews, the Son of David, the Messiah who was, is, and will return to Jerusalem, fulfilling all of God’s promises to the nation of Israel and to the whole world.

Final Words: The Rabbis of the Talmud, like Balaam, came to curse, but their curses turned out to be blessings.

A short bibliography for those who want to study and dig deeper into the Pharisaic Jewish ancient literature:

1. Gustaf Dalman – Jesus Christ in the Talmud Midrash and Zohar

2. R. Travers Herford, Christianity in Talmud and Midrash.

3. Peter Schäfer- Jesus in the Talmud

4. Dr. Randy Weiss - Judaism Through the Eyes of Jesus.

5. Even Moffic – What Every Christian Needs to Know About Judaism.

6. Lester L. Grabbe – An Introduction to Second Temple Judaism.

7. James J. DeFrancisco, PhD - A Response to an Orthodox Rabbi and others.

[1] There are two Talmuds: one is called the Babylonian Talmud, and one is called the Jerusalem Talmud. The Jerusalem Talmud is older, by around 100 years, than the Babylonian Talmud. The Jerusalem Talmud is from around the 5th century C.E., and the Babylonian is from around the 6th century C.E. The material has great similarities but also some differences. Although the differences are not so great, they are very significant simply because they are earlier and less polished and worked.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Joseph Shulam was born in Sofia, Bulgaria on March 24, 1946 to a Sephardic Jewish Family. In 1948, his family immigrated to Israel just before the establishment of the State. While in high school, he was introduced to the New Testament and immediately identified with the person of Yeshua. In 1981, Joseph and the small fellowship that was started in his house established one of the first official non-profit organizations of Jewish Disciples of Yeshua in Israel – Netivyah Bible Instruction Ministry. Joseph has lectured extensively and has assisted in encouraging disciples around the world. He and his wife Marcia have two children and two grandchildren.

AN UNUSUAL SIGN OF HEALING & MESSIANIC REDEMPTION

By Rabbi Joshua Brumbach

When I was in college, I taught Hebrew school at a large Reform synagogue nearby. One of my primary responsibilities was to prepare young adolescents for their B'nai Mitzvah. Every year, some poor twelve-year-old kid would be devastated to learn that their entire Torah portion was about physical impurities or skin conditions. Often, they would try everything imaginable to get the rabbi or cantor to let them choose another Torah portion, but usually to no avail.

Specific portions of Scripture, particularly within Leviticus, discuss such maladies in detail. One such example is Leviticus 13:1-3.

ADONAI said to Moses and Aaron, "If someone develops on his skin a swelling,

scab, or bright spot which could develop into the disease tzara'at, he is to be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons who are priests. The priest is to examine the sore on his skin; if the hair in the sore has turned white, and the sore appears to go deep into the skin, it is tzara'at, and after examining him the priest is to declare him ritually impure.

Tzara'at: A Physical or a Spiritual Condition?

Tzara'at is a type of physical condition affecting the skin, often translated as leprosy. However, the modern notion of leprosy is not the best way to understand and describe the Hebrew word tzara'at. Although it is common to understand these passages as dealing with a skin disease as understood by modern

medicine, Jewish tradition teaches that tzara'at is not leprosy at all but rather the symptom of a serious spiritual condition.

According to our sages, tzara'at is a spiritual malady caused by *sinat chinam*—hatred without a reason. It is the direct result of unforgiveness and animosity harbored over time. Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch demonstrates that tzara'at cannot possibly be what we commonly understand as leprosy today. His conclusion is due to two observations: First, the physical symptoms for leprosy are different from the Torah's description of tzara'at. And second, the confinement procedures and rules for a person with tzara'at make no medical sense. For example, a person with tzara'at which covers their entire body is not ritually impure. However, a person who is only

partially covered with tzara'at is ritually impure (see Lev. 13:13).

Another example of the illogical nature of tzara'at has to do with a home or dwelling (see Lev. 14:26). The Torah states that before a house can be declared ritually pure, all its contents must be removed. Otherwise, they become ritually impure. However, if there was truly a worry about tzara'at being a contagious skin disease, it is irrational to exclude household items from the quarantine. They should be included in the quarantine of the house!

The Talmud further states that if the symptoms of tzara'at appear on a newlywed or during a festival, the priest should not even examine the person so as not to interfere with the celebrations.

Therefore, if the purpose was to actually prevent the spread of a disease, it would be important to enforce the laws of tzara'at so as not to spread it around any further.

Tzara'at and Messiah

The rabbis teach that everything in the Torah concerns the Messiah. Therefore, even within this spiritual malady of tzara'at are hidden signs of the Messiah. As evidence of this, let's return to the following:

Leviticus 13:12-13, If the tzara'at breaks out all over the skin, so that, as far as the cohen can see, the person with tzara'at has sores everywhere on his body, from his head to his feet; then the cohen is to examine him, and if he sees that the

tzara'at has covered his entire body, he is to pronounce the person with the sores as ritually pure—it has all turned white and he is clean.

Discussing particularly verse 13, the Talmud states (b. Sanhedrin 97a), "The Son of David (Messiah) will only come when every government becomes heretical. Rabah said, 'Where do we see this in Scripture? From the verse, 'He has turned completely white; he is ritually pure.'"

The medieval commentator Rashi further explains, "Just as when the affliction has spread throughout the entire skin the person is ritually pure, so too, when all the governments have become heretical, the redemption will come."

Just as when the affliction has spread throughout the entire skin the person is ritually pure, so too, when all the governments have become heretical, the redemption will come.

Recognizing that the Messiah must be afflicted and familiar with suffering, the rabbis of the Talmud went even further, noting that one of the ways the Messiah will be identified is with the title, The Leper Scholar:

The rabbis say that Messiah's name is The Leper Scholar of the House of Rabbi, for it is written, "Surely he has borne our grief and carried our sorrows, yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten, and afflicted by God (Sanhedrin 98b, quoting Isaiah 53:4)."

The rabbis obviously recognized that this does not mean that the Messiah would literally be afflicted with tzara'at, but that this was a metaphor for one familiar with suffering, affliction, and being on the margins of society.

The ancient sages clearly recognized that tzara'at was a physical symptom of sin. It was a spiritual disease that must be kept in check. And to specifically avoid tzara'at, we must avoid slander and baseless hatred towards others.

Yeshua himself taught that we must forgive and not let baseless hatred eat away at us.

"And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins" (Mark 11:25).

And he further stated:

"Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will

be forgiven" (Luke 6:37).

Yeshua and Those with Tzara'at

Descriptions of those who were afflicted with tzara'at and also healed of tzara'at are mentioned in several places within the New Testament. And their healings were actually a sign of Yeshua being the Messiah.

In a dramatic encounter, we read in the Gospel of Luke:

Luke 5:12-14

Once, when Yeshua was in one of the towns, there came a man completely covered with tzara'at. On seeing Yeshua, he fell on his face and begged him, "Sir, if you are willing, you can make me

The ancient sages clearly recognized that tzara'at was a physical symptom of sin.

The rabbis of the Talmud went even further, noting that one of the ways the Messiah will be identified is with the title, The Leper Scholar.

clean.” Yeshua reached out his hand and touched him, saying, “I am willing! Be cleansed!” Immediately, the tzara’at left him. Then Yeshua warned him not to tell anyone. “Instead, as a testimony to the people, go straight to the cohen and make an offering for your cleansing, as Moses commanded.” But the news about Yeshua kept spreading all the more, so that huge crowds would gather to listen and be healed of their sicknesses. However, he made a practice of withdrawing to remote places in order to pray.

What is so fascinating about this passage,

especially considering the descriptions of quarantining tzara’at in the Torah, is that Yeshua reached out and touched him (see verse 13). Normally, contact with someone with tzara’at would render that person ritually impure. But that is not what happens to Yeshua. In this case, the person is healed.

Conclusion

All of us have spiritual sores and wounds, which, if left untreated, can fester into something much worse. Tzara’at, which the rabbis identified

as a physical symptom of *sinat chinam* (baseless hatred), is only one example of a spiritual malady that can destroy us. But forgiveness and healing can set us free!

Just as Yeshua reached out his hand and touched the man with tzara’at, he wants to reach out and touch each one of us as well. We must learn how to go before our great High Priest (see Hebrews 5-7), Yeshua, our Messiah, and let him inspect us. For through him, not only will we find healing and wholeness, but redemption as well.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Joshua Brumbach serves as Senior Rabbi of Simchat Yisrael in West Haven, CT, President of the Messianic Jewish Rabbinical Council, and adjunct faculty at The King’s University and Messianic Jewish Theological Institute. He is the author of two biblical commentaries and numerous articles, is a doctoral candidate in rabbinic literature at the Spertus Institute for Jewish Learning and Leadership, holds an MA in Rabbinic Writings from Messianic Jewish Theological Institute, and a BA in Jewish and Biblical Studies from UCLA. Rabbi Brumbach is married, has two sons, is an avid mountain biker, and enjoys the outdoors.

THE SIDDUR

’MAY OUR EYES BEHOLD YOUR RETURN’

By Elhanan ben-Avraham

As a Messianic Jew serving in the Israel Defense Force (IDF), one faces a number of challenges. Once that fact becomes known to our fellow soldiers, we are watched carefully until we prove ourselves. If one is a decent chap and does his job well, he is normally accepted as “one of the boys.” But that is just one of the challenges.

Once, I was serving a stint of reserve duty at Beit El (Bethel) in Samaria, the place where the Bible describes Jacob fleeing from his bother Esau, and there receiving the dream of the ladder to heaven, which later Yeshua alluded to as referring to himself. When it was discovered that I was an artist, I was given the task to paint a fairly large mural of “Jacob’s Dream” on a wall of the army base there. I took the opportunity as an honor and executed the mural between assigned guard duties and patrols. This had apparently earned me some credit with my fellow soldiers and also opened up many interesting conversations about the Bible, Jacob, and even Yeshua.

Being on duty for close to a month with a group of people leaves a lot of time together for conversation, as there is really not much else to do. My unit was made up of fellow Jews, each one being from a different country on the planet, from Russia to Argentina to Iran to Morocco to Turkey to the USA, and even Sweden. It was the actual fulfillment of the promise to Jacob at Beit El that his seed would be gathered from all the nations where they were scattered.

Off-duty time I would often spend in the synagogue reading, praying, and studying. This was many years ago, and I was just becoming familiar with the Siddur. There at Beit El, I was amazed to learn that one of the prayers in the Siddur, which appears several times, is, “May our eyes behold your return unto Zion in mercy; blessed are You, O LORD, who returns his dwelling presence to Zion.” This prayer is prayed daily by orthodox Jews in synagogues around the planet.

I found the prayer so inspiring that, one

Later, I would sing that song with my guitar, and it would become a popular song of worship in Messianic congregations in Israel and elsewhere.

night while guarding the walls of Beit El in the wee hours, I came up with a tune that I began singing under the same stars that our father Jacob, who

was to become Israel, gazed upon from this very place. I was patrolling high above the base as a watchman on its walls, tapping out the tune on my M-16 rifle. “Ve techezeina eineinu b’shuvcha l’Zion b’rachamim. Baruch ata Adonai, ha machzir shechinato l’Zion.” Later, I would sing that song with my guitar, and it would become a popular song of worship in Messianic congregations in Israel and elsewhere. It was also recorded professionally and sold as a cut on a CD available to Israelis.

One day, I found myself on the duty roster to guard the gate of Beit El with another soldier. My partner-in-arms turned out to be a very religious, orthodox Jew named Moshe (Moses). He had heard that I was a believer in Yeshua and simply could not wait to get at me. He started up almost immediately, not considering that the two of us would spend the next

The Siddur is a treasury of deep and moving prayer and wisdom, most of which is taken straight from the Bible.



twelve hours together on duty.

“How can you accept the idea of the Messiah coming and going away and coming back again?!” Moshe said, in Hebrew, “That is not Judaism; that is Christianity! Our Mashiach will come once.” I looked at him, thinking of my newly acquired knowledge of the Siddur, and said, “Moshe, you are a religious Jew. Do you pray with the Siddur?”

“Of course,” he replied, “every day.”

I went on, “Do you think about what you are praying?”

He looked at me a bit puzzled and replied, “What are you trying to say?”

“You pray, ‘May our eyes behold your return unto Zion.’ Return?” I emphasized that word. I leaned forward into his face.

“He went away? And he will return?” Moshe was dazzled with new insight, straight from the Jewish prayer book that has been prayed for many, many generations of our people. Needless to say, the rest of our long guard duty was passed in lively, friendly, passionate, and fruitful discussion there at the gates of Beit El.

The Siddur is a treasury of deep and moving prayer and wisdom, most of which is taken straight from the Bible. It not only connects us with the God of Israel, it also connects us with our fathers, who prayed during the many centuries of awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem and all of Israel, many ancient prayers going back to the days of Yeshua. But it is also a treasure in which pearls speaking of Yeshua the Messiah are hidden, pearls just waiting to be uncovered and brought to light.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Elhanan ben-Avraham, born in 1945, is a professional artist, poet, writer, father of two, and grandfather of four, and he has been living in Israel since 1979. He has served in the IDF, taught the Bible internationally, published five illustrated books of poetry, painted two large Biblical murals in public buildings in Jerusalem, and most recently produced THE JERUSALEM ILLUSTRATED BIBLE, among many other works. He and his wife live in a quiet village in the Mountains of Judah.

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netivyah.org
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Tel. 972-2-6231019 | www.netivyah.org | MORDECHAI NARKIS ST. 16, JERUSALEM 9246208, ISRAEL