

Teaching *from* Zion

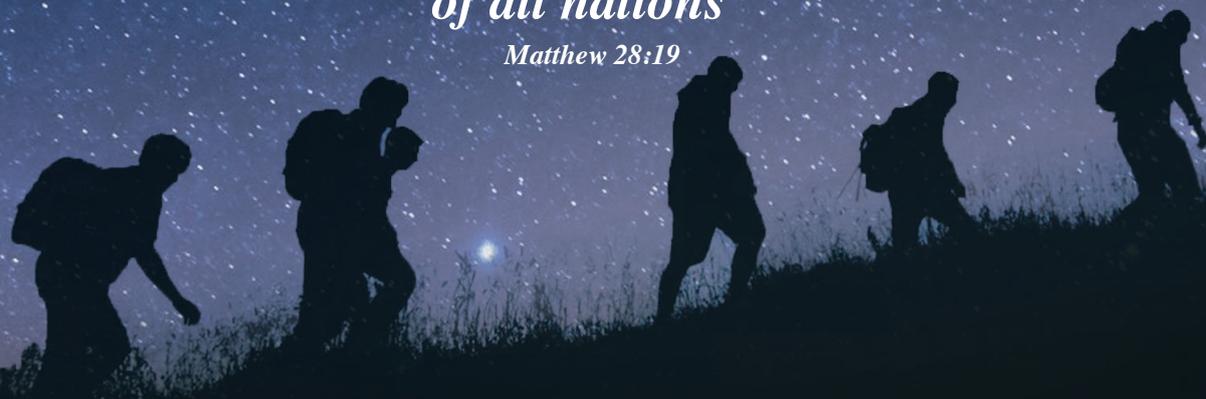
Netivyah Bible Instruction Ministry
Jerusalem, Israel

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

DISC IPL SHIP

*"Go and make disciples
of all nations"*

Matthew 28:19





Netivyah נתיביה

Teaching from Zion

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Feel free to contact us at tfz@netivyah.org or by mail at PO Box 8043, Jerusalem 91080, 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, "... According to the Way which they call 'sectarian,' I do serve the God of our fathers, believing everything that is accordance with the Torah, and that is written in the Prophets" (Acts 24:14). 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).

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By Netivyah Staff

This issue of Teaching from Zion focuses on the topic of discipleship. This is an issue of fundamental importance; however, the phenomenon of discipling, and even the meaning of the word discipling, has largely fallen into obscurity around the world. Although beneficial, discipleship is not a class nor is it greeting your brother once a week to ask how he is doing.

Discipleship is a full-time, simultaneously personal and reverent relationship between a student and his master. This model is what guarded Judaism for ages and what instructed new participants to nascent Christianity. The Mishna (second-century-A.D. codification of Jewish oral law) had plenty to say about discipleship in the opening of Pirkei Avot: “appoint for thyself a teacher [rabbi],” “rear many disciples,” “bring them close to the Torah,” and “let thy house be a house of meeting for the sages and suffer thyself to be covered by the dust of their feet, and drink in their words with thirst.”

These quotes illustrate the normative custom of the time of Yeshua to have disciples and be a disciple. Learning Torah is only half of the equation in discipleship; teaching is the other half. For what good is learning if you do not teach it to others (by word and deed), and what good is teaching if you do not receive difficult questions that drive you to continue learning?

Yeshua and his disciples were together constantly, night and day; they saw all of His actions, and heard all of His words. They asked questions freely, and He wisely answered them variously with parables, fondness, humor, or sternness as the situation called for it so that they could ultimately imitate His ways. This kind of discipleship was the standard instructive model at that time.

Fast-forward to the 21st century and discipleship is frequently something limited to reading a self-help book, or emailing your spiritual leader to ask a tough question. But don't we live in a different world now? What should discipleship look like today if everyone has a job, a family, bills, due-dates and deadlines? Well, were the disciples so different? They had families, jobs, and other responsibilities too, but they decisively shifted their values putting relationship with the Master over even those other important obligations. It is only a matter of prioritization.

Discipleship is vital because it is the internal instructive and corrective apparatus for all believers. You can see now that without it, studying declines, knowledge decreases, error creeps in, chastity disappears, and sin is marginalized. But with

proper discipleship, we grow in accountability, understanding and righteousness. Indeed, Yeshua gave us a commandment and a model about discipleship. He commanded us to “Make disciples of all nations” and as His followers, we must (re) discover what that means.

Netivyah ministers in many ways to serve as a doorway to establish more opportunities to disciple. During the season of Purim, Netivyah, together in partnership with the New Beginnings Church in Texas, was able to give heavy-duty, high-quality, backpacks, filled with goodies and necessities, to 225 believing soldiers throughout all of Israel. We are grateful to be able to bless the brave men and women who courageously serve in the Israeli Army by giving them a useful and enjoyable gift.

Our local food distribution project, Hamotzi, has continued to expand. This year we are assisting, on a weekly basis, more than 130 families living in Jerusalem from various backgrounds. We provide these families with an average 25 pounds (11 kg) of fresh produce, dry and canned goods, and high-quality beef, chicken and fish in a welcoming and friendly environment. Further, our academic program is growing too, and this year we are sponsoring and blessing eighteen believing students with scholarships.

Please keep the recent Portugal Conference in prayer that it would raise awareness to the millions of Anusim (crypto-Jews) worldwide that would return to Israel were it not for compulsory conversion. Also remember Netivyah as we approach our 40th anniversary celebration in prayer. May God bless our next 40 years with teaching, helping and discipling others in accordance with Yeshua's example.

Joseph, Yehuda, and Daniel continue to travel across the world to communities in Asia, South America, the USA, and Europe, bringing God's word and spreading Yeshua's light to the nations. We strive to connect with even more congregations across the globe, sharing our mission and supporting fellow believers. Likewise, new staff members have joined our team this year in an effort to grow and improve our ministry. We are excited to serve God and to do His will through our work at Netivyah. We thank you for your persistent prayers and support, and we hope that you will enjoy learning about the Biblical discipleship model. “Then having gone out, disciple all nations, immersing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things, whatever I commanded you. And, behold, I am with you all the days until the completion of the age. Amen.” (Matthew 28:19-20)

Rabbis and Their Disciples

between the First Century B.C. and Second Century A.D.

By Joseph Shulam

The Definition of a Rabbi

The word “rabbi” means “my master/teacher” in Hebrew. A rabbi is a Jewish religious leader; some lead synagogues (congregations), others are teachers, while some lead and teach informally. Rabbinic ordination is known as “semichah.” It is performed by three other rabbis who are in good standing with the community. After examinations and tests, these three rabbis will lay hands on the candidate’s head and pronounce a blessing over him and officially give him the title of rabbi. In the Hasidic community, a rabbi who has advanced training in Jewish law (halachah) is known as a “rav.”

Yeshua is called rabbi by both His disciples and His opponents. Why is He called by this title? Christians know Jesus as God, as Christ, and as King of the Jews, but in fact reading the four Gospels one sees that the main function of Yeshua was to teach and be a charismatic rabbi of healing, deliverance, and signs and wonders to follow His teaching. The implications of receiving Yeshua as

a rabbi are great for the early followers and for Yeshua’s followers today.

We receive salvation from our sins due to Yeshua’s death and resurrection. We likewise receive instruction from the Torah with the divine interpretation that takes into account not only the words of the Torah, but also the total counsel of God’s wisdom that is imbedded in it, as well as in the Prophets and the Writings¹. It is from Yeshua’s teachings that we learn how to live. We receive our values and the very matrix of our lives as His disciples. We learn from His instruction the very essence of obedience to God and His commandments.

Yeshua is Still Our Rabbi Today

The simple answer is that Yeshua was indeed a rabbi, and He ought to remain our rabbi to this day. We are called today as the disciples of Yeshua just like the early followers were. There is interesting evidence in the Jewish rabbinical literature that speaks of Yeshua’s disciples, and I would like to show you

There were Jews in the Galilee that were known as disciples of Yeshua and honored enough to be asked questions of the Torah.

one example: “When R. Eliezer² was arrested because of Minuth³, they brought him up to the tribune to be judged. The governor said to him, ‘How can a sage man like you occupy himself with those

1. The Writings – Ha Ketuvim, are the books of Job, Psalms, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Song of Songs, Proverbs, Ruth, Chronicles, and Ester.

2. Eliezer B. Hyrcanus was arrested on suspicion of following that sect.

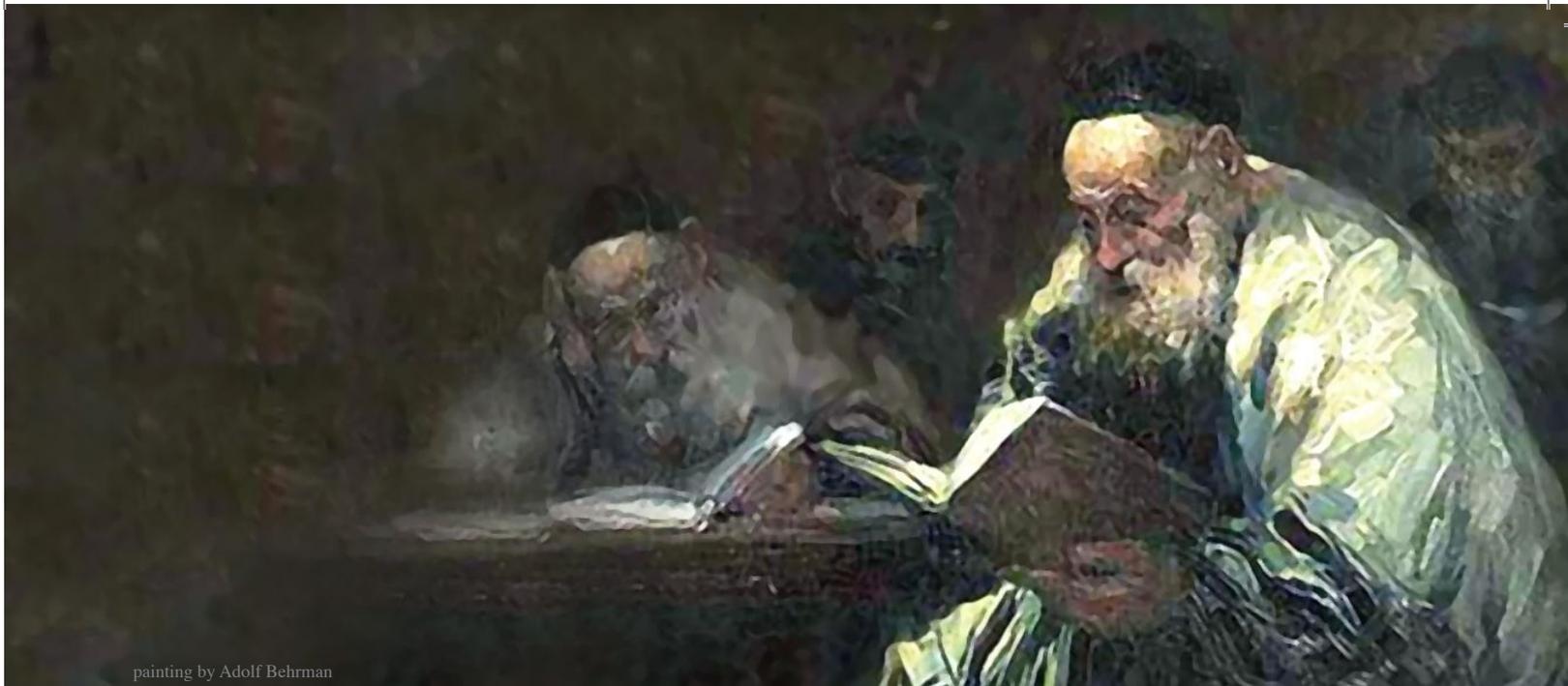
3. The Hebrew word for heresy, with special reference to Christianity. For example, during the Roman persecution of Christians in Palestine in the year 109 under Trajan (Herford, loc. cit.)

4. Today this village is named Saknein; it is near the Netophah Valley in the Galilee.

5. “You shall not bring the wages of a harlot or the price of a dog to the house of the Lord your God for any vowed offering, for both of these are an abomination to the LORD your God.” (Deut. 23:18)

6. The High Priest had to spend 25 hours in a room in the Temple and stay pure before the Day of Atonement. Yeshua’s advice was to use the money that was forbidden to build a bathroom for the High Priest in the Temple precinct. This would solve the contradiction of the Torah that states that everyone in Israel is obligated to bring the tithe to the Temple and the other text from Deut. 23:18 that forbids the tithes of the wages of the Harlot and the price of a dog.

7. Proverbs 5:8



painting by Adolf Behrman

idle things?’ He replied, ‘I acknowledge the Judge as right.’ The governor thought that he referred to him — though he really referred to his Father in Heaven — and said, ‘Because thou hast acknowledged me as right, I pardon; thou art acquitted.’ When he came home, his disciples called on him to console him, but he would accept no consolation. Said R. Akiba to him, ‘Master, wilt thou permit me to say one thing of what thou hast taught me?’ He replied, ‘Say it.’ ‘Master,’ said he, ‘perhaps some of the teaching of the Minim had been transmitted to thee? He exclaimed: ‘Akiba thou hast reminded me.’ I was once walking in the upper-market of Sepphoris when I came across one of the disciples of Jesus the Nazarene Jacob of Kefar-Sekaniah⁴ by name, who said to me: It is written in your Torah, Thou shalt not bring the hire of a harlot . . . into the house of the Lord thy God⁵. May such money be applied to the erection of a retiring place for the High Priest?⁶ To which I made no reply. Said he to me: Thus was I taught [by Jesus the Nazarene], For of the hire of a harlot hath she gathered them and unto the hire of a harlot shall they return.⁷ they came from a place of filth, let them go to a place of filth. Those words pleased me very much, and that is why I was arrested for apostasy. . . .’ (Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Avodah Zarah 16b – 17a)

What do we see from this Talmudic story from the early second century A.D.?

We see that there were Jews in the Galilee that were known as disciples of Yeshua and honored enough to be asked questions of the Torah. The teachings of Yeshua were considered a great discovery and innovation that impressed one of the great rabbis of the early second century. Even more so, we see the legacy that Yeshua left behind as a rabbi in the Land of Israel.

When we look in the Greek New Testament, we see that Yeshua is called “rabbi” 16 times. Here are some of the Greek texts that serve as an example of how Yeshua was reference by this term:

Matt. 26:49: “Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, ‘Greetings, Rabbi!’ and kissed Him.”

Mark 9:5: “Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, ‘Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.’”

John 1:38: Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, “What do you seek?” They said to Him, “Rabbi, where are You staying?”

If I look at the Hebrew background of the Greek text, then every appearance of the Greek “διδάσκαλος” or “teacher” ought to be understood as “rabbi.” This would increase the number of times that Yeshua was called “rabbi” in the Gospels to an approximate total of 63 times.

Here are some interesting verses from the Gospels that make this point very clear: “Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region. And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.” (Luke 4:14–15)

It should be obvious that a person who is not considered a rabbi would not be invited to Jewish synagogues to teach the Torah. Yeshua was quite famous, and that is where the following phrase comes from: “news of Him went out through all the surrounding region.” The second point that this text indicates is that when the people in the synagogues heard Yeshua teach, they all glorified Him. This would not happen unless Yeshua was already accepted as a teacher/rabbi, and he would not be considered a rabbi if He did not have disciples that followed him.

In summary, it is clear that Yeshua was considered a rabbi both by His followers and His opponents. Those who

followed Yeshua were always referred to as disciples and they never called themselves Christians. In fact, the word “disciple” or “disciples” appears in the New Testament 275 times. It is the most prevalent name that the followers of Yeshua were called in the New Testament.

What Does it Mean to be a Disciple of a Rabbi in the First Century B.C - A.D.?

The Hebrew term for what it means to be a disciple is “shimush chachamim” (שימוש חכמים). Keeping in context with the time, this means that being a deacon, or a servant of the rabbis, is essentially the first stage of discipleship. You serve your rabbi and you learn from your teacher everything to do with the Torah and the Word of God, as well as how to emulate him. This is the objective of discipleship; to follow, to copy, and to replicate your rabbi. It is much more than the Greek word implies. The Greek words “τῶν μαθητῶν” and “τοὺς μαθητάς” are interpreted as “disciples,” “pupils,” and “followers.”

The Hebrew

word that translates the Greek is “talmid” (תלמיד).

A person could not be a disciple of a rabbi in the first century A.D. without dedicating himself above all other duties to serve his rabbi. The Babylonian Talmud preserves a description of how a disciple should serve his rabbi: he would carry the rabbi’s baggage, wash the rabbi’s feet before going to sleep, prepare his food to his liking, and provide him with money for his needs.

Further, it is forbidden for a disciple to contradict his rabbi in public. He cannot rule against him in matters of the Torah as he is the disciple’s ultimate authority. In addition, disciples were also obligated to protect their teacher. This is the reason why Yeshua ordered His disciples to sell their coats and buy swords instead.

The duties of the rabbi are first of all to teach Torah and to train his disciples to emulate himself to surpass even the rabbi himself in knowledge and practice of the Torah. Furthermore, the rabbi is obligated to protect his disciples from

heresy and sin. For this reason, he has the privilege to reprimand his disciples and judge their actions.

Likewise, there is a fascinating text that demonstrates what it means to be a disciple: But Jehoshaphat said, “Is there no prophet of the Lord here, that we may inquire of the Lord by him?” So one of the servants of the king of Israel answered and said, “Elisha the son of Shaphat is here, who poured water on the hands of Elijah.” (2 Kings 3:11)

The greatness of Elisha the Prophet was demonstrated by describing him as a disciple of Elijah the prophet, and the greatness of his discipleship was that he had the privilege to help Elijah wash his hands.

These instructions are taken very seriously by the Jewish community from the first century A.D. and even in some circles today.

Disciples are the Perpetuation of Judaism

Disciples are of utmost importance to Jews as they mark the preservation and continuation of Judaism itself. It creates

The only guarantee of continuation that Judaism and true Biblical Christianity have is the perpetuation of disciples.



a chain and continuum that ensures that the coming generations will remain dedicated to and influenced by the Torah that God gave Israel on Mount Sinai. Without disciples of Moses, Joshua, and the prophets, there would be no Judaism today nor would the Bible exist. Only through the followers of Moses and the preservation of the tradition do we have a Bible to this day, and it is considered holy and true because it was transmitted meticulously from one disciple to the next.

The same cannot be said about Christianity because there were no more disciples of Yeshua after the middle of the fourth century A.D. The kingdom of Byzantium took the place of Yeshua and replaced him with an idol hanging on a cross. The dead Yeshua is venerated in place of the living Son of David who is sitting on the right hand of the Almighty.

The only guarantee of continuation that Judaism and true Biblical Christianity has is the perpetuation of disciples, and the only way to accomplish this is to find good people who are willing to follow the example of the Biblical disciples.

I remember in the 1960's, when I was a student at Georgia Christian School near Valdosta, Georgia, I could tell who was a disciple of Bill Long and who was a disciple of Howard Wakefield based on the kind of trousers that they would wear. The disciples of Bill Long would wear the sansabelt type of trousers that did not require a belt, whereas Howard Wakefield would wear trousers with a 1.25-inch belt.

In Jerusalem, you will see Orthodox

Jews wearing these big, mink-fur hats of different shapes even in the sweltering heat of the summer. These fur hats are of different sizes, shapes, height, and thickness; those who know how to distinguish will be able to tell you which Hasidic Jewish rabbi they are following based on their hat style. A disciple follows his master in every possible way. He wears the same hat, he shops in the same shops, and even if there is only one shop in the world that makes a hat like the rabbi's hat – they will have to buy their hat there. This is the rabbinical method of making disciples, but is this not the very same method that Yeshua commanded those who follow him?

Let me remind you of some of Yeshua's principles for making disciples. They are the same as that of the rabbinic tradition that has been in place for many centuries: Matt. 10:24-25: "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household."

Matt. 10:37-38: "Whoever loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves a son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me."

The essence of this text is essentially that the disciples must put their rabbi/master first in their lives. This text does not teach a disciple to hate his physical father or another family member, but it does teach

When a disciple studies Torah from his rabbi, he is doing the most important thing in his life. He is connecting Mount Sinai to Mount Zion and the past to the future of Israel.

that to be a disciple of a great rabbi he must prioritize his life. The reason for this ruling is because of what Yeshua and many of the early rabbis were doing was considered a matter of Tikun Olam – repairing the wrong and broken world.

When a disciple studies Torah from his rabbi, he is doing the most important thing in his life. He is connecting Mount Sinai to Mount Zion and the past to the future of Israel. It is a prophetic act of redemption to study the Torah with a

8. Please look at the citations about this concept in the New Testament:

Matt. 8:22: "And Jesus said to him, 'Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead.'"

Matt. 9:9: "As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, 'Follow me.' And he rose and followed him."

Matt. 10:38: "And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me."

Matt. 16:24: "Then Jesus told his disciples, 'If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.'"

Matt. 19:21: "Jesus said to him, 'If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.'"

Matt. 19:28: "Jesus said to them, 'Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.'"

The key to successful discipling in Orthodox Judaism is that the rabbi chooses an individual who is worthy to be his disciple.

teacher of authority. This principle of discipleship was already laid down by Moses in the wilderness. Look at these two passages and learn from them: Num. 14:24: “But my servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit and has followed me fully, I will bring into the land into which he went, and his descendants shall possess it.”

Num. 32:11: “Surely none of the men who came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, because they have not wholly followed me . . .”

The operative word in these two texts, like in many others, is the word “follow/followed.” In the New Testament, we see the very same pattern in the demand of Yeshua and Paul from their disciples.

I will note examples only from Matthew because we are not dealing with the synoptic problems; rather, this is a paper about the Jewish system of

discipling good men to carry on the baton through the generations.⁸

In the Judaism of the first-century rabbis, what the disciple did in service was much more important to the master than what he learned from the Scriptures.

The well-known text of Yeshua’s confrontation with Peter is a classic discipleship story: “But He turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.’ Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.’” (Matthew 16:23-24).

Peter did not leave Yeshua, nor did he get offended. He just he just straightened his attitude and followed him all the way to the end of his life when he was martyred in Rome. A rabbi can and ought to discipline his disciples when necessary. We see in the previous passage how Yeshua was upset by the behavior and attitude of his followers, therefore he made his feelings known to them in a clear fashion.

The conclusion from this is that the study aspect of discipleship is important, but the practical service that a disciple does for his master is even more essential as this trains his character.

Rabbi Maier makes this point even clearer: “We have learned that a disciple that studied and invested in his study but did not serve his Rabbi – he is still a simpleton.”

You can’t be a good disciple unless you follow your rabbi and assist him with the most mundane of services. In the New Testament we see the same attitude expressed by Yeshua in the story of the two sons: Matt. 21:28-31: “But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he

came to the first and said, ‘Son, go, work today in my vineyard.’ He answered and said, ‘I will not,’ but afterward he regretted it and went. Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, ‘I go, sir,’ but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?”

In this story that Yeshua shares with his disciples, we see the same principle. It is not the son who said “yes,” but rather the one who actually followed through with the service that is considered the good son and the true disciple.

According to the rabbis, a disciple can be very intelligent and a good student, but if he does not have the humility and the spirit of a servant, he will never be a good disciple.

It is important to gain knowledge from books as well as from the doctrinal principles, but if the disciple is not willing to serve his rabbi – to learn how to live and bless others – then he is not worthy of learning from him.

In the New Testament, we see that Yeshua lived in the house of Peter and his family for two years in the village of Capernaum. Who do you think did Yeshua’s laundry? Who do you think cooked for him? Yeshua was already considered a great rabbi, a healer, and a miracle worker who was able to feed 5000 people with five pita breads and two fish. Yeshua’s disciples did not sit in a church and learn from a workbook all day. Rather, they learned while on their feet by following Yeshua through the hills of the Galilee and down the Jordan valley. This was the rabbinical method of discipling.

Here is an interesting story that demonstrates how a disciple learns from his rabbi: “Rabbi Akiva said: ‘One time I was walking on the road and saw a dead person. The dead person was an opportunity to do a good deed. I carried

9. A legal decision based on an interpretation of the Word of God. This is not an issue of holding a different opinion, but it is an issue of making a legally binding ruling for the community.

the corpse on my shoulder four miles until I found a cemetery in which to bury the body. From there, I went to see Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Joshua. I told them the story.’ Their response was: ‘you should know that every step that you took with the corpse of the dead on your shoulder would be attributed to you as if you have shed blood.’ Akiva’s response to these two great rabbis was: ‘From that time on I never stopped from serving the rabbi. I found it much worthier to serve my rabbis than to only learn from them.’” (Jerusalem Talmud, Nazir 34a–34b)

One of the main rules for the disciples’ relationship with their rabbi is that a disciple cannot make a ruling (a decision based on Halacha⁹) in the face of his rabbi. In other words, a disciple cannot disagree with his rabbi in public. The

The Rabbi always chooses his disciples and not the other way around. This point is of great importance because there is a certain chemistry between the rabbi and his disciples.

result of this is that in a public setting a disciple must respect his rabbi’s legal ruling on the Word of God.

How Does One Become a Rabbi?

The word “semichah” means an ordination, and it is done by three other rabbis who are in good standing with the community. After examinations and tests, the three rabbis lay hands on the candidate’s head and pronounce a blessing and infer on him the title of

rabbi. There is no set curriculum of study and no set period that a disciple must study with his rabbi before he can graduate and become a rabbi. When his rabbi thinks that the disciple is ready, and three other rabbis from the community examine the disciple and think that he is ready to be a leader and perform the necessary tasks of a rabbi, only then will he become one.

This semichah was of great importance to the church in the 21st century. The cookie-cutter method is where a person graduates from college or Bible school and upon doing so, automatically receives the title of preacher or pastor and thus is placed to lead a church. In this modern development, the concept of a person being called to ministry has become a rare phenomenon.

The chances of finding a true spiritual leader who felt called by God to shepherd and lead a community of disciples has declined because in most cases the cookie cutter preacher/pastor was educated but not disciplined. The successful and true shepherds of the Body of the Messiah are the ones who have been disciples and have disciples of their own. A rabbi/shepherd cannot disciple others unless he himself was disciplined. The principle is that you can’t give what you don’t have. In order to be a rabbi/shepherd and make disciples, the men of God who are

called to minister must stay in the same community for a significant period of time to lead and make disciples and gain the favor with both God and men.

Rabbi Zalman Posner served over 50 years in the Shaarit Israel Orthodox Synagogue in Nashville. He was able to gain the respect of both the Jewish and the Christian communities in that city. Most Sunday mornings, I could not get a ride with someone to church, so I would walk all the way from Lipscomb to West End. One Sunday morning, I arrived a little early to the West End Church, and the doors were not open yet. I noticed that a light was on in Rabbi Posner’s office, so I decided to go up and visit him.

Orthodox rabbis are accessible for their disciples; a disciple can normally visit his rabbi on very short notice and sometimes without notice at all.

I knocked on the rabbi’s door and he welcomed me into his office. We sat and had a good chat for a while. After a short time, he got out of his chair, walked to the window, and looked outside. He called me over to show me what he was seeing out the window. I walked over to him, and he pointed to the well-dressed men and women walking into the West End Church. He said, “Joseph, these are good people. They allow the Jews who come to the synagogue to park in their parking lot. But, is it not strange that every week they come to church to worship a dead Jew hanging on a cross, but the living Jews they don’t like?” I said, “Rabbi why do you say this?” Rabbi Posner turned to me with a strange look. He said, “I have been the rabbi here for 13 years (this happened in 1967) and no one from this church has ever invited me for anything. We are neighbors; neighbors ought to have at least something to talk about.”

In 1962, outside of Valdosta, Georgia, I visited a revival meeting in one of

the African-American churches. The visiting preacher was Marshall Keeble. After the service and sermon, I walked up to Brother Keeble to shake his hand, and he asked me where I was from. I told him that I was from Jerusalem, Israel. Brother Keeble asked what I wanted to do when I finished school. I said, “I want to preach.” Brother Keeble said, “Don’t preach!” He quickly modified his statement: “Don’t preach unless you have to preach, because the Lord called you to be an evangelist.”

A Rabbi/Shepherd Must Choose His Disciples

How does a rabbi choose the individuals that he wants to become his disciples and continue his vision and teaching and improve upon them? Well, we have one of the finest examples in the New Testament – with Yeshua himself and with the Apostle Paul.

The first thing that we notice is that the rabbi always chooses his disciples and not the other way around. This point is of great importance because there is a certain chemistry between the rabbi and his disciples. This chemistry has several hallmark signs:

1. The disciple’s age is such that he can be influenced and responsible.
2. The disciple keeps himself busy and occupied; it is not feasible to take a person who is doing nothing worthy and make him start doing so suddenly.
3. He is willing to sacrifice in order to serve, study, and follow the rabbi. If a person is not willing to sacrifice in order to be a disciple, then he is not ready to become one.
4. The prospective disciple has potential to eventually stand on his own and continue the mission and the vision of his master.

When we look into how Elijah chose Elisha, we can learn how the above points are reflected in the story: “So he departed from there, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he was with the twelfth. Then Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle on him. And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah, and said, ‘Please let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you.’ And he said to him, ‘Go back again, for what have I done to you?’ So, Elisha turned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen and slaughtered them and boiled their flesh, using the oxen’s equipment, and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and followed Elijah and became his servant.” (1 Kings 19:19–21)

Notice that all the four points that I mentioned above are implemented in the case of Elijah and Elisha. He saw Elisha plowing with a powerful team of oxen; this meant that this young man was successful and hard-working with a good standard. Elisha was willing to hear and obey Elijah and did not even go say goodbye to his family. He was also willing to sacrifice his oxen – it would be like someone sacrificing his Lamborghini tractor, a twelve-cylinder full of horse power set on fire as a sacrifice to the Lord.

The key to successful discipling in Orthodox Judaism is that the rabbi chooses an individual who is worthy to be his disciple and then invests in him everything from study time to discipline and healing of emotions and wounds.

I have been fortunate to have good people who were my teachers all the way from elementary school through advanced studies both in the USA and also in Jerusalem. These teachers did more than just share information.

Today, every smartphone or laptop

The second stage of discipling is putting the disciple to the test. The first test that he must pass is the willingness to learn and his investment in learning.

computer can share more information than any great teacher that I ever had. Rabbi Google is the smartest rabbi in the world, but Rabbi Google does not disciple me or anyone else because in order to disciple, you must have a personal relationship. It is the human relationship that is outside the classroom that makes it possible to disciple. Teachings, webinars, and books can only share information, whereas true discipling can only take place with service and real relationships.

The Stages of Rabbinical Discipleship

The first stage of discipling is to invite them over for a meal. Eating together allows for another opportunity to observe your potential disciple. Pay attention during the meal to the following points: the silence and the feedback (reactions, arguments, and response) from the

¹⁰ See John 3:20, and Romans 7:15

disciple to your conversation. Try to get to know them personally and tell them about yourself.

The second stage of discipling is putting the disciple to the test. The first test that he must pass is the willingness to learn and his investment in learning. Give the disciple a task that has nothing to do with learning, being a scholar, or a rabbi. Send him to the market to do your shopping or to bring your dry cleaning back from the cleaners. Next, try your disciple with an intellectual challenge. Give him a text or a book and have him study, process, and explain the passage to you. This will be an opportunity for you as the rabbi to challenge your disciple and see how much he is willing to invest in order to learn and dig into the material.

You must also study together in a group and pay attention to your new disciple in order to see how

everyone learns and communicates with each other. Challenge your disciple to check his faithfulness and ability to stay faithful even in times of stress and problems.

It is of great importance that your disciple is able to be a part of and cooperate with your other disciples and not be overly zealous and too competitive toward the others. Don't

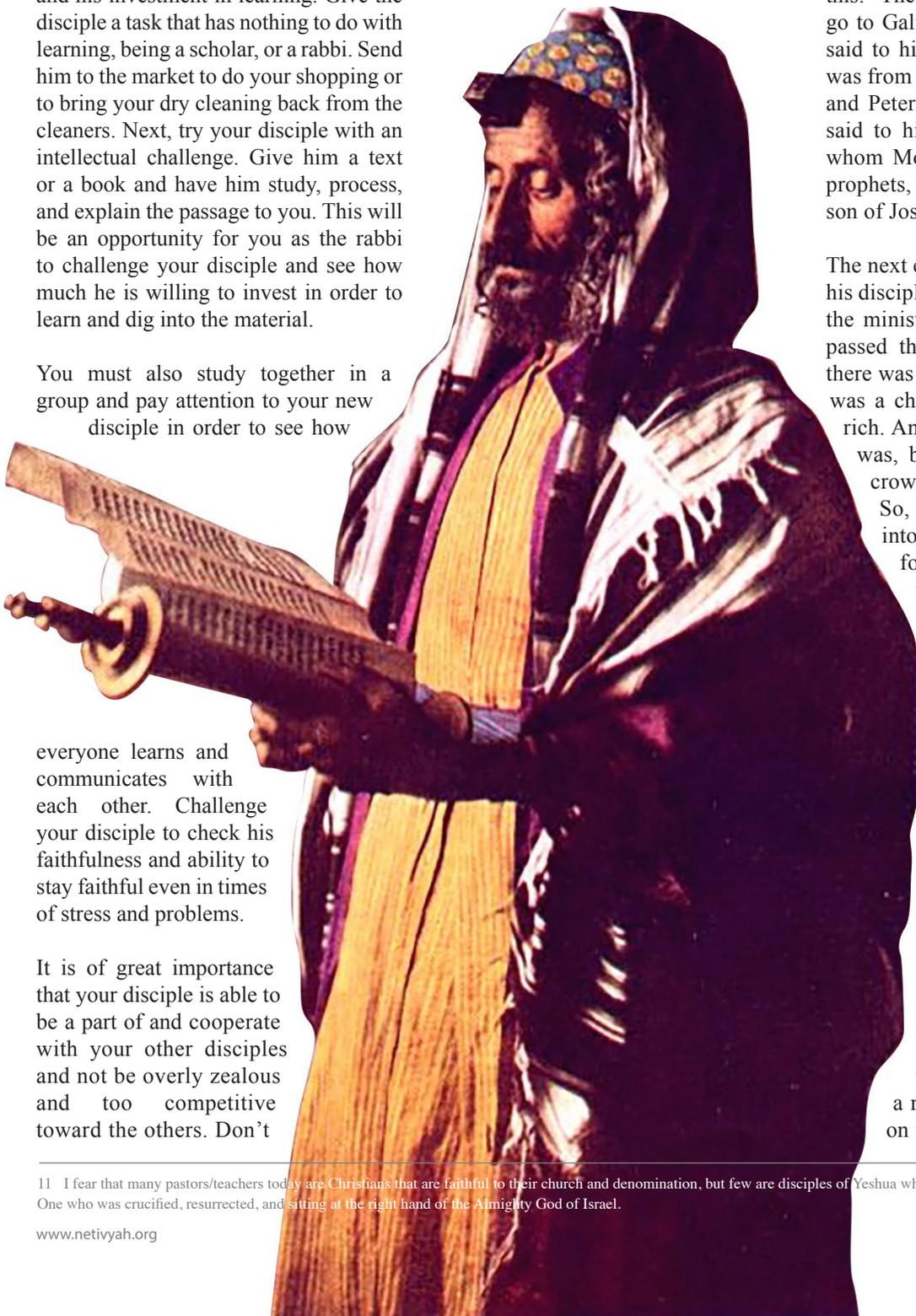
give up on your disciples even if they don't pass some of these tests. Instead, correct them one or two times and guide them on how to improve in the second or third round. However, if they continue to fail and don't draw conclusions or correct their mistakes,

you might have to dismiss them.

Rabbis disciple individuals one-by-one in a group. In fact, Yeshua used this same strategy with his disciples. He called each of them one at a time and made up a collective. Here are some examples of this: "The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, 'Follow Me.' Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, 'We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.'" (John 1:43-45)

The next example of how Yeshua chose his disciples occurred toward the end of the ministry: "Then Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. Now behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature. So, he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house.' So, he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. But when they saw it, they all complained, saying, 'He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner.'" (Luke 19:1-7)

These examples are classic rabbinical methods of spying out who has a great potential to be a disciple. Yeshua was a rabbi, and He was not looking on the outward appearance of the



11 I fear that many pastors/teachers today are Christians that are faithful to their church and denomination, but few are disciples of Yeshua who are willing to pay a price for following the One who was crucified, resurrected, and sitting at the right hand of the Almighty God of Israel.

It took Rabbi Akiba 24 years of studying and following his teachers/rabbis before he could become one himself, and only then was he able to return home to see his wife.

person or his family connections. Rather he looked for people who had an innate interest in the end goal of His Kingdom – spreading the Kingdom of God in Israel and later on in the world.

A rabbi's goal is to make more rabbis. Due to this, there has to be a very serious attitude and investment in the study of the Word of God and rabbinical literature. A rabbi expects his disciples to protect, to serve, and to put him above their own family. Loyalty of the disciple to his master must be uncompromising.

In the New Testament, we see Yeshua teaching His disciples exactly this lesson, and to us today it sounds unreasonable, but every rabbi from the middle of the first century B.C. to the early third century A.D. demanded the same from his disciples. The rabbi

invests into his disciples and in return, they are expected to give 100% loyalty to their rabbi and to his teaching.

“If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.” (Luke 14:26)

The word “hate” in this text is often misunderstood. The dictionary describes the Greek word “miseo (μισέω),” as a much broader meaning than just “hate.” To hate does not always have the meaning of “to detest or abhor.” The main meaning of this Greek word can be: to regard with less affection, less love, less esteem¹⁰.

There is no compromise for the disciple when he commits to follow his rabbi – it must be a full commitment. This is also what Yeshua demands from us even now in the 21st century.

One interesting story in regards to this matter is about Rabbi Akiva, formerly a Gentile/pagan who converted to Judaism because a young lady from Jerusalem fell in love with him. She taught him to read and write so that he could study in the academy to become a rabbi. It took Rabbi Akiba 24 years of studying and following his teachers/rabbis before he could become one himself, and only then was he able to return home to see his wife, Rachel. Rachel, who was the daughter of one of the richest men in Jerusalem, was disowned by her father. She had to cut her hair and sell it in order to supply funds for Rabbi Akiba's education, and she did laundry for others to keep herself alive. This is an extreme example of dedication to the study of Torah and loyalty to teachers.

How Do the Rabbinical Methods of Discipleship Impact the Making of Disciples Today?

Orthodox Jews have been extremely successful in making disciples in Israel and in western communities around the world. With this, it would be wise for disciples of Yeshua to learn from such success and try to replicate it for the Messiah and the Kingdom of God.

One of the most successful organizations in the world is Chabad, the Lubavitch movement. The movement started in Ukraine around 200 years ago and was a part of what is called the Hasidic Revival. The Hasidic Revival was a reaction by a very large number of rabbis in eastern Europe who were deeply disappointed by a false Messiah by the name of Shabtai Zvi. The great disappointment and collapse of the messianic hope that the false messiah Shabtai Zvi generated, had created a spiritual vacuum. The response was a revival of zeal that gave birth to the Hasidic movements that today comprise the majority of what is called “Orthodox Judaism.”

Here is what the Chabad movement has done to gain converts (by converts I don't mean from among gentiles, but from the secular, assimilated Jews). Chabad concentrated on college and university students. They opened a “Hillel House” – a kind of fraternity for Jews on almost all the university campuses in the USA, Europe, and now in other parts of the world.

In the Chabad houses around the world, they place young married couples with children in leadership positions. These young families had been disciplined themselves and are leaders with zeal and excitement for their mission. Likewise, they work to create a hospitable, open-house and non-judgmental atmosphere with light food and drink. Everyone is welcome and accepted, both Jews and non-Jews alike.

Those who come to the Chabad houses

are quickly put to work and asked to help with cleaning, cooking, or going shopping with the rabbi. The study is always in small groups and in non-threatening places, like the rabbi's house, a park, or a coffee shop. The study is always based on some rabbinical story with a moral and social implication. There is no pushing, but there is motivation by example and by the arousal of needing community and God. This aspect is of great importance because every young person looks for identity and belonging in a group. Slowly, there is an introduction to the rabbinical texts like the Mishnah and the Talmud and later on rabbinical material and Kabbalah.

At the end of this process, the disciple is ready to dedicate his life to Chabad. Part of the final process is also match-making – helping the young unmarried to find a mate for life who is also dedicated to the same ideas.

In every Hasidic movement, the rabbi is almost venerated. In some cases, the disciple who wants to serve his rabbi is willing to pay thousands of dollars just to have the privilege to give him a ride home from the airport. This dedication, in my opinion, is so much greater than most Christians' dedication to Yeshua

or to the Father. I don't suggest that in the Body of the Messiah that the earthly leadership should adopt some of these extreme practices. However, I do suggest that the casual relationship and the low respect that exists today between those who are being disciplined and those who are doing the discipleship is missing an important ingredient. The only ones who are at fault in this case are the leaders – those who take themselves and their calling to disciple very casually.

Let us see what Yeshua was demanding and teaching His disciples: "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. . ." (Matt. 10:24-25)

This statement of Yeshua is exactly the position of some of the great rabbis of His day. When Yeshua invited His followers to follow Him and predicted their following Him with "Take up your cross, and follow Me," He was actually saying to them, "You have to be like me. It will not be easy; it will be hard. But if you are going to be my disciples, you have to do what I do."

This is the plain and simple meaning of what it was like to be a disciple in the time of Yeshua and in the Jewish context

of that time. It is the simple and only true way to make true disciples of Yeshua. This can only be done if we are disciples of Yeshua ourselves¹¹.

This is one of Yeshua's last teachings to His disciples:

"He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor." (John 12:25-26)

The Good News of Yeshua is a radical and revolutionary message with a clear intent to change the world and bring an end to idolatry and the corruption of the human race. It is not a religious game or a social convention to ensure the pursuit of happiness, prosperity, and social status of the followers of the Messiah.

The promises of God to humanity are being fulfilled daily and the return of the Messiah is going to be a reality. God's reign on earth will be visible to all humanity and the judgment day will be a great experience for all, the just and righteous and the evil alike. Yeshua will be seated on the judgment throne and all flesh will tremble, and the sheep and the goats will pass under his staff. He alone will decide who will go to the right and who will go to the left, who will burn and who will be crowned, who will rejoice and who will cry. Evangelism is getting people out of the fire and prepared for a crown – the choice is given to all who will follow the Master Himself. This is the old message of the early disciples of Yeshua. It is also the only message that has the power to change lives in the past and today.

Be a disciple of Yeshua – find yourself a teacher that is already a disciple of the Messiah and follow him.



DISCIPLES AND THEIR MASTERS

By Joseph Shulam

The average Christian is not aware that the principle of discipleship is not a New Testament invention. Like many other teachings of Yeshua, the basis for His instruction is more often than not based on clear Old Testament texts. Here are two examples that support this: Matt. 4:19: “And he said to them, ‘Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.’”

How did Joshua become Moses' assistant in the first place? He was given a particular task by Moses which he executed with excellence.

Yeshua's statement was based on our father Abraham. Abraham's camp didn't just consist of one tent for himself, Sarah his wife, and a couple of servants and their families,

but rather it included an entire army.

Genesis 14:13-14: “Then one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, who was living by the oaks of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and of Aner. These were allies of Abram. When Abram heard that his kinsman had been taken captive, he led forth his trained men, born in his house, 318 of them, and went in pursuit as far as Dan.”

In this passage, we find out that Abraham had about 318 young men/soldiers who were born in his house. Where exactly did these individuals come from? The answer is very clear. When God called



Abraham to leave his house, his family, and his country in order to go to the land that God showed him, this is what was written: Genesis 12:4-5: “So Abram went, as the Lord had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother’s son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan. . .”

The phrase, “the people they had acquired in Haran,” is the classic way in Hebrew and in Judaism to say that they were converted. The more literal translation from the Hebrew would be: “the souls that they had made in Haran.” “To make souls” is the Hebrew term for conversion.

Abraham was not the Lone Ranger, and he did not leave Haran with only Tonto by his side. Rather, he had a whole army

Abraham was the first evangelist who spread the Good News in Haran and converted those that stayed with him in his household.

of men in his household fit for battle. Abraham was actually an evangelist and a very effective one at that. To have 318 men fit for battle, they had to be between the ages of 20 and 50 years old, which means that they also had families. From this, we can safely deduce that Abraham’s camp numbered over 1000 people.

Another example comes from when Jacob was on his deathbed. Joseph was with his father and his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, and Jacob was telling Joseph a bit of his family history as well as taking a moment to bless his grandsons.

Genesis 48:16: “The angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the boys; and in them let my name be carried on, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.”

“Let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth,” is translated from the Hebrew: “וַיְדַבֵּר לְרֵב בְּקִרְבֵּי הָאָרֶץ.” Literally put, it says: “Let them fish much throughout the whole earth.” The Hebrew word “דג” means fish, and the grammatical form in this text is “they will fish.” From here, Yeshua got the concept and the commission to spread the Good News throughout the whole world.

Abraham was the first evangelist who spread the Good News in Haran and converted those that stayed with him in his household. What happened to these hundreds of men by the time of Jacob? I don’t really know, but I suppose that the family of Abraham had fallen apart after Jacob and Esau separated. Esau had 400 men of war, which we find out upon Jacob’s return from Haran with his wives, twelve sons, and probably some daughters as well.

The second example gives us a clear reference and is one of the classic teachings of Yeshua from the Sermon on the Mount: Matt. 5:39: “But I say to you, do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.”

Lam. 3:30, “Let him give his cheek to the one who strikes and let [the one who strikes] him be filled with insults.”

The context of this verse in Lamentations starts from verse 25. The writer gives instructions to the people of Jerusalem on how to react to the great tragedy of the fall of Jerusalem. He tells the people that the Lord will be good to those who wait upon the Lord and continue to seek Him. This, of course, was after the great disaster that fell upon the city. The way to wait upon the Lord was to quietly wait for His salvation. In other words, don’t try to save yourselves, but rather accept the verdict of God’s judgment by trusting in Him.

Lam. 3:28: “Let him sit alone in silence when it is laid upon him. Let him put his mouth in the dust there may yet be hope.” In verse 30 comes the instruction to turn your cheek to the one who strikes you so that he (the one who has hit you) will be filled with insults.

We must remember that Israel was under Roman occupation during this time and that the Sermon on the Mount was given within this particular context of history. Of course, there are applications of Yeshua’s teaching for everyone today and in every context.

When we think of Abraham, we normally don’t think of him as a great evangelist, but it is good for us to know his connection to evangelism and conversion. Even today, almost every non-Jew who converts to Judaism changes his family name to “Ben Avraham” or “Son of Abraham” in English.

One of the greatest masters and shepherds of the nation of Israel was Moses. When we look at his story in the light of a master-disciple relationship, Moses actually had few disciples and many critics. Joshua Ben Nun was his prime disciple, but he did not start out that way; he was first the assistant or servant of Moses.

“So Moses arose with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up to the mountain of God.” (Exodus 24:13)

How did Joshua become Moses’ assistant in the first place? He was given a particular task by Moses which he executed with excellence.

Exodus 17:9-14: “And Moses said to Joshua, “Choose us some men and go out, fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand.”

Joshua did as Moses had said and he fought with Amalek; he was able to defeat him and his people with the edge of the sword.

We see once again the principle of how a leader must choose his disciples. Not everyone who wants to be a disciple is equipped to be a follower and an assistant. I have had more than 50 years of experience discipling, and unfortunately, many of the individuals I spent years teaching brought nothing beneficial to the Kingdom of God. I did not learn in time what I know now, and that which I am trying to teach you in this article. It is better to have a few capable and faithful disciples who will be your assistants and take the task of building the Kingdom of God forward than to have thousands of disciples who are not really your followers, but rather just time and energy vampires.

A disciple is someone who has acquired

the very DNA of your ministry, goals, vision, and will take these qualities up to the next stage. This is what Yeshua was looking for among His twelve disciples, and this is what was expected of them. It was no simple matter for people like Peter, John, and the others who came from a fishing village in the north side of the Sea of Galilee to leave their businesses and families and walk about the Land of Israel behind a young Galilean rabbi. I am sure that their wives and their families had some words with these men as well as some objections. There must have been concern of how the family would live and how the fishing business would sustain itself without these men. There is no such thing as a disciple who is not willing to sacrifice his time and money, or at times even receive abuse on behalf of his master.

From Moses, we can learn that there is also no such thing as a master who will not receive criticism and, at times, questions or rejection from some of his disciples. One man can’t do by himself everything that is necessary to lead a group of people, as was advised by Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law. Moses learned from him many important

Another leader of Israel who had disciples was King David. Actually, David had disciples long before he was even king.



principles for both leadership and for discipleship.

In the true sense of the word, Moses did not have many disciples; as far as I know, he just had one true disciple, Joshua Ben Nun. In fact, this faithful disciple of Moses finished the task that his master could not finish: he conquered the Promised Land and divided it for the twelve tribes and rededicated the people of Israel to follow God faithfully.

Another leader of Israel who had disciples was King David. Actually, David had disciples long before he was



David lied and took the Lord's bread that was forbidden to eat in order to feed his disciples. The dedication of David to his men, to his disciples, is a prerequisite for a true rabbi or a general in the army.

even king, as it is written in 1 Samuel 22:1-2: "David therefore departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam. So, when his brothers and all his father's house heard it, they went down there to him. And everyone who was in distress, everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented gathered to him. So, he became captain over them. And there were about four hundred men with him."

This group of 400 men who joined David when he was running away from King Saul was not exactly the cream of society in Judea. They are described in

the text above as men in distress, men who had debts with the implication that they are not planning to pay them or could not pay them, and men who were discontented. What would you, the evangelist, do if these were the people who were willing to follow, listen, stand by you, and become your disciples?

This question is not a theoretical question, it is a question that even I have contemplated and experienced in the early years of my ministry in Israel. However, every man of God, prophet, or God-led leader like Moses, Gideon, David, and Elisha, had disciples

who were not exactly the best, most successful, or highly educated. The great leaders dug deep into the bottom of society and took the discontented, the distressed, and the unsuccessful, and made them heroes and leaders.

The people who are willing to follow a person who is strange and not on the top of the hit-parade like any of the true men of God are the people who have nothing to lose in society. In the camp of the Pharisees, however, the picture was different. The Pharisees themselves came from the camp of the wealthy and popular parts of society.

We see Yeshua taking the side of King David on the breaking of the Sabbath for the sake of satisfaction of His disciples' hunger. True disciples must have true teachers or leaders.

The reason that people joined the Pharisee camp was because they were a wealthy and powerful people and many of their leaders were actually not born in Jerusalem or in Israel; they were educated and close to the Hellenistic culture. If I had to characterize the great leaders in the Bible and the great leaders of history, the one characteristic that most of them had was that they knew how to accept, develop, and form the people who were willing to follow them.

The task of the master is to take the raw diamond and polish it into a beautiful top-quality jewel fit for the king's crown. This is actually what King David did – the proof of this in one of the stories towards the end of 2 Samuel. Here is the text of the ultimate test of discipleship that David gave to his valiant men: “Then three of the thirty chief men went down at harvest time and came to David at the cave of Adullam. And the troop of Philistines encamped in the Valley of Rephaim. David was then in the stronghold, and the garrison of the Philistines was then in Bethlehem. And David said with longing, ‘Oh, that someone would give me a drink of the water from the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!’ So the three mighty men broke through the camp of the Philistines, drew water from the well of Bethlehem that was by the gate, and took it and brought it to David. Nevertheless, he would not drink it, but poured it out

to the Lord. And he said, ‘Far be it from me, O Lord, that I should do this! Is this not the blood of the men who went in jeopardy of their lives?’ Therefore, he would not drink it. These things were done by the three mighty men.” (2 Samuel 23:13-17).

These men who were described in 1 Samuel 22:1-2 as debtors, distressed, and discontented became heroes, fighters, generals, leaders of armies, and men of character after going through nearly twenty years of bootcamp with their master. David, with nothing less than chutzpah, wished to drink water from the same well of water that he used to drink from as a child in Bethlehem.

Normally, this would not be a problem, but at that time it was a big issue. The Philistines, Israel's arch enemy, occupied Bethlehem, and in order to satisfy David's old age wish, they would have to go behind enemy lines and endanger themselves just to please their not-yet king and leader. Note that David did not ask any of his thirty mighty men to go out and get the water from the well in Bethlehem. Instead, three of the men took it upon themselves to endanger their lives and risk being captured into the hands of the Philistines or even get killed in the process of this commando raid just to bring a bottle of water from the well. The motivation of these mighty military leaders was only

one thing, to please David their master. These serious men actually said, “David, your wish is our command!” They didn't ask permission from him. They did not inform him that they were going behind enemy lines that night to bring his water. Rather they just took it upon themselves as a secret mission.

The three men who went to Bethlehem in secret and got the water from the well were standing by David's bed with the water bottle in their hands. David woke up and his first reaction was surprise and humility. He understood that this kind of dedication, sacrifice, and willingness to serve him was special, so he thought that the only appropriate thing to do was to sacrifice this water and pour it out before the God of Israel. He did not drink this special water that was brought to him by these men who had been with him and followed him for years as fugitives from King Saul. Only God deserved such dedication, faith, and desire to serve and follow Him.

There are other things that we can learn about raising disciples and followers from King David. For example, David tried to deceive the priest in the city of Nob by getting him to give his army the bread that was baked for the Lord's Table. This bread was considered holy and was forbidden even for the priests themselves to eat except in a holy place after the bread was replaced with new loaves. Here are the passages: “Now David came to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest. And Ahimelech was afraid when he met David, and said to him, ‘Why are you alone, and no one is with you?’ So David said to Ahimelech the priest, ‘The king has ordered me on some business, and said to me, “Do not let anyone know anything about the business on which I send you, or what I have commanded you.” And I have directed my young men to such and such a place. Now therefore, what have you on hand? Give

no matter how great a man of God you are and no matter how gifted you are in calling upon the Lord, all of these great things that the Lord has used you for are not worth very much if you don't have anyone to follow you and continue your ministry.

me five loaves of bread in my hand, or whatever can be found.' And the priest answered David and said, 'There is no common bread on hand; but there is holy bread, if the young men have at least kept themselves from women.'" "Then David answered the priest, and said to him, 'Truly, women have been kept from us about three days since I came out. And the vessels of the young men are holy, and the bread is in effect common, even though it was consecrated in the vessel this day.' So the priest gave him

holy bread; for there was no bread there but the showbread which had been taken from before the Lord, in order to put hot bread in its place on the day when it was taken away. Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the Lord. And his name was Doeg, an Edomite, the chief of the herdsmen who belonged to Saul. And David said to Ahimelech, 'Is there not here on hand a spear or a sword? For I have brought neither my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste.' So the priest said, 'The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in the Valley of Elah, there it is, wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod. If you will take that, take it. For there is no other except that one here.' And David said, 'There is none like it; give it to me.'" (1 Samuel 21:1-9)

One could easily learn from this story that the end justifies the means, but actually there is a law that the preservation of life is above most of the commandments. David had 400 men that were living in the Judean Desert hiding from King Saul's army who wanted to kill David. They were hungry and the only available food that David could find was this bread that was baked on the Sabbath day and changed in the tabernacle every Sabbath. This bread was placed on the table as showbread that was in the Tabernacle of God.

David lied and took the Lord's bread that was forbidden to eat in order to feed his disciples. The dedication of David to his men, to his disciples, is a prerequisite for a true rabbi or a general in the army. This is also the reason that good leaders and teachers make such strong demands from their disciples, just as Yeshua Himself did for His disciples. Dedication from the leader is the ground on which the demand for the dedication of the disciple to his rabbi stands.

"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple." (Luke 14:26)

Yeshua said: "As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep." (John 10:15)

The story from 1 Samuel 21 about David taking the bread baked on Sabbath from the Lord's table for his men actually served Yeshua in the story about His disciples picking up grain on the Sabbath day while walking through the Galilee from Nazareth to Capernaum (between an 8 to 10 hour walk). "Now it happened on the second Sabbath after the first that He went through the grain fields. And His disciples plucked the heads of grain and ate them, rubbing them in their hands. And some of the Pharisees said to them, 'Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?' But Jesus answering them said, 'Have you not even read this, what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: how he went into the house of God, took and ate the showbread, and also gave some to those with him, which is not lawful for any but the priests to eat?' And He said to them, 'The Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.'" (Luke 6:1-5).

We see Yeshua taking the side of King David on the breaking of the Sabbath for the sake of satisfaction of His disciples' hunger. True disciples must have true teachers or leaders. A disciple can't be any better than his teacher. Therefore, those who want to make true disciples must also be very transparent, honest, humble, and stand up for their disciples. At the same time the leaders must also be like Yeshua, willing to sacrifice for their disciples.

I take just a short interlude from the topic as I give you a personal story and anecdote to this topic.

When I was in elementary school, my father was sometimes away from home for months, and one time for over 3 years. He was working such a demanding job that he was often absent from home. My mother also worked, and the only one at home was my very elderly grandmother who didn't know Hebrew at all. So, there I was after school, not a person at home who could take care of me and help me with homework.

I had a homeroom teacher that was from a kibbutz near Capernaum, Kibbutz Ginosar, which in the Bible appears with the spelling, "Gennesaret." After school, this teacher, whose name was Miri, would take me to her house, feed me lunch, and help me with my homework. One of my God-given gifts throughout my life was to have wonderful teachers who cared about me and invested in me.

I feel that I am the disciple of teachers such as Sara Jephth in Jerusalem, Bill Long in Dasher, Georgia, John McRay, George Howard, Ernie Stewart, Ralf Henley, and many other wonderful world-class teachers in the Hebrew University of Jerusalem who took time and opened their homes for their students. I didn't just learn information from these teachers, but instead I feel that I have become their disciple and servant. This includes great men like David Flusser, Samuel Safari, Menachem Stern, and Michael Stone, all of which had opened their homes for their students and established a relationship of master and disciple.

Another example of discipleship in the Bible can be seen in the relationship between Elijah and Elisha.

The story of Elijah starts without any personal notes about his origin, tribe, or family. He was a man who stood alone against the system, against King Ahab and his pagan wife Jezebel, and against

the false prophets of Baal. Elijah was the only one who was against one of the most powerful kings in the history of the 10 northern tribes of Israel and he just popped into history with a bombastic declaration:

"And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, 'As the Lord God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word.'" (1 Kings 17:1)

Elijah's declaration that there would be no rain or dew in the Land of Israel except by his own word made him the number one public enemy. He became a hunted man; King Ahab looked for him not only in the Land of Israel, but he also involved the "Interpol" to search as well. God sent Elijah to the Transjordan to the Cherith Brook. The river dried and Elijah was sent to Tyra to live with a Gentile widow and her son. After three years, Elijah returned to Israel and organized a showdown with the prophets of Baal and King Ahab on top of Mount Carmel. God honored Elijah and brought fire from heaven to devour the bull sacrifice that he brought on top of the altar. He had only one servant who helped him prepare the sacrifice. Before the rain started to fall, Elijah killed the 450 prophets of Baal. You would think that this great event would bring joy and happiness to him, but instead, he entered into a deep depression to the point of wanting to die. He went to a cave in the desert where he tried to starve himself to death.

"Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, while he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. 'I have had enough, Lord,' he said. 'Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors.'



Elijah killed the 450 prophets of Baal. You would think that this great event would bring joy and happiness to him, but instead, he entered into a deep depression to the point of wanting to die.

Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep. All at once an angel touched him and said, 'Get up and eat.' He looked around, and there by his head was some

bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again. The angel of the Lord came back a second time and touched him and said, 'Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.' So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. There he went into a cave and spent the night. And the word of the Lord came to him: 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' He replied, 'I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.'" (1 Kings 19:3-10)

What can we learn from this part of Elijah's story? It is very simple, no matter how great a man of God you are and no matter how gifted you are in calling upon the Lord, all of these great things that the Lord has used you for are not worth very much if you don't have anyone to follow you and continue your ministry. It is depressing to be a great teacher and not have any disciples who will enhance and continue your goals. This is what depressed Elijah to the point that he thought that none of his work was of value. He thought that the people would not change but rather would continue in their unfaithfulness.

In 1 Kings 19:11, the Lord invites Elijah outside the cave:

"Then He said, 'Go out, and stand on the mountain before the Lord.' And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still

small voice. So it was, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. Suddenly a voice came to him, and said, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' (1 Kings 19:11-13)

When the Lord gave Elijah a new international mission, He revealed to him that he was not alone and that there were in fact seven thousand men in Israel who had not worshiped the Baal. In addition, He showed him that he would have a successor (a disciple) by the name of Elisha, who would finish the work that he started. This brought Elijah out of his depressive state and reinvigorated him to serve the Lord.

Elijah went searching for this man whom the Lord had revealed to him. Eventually, he found Elisha son of Shaphat plowing with twelve yoke of oxen. This is an interesting detail that the Holy Spirit inserts here. Plowing with twelve yoke of oxen is like having a Lamborghini tractor with twelve cylinders. It means that Elisha came from a rich family, a family with much land and power. Elijah does not say a word to Elisha, but instead he passed by and threw his mantle on him. Elisha recognized the mantle of a prophet and he knew the meaning of this strange act – it was a call to prophecy. Granted, it was not an easy call, a call that would require a person to be politically incorrect, and sometimes to be a little harsh and rude to people who think that they are great and powerful. Elijah was irritated when Elisha wanted to go kiss his father and mother goodbye. Elijah's response in this occasion was in plain English: "what do you want from me? Go do whatever you want to do!" In other words, Elijah implied to Elisha, "if you don't put me first, then go do whatever you want."

Elijah did the very same thing to the old

widow from Tyra. He said, "fix me food first, and later you will see what God can do." Elisha understood Elijah's frustrated statement and took his twelve oxen with the equipment and cooked some food to give to his servants. After that, he followed Elijah and became his servant (see 1 Kings 19:21). Elijah continued to serve the Lord with Elisha by his side as his servant until he was finally taken up to Heaven.

From 1 Kings 19 until 2 Kings 2:15, Elisha was serving his master Elijah, and the fame of Elisha in the land was recorded in 2 Kings 3:11: "But [King] Jehoshaphat said, 'Is there no prophet of the Lord here, that we might inquire of the Lord by him?'" So one of the servants of the king of Israel answered and said, 'Elisha the son of Shaphat is here, who poured water on the hands of Elijah.'"

This phrase "poured water on the hands of" means that he was his disciple and servant. What a great honor it is to be a disciple of someone like Elijah. Likewise, what a great honor it is for all of us to be disciples of Yeshua the Son of God, Messiah and King of the Jews. What a great honor for a master and teacher to have disciples that are like Elisha who was willing to leave his farm and feed his 12 oxen to his servants just to follow the Prophet Elijah.

We can learn much about discipleship and marketing disciples, but above all, that special relationship between the teacher and his student, the master and his apprentice, will always be the main ingredient that will keep the wheels of history moving in the right direction. Faith, righteousness, hope, and love for truth and for the Creator will not cease as long as there are masters, teachers, rabbis, and pastors that keep making disciples who are willing to serve.

DISCIPLESHIP

By Dorothy M. Gitelman

Teaching by Modeling

My husband is a huge American baseball fan and he particularly loves the Cubs team. His family is from Chicago, Illinois, and he grew up waiting for them to win the World Series competition. The Cubs won the World Series in 1908, and then 108 years later won the World Series again in 2016. Chicago Cubs fans, loyal and patient, waited while Yankees and Red Sox fans were rewarded with plenty of championships. No matter how horrible of a season the Cubs have, Wrigley Field Stadium is packed, and the fans always say, "We'll win next year."

to model the discipline of being a Cubs Fan and to invite my son alongside him.

Defining Discipleship

The word "discipleship" derives from "disciple." Adding the suffix -ship to a word indicates a state or condition. Hence, "discipleship" means the state of being a disciple. "Disciple" comes from "discipline," and both derive from Latin.

A disciple is a follower of a teacher or a student. Discipline is to follow instruction, presumably from a teacher. The word

Torah scholar, imitating his life and faith, and concentrating on mastering the Mosaic Law as well as the traditional interpretations of it." It was a form of learning from a teacher, similar in many ways to an apprenticeship. A master would take on a student, passing on all their knowledge and ways.

Within the wider Christian community, discipleship refers to a believer's continuing care and education in the faith. Within the messianic Jewish community, I have seen and heard the term "discipleship" used, but also

What does it mean to be a Jewish follower of Yeshua when the paths of Christians and Jews have diverged so dramatically since the time of the early believers in the Bible?

My husband's dedication or discipline of being a fan rubbed off on our son, as if by osmosis, though this wasn't really the case. Even though we didn't hold a "how to be a Cubs fan class," my husband taught through his example. Whenever possible, we watched the games on television, we brought the kids to Wrigley field, and we supplied the children with Cubs gear.

Discipleship is essentially education and emulation. Often paired with outreach (bringing people into a community's door), discipleship is both knowledge and training. If you consider outreach and discipleship within a family, outreach is easy -- you already have a captive audience. In the instance of becoming a Cubs fan, all my husband had to do was

discipline evolved through old French to mean not just "instruction," but also "physical punishment in order to learn a lesson." For instance, "to discipline a child so they can behave well," connotes some form of punishment in order to extract appropriate or improved behavior.

The Prevalence of Discipleship in Ancient Judaism

Discipleship was commonplace in the ancient world as a form of education. Bible.org says that discipleship "referred to imitating the teacher's life, inculcating his values, and reproducing his teachings. For the Jewish boy over thirteen this meant going to study with a recognized

"talmid" and "talmidim" (disciple and disciples). Curiously enough, however, outside of the messianic Jewish community, discipleship is not a term widely used in the Jewish community, if at all. While discipleship programs are common in churches and messianic synagogues, non-messianic synagogues are full of standard Jewish education programs.

Even though the concept of discipleship existed in the ancient Jewish world, it seems that the word has been replaced with education, and discipleship has come to belong primarily to those who believe in Yeshua. In the passage known as "The Great Commission," found in Matthew 28:16-20, Yeshua directs His followers to make disciples.

BY EXAMPLE

“Now the eleven disciples went to the Galilee, to the mountain Yeshua had designated. When they saw Him, they worshiped; but some wavered. And Yeshua came up to them and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, immersing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Ruach ha-Kodesh, teaching them to observe all I have commanded you. And remember! I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’” Matthew 28:16-20

“Discipleship” has come to mean “making followers of Yeshua,” especially in accordance with the Great Commission. The Jewish world does not hold to the connotations of the term “disciple” or “discipleship,” because it implies faith in Yeshua.

Typically, the Besorah uses “disciple” simply to mean a student of a teacher. In John 9, after Yeshua heals a blind man on a Shabbat, Pharisees attacked Him for breaking the Sabbath. They then attacked the formerly blind man: “They railed at him and said, ‘You’re a disciple of that One, but we’re disciples of Moses!’” (John 9:28)

The Pharisees clearly identified themselves as disciples of Moses, and they distanced themselves from Yeshua, not accepting his miracles. “We know that God has spoken to Moses; but as for this fellow, we don’t know where He is from.” (John 9:29)

They accused the healed man of being a follower of Yeshua. “The man replied to them, ‘That’s amazing! You don’t know where He is from, yet He opened my eyes! We know that God doesn’t listen to

sinners; but if anyone fears Him and does His will, He hears this one. Since the beginning of the world, no one has ever heard that anyone has opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, He couldn’t do anything.” (John 9:30) Yeshua performed miracles, and yet all the Pharisees could see was the apparent breaking of Shabbat laws; not the healing from God.

What does it mean to be a Jewish follower of Yeshua when the paths of Christians and Jews have diverged so dramatically since the time of the early believers in the Bible? Even Jewish identity, practice, and tradition have changed over the last 2000 years, partially because of the destruction of the Temple and the scattering into the Diaspora, but also partially because of the opposition to Christianity. As the modern messianic Jewish movement has developed, one big question that has arisen is how can we remain Jewish, and yet believe in Yeshua? How much of rabbinic Judaism should a messianic Jew follow and respect, and how much should we put aside?

I don’t have a comprehensive prescriptive answer except for this: as disciples of Yeshua (the living Word/Torah), man-made traditions can never override Yeshua’s teachings. Our discipleship education means that we want to nurture Jewish believers in the image of Yeshua.

Following Yeshua’s Example for Our Lives

It is important to respect the teachings of Moses, and to a certain extent, the teachings the rabbis developed over the course of millennia. In living a Jewish life and following the Jewish calendar, we align with the Jewish community

and identify as Jews. But as we take on spiritual practices, the standard we measure everything up to needs to be the measure of Yeshua.

Learning to follow Yeshua is partially good education and partially practice. Just like learning to play piano, you need to find a good teacher, learn, and then practice until you master it. A piano teacher assigns scales, exercises to practice, and eventually pieces of music. What do we need in order to practice our faith?

Some examples of spiritual practices are commitment to mitzvot (such as keeping kosher, keeping Shabbat, and observing the Jewish holidays), spending time in prayer and meditation, Bible study, and fellowship in a community. When we fellowship with followers of Yeshua who revere Him, we learn more about Him.

When we study Tanakh and Besorah, we understand what it means to be a disciple of Moses and a disciple of Yeshua. We need to understand what it is to be a disciple of Moses in order to emulate Yeshua, but we follow Moses through Him.

We might be excellent at all the spiritual practices, but if we do not love those in our midst—and also those outside of our circles—we are not representing Yeshua. After Yeshua resurrected, He instructed His disciples to spread the good news to all nations, while maintaining our identity according to His “new commandment:”

“I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, so also you must love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:34-35)

DISCIPLESHIP:

THE ART OF

By Gabriel Lumbroso

IMITATION

I locked my keys in my car one day at a very inconvenient time; but when is it ever a convenient time for that to happen? After I called some experts to open my door, I finally decided to make an extra key that I could keep in my wallet, and I headed to the local hardware store in our little town. After I told the employee, Steve, what I needed, he brought me over to the key machine that was fastened to his work table.

I handed him my original key, and he matched it up with the correct blank key. Next, Steve started the process of making a copy. Many of you have probably already seen such a machine, but I want to describe the process. In order to use the key machine, an original key must be fixed into a vice next to a guide. The blank key is then locked into the vice on the other end at the cutting wheel. The two keys move precisely together, though on opposite ends of the machine, one at the guide and one at the cutting wheel. When the motor is switched on, it drives the cutting wheel. As the user traces the guide along the cuts of the original key, the key blank is dragged along the cutting wheel, duplicating the cuts from the original exactly.

Lastly, the whole process is finished once the rough spots of the new key are buffed with a rotary wire brush either mounted on the key machine itself or on a grinding machine. What a wonderful illustration of discipleship that this machine serves. What were the steps involved to make my key? First, you must bring the original. Then, you need to choose a worthy blank. Afterwards, you must cut an exact duplicate of the original on the blank, and finally, you need to clean the burrs.

Bring Yeshua, the Original

Yeshua taught His disciples about discipleship using an idea that echoed from the Galilean

rabbinic yeshivas of His days. He said, “A talmid is not greater than his rabbi, a slave is not greater than his master. It is enough for a talmid that he become like his rabbi, and a slave like his master.” (Matthew 10:24-25) The blank must become like the original; we must become like Yeshua.

We Must Be a Worthy “Blank”

After His resurrection, just before leaving for the next phase of His messianic mission, Yeshua told his close friends: “Just as the Father sent me, I myself am also sending you.” (John 20:21)

He was sent on a mission where He had to be a willing vessel no matter what. Now, He is sending us on this very same mission. I heard it said once that the easiest way to know God’s will for our lives is to have no will of our own. Being a “blank” is a story that repeats itself over and over again. From the time we came out of Egypt and said, “Everything Adonai has said, we will do,” (Exodus 19:8) to “He must become more important, while I become less important,” (John 3:30) HaShem expects us to be “blanks” that we may be cut in His image. Why is that?

We Must Let Him Conform Us to His Image

If we are to represent Him on earth, it is imperative that we be different from the Egyptians; from the world. As such, HaShem wants to be involved in every facet of our lives: in what we eat, in how we dress, in our relationships inside and outside of Israel, in how we handle money, and even in whom we marry. He even asks us to change our bodies through circumcision as a witness that we belong to Him. In essence, the laws of the Torah are the laws of discipleship for the children of Israel and for those who decide to join them. Now comes the hard part: to be transformed, to be made in His image. The cutting wheel of life’s trials and tribulations must shape us by cutting through our stubborn will.

Buffing Out the Rough Spots

Obedience to the Almighty and His acceptance of us often tend to bring us to the snares of pride, self-righteousness, and elitism. Just as it is important to be made in His image, it is equally important to rid ourselves of these rough spots of pride which will keep the key from functioning smoothly. Pride has been the downfall of Satan and we know that “before being ruined, a person’s heart is proud.” (Proverbs 18:12).

Many people associate discipleship solely with learning a certain rabbi’s teachings. While learning teachings certainly is a part of discipleship, it is not the main one. One good example comes from the Gospel of John. Yochanan (John) the immerser was by the river with his disciples, and “on seeing

with his family, with his neighbours, in times of joy, in times of sadness, in times of wealth or poverty, as well as in times of conflict and tribulation? That is the real teaching! It is what is known as the “clinical method” today.

Rabbi Shaul expressed this style of discipling best when he said, “Try to imitate me, even as I myself try to imitate the Messiah.” (1 Corinthians 11:1) Discipleship is therefore the ability to imitate your teacher/rabbi. A disciple is primarily a good imitator as well as a good follower. He walks so close that he walks in the very dust of his rabbi.

Walking in Yeshua’s Footsteps

For the last two years, I have been teaching lessons to my congregation from the Didache. The Didache is a

congregations around the Aegean Sea and of the Master’s corrections for them therein. From the lack of passion and love, to disobedience to the Torah and compromise with the world, these congregations received divide messages that basically outline the most important things for the Master in the life of would-be disciples. If you want to prioritize Yeshua’s teachings, Revelation would be a great reference.

Finally, if we are to follow His example, we need to ask ourselves, what is it that made Yeshua so special? His disciples included people of all classes including tax-collectors, zealots, and fisherman. His lifestyle seemed to be a middle-ground that represented all the factions of the Israel of His day. In His teachings to forsake all and follow Him (Luke 14:33), we see the Essene culture. We see the Pharisees’ hope in the establishment of HaShem’s Kingdom on earth in His statement: “Repent for the Kingdom is at hand.” The Sadducees are reflected in His respect for the Temple, calling it “My Father’s House.” One could almost hear the message of the zealots in His teaching about the Kingdom when He says, “From the time of Yochanan the Immerser until now, the Kingdom of Heaven has been suffering violence; yes, violent ones are trying to snatch it away.” (Matthew 11:12) In His fish, seed, and talent parables, He also addresses the farming, the fishing, and the commercial aspect of Israel. Thus, if we are to imitate Him, we are to also be a well-rounded representation of those we lead. I often marvel at the fact that people always followed the Master. Religious and non-religious Jews felt comfortable to approach Him, and even the Gentiles felt safe enough to do so also.

As His disciples, may we walk in His dust, follow in His footsteps, and live in His lifestyle, so that crowds of Jews and Gentiles, religious or not, will desire to follow and learn from us just as they strive to learn from Him.

People associate discipleship solely with learning a certain rabbi’s teachings. While learning teachings certainly is a part of discipleship, it is not the main one

Yeshua walking by, he said, ‘Look! God’s lamb!’ His two talmidim heard him speaking, and they followed Yeshua. Yeshua turned and saw them following him, and he asked them, ‘What are you looking for?’ They said to him, ‘Rabbi! Where are you staying?’ He said to them, ‘Come and see.’ So they went and saw where he was staying, and remained with him the rest of the day, it was about four o’clock in the afternoon.” (John 1:36-39)

In those days, it was common for a would-be disciple to move in with his favorite rabbi. He would then learn not only from his words, but also from his lifestyle. How does he conduct himself at home

composition said to be compiled by the disciples of Yeshua to help them in their mission to teach Judaism to the Gentiles. In their treatise, I have discovered some amazing things, the most profoundly that according to this compilation, those disciples who lived with the Master, seemed to be more interested about teaching the ethics of the Torah than its rituals. This should tell us something about what they felt was the most important things to teach—their take-away from living with the Master.

In the revelation Yochanan received on the Isle of Patmos, we have a record of the messages to the seven

Can you have discipleship without legitimacy?

Typically, a discipleship relationship can introduce a concept of authority that the mentor has over the disciple.

It would be ideal for the disciple to submit to the mentor's authority. It may work out at first, but over time, as things are tested, the relationship can strain. And the perception of authority can falter.

What's needed in this case is for the authority to be perceived as legitimate. Once authority loses its legitimacy, it's no longer effective.

In a study that goes from violent uprising in Northern Ireland to a rowdy kindergarten class in the US¹, author Malcolm Gladwell suggests that things like political unrest and rebellion against authority come when the authority in charge has lost its legitimacy.

1. Malcolm Gladwell, *David and Goliath* (Little, Brown and Company, 2013).

He points to three things that allow authority to be perceived as legitimate:

- It has to be fair – not favoring one people group over another.
- It has to be predictable – it cannot change dramatically from one day to the next.
- It has to listen – the people being governed need to know that they have a voice.

To be clear, in a discipleship relationship, a mentor has no legal authority over a disciple. But in order for a disciple to grow, he or she must submit to a mentor. And that won't work unless the mentor decides to become an agent of legitimacy.

A mentor can employ the three aforementioned ingredients in a discipleship relationship, and thereby establish the legitimacy of the authority that relationship seeks to uphold.

A mentor can establish: Fairness

A mentor can make sure to not value some disciples over other disciples. A mentor can give time and resources to a disciple - especially someone who may be showing signs of being lost or being in destructive behavior.

Predictability

Not only can a mentor value disciples, but he or she can do it consistently. It's not about reaching out to someone once

and then sending them on their way. (How would you feel if that were you?) A mentor's job is to structure a life that allows for him or her to give time and resources to disciples on a regular basis. So that a disciple will know that a mentor is available to them.

Listening

A mentor does not only talk. Communication is a two-way road, and listening is an imperative half of teaching. When a mentor decides to reach out to a disciple, it should be clear that he or she values the disciple's presence and voice above any exhortation intended for them.

7 Steps for Establishing Legitimacy

If you want to be a mentor, here's what I want you to do. When you're planning the coming week:

1. Find someone close to you who is in need of discipleship. It shouldn't be too hard. Pick the one who is in the greatest need (as long as they'll be willing to meet you).
2. Schedule to meet that person for coffee or lunch. Your treat. Make sure that the reason for your meeting is clear – to spend time together, that's it. You need to value their time and their presence. The goal is not for you to preach to them.
3. Try to give 60-90 minutes of your time to this. Meetings like these tend to stretch up to that long (a half-hour of

greeting, a half-hour of conversation, and a half-hour of wrap-up).

4. Try to find a place that's easy to reach for both of you. It's got to be something that works with your lifestyle. If not, it can be a burden for you or for the disciple.

5. Make sure the coffee or lunch is within your budget. Remember, it's the time and presence that are valuable. You don't need to go gourmet here if it's going to empty your pockets and distract you from the main reason why you're doing this.

6. Do it again. Shoot for once a week. More than that can be a burden on both of you, and less than that tends to diminish the legitimacy. There's good balance in sticking to a weekly cycle.

7. Remind them of the reason for discipleship. Only when you perceive that legitimacy has been established can you exhort them in love. It probably won't happen in the first meeting.

As a potential mentor, it isn't enough just to get your life in order, make personal goals, and shoot for the moon. You have a responsibility to care for your family and community as well.

I'd love to see more communities fighting to be agents of legitimacy. And by the way, someone did this for me... and it worked.



Adam Lee Rosenfeld is the media director at Netivyah Bible Instruction Ministry in Jerusalem, Israel. When he's not designing brands and creating content, he shares his lifelong pursuit of finding and creating beauty and truth with his music project, Har Adonai. Check out his podcast at: haradonai.net

There's a lot more to Netivyah than meets the eye; the Teaching From Zion magazine is only one of our outreach and humanitarian ministries. We invite you to connect with the other branches of our ministry.

Congregation

Roeh Israel, "Shepherd of Israel," is a Messianic Jewish Congregation in Jerusalem. The Congregation is made up of followers of Yeshua, both Jews and non-Jews, who worship together in a traditional synagogue environment.

Humanitarian Aid

There are many families in Israel, even entire sections of the population, who fall between the cracks. Hamotzi Food Distribution Center is a place that literally brings forth food for local needy families in Jerusalem. Without charities and organizations like Netivyah, they would not be able to put food on the table.

Publications

Publishing is one of Netivyah's top priorities, as we see education as being central to our existence. Visit our website for previous issues of Teaching from Zion, as well as a selection of our books.

Radio Station

Kol Ha'Yeshua ("The Voice of Salvation") is the Hebrew partner of "Trans World Radio" worldwide gospel radio network. We present the Good News to our Hebrew-speaking audience in the context of its Jewish and Hebrew culture.



netivyah.org
tfz@netivyah.org



Netivyah Bible Instruction Ministry

PO BOX 8043, JERUSALEM 91080, ISRAEL
Tel. 972-2-6231019 | www.netivyah.org