

Teaching *from* Zion

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



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

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Teaching *from* Zion

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The Kingdom of Heaven *Is* Eating and Drinking

Common to all creatures, man and beast alike, eating and drinking are mere matters of material survival. One would not think there could be anything spiritual about something that dogs do, too. Yet one of many mind-blowing Biblical verses reveals quite the opposite: "*And they saw God, and did eat and drink*" (Exodus 24:11). This verse refers to Moses and the priests and seventy elders who ascended Mount Sinai. One might think that it is odd that these men occupied themselves with this "lowly physical act" on the occasion of seeing God, instead of falling on their knees in prayer and praise or being knocked out flat in amazement and awe. This episode is one striking expression of the unity of God and man, the meeting point of the earthly and the Divine. In fact, the invitation to dine at the Lord's Table demands that everything in the life of man ought to be sanctified, even those "fleshly" acts. Although we do the same things that animals do, we do not do them in the same way because we have seen God. A cat will protect its dish of food from its hungry brother in a bold and unashamed- even unconscious- demonstration of selfishness. Humans would probably behave the same way if it was not for the knowledge of God, the creator and provider for all flesh, who advocates caring and sharing and not exaggerating the pleasure of the flesh.

Food is indeed the most basic commodity we are required to share and the most urgent for the needy. The way we treat one another is the way we treat God. This message made explicitly clear by Yeshua also explains the deep meaning behind the Sinai encounter of "seeing" God while sharing a meal together. "*Taste and see that the Lord is good*" says the Psalmist (34:9) in another

expression of this mystery. What is it that we should *taste* to see the goodness of the Lord? It is His own offering, the Passover Lamb, the Bread of Life through which we can "see" God and His goodness. The "mystical" idea of "eating the Messiah" and of internalizing the experience of salvation upon seeing God comes to its ultimate conclusion on that Passover night when the Lamb offered Himself to be "eaten" by His disciples, and subsequently by all humans, an idea that was admittedly shocking to them and a stumbling block to many to this day. Interestingly enough, it is worthwhile to note that it is not by coincidence that the Hebrew words *basar* (flesh) and *Besorah* (the Good News) have a common root. Yeshua was aware of that, no doubt.

This is just a bit of "food for thought." It is not in the metaphysical realm that this issue of TFZ intends to dwell, however. As the *Besora* needs to be manifested in the *basar*, the idea made into flesh, in the same manner is God's Spirit manifested in the very important place given to matters of eating and drinking in His Word, which relates in great detail even to our everyday habits. We feel that there are some badly missed points concerning this issue among New Testament readers which will be the focus of our attention, along with other aspects of the Biblical attitudes to matters such as *kashrut* and animal welfare, themes that concern us today even more than in ancient times. Additionally, in order to make sure that all this "spiritual" material goes down well, some reviving recipes are included. Taste and see that the Lord is good!

- Udi Zofef



The Christian Diet - Food Laws in the New Testament

Joseph Shulam

One of the most cherished values of believers is freedom. Yeshua said: *"You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free."* (John 8:32) There is no question that what Yeshua said is true. There is a question that nags us all, however, and it is the same question that Pontius Pilot, the Roman procurator, asked Yeshua just before he sent Him to be flogged and crucified: "What is truth?" Truth can only be found by examining the living Word of God. In this way, we have standards that shape our lives.

One of the most basic human needs is FOOD! Therefore, it is important to know the truth concerning the New Testament laws about the substances that we ingest. In order to discover the truth, we must address the following questions: Is a believer free to put anything he desires into his mouth and eat whatever he pleases? What is the attitude of the New Testament toward the Torah's dietary laws?

In order to understand the New Testament teaching on food, we actually need to start from the very end. Let us, therefore, examine the book of Revelation and what it says about eating. Rev. 2:14 says, *"But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit acts of immorality."* Additionally, Rev. 2:20 says, *"But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads my bond-servants astray so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols."*

In both cases in Revelation, there seems to be a clear condemnation of eating "things sacrificed to idols." Confusing this situation greatly though is the fact that a cursory reading of the letters of the Apostle Paul gives the impression that it is permissible to eat "meat" or "things" sacrificed to idols. This alone ought to cause us to dig a little deeper and search with an open mind what the Lord's will is concerning what, when, where, and how we eat. We learn that freedom has its limits when we see the complete picture of the ancient world in which the Good News was born and spread.

Food is not the most important thing in our lives. Nevertheless, we must remember that eating "blood" is absolutely condemned in the Scriptures and classified as a negative commandment for everyone, including non-Jews, in the Body of Messiah. The instructions given by the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 have far-reaching ramifications for all

disciples of Yeshua. When slaughtering animals for food, all the blood of the animal has to be drained. This is clear from the second prohibition that the Apostles gave in Acts 15- "eating meat strangled." The meaning of "eating meat strangled" is not so simple to discern because this Greek word is used only once in the New Testament. The least that it could mean is that one should not "strangle" an animal and eat the meat. The most likely meaning and implication is that an animal that is slaughtered for food ought to be bled while it is being killed, i.e. the throat of the animal is cut so the heart pumps the blood out of the body of the animal until it is drained. Although in a mixed community of Jews and non-Jews, there is diversity and freedom, the Apostles thought it necessary to command the non-Jews in the Body of the Messiah to abstain from "blood" and from "eating meat strangled." I believe that this is a significant issue, which the Church ought to take to heart and discuss very seriously before completely dismissing the issue or accepting the ruling of the First Century Apostles.

As for food offered to idols as it is discussed in Corinthians and Revelation, we can say clearly that Revelation 2:14, 20 condemn the churches that eat meat offered to idols. These verses see "eating things sacrificed to idols" as the work of Balaam that puts a stumbling block before the sons of Israel. On the other hand, Paul is not speaking "post-priori" [after the fact] like John, but rather "a-priori" [a principle that is independent of experience]. Here he gives instruction of a legal (*halachic*) nature that instructs the believer in all possible considerations and circumstances so that our freedom in the Messiah does not become a stumbling block to the weak brother.

"Eat anything that is sold in the meat market without asking questions for conscience's sake; FOR THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S, AND ALL IT CONTAINS. If one of the unbelievers invites you and you want to go, eat anything that is set before you without asking questions for conscience's sake. But if anyone says to you, 'This is meat sacrificed to idols,' do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for conscience's sake. I mean not your own conscience, but the other man's; for why is my freedom judged by another's conscience? If I partake with thankfulness, why am I slandered concerning that for which I give thanks? Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." (1Cor. 10:25-31)

Most people read the opening statement of this passage and stop there. In order to understand Paul's Rabbinic

technique in this passage, one must continue reading, however. This passage is a legal Torah discussion based on Psalm 24:1. First it uses a principle that illustrates the general rule that comes from this passage and then elaborates the circumstances under which the principle ought to be modified. Under normal circumstances, a person ought to value the honor of the invitation and the one that invites him more than his food. Nevertheless, when the food is given as a test case to see if the believer is consistent with the principles of his faith or not, the food and the honor of the host who serves the food take a second place to the firm convictions of faith, which instruct us not to eat meat sacrificed to idols.

Physical food is not the most important thing for disciples of Yeshua and for the Kingdom of God. Paul states very clearly in Romans 14:13-17. *"Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this—not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way. I know and am convinced in the Lord Yeshua that nothing is unclean in itself; but to him who thinks anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. For if because of food your brother is hurt, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not destroy with your food him for whom the Messiah died. Therefore do not let what is for you a good thing be spoken of as evil; for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Whoever thus serves the Messiah is acceptable to God and approved by men. So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbringing."*

We can learn several very important things from this short passage of Scripture. First, food is not the most important thing for us. Walking according to love is much more important. Righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit are much more important for us and for God.

S e c o n d, everything that God has created is clean and good, but if

one thinks that something is "unclean," it is unclean for him. Therefore, he ought not eat it, lest he violate his conscience. Things that we do without faith and a clean conscience are sins. Most people do not understand this principle because we have a sense that SIN is always an absolute. On the contrary, every judge, lawyer, and jury knows that there can be what is called in legal language "extenuating circumstances." Yeshua healed the sick on the Sabbath, and He did not condemn His disciples for picking "corn" on the Sabbath. He did not break the Sabbath laws because He, like most of the Rabbis of His day, understood that there are circumstances under which *not* to heal on the Sabbath would be a sin, *not* to allow the hungry to eat on the Sabbath would be wrong, and *not* to cook hot soup for the sick on the Sabbath would be a transgression. We need to understand these principles and start applying them to our own lives and thinking. When we do this, we will be less condemning of others and more helpful than those who are suffering from the religious epidemic of "legalism."

After considering these points, we can now examine some of the Biblical principles concerning food and eating and how the Word of God instructs us with regard to them. We must pay attention to the fine difference between "instructs" and "commands" in this case. Essentially, the word "Torah" means "instruction," not "law."

To Eat or not to Eat? – That is the Question.

It is interesting that the very first instruction that God gave man in the Garden of Eden was **not** to eat from the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. The first sin humans committed against God was in the matter of eating. Long before the giving of the Torah on Mt. Sinai, Noah already knew about clean and unclean animals.

This is what God told Noah: *"You shall take with you seven each of every clean animal, a male and his female; two each of*

animals that are unclean, a male and his female; also seven each of birds of the air, male and female, to keep the species alive on the face of all the earth." (Gen. 7:2-3) What we eat

is connected also with what we offer on the Lord's altar. We are commanded to offer only the same animals that we are allowed to eat, i.e. the "clean" animals. It is logical to suppose that what is good enough to be sacrificed



to God on the altar is also what God wants His children to consume. Although there are passages in the New Testament that might give the impression that a person can eat anything he wants, a more careful examination of these statements shows some interesting new angles.

Freedom from Judgment

"So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Messiah." (Col. 2:16-17) These words of Paul's often are used to justify eating anything and not celebrating the Biblical Holidays because this text says that we ought not judge one another about these things. What this statement means, however, is that we have freedom to keep or not to keep kosher. In a congregation that has both Jews and non-Jews, this is the natural and totally necessary position if the two groups want to continue to walk together and worship in the same place. There has to be a wide allowance for different expressions of the same faith.

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 7:17-20, *"Only, as the Lord has assigned to each one, as God has called each, in this manner let him walk. And so I direct in all the churches. Was any man called when he was already circumcised? He is not to become uncircumcised. Has anyone been called in uncircumcision? He is not to be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but what matters is the keeping of the commandments of God. Each man must remain in that condition in which he was called."* This passage from 1 Corinthians is really not complicated; it is, in fact, very clear. The language is easy, and the instruction is simple. Let each believer stay in the same status that he was when God called him. If someone was called as a Jew, he should not become a Gentile. If he was called as a Gentile (uncircumcised), he should not become Jewish. There are several different implications that arise from this text:

1. God does not make mistakes when He creates us.
2. God is the one who calls us, and He does so not because we are Jews or Gentiles.
3. We were made exactly as the Maker wanted us to be, and we do not need to change.
4. It is not important if one is a Jew or non-Jew. What is important to God is how we keep the commandments. Keeping God's commandments is much more important to God than being "circumcised" or "uncircumcised."
5. Not all the commandments are for all people. There are specific commandments for men and others for women. There are commandments for Jews and others for non-Jews. This simple point is a cause of great stress to some people in the Church, and in some cases, it has led to enormous divisions in the Body of Yeshua our Messiah.

Let us reiterate that for God it is not important if a person is a Jew (circumcised) or a non-Jew (uncircumcised). What is important is what commandments a person keeps and how he demonstrates his faith through keeping them.

Unity in Diversity

In the context of the First Century, especially in the Diaspora, the Jewish community and the Church were mixed with both Jews and God-fearing Gentiles. This kind of mixed situation was a wonderful celebration of the variety of God's human colors. It did create some major adjustment problems concerning culture and custom between races and nationalities though. There is nothing more influenced

"...All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for the man who eats with offense. It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles..."

by culture than the food we eat. For this reason, Paul speaks directly to disarm the possibility of major rift and division in the Church in the continuance of the passage in Romans 14 that we examined above. *"Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for the man who eats with offense. It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak. Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin."* (Rom. 14:20-23)

Just as the passage in Colossians says, here too in Romans, Paul admonishes the Church not to judge one another and to do what is possible to resolve the problem of eating foods that are considered "unclean" in a peaceful manner. Paul is speaking of a gradation of commandments. The most important command is not to offend or hurt the feelings of one's brother, so as not to become a stumbling-block to him.

This principle is very clear in Rabbinic Judaism also. The Rabbis understand that eating "unclean foods" is only a minor sin. They came to this conclusion by looking at the punishments that God gave in the Torah for different sins. Eating food that is not "clean" does not require a horrid punishment. The only punishment a person had when he ate "unclean food" was that on the same day he could not go up to the Temple and worship God. He could go to sleep that

same evening, and when he woke up he would be pure and able to go up to Jerusalem and worship in the Temple again. In contrast, if a person embarrassed someone publicly, the punishment was much more severe. When we compare the severity of the punishments of the two sins, we see that it is a bigger sin to embarrass a person in public than to eat pig or anything else unkosher.

With this key principle in mind, we see that Paul actually did three things in this passage in Romans 14:

1. Paul tried to keep the unity of the local congregation, especially between the Jewish and Gentile mixture inside the congregation.
2. Paul tried to stop the disruption of the daily life in the congregation in Rome. He wanted to see unity and cooperation there.
3. Paul wanted people to have the right priorities and realize that the Kingdom of God deals with so much more than issues of food and drink or upon which days a person should rest or not. For Paul himself, these things were actually important but not more important than the unity of the Church and the bond of the Body of the Messiah.

We need to remember that Paul kept the Torah as much as it was humanly possible. In Acts 28:17, Paul met with the leaders of the Jewish community of the city of Rome and told them: *"Men and brethren, though I have done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. . ."* From this text, we learn that Paul kept both the Torah and the Oral Traditions as much as he could. In light of his own life, a person like Paul could not speak against the keeping the Torah or Jewish tradition without being accused of duplicity and hypocrisy. In my opinion, this great Jew and disciple of Yeshua did not have even a small amount of duplicity in his life and message. For this reason, I think that the traditional opinions about Paul and his "anti-Jewish gospel" come from the Church fathers and the anti-Semitic attitudes of the Byzantine and Roman Churches, rather than from the Scriptures themselves.

Yeshua and the Pharisees on "What Goes Out and What Comes In"

"When He had called the entire multitude to Himself, He said to them, 'Hear Me, everyone, and understand. There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!' When He had entered a house away from the crowd, His disciples asked Him concerning the parable. So He said to them, 'Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, thus purifying all foods?' And He said, 'What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil

thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man." (Mark 7:14-23)

This passage is one of the more challenging to explain because it is so Jewish and Rabbinic in nature. Let us take into consideration the previous discussion about how sins have degrees of severity. In Christian and Western culture, people often think a sin is a sin is a sin. It is not so in the Word of God though; all sins are not created equal. Each sin has the proper degree of punishment, and one sin is not the same as another.

When Miriam and Aaron, Moses' siblings, spoke evil against him in Numbers 12, their punishment was that Miriam became a leper. Leprosy is considered something very severe and impure in the Jewish understanding. It was so impure that people who were sick with leprosy actually had to leave the camp and live in a special colony. Even King Uzziah had to rule Jerusalem from afar because he had leprosy. The word for "leper" in Hebrew leprosy is מצורע, "metzora." To speak evil of someone in Hebrew is called מוציא רע "motzi-ra," which literally means "to take evil out" of one's mouth. So, speaking evil and giving false accusations against someone ("motzi-ra") is a word play with "metzora," leper. With this background, it is clear that Yeshua taught that the Pharisees' speaking evil against His disciples was just like being infected with leprosy, which is much more defiling and impure than eating unclean food or eating without washing one's hands.

In no way was Yeshua negating the Torah of God that was given by Moses for the people of Israel. Had Yeshua spoken against the Word of God, He would be a sinner and thus unfit to be the Messiah and Savior of the World. Yeshua was sinless, and He is the Son of God, our Savior, Messiah, and Rabbi, who is now sitting at the right hand of God!

The issue of food and eating is a universal human issue, and for this reason it evokes strong emotions and feelings. This article in no way intends to convict anyone or condemn anyone in the matter of eating or not eating or hinder anyone's freedom. The real questions here are historical and exegetical. Did Yeshua or His disciples break the Torah and teach against it? Does the New Testament teach that Jewish disciples of Yeshua ought to eat bacon in order to go to heaven? Does the Word of God allow everyone to eat anything under all circumstances? Is the present position of the majority of the Christian world truly a Biblical position, or should the rules that the Apostles made for the non-Jews in Acts 15 still apply today? These questions above might not be fully examined or answered by this short article, but they are raised here so that the reader can ponder and examine them and embark on a serious search in the Word of God for answers that will satisfy him.

Have a good journey that will whet your appetite for the best physical and spiritual vittles that God can provide!

On the Tip of the Fork

Udi Zofef

Three years ago, the Knesset's Committee of Education rejected a request from the Ministry of Agriculture to continue to allow the forced stuffing of geese before their slaughter. With this decision, the end came, at least from a legal perspective, to the cruel practice of stuffing geese using a funnel that is forcibly inserted into their windpipes. This stuffing increases the weight of the goose's liver up to ten times its natural size so as to increase the profit made from selling this delicacy.

The Committee of Education is the government agency that is authorized to approve or reject the practices of the Ministry of Agriculture with regard to the Law against Cruelty and for the Protection of Animals which was enacted in 1954. Clause 2a establishes an across-the-board prohibition: "No person shall torture or behave cruelly to an animal or maltreat it in any way whatsoever." The head of the committee at that time, Zebulun Orlev, has done a great deal for the advancement of legislation for the rights of animals in Israel.

There is certainly a place to rejoice over this important gain, although stuffing geese is only one small detail within a vast body of serious phenomena of cruelty to animals that occur in every branch of the livestock industry. There is no need to go into great detail about the terrible conditions in which animals are held in most of the livestock farms in Israel. The situation is especially serious in the poultry industry because the most profitable companies use Battery Cages, which are chicken coops that measure 18 by 20 inches and hold five to eleven hens in them for up to two years at a time, as they are intentionally starved to force them into a constant laying cycle. These cages are then stacked on top of one another, so the hens live in horribly crowded conditions in which they cannot move at all and endure great physical suffering. The points of their beaks are sawed off, and they die constantly from illness, filth, and different kinds of afflictions in these crowded, "inhumane" conditions. One may even be able to speak in this case of "mental anguish."

In this particular area, the hand of the law "was too short to save" because it only forbade torture for torture's own sake and is quite flexible about causing animals suffering if it serves an "appropriate purpose." One example of such a purpose is medical research. Apparently the right of the citizen to chicken schnitzels and the right of the farmer to make a living are also considered to be "appropriate purposes" and therefore justify the continuance of the current conditions.

It must be emphasized that this accusation of abuse is not talking about kosher slaughter, which has turned into a "hot topic" in recent years among certain "Green" organizations because it is supposedly "cruel." In fact, the ancient Jewish practice of kosher slaughter is still one of the methods which causes the least amount of suffering to the animal that is being killed. The problem is not with the method of slaughter, but rather with the living conditions of the animals before their slaughter. Ironically, the awareness of this particular issue in Israel is quite underdeveloped in comparison to that of other countries, even though we live in a Jewish country that proudly carries the "Banner of the Torah."

The Torah does permit the killing of animals, although at the beginning it was only permitted along with Temple worship, which included sacrifices and then eating parts of the sacrificial animal. This leniency of being allowed to kill animals for "secular" purposes does not allow a person to treat an animal in any way he wishes, however. Quite the opposite, the Torah explicitly commands that people protect and have compassion on animals. It is true that there are only a few applicable laws scattered here and there throughout the Torah, but there is no disputing that the Torah reflects God's will. Therefore, the mistreatment of animals must touch His heart.

Here are a few examples: "*Do not muzzle the ox while he is treading the grain*" (Deut. 25:4). In other words, an ox which is pulling the grinding stone must be allowed the freedom to eat while he is working. "*You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together*" (Deut. 22:10). The strength of these beasts is not equal and would certainly cause the donkey, the weaker animal, suffering. The commandment to rest on Shabbat also applies to animals. Not only is it forbidden to physically hurt an animal, but it is also forbidden to hurt an animal's feelings. "*You shall not slaughter a sheep and its lamb or an ox and its calf on one day*" (Lev. 22:28), and the commandment of sending a mother bird away from her nest before taking the eggs also stems from this concept.

On the basis of these few commandments, the sages established, "[The law against making] animals suffer is *d'Oraita* (written in the Torah), and one should even feed his animals before himself" (*Pele Yoetz*, Section 1, 79). This instruction comes from the principle of "measure for measure." An animal is dependant on his master, just as his master is dependant on God, so an animal's master has to treat it with mercy, just as

God acts toward His creatures. Rabbi Eleazar Papo discussed the issue of animal mistreatment in his important book *Pele Yoetz*. There he mentioned a story that circulated in the time of the Ari about a man who was punished with the death of his children because of a mistake his wife made in handling some chicks, which caused them to be separated from their mother hen. Because of the lethal seriousness of the matter, Rabbi Papo recommended that one had better not raise chicks at all, "Because no one can stand on guard all the time to make sure they will not suffer, and most people do not succeed, since most of them die from falling or become food for mice or cats and the like, which is emotional suffering" (from the same section of *Pele Yoetz*).

In light of the strict stance taken on nuances of *halacha* like the raising of chicks, it is hard to understand how the sages of our generation can ignore the widespread suffering of masses of animals that are the victims of the modern food industry, which is many times worse than anything described by the early sages. The problem is possibly compounded by the fact that today's *halacha* makers are acting on the basis of observations that were established in the distant past, when no one even imagined the reality of raising animals in mass quantities and caging them in the monstrous conditions that are the norm today. The idea of the mass extermination of thousands of chicks by crushing them to dust in a horrifying manner, (a routine practice in today's poultry industry), never would have risen in Rabbi Papo's wildest nightmares. His sleep was disturbed at night by the fear that one chick might fall out of its nest and be miserable.

It seems that the rabbis of our generation are also greatly disturbed by small nuances of *halacha*. They are incredibly concerned, for example, about feeding cows before Passover with a special kind of food in order to make sure that their milk is "kosher for Passover." While they are standing there examining "with seven eyes" what goes into the cows' mouths, they are ignoring their terrible living conditions. Yeshua's claim about those who "strain out the gnat and swallow the camel" is very appropriate here. The situation that reigns in today's livestock industry is borderline torture and never would have been accepted by our ancient sages as something to which they would give a *heksher* (kosher certification).

The sorrowful conclusion of all that has been said so far is that the "kosherness" of the food we obtain from livestock including meat, milk, chicken, and eggs is thrown highly into doubt because of the suffering of the animals involved. The only real option available to someone who has this subject close to his heart is to become a vegan or to choose some alternative options, such as "free range eggs." These eggs come from small farms where the chickens have relatively more spacious conditions, and one can buy them at almost any health or natural food store and occasionally in regular supermarkets. There is already a great awareness of this issue in Europe, and free range eggs compose a hefty percentage

of the eggs sold there. In Israel only a handful of "extremists" are conscientious about this matter, and free range eggs do not even come to one percent of the total amount of eggs sold in this country. There are also milk products that come from small farms with better conditions, but they are usually expensive and less accessible for the average consumer.

At the moment, the work of the righteous is being done by others. While the voice of the Chief Rabbinate and the religious political parties is not heard at all (or very little) with regard to this issue, there is a group of Knesset members from different factions that has initiated legislation calling for an improvement of living conditions in the livestock market. Only recently, one farmer was sent to court because he prevented a sick cow from receiving medical care and caused her suffering. The case against him was presented by the Ministry of Agriculture, and this may be an encouraging sign for the seriousness with which they intend to enforce the new laws. Success in these sorts of battles usually is a result of a long-term investment in education that changes public awareness on the subject. In fact, the Jews have one institution that could drastically shorten this process: the Rabbinate. It has the power to remove the *heksher* from any product that comes from a source that violates the commandment of treating animals with compassion. All that remains to be done is to "arouse the sleeping giant."



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In conclusion, it is important to be aware that the matter of animal suffering and "kosher" (appropriate for consumption) food should not be just a concern for Israelis. God gave mankind dominion over the earth and the animals upon it "to cultivate it and to keep it" (Gen. 2:15), not to abuse it. Not only is food that comes from animals who are suffering less healthy than animals who are cared for properly, but there is also a serious doubt as to whether it could be considered "kosher" for anyone who wishes to fulfill "the Spirit (or letter) of the Law" in his life.

Pillars of Zion

Irene Levy

Rittie Katz, Elizabeth Wakefield

Ruth's Gleaning

By Irene Levy

I'm just a Gentile believer,
I've come to the God of the Jews,
Forsaken my old life in "exile"
To live where my God shall choose.

I hear that you Jews love strangers,
That you let them glean in your fields;
Already you've dropped handfuls on purpose,
And I've had such bounteous yields.

Such gleanings from sacred pages
The Jews have let fall for me!
These sheaves from which I'm now gleaning
Are all so fruitful and free!

Why, O Naomi's Kinsman,
Shouldst thou take knowledge of me
Seeing I am a stranger
And not of Israel like thee?

A full reward Thou hast given,
O Lord God of Israel!
As under Thy wings I'm now trusting,
Here all's so abundantly well.

At last I am one with Thy people
Through Thee Who alone couldst redeem,
O Israel's great Kinsman, my Bridegroom,
Forever together we'll glean!



Irene - on the left - with the Wurmbrands

had hired hands to help, but it soon became too much for her mother, so they moved. Though her father was not a believer when he died, he had been a wonderful man, and many people attended his funeral and spoke well of him.

All of her life, Irene has not been called Agnes, but Irene. She began our interview with coffee, cake, and a lot of exuberance, explaining that Agnes is Latin for "lamb," Irene is Greek for "peace," and Poe is Hebrew for "here," so that through the Lamb she has peace here in Israel.

Irene is a delightful and energetic person who loves the Lord very vocally and passionately with all of her heart. She was delighted with the interview and excited to talk about how much the Lord has done in her life. Often she would remember something she felt was important and share it in the middle of another story. It is obvious that she is a woman of faith and courage.

Irene remarked that she is now 88, and it is the year 2008. Eight is the number of resurrection. All five sisters are still alive and in their 80's as well.

Her mother took the girls faithfully to a country church. Irene says that she loved the Church but that up until the age of 18 she did not have assurance of salvation. She did not respond to altar calls because she felt she could not stop fighting with her sisters. During her high school years, Irene heard many missionaries speak, and her heart was deeply stirred. She also wanted to help people come to faith, even though she had not yet fully come into assurance herself.

Irene received a scholarship to Mennonite College where

Irene Levy was born Agnes Irene Poe in 1919 in Macomb, Ohio. Irene told us that "makom" means "place" in Hebrew, and she believes that she has been blessed by God, Who is often called "The Place." She is sure that her family has been taken care of in that and in every place. She was the second of five girls in her family. They lived on a farm of 350 acres. When her father was killed in an accident at only 33 years of age, her mother could not stop crying saying, "Oh girls, what are we going to do?" The family tried to stay on the farm and

her sister had gone. The college had a tradition of singing Handel's *Messiah* once a year, which gave Irene a great love for this musical composition. Her love for Handel's *Messiah* lasted her entire life and became significant years later as well.

She went to a missionary church close to the college and often heard young people giving their testimonies. She only asked for prayer, however. She wanted to be saved, but she did not think it was possible. She did not know if she had repented or believed enough. She had many little doubts and did not see a "great light" like Paul. Finally, she heard the Lord speaking to her heart and asking "Is my Word not enough? It is finished." Indeed, it was enough for her, and she somehow knew that it was done and confessed with her mouth that she did believe. She says throughout that day on the way home from church, and even for days later, the joy of the Lord was indescribable. The Holy Spirit gave her His joy which always continues.

Irene finished her B.A. in Toledo, Ohio, where she had gone to live with her sister who had some small children. It was on Irene's heart to be a "missionary/teacher," so she began teaching in a suburb of Detroit, Michigan, where she was active in living near and helping the black community who composed the majority of her pupils. She became a member of the NAACP and visited many black churches. She often sat in the back of the bus with them, as buses were still segregated at that time. She went to the University of Detroit in the evenings and worked during the day teaching first and second grades as well as volunteering in a Baptist Church, helping in youth fellowships, and visiting people, always speaking about the Lord. She received her Master's degree there in Detroit.

After some time, Irene went to a Bible School in Chicago with a friend while also helping there in the slums. Then she went to teach in the Virginia public schools through a national program. It was a complete move of faith because the local churches were supposed to provide the teachers' living expenses. She taught Bible in eight schools, teaching Old Testament to the fifth graders and New Testament to the sixth graders. She also cooperated with the regular teachers and held programs for the parents, all this time being a qualified teacher with a Master's degree who received no regular salary. The different churches in the area did indeed provide for her at that time, and they even bought her a station wagon after her move to Israel.

Though she was happy and productive in Virginia, she still had the foreign mission field on her heart. After a time, she moved to New York and began to see the prophecies of the Old Testament fulfilled in the New Testament as events in Europe and the Middle East unfolded. Whenever she spoke to someone Jewish about these issues, and they said, "That is not for us Jews," she answered, "You are the ones who should be speaking to me because you gave me the Scriptures!"

In 1946, several Jewish women entered Irene's life while

she taught school in New York. Through them, she began to have a deep love for the Jewish people. One of the women used to preach in the streets with untiring compassion. Another woman was a Jewish believer who taught classes on the book of Ruth. Through these studies, Irene began to identify with the way Ruth clung to Naomi. She also began studying and memorizing the book of Romans and was touched in her heart by Romans 11, particularly the verse which says, "*Through your mercy, they may obtain mercy.*" While attending a conference on Jewish evangelism there, one believer from Canada who had come for the conference confirmed through prophecy that Irene was called to the Jewish people.

While she was staying at Samuel Needleman's Mission in New York, four titles of poems came to her. Each had to do with her calling: Rahab's Grace, Rebecca's Gems, Rachel's Glory, and Ruth's Gleanings. After she wrote these poems, she used to post them in the mission's front window and set up chairs in a circle in the front room. Many Holocaust survivors and other Jews living in the Lower East Side of Manhattan walked by the window, became intrigued by the poems, and came to sit down at the small study she taught.

Irene studied at Wycliffe Bible Translation School in Oklahoma, with the thought of moving to India to work with the Jewish people there. (Ironically, once she came to Israel and taught a summer children's Bible school in Beersheva, she found that mostly Jews from India came to her). While at Wycliffe, she was troubled when she noticed that although they held special prayer times for many different countries, they had no time set aside to pray for the Jewish people. She was still in the process of memorizing the book of Romans at that time, and when she got to chapter 11, she fell on her knees and felt the hand of God on her head. She was completely and continually burdened for Jerusalem and kept asking the Lord what He was saying. Irene was at the end of her course at Wycliffe and wondered what she should do. She prayed that the speaker on that final day would have a word for her, which would confirm her calling and the path she was to take. The speaker read Romans 15 that day (the chapter she was memorizing then), and when he got to verse 25, Irene heard, "*Now I go to Jerusalem to make a contribution to the saints.*" A blinding light flooded her like when one raises a window shade, and Irene knew that she had been called to Jerusalem.

A good friend obtained a visa for her to Lebanon so she could proceed south from there. The Baptist Church for whom she had volunteered decided to send her \$200 every month. Two evangelical men with whom she had ministered in New York offered to be her "Board of Directors." Irene did not know if she even needed a Board of Directors, but she accepted. One was a lawyer who gave her good advice, and the other was an evangelist who gave her tracts to distribute. She had often backed him and others in open air preaching.

On June 11, 1948, she got on the Marine ship *The Carp* that

was taking Jews to the brand new State of Israel. Though her friends helped her to travel first class, she decided to go to the lower deck so she could be with the Jews there, just as she had ridden on the back of the bus with the black people. The Jews in the lower class cabins taught her Hebrew songs, and she found a believer there who prayed with her. Together they prayed for a young man named Moshe (who Irene believes ultimately came to faith) and who was killed later in the war after arrival in Israel.

Irene had a phonograph with her, and she played Handel's *Messiah* over and over for the passengers. She wrote a poem for each Jewish person she met aboard the ship and gave them to each passenger as they disembarked. She also did Bible studies for the children and organized a play based on the Book of Esther. The Jewish passengers came to see this play because they were amazed that a Gentile would write a play with a Jewish theme. Although the entire journey lasted only two weeks, Irene packed more into this short trip than many people pack into a year.

The ship then landed in Haifa, where many of the Jews disembarked, but Irene continued on to Beirut. Irene stayed in the home of a barber and his young daughter Samia in Bhamdoun, Lebanon. He was "an evangelistic barber," and whenever people were in his chair, they were a captive audience. He used to tell them the entire gospel while he shaved them and cut their hair.

An old friend of Irene's from her New York days came to visit her in Beirut soon after she arrived and used to pray with her a lot since they were some of the only English speakers there. His name was Stanley Joseph Duce, and they became fairly close. (The Arabs could not pronounce "Stanley," so they called him "Yusef"). Stanley spoke Arabic, but he was interested in the Jews and their return to Israel and in learning Hebrew, too. Irene and Stanley began to learn Hebrew together in the home of the Rabbi there. One day Stanley proposed marriage to Irene at the Cedars of Lebanon, but she did not accept. He became offended by her refusal and left the area.

In the meantime, Irene made many friends in Lebanon. She met a woman named Naomi Cassis who came from what she described as a "fine believing family." They, as many Arabs, had fled Jaffa during the Israeli War of Independence and had gone to Bhamdoun. The two women began children's meetings together. One day, on a trip to visit the Rabbi's wife, Irene learned that although Naomi had left everything in Jaffa, she was not upset because her faith was so strong that she said she was content with her home in heaven. Even though they had lost everything, she was not bitter or discouraged. Naomi added, "The Bible says that the Jews would return, and God takes care of my needs."

Irene has developed a lovely "midrash" related to the Arabs based on this story. Many of them lost everything during the wars, and they can also relate to Holocaust survivors who also lost everything in World War II. In the Bible,

Ruth the Moabitess was doubly blessed because she clung to Naomi, who had also lost everything and helped her come back to her land. Naomi became "pleasant" instead of "bitter" through Ruth, who by her union with Boaz (who is a picture of the Redeemer), produced a new life! Together then, Ruth and Naomi, Jew and Arab, fulfilled their destinies. Irene speaks this word to Arab believers and is blessed that she can share this challenge.

Irene and her friend Miss Graves helped Palestinian refugees in a refugee camp named Mia Mia near Sidon during that time. Irene's mother sent her packages of soup, which she cooked and distributed to hungry people there. She and her friend rented a room in the camp and spoke words of hope in Arabic to the ladies in the camp.

One day Irene left the refugee camp and walked to Sidon to see how the Jews were faring. While she was visiting in the home of one Jewish friend, a policeman wearing a keffiyah came in and asked her if she was a Jew. Irene answered with her usual forthrightness, "No, but my Savior is a Jew!" The policeman asked Irene for her passport, but she had left it back at the camp. He gave her a ride back to the camp to get the passport and on the way learned about what the ladies were doing there and how they were helping the refugees. When the policeman saw her room in the camp with only an air mattress on the floor, he was astounded and asked, "Can't the Americans afford anything better than this?" She then felt as though she had an "open door" from the Lord, so she gave him tracts and described why she was living such an unusual life to serve the Lord.

One day, while in Zerka near Amman, Irene received a telegram from Stanley asking, "Shall I come?" Her friend wisely counseled Irene that this question meant more than a simple request to visit. Irene told him to come, and when he did, he proposed again, at the home of Roy Whitman in Amman. This time she accepted!

Irene and Stanley came to Jerusalem together and got married at St. George's Cathedral. They lived at the guest house in the Garden Tomb in East Jerusalem and called it their "Resurrection Residence." The war was still raging. Irene remembers feeling, "I have come to the Kingdom for such a time as this!" to pray for Israel and for Jerusalem.

Stanley helped Arab believers understand the importance of the return of the Jews. Often they went to Jericho and helped in the camp there. Stanley used to tell the Arabs the profound idea that when they felt humiliated and defeated, it was because they were not living the way they were supposed to be. He told them that they would feel differently if they helped the Jews return to Israel, which was what they were supposed to be doing at that time. At the end of the war, Jerusalem was divided, and Stanley and Irene found themselves on the Arab side! It was the end of 1948.

To be continued in the next Teaching From Zion...

My Mama's Brownies

Marcia Shulam

This is probably my favorite recipe, My Mama's Brownies. It is very easy and uncomplicated. Mama actually ices her brownies with a delicious chocolate icing!

June's Brownies Ingredients:

(One well oiled baking pan)

2 cups of sugar
1 1/2 cups of flour
1 teaspoon of salt
1/2 cup of cocoa

Measure these 4 dry ingredients into a large bowl and stir them until mixed.

4 eggs
1 cup of corn oil
1 teaspoon of vanilla

Break the eggs, add the oil and vanilla on top, and mix it with an electric mixer for about 60 seconds, moving the mixer until everything is combined but no longer than necessary. The batter will be thick. Take a spatula or spoon and push the mixture out into your oiled pan. Bake for 20-25 minutes, until the brownies puff up and begin to pull away from the sides of the pan. This could take a little less than 20 minutes or more than 25 depending upon your oven. As soon as you take the brownies out, cut them and go around the edge of your pan to loosen them.

The brownies should be chewy, and they are **parve**. They can be eaten with milk or meat.



Editor's note:

These delicious and uncomplicated brownies are requested at every event. For some reason we have been unable to discern, they are amazing and scrumptious only when made by Marcia herself. The rest of the time, they are simply great! Enjoy!

Mark 7:19 - Did Yeshua Make "Unclean" Food "Clean?"

David Bar-Yonah Bivin

"Now when the Pharisees gathered together to him, with some of the scribes, who had come from Jerusalem, they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands defiled, that is, unwashed.... And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, 'Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with hands defiled?'... And he called the people to him again, and said to them, 'Hear me, all of you, and understand: there is nothing outside a man which by going into him can defile him; but the things which come out of a man are what defile him... Do you not see that whatever goes into a man from outside cannot defile him, since it enters, not his heart but his stomach, and so passes on?' (Thus he declared all foods clean)." (Mark 7:1-5, 15-19; RSV)

The last four words of Mark 7:19, καθαρίζων πάντα τὰ βρώματα, "cleansing all the foods," has caused many Christians to suppose that Yeshua did away with the Biblical food prohibitions and declared "clean" (טהור) what the Torah declares "unclean" (טמא). The way English versions of the Bible have translated this verse has strengthened the misunderstanding: "Thus he declared all foods clean" (RSV, NRSV and NAB); "In saying this, Jesus declared all foods 'clean'" (NIV); "By saying this, he showed that every kind of food is acceptable" (NLT); "Thus he pronounced all foods clean" (NJB); "Thus He was making and declaring all foods [ceremonially] clean [that is, abolishing the ceremonial distinctions of the Levitical Law]" (AMP). In the Torah, "clean" and "unclean" are also used of permitted and forbidden food, and therefore Christians usually have believed that the Biblical food laws were abrogated by Yeshua in this passage. One should not be too quick to throw out large portions of the Torah, however, in this case portions of Leviticus and Deuteronomy, because of a four-word parenthetical comment¹ by Mark at the end of a long *halachic* discussion. Such a serious reversal of God's commands and contradiction of God's Word would need explanation and discussion.

The Torah prohibits the eating of certain animals (Lev 11, cf. Deut 14, Negative Commandments #172-179). We can assume that Yeshua would not have violated these commandments. (Otherwise, He would have been condemned by the words of Torah and would have been a sinner). Nor would He have taught others to violate the commandments, since He Himself taught, "Anyone who breaks them [the commandments of Torah] or teaches others to break them will be called 'light' [קֶלֶךְ, that is, of no esteem]" (Matt. 5:19). In other words, such a

disciple could not become or remain part of the "Kingdom of Heaven," a term that Yeshua used to refer to His band of full-time disciples.²

Since it is so difficult to believe that Yeshua abolished Biblical prohibitions pertaining to the eating of certain foods, or even referred to them there, we must clarify what probably was being discussed by these First-Century Jews. What was Yeshua teaching? The context for the *halachic* discussion in Mark 7:1-23 was the Pharisees' and scribes' criticism of Yeshua's disciples for eating without washing their hands. The controversy was: "Does handling clean food with unclean, that is, unwashed, hands cause the food to become unclean?" In this context, Yeshua and His contemporaries are not discussing categories of permanent prohibitions, (which by Biblical definition are impure or unclean), like the prohibition on forbidden foods such as camel meat, rabbit meat, or pig meat (Deut 14:7-8). Instead they were disputing over items such as cups and hands that are not essentially unclean but have the capability of contacting uncleanness, or going in and out of a state of purity, according to Rabbinic *halacha*. If this was the discussion, then Yeshua was not declaring "clean" what the Bible declares "unclean." His answer to the question "Does touching food with unwashed hands ritually contaminate it?" was an acceptable Jewish response in the First Century. The *hacham* [sage] Yeshua ruled, "No, it does not" (Mark 7:15 = Matt. 15:11). Bread that is touched by an unwashed hand does not lose its state of ritual purity or become a carrier of impurity.

Most scholars assume that Mark, not understanding Yeshua's defense of His disciples, added his own words to the story or combined material from different contexts or different sources.³ Yeshua clears His disciples of the charge against them by arguing that nothing that goes into the mouth can defile. Within the passage, the discussion shifts from hand-washing to food entering the mouth. The thrust seems to become not Yeshua's ruling that unwashed hands cannot defile food, but that no food that is eaten can defile.⁴

Contrary to this common misunderstanding, the scholar Yair Furstenberg says that there is no shift in the discussion and that the entire passage is a coherent whole.⁵ Furstenberg has given, perhaps for the first time, a comprehensive explanation of the whole pericope (Mark 7:1-23 = Matt. 15:1-20). He explains that prior to the time of Yeshua many schools of Pharisees, including the Schools of Hillel and Shammai, had ruled that

"Hands can be impure to the second degree (mYadayim 2.1; mTaharoth 1.7). Whenever liquids come into contact with a second-degree impurity, the liquids themselves enter a state of first-degree impurity. In turn, anything that comes into contact with the liquids then becomes ritually impure to the second degree (mParah 8.7). In other words, when hands come into contact with a mix of solid food and liquids, the food becomes ritually impure to the same degree as the hands. Consequently, a person who eats food that has been defiled by ritually impure hands becomes impure to the same level."⁶ Without the washing of hands before handling food, impurity could continue endlessly. Thus, there is a connection between hand-washing and food that enters the mouth.

Yeshua opposed this specific purity system,⁷ which is unknown in the Bible.⁸ He ruled that, *"There is nothing outside a man which by going into him can defile him, but the things which come out of a man are what defile him,"* that is, "a person cannot be defiled by eating ritually contaminated food, but only by the sinful thoughts that come out of the heart."

In summary, Yeshua's words must be read in context. When His words are read in the light of Rabbinic literature, one finds that He did not contradict God-given commandments. He did not make Biblically prohibited categories of food kosher. He did, however, challenge the dominant purity system of His day, arguing that unwashed hands do not transfer ritual uncleanness to the body through food that is eaten. In addition, He drove home a moral point: the state of a person's heart is more important than the state of his or her hands, and the heart is unaffected by the ritual purity of the hands.

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1. "It needs to be borne in mind that 'declaring all foods clean' is Mark's interpretation of Jesus' statement in 7:15, not Jesus,' and that Matthew seems to have a much less radical interpretation of the dominical saying."

Marcus, Joel. *Mark 1-8*. AB 27. Garden City: Doubleday, 2000, p. 458. In fact, Mark's editorial comment, "cleansing all the foods," is missing entirely from Matthew's parallel (Matt 15:17). "The syntax clearly marks out καθαρίζων πάντα τὰ βρώματα as a parenthetical editorial comment, since there is no masculine singular subject within the reported speech to which it can relate, (hence the emendations found in some MSS, representing attempts to 'correct' the syntax by those who failed to recognize the nature of the clause...The subject therefore is Jesus (the subject of λέγει, v. 18a), whom Mark thus interprets as 'cleansing all food' in the sense of declaring that it is no longer to be regarded as ritually 'unclean.'"

France, R. T. *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text*.

NIGTC. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002, p. 291, cf. 276.

Mark's interpretation may have been intentionally ambiguous. It

faithfully describes the *halachah* for those who are concerned with *halachic* purity, and it even has a secondary application to Gentiles who are not under the Torah food laws.

2. Paul's instructions about eating meat sold in the market or meat set before a believer by an unbeliever at a dinner to which he has been invited (1 Cor. 10:25-29) was directed at former Gentiles who lived in heathen environs and near pagan temples. Paul championed the status of believing Gentiles within the *Edah* (community), but presumably he would not have instructed Jews to enter pagan homes or eat food offered to them by pagans. Former Gentiles who were members of the *Edah* were, by apostolic *halachah*, not obligated to keep all the commandments nor to circumcise their male children (Acts 15). Jewish followers of Jesus were so obligated (Acts 21:18-24), and this obligation included the keeping of the community's Oral Torah, its interpretation of the Written Torah.

3. "This is a revealing editorial insertion...When Mark wrote his Gospel, questions related to kosher foods and dietary regulations were prominent in the minds of converts to Christianity, particularly from paganism (e.g., 1 Corinthians 8). Less that a decade earlier, in all likelihood, Paul had also addressed the question of clean and unclean foods at Rome (Romans 14-15), the probable location of Mark's Gospel. Mark's parenthetical declaration that 'all foods [are] "clean"' (v. 19) thus reveals his understanding of Jesus' position on the matter of clean versus unclean foods. This declaration takes precedence over the dietary regulations of both the oral and written laws (e.g., Leviticus 11; Deuteronomy 14). Again in Mark, the teaching of Jesus is supremely authoritative, superseding the Torah itself."

Edwards, James R. *The Gospel according to Mark*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002, pp. 212-13.

See also Gundry, Robert H. *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993, pp. 365-71.

None of these commentators have understood the discussion or Yeshua's answer here about temporary uncleanness.

4. "The explanation subtly moves from 'how' one eats to 'what' one eats...It is only a short step then to the parenthetical comment that follows about 'all foods'"

Guelich, Robert A. *Mark 1-8:26*. WBC. Vol. 34A. Dallas: Word Books, 1989, pp. 377-78.

5. Yair Furstenberg, "Defilement Penetrating the Body: A New Understanding of Contamination in Mark 7.15," *NTS* 54 (2008), pp. 176-200.

6. Ibid, pp. 184-85.

7. "Nothing in Jesus' words points to the possibility that he opposed the 'expansion of purity,' per se. Jesus only confronted a law which focused on one specific conception of impurity: the kind that is concerned with 'that which enters the body'. The hand-washing custom, together with the view that foods have the capacity continuously to transfer contamination to other objects and even to people, are the laws under attack in Jesus' statement." Ibid, p. 200.

8. "In the biblical purity system, the possibility that hands might defile independently of the whole body is unknown. Defiled hands are not one of the sources of impurity in the biblical system, except as part of an impure person, such as a *zab*. Furthermore, biblical law does not know of a purification process for hands alone, contrary to what is found in rabbinic law and mentioned in our pericope." Ibid, pp. 190-1.

The Food of Redemption

Elizabeth Wakefield

Many believers like to speak about the "Scarlet Thread" relating to the Messianic redemption that runs throughout the entire Bible and always points to God's ultimate plan of redemption for Israel and the world. This writer would like to propose that there are other patterns and lines running throughout God's Word as well, and one of them concerns food and eating. A little thought reveals many stories about eating, rules about food, miracles relating to food, and parables and speeches about food that compose a sort of "Bread Line" that flows through the Scriptures, often intertwining itself with the "Scarlet Thread" of redemption. It is because of the meeting of these lines that Yeshua can speak about "the Wedding Feast of the Lamb" as the ultimate symbol of a completed redemption and about Himself as "the Bread of Life."

Before we examine some examples of the places where these lines run together, here are two caveats. 1) It is the common mistake of the Christian world to think that redemption is only spiritual and therefore has no physical aspects or implications. This is categorically untrue. On the other hand, just because it appears that God "only" redeemed someone physically from death does not mean that there are no spiritual affects either. Physical and spiritual redemption are inseparably related to one another (c.f. Romans 8). 2) For the purpose of this study, we will place stories about both eating and drinking in the same genre. Human survival demands drinking just as much as eating, and the Bible records many instances of deliverance through the provision of water.

The first time we see the connection of food to redemption occurs in Genesis 14, when Abraham went to war to rescue his nephew Lot, who had been kidnapped. After saving Lot and defeating the armies who had taken him captive, Abraham was met by Melchizedek, (a prototype of the Messiah according to Psalms and Hebrews), who brought him a celebratory symbolic "meal" of bread and wine. In Genesis 18, it was during a meal that Abraham hosted for three angelic guests that he was told that within the year Sarah would give birth to Isaac, the beginning of the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham of a seed that would bring blessing and redemption to the whole world. Joseph was redeemed from prison and slavery in Egypt because of Pharaoh's dream about the upcoming famine that only Joseph could interpret. After he rose to power as Pharaoh's second in command, Joseph was able to deliver his entire family from the famine by giving them food and a place to live in Egypt. It was this redemption

that allowed the Jewish people to continue and grow from a small group of seventy to an enormous population of over a million by the time of the Exodus.

The slaughtering and eating of the Passover Lamb played an integral part in the Exodus, which not only involved the physical redemption of the Israelites from slavery to become a free people in their own land, but also their spiritual redemption, which took them from worshipping the idols of Egypt to the worship of the one true God. During the forty years of wandering in the wilderness, God constantly and miraculously provided manna from heaven, water from the rock, and quail to sustain His people and to keep them from starvation. He also did this to teach them about His great power as the God who not only redeemed them once from Egypt, but also as the God who delivered them daily from hunger and need and sought a living relationship with His people. The Torah prescribes the eating of certain sacrifices, such as the Passover Lamb and the Peace Offerings, as a step of participation in the redemption signified by these sacrifices.

Who can forget the important role played by the gleaning, eating, and harvesting of grain in the redemptive love story of Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz? In the time of the early prophets, 1 Kings 17 recounts the salvation of Elijah from the drought and famine in Samaria, which was brought on by his word at God's command. God sent him to a special hiding place by the Cherith Brook, which continued to flow for a long time despite the drought, and sent ravens to bring Elijah food every day. Once the brook dried up, God sent Elijah to a widow and her son in Zephath (in Lebanon) on the very day that she and her son were about to eat their last meal and then die of starvation. Elijah asked her to make him bread with the last of her flour and oil, and when she did so, God rewarded her faith by multiplying her food supply so that it was enough for all three of them for the duration of the famine. Not only did this multiplication bring her the physical redemption of living through the famine, but it also brought this non-Jewish family to the experiential knowledge of the one true God.

In 2 Kings 2:19-22, Elisha purified the bitter water of the city of Jericho through the power of God by throwing salt into it. In this way, he delivered the residents of the city from the death and miscarriages that their water was causing. Then in 2 Kings 4, appears the story of how a widow and her sons were redeemed from being sold into slavery to pay off their debts when they cried out to God and Elisha. Elisha told them

to collect all the empty jars they could borrow and to start pouring oil, (which was a staple both for light and for food), into them. God miraculously multiplied the oil so that it filled all the jars, and they sold it to pay off their debts and to redeem themselves. Isaiah 55:1-3 summarizes the Tanach's approach to God's desired salvation and redemption of Israel with this metaphor. *"Come everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy, and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me and eat what is good and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear and come to me. Hear, that your soul might live, and I will make you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David."*

Yeshua spent an enormous amount of His ministry eating with people, giving parables and teachings about food, and doing food-related miracles. Almost all of His food miracles were intended to be signs of the coming of the Kingdom of God and the Messianic Age. To this purpose, there are many passages in which Yeshua multiplied food, such as the feeding of the 5000 with five loaves and two fish (Matt. 14:13-21) or the feeding of the 4000 with seven loaves and a few fish (Matt. 15:32-39) or the two instances in which He miraculously gave the disciples an enormous catch of fish on nights when they had not managed to catch anything on their own (Luke 5:1-11, John 21:1-14). His very first miracle was the changing of the water to wine at the wedding in Cana (John 2:1-11). Besides providing for the physical needs of those present, it seems that all of these miracles of plenty were also meant to be signs of the overflowing abundance of the Messianic redemption Yeshua brought into the world. In John 4:13-14, Yeshua describes His redemptive work to the Samaritan woman at the well by telling her, *"Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I give him will never be thirsty forever. The water that I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."* Besides eating and drinking with sinners and tax collectors in order to bring His good news of forgiveness to them, He talked a lot about the Kingdom of God as an Eschatological Banquet, the Wedding Feast of the Lamb. In Matthew 8:11, He describes the Kingdom this way: *"I tell you, many will come from East and West and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven."*

Finally, we arrive to Yeshua's last Passover during which He bade His disciples to participate in a special Messianic meal as a symbol of His redemption of Israel and the world. *"And he*

took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' And likewise he took the cup after they had eaten saying, 'This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.'" So significant was this meal, that even after His ascension, Yeshua's followers continued to meet together daily in the book of Acts to "break bread together" in a celebratory meal to commemorate the redemption that came through His death and resurrection.

These are only some of the many examples of the connection between food and redemption in the Bible. Of course, there are many situations of redemption in the Bible that have no relation to food and many times in which eating has no connection to redemption. The "Scarlet Thread" of redemption and the "Bread Line" do not always run together, but there are many important occasions in

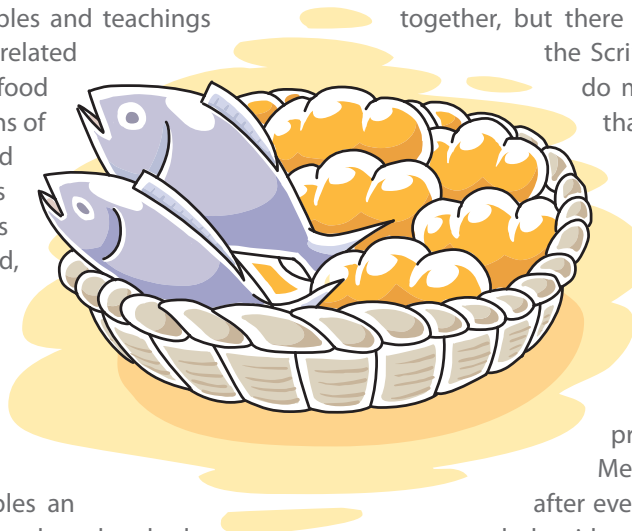
the Scriptures in which these two themes do meet and enhance one another so that we can better understand and appreciate the richness of God's plan for the physical and spiritual redemption of His people.

One beautiful example of the realization of the important connection between physical and spiritual redemption within Jewish tradition appears in the prayer *Birkat HaMazon* (Grace after Meals) that is supposed to be said after every meal that includes bread. Let us

conclude with two paragraphs from this ancient and meaningful prayer that begs for both physical provision and complete redemption.

"We thank you, O Lord our God, because you have given to our forefathers as a heritage a desirable, good, and spacious land and took us out of the land of Egypt and redeemed us from the house of bondage and for your covenant which you sealed in our flesh and for your Torah which you taught us and for your statutes which you made known to us and for the life, grace, and loving-kindness which you granted us and for provision of food with which you nourish and sustain us constantly in every day and in every moment and in every hour..."

"Have mercy now, O Lord our God, on Israel your people and on Jerusalem your city and on Zion the resting place of your glory and on the kingship of the House of David, Your Messiah, and on the great and holy House upon which your name is called. Our God, our Father, tend us, nourish us, sustain us, support us, relieve us, O Lord our God, swiftly relieve us from all our troubles. Please, O Lord our God, do not make us needful of gifts from human hands or of loans, but rather only from your hand which is full, open, holy, and generous that we may not feel shame nor be humiliated forever and ever."



The Lord's Supper in the Breaking of Bread

Yizchak Kugler

The term "Lord's Supper" is found in 1 Corinthians 11 where Paul gives instructions to the Gentile believers in Corinth as to how to behave at such a meeting. In Acts, however, Luke uses a Jewish expression "the breaking of bread." The term "breaking of bread" occurs many times in Jewish literature and especially in the Jewish literature of the Mishnaic period, which very often relates to practices in the final years of the Second Temple era.

The Community of the Notzrim

In order to understand the breaking of bread, we need to understand some things about the early Church. The early Jewish believers in the Land of Israel were called Notzrim.¹ The community which is described in the first chapters of Acts was a community of Jewish inhabitants of the land of Israel. All of their customs were rooted in the Judaism of the Land of Israel in the late Second Temple period. The difference between this

Many translations and even the UBS Greek text have a comma after the word "fellowship," but the Greek grammar makes the fellowship an integral part of the breaking of bread. The Lord's Supper in the breaking of bread was the means to, the center of, and the heart of fellowship in the early Messianic Jewish community in Jerusalem.

The large gatherings of the Notzrim were principally for the teaching of the Apostles. These early believers usually met in the Temple precincts in the same way that Yeshua taught the crowds in the Temple. Paul and Bar Naba taught the congregation in very large audiences in Antioch. In 1 Corinthians, we can see some of Paul's instructions to the community there in chapters 14 and following. The large gatherings were public events where uninitiated persons could enter, listen, and observe. Paul mentions this possibility in 1 Corinthians 14:23.

The Nature of the Breaking of Bread Meeting

The other kind of meeting in the ancient Church was the breaking of bread. In Acts 2:46, Luke reports that the breaking of bread was one of outstanding activities of the community of believers. In the Greek of verse 46, there is only one main verb "sharing" (*metalambanon*), and all the other actions are represented as participles that serve as modifiers for the main verb. In other words, they were sharing their food in their various residences whenever "they broke bread," and they did this by "praising God with overflowing joy and in sincerity of heart." We can learn from the way Luke wrote his report, therefore, that the breaking of bread was an integral part of their meals together. It is a mistake to think of the breaking of bread as a separate ceremony from the supper or from the fellowship.

One might mistakenly think that this description of the Lord's Supper, or the breaking of bread, in Acts contradicts the proscription on eating food at the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians. A re-reading of 1 Corinthians 11, however, reveals that the last words and summary of the Apostle's comments on the subject are: "Therefore, my brethren, when you gather to eat, wait for one another." In other words, the stated purpose of the gathering was **to eat**. The Scriptures must be interpreted according to their plain, "simple" sense and in the context of the whole of the Scriptures. We must set aside our pre-formed opinions and attachments to traditions. In light of all the contexts which mention the breaking of bread, the cultural

The Lord's Supper in the breaking of bread was the means to, the center of, and the heart of fellowship in the early Messianic Jewish community in Jerusalem.

community and the rest of the Jews in the Land was not so much between customs but rather between the principles of its faith, the gospel it preached, and the life lived by its members.

The Principle Congregational Activities of the Notzrim

Acts 2:42 describes the three principle activities of the Notzrim in Jerusalem, and these were 1) the teaching of the Apostles, 2) the fellowship in the breaking of bread, and 3) the prayers.

background, and the context of Israelite worship in the Old Testament, Paul would never have forbade eating at the breaking of bread! Centuries of Church tradition make one think that Paul forbade eating at the breaking of bread, but that tradition began outside the Land of Israel after the First Century.

Paul wanted to correct an improper manner of eating at the breaking of bread. He wanted to point out that the purpose of their meeting was for fellowship and for remembering the Lord and not merely to fill one's stomach. This Jewish Apostle was aghast to learn that these Greek believers had turned the breaking of bread into an orgy of eating, in which, instead of sharing their food together, some were eating of the over-abundance that they brought for themselves and their family, while others of lesser means were going hungry. Such behavior was not "discerning the body."

The Breaking of Bread in Rabbinic Literature

Rabbinic literature preserves a great amount of material testifying to the existence of the well-rooted custom of breaking bread in the Jewish culture of the Second Temple and Mishnaic periods. One can find many of these sources in the Hebrew articles in the Talmudic Encyclopedia on *be'tsiah* (בציעה) "breaking" and *Havdalah* (הבדלה) "division" because the breaking of bread mostly took place at the *Havdalah* service at the end of Shabbat.²

The Form of the Breaking of Bread

The breaking of bread was the act at the completion of the blessing pronounced over the food in a ceremonial supper. The Notzrim in the Land of Israel broke bread in their homes because that was the extant custom. There is no reason to think that they broke bread in their homes because of lack of choice or out of fear because Acts 5 shows them openly meeting in large groups in Solomon's Court of the Temple in Jerusalem. Rather, as was the custom and the rule, they reclined at the tables in their homes. They did this because the Messiah Yeshua commanded them to remember Him every time they broke "this bread" and drank "from this cup."

The fellowship mentioned in Acts 2:42 was an integral and inseparable component of their meetings because the breaking of bread was a supper where the believers shared their food with one another in private residences. In every culture, eating together is a ritual which promotes friendship and peace. There are very few situations in which people are willing to eat at the same table with their enemies. People do not readily eat with strangers, and if the situation does arise, they are quick to make acquaintance with the people who sup at the same table.

Jean Danielou reports that it was Greek speaking churches which were the first to separate between the Eucharist³ and the common meal that was characteristic of the early Church.⁴ Gabriel Grossman of Beit Yeshiyahu in Jerusalem reported

in a private conversation that Latin Churches were known to have a common meal at their "Eucharist" until the period when the Church became a large movement, and it became difficult to distribute even a small bite to everyone even in one hour. The cessation of the custom to break bread in a love feast or common meal conducted in private homes and accommodations took place among believers outside of the Land of Israel and after the close of the First Century Apostolic period.

The Breaking of Bread in Homes

Luke reports in Acts 2:46 that the believers were sharing their food together in their homes. In many translations, it appears as if all of them went together from house to house. Logically, this practice would have been impossible, however, because the early Church in Jerusalem numbered in the thousands, and they could not have all fit into one single residence. The number of participants depended on the size of the residence, and that is why the text says "according to the home" (*kata oikian*), which is often mistranslated "from house to house." Yeshua first invested new meaning into this custom in an upper room of a residence. In Acts 20, the believers gathered to break bread in an upper room of a residence. In no case was the breaking of bread conducted as an open meeting where observers, the curious, and others could enter and observe. Rather, it was an intimate celebration for the family of believers. In Jude 12, it is called the "love feast."

The Role of Women in the Breaking of the Bread

Women's voices would naturally be heard in the breaking of bread meeting in prayer and prophecy because it was a home meeting isolated from the public with a different character than a public meeting. A meeting which is in the home or in a private place that involves believers sharing their food at a table is an entirely different context from a public meeting. It is significant that the only place in Pauline instruction where women's voices were supposed to be heard occurs in 1 Corinthians 11, the very chapter where the instructions for the Lord's supper are recorded. It is possible that the participation of women in the breaking of bread ceremonies among the Notzrim was more progressive than all the other sects in Israel, for this writer found no record of women in breaking of bread ceremonies in any of the Rabbinic sources. In the Messiah, women receive respect and also the same Spirit that is poured out on the whole community. Therefore, the women among the Notzrim were active in prayer and prophecy in the breaking of bread service.

On the other hand, Paul enjoins women to silence and submission in public gatherings of the community where there was ministry and teaching. His arguments for this restriction were 1) that it is not customary in the Churches of God, i.e. those in the Land of Israel, 2) that it is contrary to the Torah, 3) and that such activities bring shame on the

Church if done by women (1 Cor. 14:34-36, 11:16). All of these arguments represent the norm in Israel since ancient times. One should note that unlike all the cultures of the ancient world, Israel uniquely did not have an order of "priestess." Every other culture had priestesses, temple cult prostitutes, and the like. These are customs from Egypt, Phoenicia, Greece, Rome, Babylon, and the cult of Ba'al that plagued Israel and Judaea in the Kingdom period. Therefore, even though it may have been in keeping with Greek culture for women to take an active part in liturgy, the apostles set down the norm held to in Israel and forbade women's participation in the liturgy of public gatherings of the Church.

The failure of believers to distinguish between the "Ministry Meeting" and the "Breaking of Bread Meeting" has caused confusion in the whole Body of Messiah regarding the activities of women in the congregation. One whole segment totally disregards the teaching of the New Testament regarding women leading in prayers, teaching, and public ministry, while the other half totally silences the women to the congregation's great loss and spiritual damage of the women. The place for the women's voices to be heard in prayer and prophecy is in the breaking of bread meeting, and in this context, women can have a powerful influence for good on congregational life.

The Time of the Breaking of Bread

The earliest practice in the early Church was to break bread on Motzei Shabbat, (Saturday evening). The believers in Troaz broke bread on Motzei Shabbat according to what Luke records in Acts 20:7-8. *"And it came to pass on the first of the Shabbat, when we gathered to break bread,... and he prolonged his speaking until midnight; and there were many torches in the upper room into which we had gathered."* The term "first of the Shabbat" is a Hebraism, which refers to the first day of the week. It is important to avoid the confusion between the Hebrew reckoning of days, which is from sundown to sundown, and the Latin reckoning of days, which is from midnight to midnight. After sundown of the Shabbat (Saturday), the first day of the week has begun. If it had been Sunday evening, Luke would not have been able to write "on the first of the Shabbat" because Sunday evening is the second of the Shabbat. That it was evening is evident from the mention of "many torches" and that Paul prolonged his speaking until midnight.

A survey of Talmudic sources shows that the custom of Jews in the Second Temple period and continuing onwards at least to the end of the Mishnaic period in the Land of Israel was to always set the table on Motzei Shabbat for the purpose of *Havdalah*, a ceremony separating between the sanctity of the Shabbat and the secular days of the week. In those days, *Havdalah* was in the context of a supper at the table set for the purpose of breaking bread.

The Jewish custom of breaking bread on Motzei Shabbat, which is the beginning of the first day of the week, led to the

Christian custom of meeting on Sundays. There is no evidence at all that the Jewish believers met on Shabbat. Somehow by the Second Century, Christians started meeting on Sundays. The weekly meeting on Saturday night after the Shabbat (Motzei Shabbat) was converted to meetings on Sunday morning.

The number of Notzrim, (Hebrew speaking Messianic Jews), was not small in those early centuries, and their influence on the people of Israel was not small either. The Rabbi Yohanan Bar Naphha, founder of the Yeshiva of Tiberius, lived around the year 250 AD and was called one of the pillars of the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmud. (Indeed the amount of material attributed to him is great⁵). He says in Ta'anit: "And on the eve of Shabbat people do not fast out of honor for the Shabbat, and on the Shabbat herself on the principle of deducing the weightier from the lighter, and not on the first of the Shabbat because of the Notzrim."

The whole congregation of Israel avoided fasting on the first of Shabbat, (i.e. the first day of the week), for the mysterious reason "because of the Notzrim." These "Notzrim" were not Gentiles, as is the custom to think in Israel today, but rather Jews who followed the Nazarene. Their custom was fixed on Motzei Shabbat, the first of the Shabbat, to remember their Lord and Savior Yeshua the Messiah in the breaking of bread.

1. "Notzrim" in this article refers to Hebrew speaking Jewish believers in Yeshua in the Land of Israel in the First and Second Centuries. This name is found in the New Testament in Acts 24:5. Perhaps they received this name because they were followers of the Notzri, (the Nazarene), Yeshua. There is some evidence that Hebrew speaking Jewish believers frequently cited Is. 11:1 in support of their loyalty to Yeshua, *"And there shall go forth a branch from the stock of Jesse, and a shoot (Netzer) from his roots will be fruitful..."*

A similar view on the name and the character of the Jewish believing community in Israel of the times is found in *The Jewish Christian Sect of the Nazarenes*, a doctoral dissertation presented to the faculty at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem by Ray Pritz in 1981.

2. Rabbi Mayer Berlin, *Talmudic Encyclopedia*. Vol. 4. Jerusalem: Bar Ilan University and Yad HaRav Hertzog, columns 153-154.

3. "Eucharist" means "thanksgiving" in Greek. Perhaps this term came into the language of the Greek speaking congregations because the original form of this service, the Breaking of Bread, was associated with the blessings pronounced at the beginning of the ceremonial supper, i.e. "thanksgiving."

4. Danielu, Jean. *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964, p. 315.

5. *The Hebrew Encyclopedia*. Vol. 10. Columns 353-353. (in Hebrew).

Behind the Dietary Laws

Elhanan ben-Avraham

The knowledge of clean and unclean animals and food existed well before the giving of the Torah (Law) at Sinai. We see evidence of this, when Noah, a man of God, was instructed by the Lord to take both clean and unclean beasts into the ark. In the Garden of Eden, the first command given man had to do with that which was permitted to eat, and that which was forbidden. The fall of mankind came about through ignoring the difference between that which was to be eaten and not. In distinction to the fall, the salvation of mankind comes about through the eating of the Passover Lamb of God, who is also "the Bread of Life."

Contrary to much political correctness and liberalism in the West and its theologies, this distinction leading to division is not surprising since the God of Israel is a *divider*. Among the first acts of God were the dividing of light from darkness, the Sabbath from the other six days, good from evil, holy from profane, clean from unclean, right from wrong, and Israel from the nations. He will ultimately divide "sheep from goats" in heaven and hell. The very concept of "holy," which is quite abstract in English, is clear in the original Hebrew: "*Kadosh*" means *separate*. Therefore, God would raise up through history a line of people who were *holy* or *separate*. They were a people who were commanded not to mix the clean with the unclean, holy with profane, or good with evil, but rather to keep themselves separate. They would be educated in every aspect of their lives to *discern* the differences. They were taught not to mix two different seeds in the same field, not to weave wool and linen together in the same garment, not to plow their fields with both an ox and a donkey ("unequally yoked"), not mix with the ungodly in marriage, nor take into themselves any foods which are called unclean, ("*For I am the LORD your God...thus you shall be holy for I am holy*"- Leviticus 11:45). The intent of God's nation was to be a separate people of great discernment and discipline, exhibiting the fruits of holiness unto the Lord and unto a lost world.

Yeshua, the Jew, also brought the same distinct, yet greater knowledge of holiness, *separating* unto God those who were willing to be separated from their sins and their sinful ways. He said, "*Think not that I am come to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace but a sword*" (Matt. 10:34). A sword is always a divider, and the sword of the Word of God proceeding from His mouth would separate even members of the same family, those who follow Him into the kingdom of God, and those who do not. "*Woe to them,*" cried Isaiah, "*Who*

call good evil and evil good, who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness, substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter" (Isaiah 5:20). It was those *cohanim* (priests) who ceased teaching the people the differences that God condemned and removed (Ezekiel 22:26).

Today we are witnessing a further drift in part of Western Christianity, wherein the Torah and its wise instructions and distinctions have become anathema to a Church moving toward **lawlessness** (Greek: *anomia*). We see even churches mixing male with male and female with female at the altar of marriage claiming, "We are no longer under the old Jewish Law," and nothing is to be called unclean- not even the destruction of the image of God in male and female. We also see even good churches racked by adulteries, divorces, addiction to pornography, and unfaithfulness, who are apparently unable or unwilling to discern right from wrong or clean from unclean. Lacking, it seems, is self-control, *discipline*- from which comes the word *disciple*. Fearfully, it is this same **lawlessness** (*anomia*) that describes the antichrist (2 Thess. 2:3) and those who call Yeshua "Lord" but who will later be told by Him, "*I never knew you; get away from me you workers of lawlessness (anomia).*" (Matt. 7:21-23)

Yeshua said, "*Let your yes be yes, and your no be no,*" (Matt. 5:37), and any lukewarm "maybe," (neither hot nor cold), "is of evil"- another clear distinction. A people trained up with the ability to know yes from no, right from wrong, and the permitted from the forbidden, are perhaps more likely to keep the command of doing the right thing, saying "no" to that which is wrong, and "yes" to that which is right. For the person keeping the Biblical kosher laws, the appealing smell of cooking swine's flesh, (i.e. bacon- see Isaiah 66:17), wafting up from a kitchen on a bright morning will certainly awaken the appetite, the same as it would for those who do not. The aroma and sight of cooking bacon would say to the person's senses, "eat me!" Nevertheless, the Word of the Lord would come in conflict saying, "do not eat of it," to which the disciple would overcome physical desire and decide upon obedience. The person who can discipline his own desires and thoughts and who can say "no!" to his appetites is the possessor of great power and may be better able to overcome other and greater temptations of the appetites. Moreover, the same person who can say "no!" to himself for that which is forbidden can also say a robust "yes!" to all the joys of that which is permitted and provided by God for our great pleasure.

Taste and See that the Lord is Good

Rittie Katz

There is an intimacy and a nurturing associated with the act of feeding. The primal bond between mother and child is formed as the nursing child latches onto the mother's breast and receives life from her body. In this way, everything the newborn needs, complete with nutrients, sweetness, protein, and nourishment, flows from mother to child.

Because "primitive" cultures are especially aware of this bond, the act of feeding takes on significance beyond the giving of nutrients. I have a friend from Ethiopia who told me that his mother used to literally place the food she had cooked for him in his mouth. Thus, her taste and the taste of the food were intermingled. To him she had her own unique and comforting taste which years later, even though the boy had become a man and father himself, he could still "taste."

Several years ago we visited a Muslim friend in the ancient city of Azzariah (Bethany), where Yeshua raised His friend Lazarus from the dead. As we sat in my friend's salon, he pulled chicken meat off the bones and placed it with his own hands onto the plate of my son. I watched the tenderness with which he ministered to my child, and we then briefly met each other's eyes. My son took the meat with a faint smile on his face, and I saw that my friend was also smiling. The intimacy of those smiles and that simple act and wordless encounters went far beyond any conversation we have ever had. I knew at that moment from the depth of that interaction that my friend loved my son, and my son trusted him.

Joseph Shulam often advises people who have had a rift between them to eat together so the rift may be healed. Intimacy is encouraged by the sharing of a meal because conversation can occur in an unhurried manner. Yeshua used this method to heal the rift with Simon Peter after Peter had denied Him.

It is significant that in modern Western culture there is a trend towards going out to eat in restaurants. The removal of the act of preparing, serving, and eating food in a person's home has far-reaching implications in terms of lack of intimacy and knowledge of the other. In looking back on my own significant and deep friendships, almost all of them have involved an element of preparing and eating meals together. These acts establish intimacy in a very important and primal manner.

After Yeshua died and was raised, He met His disciples at the Sea of Galilee, as we read in John 21. The first, albeit rhetorical, question He asked was if they had any food. When

they answered that they did not, He told them to "*cast the net on the right side of the boat, and they were not able to draw the net in due to the amount of fish they had caught*" (John 21:6). Almost immediately, as they came to the land, the disciples saw a fire of coals with fish grilling and bread. At this point, Yeshua invited them to share the fire and bring some of the fish they had caught, saying "*come and eat breakfast*." Yeshua took the bread and fish and gave it to His disciples to eat.

After they had eaten, Yeshua asked Peter an interesting question: "*Do you love me?*" When Peter answered that he did love the Lord, Yeshua told him to "*Feed my lambs*." Again, Yeshua asked him if he really loved Him, and when Simon Peter answered affirmatively, Yeshua told him to "*tend my sheep*." Then the Lord asked Peter yet a third time, and Peter, once again, assured the Lord that he did truly love Him. What does this mean? Why did the Lord ask the same question three times and then describe how Peter was to live, what he was to do, and even ultimately how he was going to die in order to "feed His sheep?"

Looking back into the text, we see Peter, still self-willed and independent, declaring that he was going to, in his own strength and out of his own desire, go fishing. By trade Peter was a fisherman. Could it be that after his denial of the Lord before the crucifixion that Peter was toying with the idea of returning to his past life? "Forget this Messiah stuff," he may have said. "He's dead, and I have to earn a living." He went out and caught nothing. Though he had been a fisherman all of his life, he was unable to catch even one fish. Only when the Lord came and, as it were, anointed him and indicated how and where he was to fish, was Peter successful. "...*Without Me you can do nothing*" (John 15:5).

Another interesting point in this story is that the Lord Himself fed His disciples, and only then were they satisfied. Like any good teacher, the Lord asked questions in order to bring His students into reality and in touch with their deepest truths. Peter may have not known how much he truly still loved Yeshua, but the Lord knew. His questions were designed to reveal this truth to Peter.

Looking back further into the text, we see that Yeshua had prayed for His disciples and said to His Father the following strengthening words: "*While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your Name. Those whom You gave me I have kept*" (John 17:12). Soon afterwards, however, Simon Peter denied being a disciple or that he even knew the Lord and warmed

himself by the enemy's fire.

Yeshua, in a significant and meaningful act of reconciliation, forgave Peter and drew him back by eating with him and giving him food. While doing so, He asked questions to reveal the truth in Peter's heart. After he was forgiven and fed, Peter was strengthened to be able to feed others and even to glorify God by allowing himself, *"to be taken where he does not wish to go"* (John 21:18). Gone was the independent and spirited young man who thought he could feed himself, replaced by the humble, contrite, and forgiven disciple who had been fed.

In the book of Deuteronomy 8:10, we see the Lord says, *"When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the Lord your God..."* By the way, in much of the Western world prayer is offered up before the meal. At a traditional meal in Israel, however, the longest prayer is offered afterwards, in accordance with this Scripture.

As disciples and teachers, we eat from the hand of the Lord and allow ourselves to be nurtured and fed by His words

and Spirit, so that we may be *"broken bread and poured out wine"* (1 Cor. 11:24-25) to feed a hungry world. Like Peter, we need forgiveness and spiritual food as well as comfort and reconciliation with our Lord. We are in need of a God appointed task and a vision for our future. Only a forgiven soul can forgive, and only a satisfied soul knows how to satisfy and what is required for satisfaction. Only a soul who has been fed can feed others.

Let us, therefore, use our mealtimes not as a method to simply feed our bodies, but to also minister to those with whom we eat. Let us take the time to determine what is important to them and what is in possible need of repair. In order to do this, let us eat from the hand of the Lord ourselves, so that we may be satisfied. In this way, we shall be able to bless Him by feeding His lambs out of our own contentment and joy. *"O Taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the man who trusts in Him! O fear the Lord, you His saints! There is no want to those who fear Him"* (Psalm 34:8-9).





Ha-adom Ha-adom Ha-zeh

Zach Schecter

I have always been the kind of person who was curious about how things worked and who asked questions like, "What if it was done this way?" This characteristic, coupled with an immense passion for food, has often brought the story of Eisov, Yaakov, and the lentils to my mind. There seems to be a huge discourse about the circumstances surrounding the event, yet very little speculation on the "האדם האדום הזה," ha-adom ha-adom ha-zeh, (literally, "that red red"), which is from all accounts a stew/broth of red lentils.

Lentils were a staple in ancient times, used both whole as a legume and ground into flour to make bread. Archaeologists have found stores of lentils in ruins in the region of Jericho that date to 4000 BCE. Lentils are an incredibly healthy food that are packed with protein and other nutrients. Rashi said that this lentil stew was a mourner's meal for the *shiva* (mourning period) of Avraham Avinu.

All we really know about the stew from the text is that it was red and had lentils in it. Even the "red lentils" that we have today are actually salmon coloured when dry and then turn yellow when cooked. So how do we (or did Yaakov) make them red? In Ghana there is a dish that is translated "red-red", but I discovered that it contains tomatoes to make it red. Tomatoes, like peppers, (which is the source of paprika and chili powder), could not have been the red ingredient in Yaakov's stew because they were only discovered in the New World in the late 15th Century. So I decided to attempt a lentil stew exclusively using the ingredients available in the time of the Patriarchs that hopefully would also be red.

In my research, I found a native spice called sumac that is red and is used in this region, mostly in salads, to turn things red. Unfortunately, it turns brown when cooked, with an ever so slight tint of red. It is quite possible that there used to be a variety of lentils that had the colour of the of *vigna umbellata* - red rice bean, *vigna angularis* - azuki bean, or the kidney bean, all of which were cultivated much later than our story, and that we no longer have today. It has recently been suggested that a juice such as pomegranate or maybe even a red grape may have been used to achieve the red color. Since those items are seasonal and presently not available in the *shuk* (outdoor market) though, this will have to be investigated at a future time.

The following recipe is what I came up with. It is quite tasty, though not quite as red as I had hoped.

Ingredients:

1 lamb or goat shank	3 sprigs fresh hyssop
olive oil	(marjoram is a very good substitute) (or 4 T. dry)
3 bulbs garlic	1 cinnamon stick
6 small onions	3 cups lentils (red whole)
1 medium fennel bulb	1 cup ground sumac
water	
1 T. ground cumin	Optional: Season the shank
1 T. salt	with 2 t. olive oil and a
1/3 cup raisins	pinch each of salt and
(preferably small golden)	granulated garlic.

Roast with 3 bulbs of garlic and 4 small onions in a 200° Celsius (400° Fahrenheit) oven until well browned, approximately 40-45 minutes. Remove the garlic and deglaze the roasting pan with a liter of water. Bring to a simmer and simmer for 30 minutes to get a deep brown stock.

While roasting the shank, *dice 6 small onions and 1 medium fennel bulb. Sauté them in a bit of olive oil until they begin to caramelize. Add cumin and salt and cook another 3 minutes. Add the shank and the stock to the onions and fennel and then add hyssop and cinnamon. Coarsely chop the onions from the stock and add to the mixture with about 4 liters of water and simmer.

After simmering about an hour, peel the roasted garlic and put both the raisins and the garlic into the stew. Simmer a while longer. Pick through and add 3 cups lentils and cook until the lentils are done. Add water as needed. Add the 1 cup sumac and stir.

Vegetarian Version

Roasting the garlic will yield a much richer stew, but chopping the garlic and sautéing it with the fennel and onions is a good alternative. Dice all the onions and starting at * also add 2 large bay (laurel) leaves.

Suggestion

Serve with bread or over rice, (though rice was not available in the region until later).

בתאבון - Enjoy

A Kosher Kitchen

Marcia Shulam

I believe that whenever we determine to keep God's commandments and instructions, we are blessed. God's grace and love have guided Joseph and me through many changes in our walk of faith, and we have found that these adjustments have always been for our spiritual benefit and the good of those with whom we are in contact.

Our home has always been open to guests, and we have been privileged to be able to share hospitality with many people. In the early 1970s, Joseph began attending a Yeshiva, (school for higher Jewish learning), and we found that some of his Orthodox friends were not able to drink even a glass of water in our (then) non-kosher home! This caused us to look more closely at our walk with God, and we decided to heed Rabbi Shaul's advice in Romans 14:15, *"For if because of food your brother is hurt, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not destroy with your food him for whom Messiah died."* This verse troubled our hearts and consciences, so Joseph and I decided to "kosher our kitchen" so that we could extend hospitality to these new friends. Phillipians 2:3-4 encourages us to look out for the interests of others and not after our own interests, and this further strengthened our resolve.

A very kind Rabbi explained the basic rules and how to implement them. As I listened to his instructions and read *The Royal Table: An Outline of the Dietary Laws of Israel* by Rabbi Jacob Cohen, I realized this would cause significant changes in our lifestyle. No longer would we buy *any* meat, fowl, or fish to eat except those that were "kosher" or permitted according to Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14: 3-21. In addition, there were other prohibitions. The kind hearted injunction against boiling a kid in its mother's milk (Exodus 23:19; 34:26; Deut. 14:21) was interpreted by the Rabbis to mean that one should not eat meat and milk together at any time. I remember being surprised at the extension of this prohibition to the point of not allowing milk or milk products (cheese or butter) to be eaten with chicken, turkey, or any other kosher fowl. I learned that the principle of *mareet ayin* (מראית עין) "avoiding the appearance of evil" (1 Thess. 5:22) is considered in this precept. Even though no chicken, turkey, or other bird gives milk, their flesh could be *mistaken* for meat, and someone could be



misled by the action of eating *what they thought was meat* with milk products.

Our actions and example are always important. We must be above reproach, so that we do not inadvertently cause harm to another. Kindness and care

for others is the basic principle not only with regard to the kosher laws but also throughout the Scriptures.

Kosher fish have fins and scales (Lev. 11:9-10; Deut. 14:9-10), and they are considered to be "*parve*," neither milk nor meat. Eggs, fruit, vegetables, and grains are also "*parve*." This provides a person with a large category of foods that may be eaten with either meat or milk products. It is important to remember when cooking a "meat" meal that the gravy, starches, vegetables, desert, and bread should also contain no milk products, and vice versa. No dairy meal may contain meat products. Fortunately, there are many kosher cookbooks, recipes, and informative articles available online and in bookstores for those who are interested.

The Rabbi also explained that I had to additionally think about the dishes we use to cook and serve and eat on. He said that some pots, pans, dishes, etc. could be koshered, but others could not. Those items that could be made kosher had to have a *mikve*, (ritual immersion similar to a baptism), so that they would be considered pure. Porous items like clay, ceramics, plastic, and Teflon absorb what they cook, so they cannot be koshered. I remember looking at a particular Teflon pan we owned and thinking, "This has had milk cakes, meat roasts, and even pork baked in it! No hope for you in my kosher kitchen!"

In time, these things became second nature to me, and now I am able to manage my kitchen quite easily, having separate dishes, pots, pans, etc. It was not as complicated as I had initially thought. The greatest benefit was that it has allowed us to entertain guests in our home who would have been unable to eat or drink had we not "koshered" our kitchen. *"Let love of the brethren continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by the some have entertained angels without knowing it"* (Hebrews 13:1-2)

May the Lord guide and bless each one of us, as we seek to serve Him and to be an example of light and kindness to a world in need.

In Loving Memory of



Jackie Zofef (1947-2008) Beloved wife of Udi.
Mother of Indrel, Jonine, Erin, and Shaul.

I remember years ago my daughter was having a Bat Mitzvah, and Jackie shyly presented me with a book to give to her. It was a lovely book about Yeshua, filled with beautiful illustrations. When I asked her about it, she gently said that she had written it and illustrated it, as well! I was impressed and struck by the obvious talent this unassuming woman possessed.

A little while later I saw her in Jerusalem sitting on the sidewalk and receiving coins from those who passed by. I was alarmed and asked her if she needed help. Could I, perhaps, give her something, buy her food, or take her somewhere? Once again, she smiled that gentle, almost other-worldly smile and told me that she only gathered for the day that which God provided. I was impressed once again by her faith and her innocence that knew He would, indeed, provide for her every need.

I saw Jackie infrequently. We were not intimate, though there was something about her I loved, was drawn to, and inspired by. I am grateful that I saw her fairly recently at a birthday party of a mutual friend. We sat together for a while and talked. Once again, I came away feeling that I had been in the presence of someone very special. It was as though she knew the secret things of the Lord and walked closely with Him.

When I heard she was sick, I was worried along with her family. I knew she had great faith and wanted to go to a better

place, but we all, especially her family, were not quite ready for her to leave. By the time she arrived to the hospital, her illness was too advanced to stop, but thankfully, they were at least able to alleviate some of the pain.

Jackie died on the day that is called the first day of the year in the Bible, the first of *Nisan*. Therefore, on the first day of this first month, during a beautiful and fragrant spring, the Lord called Jackie to Himself.

As I was praying, I remembered Shir HaShirim (Song of Songs) 2:10–13, which is an allegory of the Lord's love for His bride. *"My beloved spoke and said to me, 'Rise up, my love, my fair one and come away. For, lo, the winter is past; the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. The fig tree puts forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grapes give a good smell. Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.'"*

To anyone who knew Jackie, it was obvious she had been waiting for the call of her Lord for years and years. Jackie was one of the few who walk among us *"of whom the world is not worthy."* (Hebrews 11:38)

"May the Lord comfort those who mourn in Zion, and may we live to see the Messiah in our days."

- Rittie Katz

News from Netivyah

The last few months in Israel have certainly exemplified the spirit of Ecclesiastes 3:4, "*There is a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance.*" In May the State of Israel celebrated its 60th birthday, and there were many joyous ceremonies and celebrations all throughout the country in honor of this happy milestone. Unfortunately, even joy in this part of the world is often mixed with sorrow. There is an expression in the Middle East, which translated means, "One day honey, one day onion." Sometimes the honey and onion occur within the same day and even within the same hour. Early this month, we were meeting to finalize plans for the joyous wedding of two of our congregational members, which was scheduled for the next day, when we started hearing sirens from the streets near our office. Just a few blocks away, a Palestinian bulldozer driver plowed into crowds of people in a lethal attack, which was followed by a copycat incident of a similar nature two weeks later.

In addition, all of Israel is mourning as we just received the bodies of two of our soldiers, Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev, who were kidnapped by Hizbollah in the summer of 2006, sparking the Second Lebanon War. The State of Israel values its soldiers so much that it was willing to exchange live, unrepentant terrorists and hundreds of bodies of terrorists in order to bring our soldiers home for a proper burial. The whole nation has been hoping and praying for their safe return for the last two years, and this month's funerals were a disheartening and grievous end to the negotiations. Please pray for God to comfort the soldiers' families and to establish His peace in Jerusalem.

Since our last issue of *Teaching From Zion* on the purpose of Biblical Prophecy, we have had many joys and many sorrows in the private sphere as well. To our great sadness, Jackie, the wife of Udi and the mother of Shaul, our radio staff members, passed away from lymphoma, and the father of another one of radio workers also died of cancer. We have had the joy of seeing two of our members get married this month as well as celebrating a Bar Mitzvah all together at the Western Wall not long ago, and another of our young families just gave birth to a baby girl. We have several new families with young children who joined our Roeh Israel congregation in Jerusalem recently, which is both a blessing and a challenge, as we now need to completely reorganize our children's program and recruit new teachers.

In the last couple of months, Joseph and Yuda traveled to Finland and had a wonderful time teaching and fellowshiping with our brothers and sisters there. Joseph and Marcia also spoke at a conference in Greece that included people from

all over the world. Our Greek brothers organized a lovely conference near ancient Corinth with the theme of holiness. It was great to see old friends and to fellowship there with Bulgarians, Greeks, Ukrainians, Russians, Romanians, and Germans, with a few wonderful brothers from the USA. It is such an optimistic and refreshing thing to see the Body of the Messiah at work, loving, and growing.

The Shulams are now in the United States visiting family and sharing the Word of God in several venues. The Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations recently held their international conference here in Jerusalem, and several of our workers were invited to speak there. The Netivyah staff members were there with a book table and got to meet many interesting people besides enjoying some sessions.

We had a wonderful time as a congregation celebrating Shavuot (Pentecost) with several late night Bible Study sessions. We also revisited the African refugees in Tel Aviv to bring them a little hope and necessity items and are planning on going to see them again soon with a more serious food delivery. Additionally, we held another inter-congregational women's Bible study, which was a blessed time to fellowship and study Yeshua's teachings with believing women from the entire Jerusalem area.

We have just published a new book, *Hidden Treasures: The First Century Jewish Way of Understanding the Scriptures*. This book will hopefully bring a greater understanding and appreciation of how to interpret sacred texts. The study of how to interpret the Scriptures is a challenge for every serious student of the Bible. The book has been written in order to help the reader delve into the world of Yeshua and into the First Century methods of understanding the Word of God. In addition, our brother Elhanan Ben Avraham has written an insightful volume correlating the life of Joseph with the life of Yeshua, which is also available to purchase now. Purchasing information for both books is available on the back page.

The needs in Jerusalem continue to grow, and the soup kitchen is running at maximum capacity. The dollar has lost about 35% of its buying power here in the last few months, and food costs are rising, too. We had decided not to take any new people because of this situation, but we found that it was impossible turn hungry people away. We need help to be able to keep up with the growth of the soup kitchen, since we cannot ignore Yeshua's important command to care for the poor.

We hope you enjoy this edition of *Teaching From Zion* regarding food! May you be blessed, encouraged, and "fed" as you delve into this issue!

10\$

Mashiach ben Yoseph משיח בן יוסף



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