

Beginners Torah Lesson #7: The TaNaK: HaYesod- THE FOUNDATION!

By Rabbi Edward Levi Nydle – B'nai Avraham

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

“DO NOT THINK that I have come to destroy the TORAH or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to complete. For truly I say to you, till heaven and the earth pass away, one jot (yod) or one tittle (ornamental flourish) shall by no means pass from the Torah till ALL be done.” Rebbe Melek Yahshua HaMoshiach Mattithyahu 5:17-18

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

Built on a Rock-The TaNaK!

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

- “The liberating and system-shaking message of love was given its RENEWAL by [Yahshua]. In Horsely and Silberman's useful formulation, what we have here is a “RENEWED COVENANT” more than a new one.” Constantine's Sword by James Carroll page 118
- “The phrase “New Covenant” which has come to define Christianity's status as the superseding religion has its origin, in fact in Jeremiah, but the Hebrew word the prophet used carried exactly this connotation of RENEWAL, a notion that does not open into the DEADLY DICHOTOMY between new and old. For Jeremiah, and for [Yahshua], there was only ONE covenant. So we are not talking about Judaism's being brought to a fulfillment in the discontinuous message of a different movement. The point, again, is the [Yahshua] offers a Jewish renewal and it is tied to love. [Yahshua's] message was rooted not only, say, in the opening chapters of Genesis, but in the piety of Judaism as such. I read it as a Christian, yet the record of the Torah seems clear: before [Elohim] gave commandments, [Elohim] gave blessings. Before the law there was the rescue from Egypt. Hosea, Isaiah, and other prophets strike the theme repeatedly: If Israel behaves like a faithless wife, sometimes provoking [Elohim's] rage, [Elohim] nevertheless takes her back, every time. Nothing Israel does can undo His love.” Constantine's Sword by James Carroll page 118

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

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

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

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

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

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

- “Do not be conformed to this world-this age, fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial customs. But be transformed (changed) by the entire renewal of your mind-by its new ideals and its new attitude-so that you may prove (for yourselves) what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of Elohim, even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect in His sight for you.” **Romans 12:2 Amplified Bible**
- “The early church had no other sacred books than those in use in the synagogue, and on those were based the claims of the Messiahship of [Yahshua] to fulfillment of Scripture.” **The Jewish Encyclopedia Vol.IX page 246**

We again note that the only Scriptures Yahshua’s talmidim had were the scrolls of the TaNaK. The Brit Chadasha, in relating the life of our Rebbe Yahshua, holds before us the IDEAL life we should live. The TaNaK speaks of our daily experiences in this world and how to relate to them according to Elohim’s instructions.

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

- “And Yahshua said to him, ‘You shall love Elohim with all your heart, and with all your being, and with your entire mind. This is the first and great command. And the second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commands hang ALL the Torah and the Prophets.’ ” **Mattithyahu 22:37-40**
- “Your father Avraham was glad that he should see My day, and he saw it and did rejoice.” **Yochanan 8:56**
- “And the Scripture (TaNaK), having foreseen that Elohim would declare right the nations (goyim) by belief, announced the Good News to Avraham beforehand, saying, ‘ All the nations (goyim) shall be blessed in you.’ ” **Galatians 3:8**

Blind leading the Blind

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

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

A book that is a standard work for “Church History 101” in most Bible Colleges says the of the Acts 15 council:

- “The liberation of Christianity from the observance of the ceremonial Jewish law was the long-range result of the council...Christianity is freed from THE DANGER OF BECOMING ONLY A SECT WITHIN JUDAISM...The new law of love, which leads to the keeping of the Jewish moral law out of love to [Elohim] rather than out of a sense of duty, becomes the basis of Christian ethics.” **Christianity Through** The Ages by Earle E. Cairns

Even not long ago a well-known Sacred-Name group in Missouri (who claim to be “Messianic”) in a recent booklet called anyone who wears tzit-tzit, a headcovering, and requiring circumcision of the flesh as “Jew wanna-be’s”. This places a cover of religious respectability on behavior that reveals enormous and overt hostility to anything considered “Jewish”! This kind of angry religion usually becomes so extreme and excessive that it burns itself out by the prejudices of its people.

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

After the Second Century CE, “Christian” literature took on a tone of the rejection of the Yisrael, based upon the false claim that Elohim had rejected Israel because of their rejection and killing of Messiah. The “church” claimed to be the TRUE Yisrael. This has become the typical theology of the Twentieth Century “church”. Also, this heresy gave birth to a great undercurrent of Anti-Semitism and Anti-Zionistic movements now within “Christianity”.

The former Platonist Justin (in the middle of the Second Century CE) wrote, “Christianity had superseded Judaism”. He called anyone who insisted on Torah observance for Believers as “wicked and uncomprehending and will not be saved.” He was the very first to claim that all the ‘church’ was the True Israel (**Dialogue 11,123,124**).

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

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

I ask you one question. DO YOU REALLY BELIEVE YOU ARE THE PHYSICAL SEED OF AVRAHAM AS THE TWO-HOUSE MESSAGE TEACHES? Have you ever noticed that the first thing Yisrael did in being assimilated into a pagan culture is to stop circumcising their children? Also, when they were conquered or under the subjection of other pagan nations, they were forbidden to practice circumcision. Why does this seem to be THE point of contention within the Messianic Movement? If we are not really Yisrael then let’s hang up our tallit and kippah and all go back to the kirche system!

Another Second Century writer, Melito of Sardis, invented the “Christian Passover” which was held on the 14th of Aviv (he was what is called a Quartodeciman). The Roman usage that was to later prevail called for the observance of Easter on the Sunday following Passover so that the celebration of the resurrection was always on a Sunday. He claimed the “Christian Passover” was superior to the Hebrews Pesach, and that the observance of the Passover in the Hebraic manner had lost any usefulness it once held for the chosen people of Elohim.

Tertullian [165CE to 225 CE] was thoroughly Romanized in his education. He was the founder of LATIN THEOLOGY. Tertullian was the first to state the false theological doctrine of the Trinity and to make use of that term in Against Praxeas chapters 2-3. He was the first to argue for two separate persons (gods) of the Father and Son. He also believed that any post-baptismal sins were mortal sins. He argued that all the mitzvot of the Torah, which the pagans and Christians alike regarded as “degrading and unworthy of an enlightened people”, were abrogated. He taught the Torah was given to Israel to curb their tendency towards idolatry, sensuality, and greed-which he claimed was a tendency unique only to the Jews and not shared with the rest of mankind. According to him, the Jews engaged in worthless ritual and that their religion was sterile and incomplete. He wrote that the “Jews” had never properly understood that Elohim was a Father, because they had never known Him as one. He went as far to say that the rejection of the Yisraelite people was the deliberate plan of Elohim. “Anti-Judaism is in G-d’s blood” he wrote in “Against Marcion” on page 146. He also wrote that “Jesus” is, “the giver of a new law, the heir of the new testament, the priest of new sacrifices, the purifier of a new circumcision, and the observer of a new Sabbath-one, that is, who would suppress the old law, establish a new covenant, offer new sacrifices, repress the antiquated ceremonies, and suppress the old circumcision with its Sabbath” see Adversus Judaeos, 6:1-2. To make way for this “new law”, he conceives the “old law” as abolished or abrogated. Spiritual circumcision, the circumcision of the heart, which only the “Christians” have received, spiritually fulfills this new law. According to him, “Christians” now celebrate the divine and eternal Sabbaths, and offer spiritual offerings. For him, as with later Catholic thought, the “church” has a new and better law than the Torah, or the one given by Yahweh at Mt. Sinai to Yisrael.

- “O Yahweh, my strength and my stronghold and my refuge, in the day of distress the goyim shall come to You from the ends of the earth and say, “Our fathers have inherited only FALSEHOOD, FUTILITY, AND THERE IS NO VALUE IN THEM.”” **Yirmeyahu 16:19**

As a result of the instruction of “church” leadership in colleges where this Anti-Hebraic/Torah mindset is taught, anti-Torah thinking has filtered down to the quintessential pew sitter today.

Because they have been taught by their stone-blind leadership that the “Christ” (not the Jewish Messiah called Yahshua) came to do away with the heavy burden of the “law” by “nailing it to the cross”, they fail to incorporate its teachings and commands to their discipleship programs and foundational teachings. They become “a quarter-of-the Bible” adherents (the Brit Chadasha has 260 chapters compared to the 929 of the TaNaK). Little do they know that the Torah has 613 commands while the Brit Chadasha has 1,050! So which one has more “commands”? They have once again detached themselves from the Hebraic thought by reasoning they have something better in the “New Covenant”.

They express to the “synagogue” the attitude that “you have nothing to offer us but a dead, ritualistic, legalistic system of religion” while we have the true “spirit” and do not need the “law, rituals, or liturgy”. Any mention of the Torah ends in a conversation that says, “you are trying to put us back under the law”. All this is a subtle disguised type of Neo-Marcionism. They regard the Torah as perverted legalism or refer to it as “a salvation by works religion.” Good works or the *mitzvot* do not figure into their salvation equation (**Matt.5: 14-16; Rev.22: 14**). They do not have the understanding that by performing the *mitzvot* we are not trying to merit salvation, but we are taking every moment of our life and are setting it apart by the Torah (**Yochanan 17: 17**).

Unknowingly, they have eroded the full authority of all the Scriptures. If they truly knew Yahshua as the Yisraelite Moshiach, who was of the tribe of Yahudah; their minds could begin to be renewed to the importance of the Torah and the *mitzvot*. They need to ask themselves-“How did Yahshua view the Torah?” They proudly wear their “W.W.J.D” bracelets, not understanding what YAHSHUA (the JEW) would REALLY do as an Orthodox Jew. They do not understand that the ethical teaching of Rebbe Yahshua HaMoshiach are what the rabbis call “li-fenim mi-shurat hadin” or a withdrawing within the line of the law as behooves the esoteric circle of the Chasidim. Yahshua’s parables follow what is known as “meshalim” or illustrative stories of some ethical truth or similitude’s called “mashal le-mah ha-dabar domeh” (example-To what may this be likened?). He was a Jewish rabbi or teacher using rabbinical teaching methods of the Second Temple period to teach the way of TRUE TORAH OBSERVANCE BY THE SPIRIT AND THE LETTER! His teachings were never opposed to the Torah, but the hypocrisy displayed by the Pharisees and the Saducees in their legalistic observance of the Torah.

Our Rebbe Yahshua was NEVER opposed to the Oral tradition and traditional observances of His day, as is commonly taught even in Messianic circles. What Yahshua criticized was the elevating of the Oral Tradition OVER the Torah so that the Torah was broken in order to observe the Traditions, and the pretense of piety of the leadership.

- “Well do you set aside the command of Elohim, in order to guard your tradition.” **Mark 7:9**
- “The older and the more genuine the records, written and unwritten, of the doings and teachings of [Yahshua], the more they betray close kinship with and friendly relations to the Jews and Judaism; but the more remote they are from the time and the scene of the activity of [Yahshua], the more they show hostility to the Jewish people and of the antagonism to the Mosaic Law.” **The Jewish Encyclopedia Vol.IX page 247**
- “Men, brothers, though I have done none at all against our people or the practices of our fathers, I was delivered as a prisoner from Yehrushalyim into the hands of the Romans.” Rav Shaul **Acts 28:17b**
- “And I praise you, brothers, that you remember me in every way and keep the traditions as I delivered them to you.” Rav Shaul **1 Corinthians 11:2** also see **Avot 1:1** and **Acts 6:13-14** (customs=*ethos*=*usage, habit, law*)
- “So, then brothers, stand fast and hold the traditions (*mesora*) which you were taught, whether by WORD or by our letter.” Rav Shaul **2 Thessalonians 2:15**
- “But we command you, brothers, in the Name of our Master Yahshua HaMoshiach, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly (*ataktos*- slack in duty, irregular, living as a shirker) and NOT ACCORDING TO THE TRADITION WHICH YOU RECEIVED FROM US.” Rav Shaul **2 Thessalonians 3:6**
- TRADITION: Strong’s #3862 *paradosis* from #3060 *paradidomi* – “transmission, a precept, spec. The Jewish TRADITIONAL laws-ordinance, tradition; intrust, transmit, deliver up, recommend, commit.”
- TRADITION: Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary: **1.** The handing down of information, beliefs, and CUSTOMS by word of mouth or example from one generation to another WITHOUT WRITTEN INSTRUCTION **2.** An inherited pattern of thought or ACTION (as a religious practice or a social custom) **3.** Cultural continuity in social attitudes and institutions.

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

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

A picture paints a thousand words!

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

Truth is stranger than Fiction!

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

But the real conflict came from the way that Scripture (the TaNaK) was read and interpreted. This involved a total rejection by the “church” of Yahweh’s covenant with Yisrael at Sinai (the Torah) and the Yisraelite commitment to the mitzvot. They claim that circumcision, fringes, the feasts, the Shabbat, kashrut, and the other 613 mitzvot are no longer applicable since Moshiach has come and “fulfilled the law”. This is why so-called “Christian scholars” today largely ignore the Jewish writers and the Hebrew method of hermeneutics (PRDS). In the absence of the legal and ethical system arising from Sinai, the TaNaK no longer bore its original meaning. It was read as prophecy, not as Torah (instruction). It was interpreted as pointing to the “church” that would be “birthed at Pentecost”. The “church” was viewed as a separate entity from the Yisrael of the TaNaK. Any part of the Torah not pointing to the Messiah or the “church” was simply ignored and treated as obsolete. It was even given a new name –the “Old Testament”. Since it was abolished, its only meaning was for topological and prophetic meaning; not practical living for the Believer. The “Old Testament” had to read and interpreted in the “light” of the “New Testament”, not the other way around.

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

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

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

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

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

A Hidden Treasure

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

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

First, the size of the TaNaK has become an intimidation to the average Believer. Even though the English version is shorter; the full Hebrew text (*Stuttgartensia Edition*) contains over 1,500 pages. Also the TaNaK contains several hundreds of characters and places. There are numerous lists of tribal affiliations, nations, and genealogies. The time period also covers several thousands of years (even before time existed).

The time period and the language of the era seems so remote and strange to today’s Believer. They have been told the lie that the TaNaK is for the “JEWS” and all about the “JEWS”. Since they are poor “gentiles” simply grafted into the “Jewish Olive Tree”, this part of the Scriptures does not apply to them or their life-style. Without the revelation of the TRUTH of the TWO HOUSES, they do not see the relevance for their lives or belief system of the Torah. They see the TaNaK as a book filled with strange idioms, metaphors, and unfamiliar Hebraic thought forms that they think are too difficult for them to grasp or understand.

Many Believers seem to stumble over the Torah based concepts taught by the TaNaK. These seem foreign to “Christianity” and Western-Greek thought. They question and cannot grasp the accounts concerning polygamy, slavery, ritual cleansing, Torah observance, and the violence and blood shedding that is prevalent in the TaNaK.

The “church” has been guilty of stressing the differences between the Brit Chadasha and the TaNaK. It has over emphasized the so-called antithetical relationship of the two Covenants rather the RENEWAL of the former by the latter. It is an ancient problem tracing back to the influence of Greek culture and the pagan influence on the early “church” that created and stressed the contradictions and contrast rather than the similarities, roots, and relatedness of the two Covenants that make up ONE BOOK for ONE PEOPLE! The TaNaK is called a “book of wrath” while the “New Testament” is a “book of love and grace”.

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

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

Renewing Your Mind!

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

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

- “The gospels do not claim to have been written by any of the apostles, but only to have been transmitted orally as tradition emanating from them [NOTE: see Luke 1:1-4 Rabbi Ed] **Jewish Encyclopedia Vol.Ixpg247**
- ...That Matthew had made a collection of the sayings of Jesus in the HEBREW without the historical framework, which was given differently to each commentator.” **The Jewish Encyclopedia Vol.IX page 247**
- “That the sayings of [Yahshua] were collected and grouped together by several writers before they were embodied in the first and third gospels; and they were circulated in many forms afterward as “LOGIA” or Oracular Sayings of Christ. This accounts for the repetition and dislocation of some of them. As they were handed down originally in the Aramaic language, traces of which are still preserved in Mark.” **The Jewish Encyclopedia Vol.IX page 249**

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

The next thing we need to do is stress that the Scriptures are not complete without the Torah-Prophets- and the Writings. We need to see the Scriptures as a play in two Acts and without Act #1; Act #2 does not make any sense nor can it be understood. You cannot even identify the characters, the background, the plan, and the blueprint.

The Brit Chadasha has over 1,600 quotations from the TaNaK. This builds a UNION that is similar to a suspension bridge with all its cables that combine to make the bridge to join both shores together into one complete cable! Without the TaNaK we are trying to build a House without any foundation or walls to place the roof upon.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Many people do not want to acknowledge the impact that the Oral Traditions of the period had upon Yahshua and His talmidim, including Rav Shaul (a Pharisee). Although most the teachings of the Jewish rabbis were not written and compiled until after the Second Temple, we have to recognize the common thread of teachings between rabbinical writings and the Second Temple Period. Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls from Qumran, and the apocryphal writings help us understand the various sects and practices of the time of Yahshua. It is vital that we understand the workings of the synagogue, the Sanhedrin, and the importance of the work of the itinerant rabbi.

Also, His parables have been clarified through rabbinical writings and literature. Rabbinical teachings have over 5,000 parables and over 800 are King parables, which was a favorite subject of our Rebbe's parables. Yahshua used Hebrew idioms and rabbinical principles in His teachings to the multitudes and His talmidim (such as middah keneged or measure for measure from Matt. 7: 2). Without such insight, Ephraim has come up with ridiculous meanings of the terms such as "binding and loosing" and "to fulfill and destroy". Both are known rabbinical terms.

- A good example is the term "weightier matters of the law" in **Mattithyahu 23:23**. It appears that Yahshua is saying that the ethical aspects of the Torah (love, justice, mercy) are more important than the ceremonial observance of the Torah, such as tithing.
- This is not a Scriptural conclusion if we truly understand Yahshua's teachings and rabbinical teachings of the day. Yahshua taught that the so-called lighter matters of the Torah were NOT to be neglected. The understanding then is that all the Torah is important and none of it should be neglected, as a follower of Yahshua. We cannot pick to do the ethical commands and leave the ceremonial undone. Yahshua was simply stressing the importance of inner obedience and devotion to Yahweh and the Torah, which legalism cannot produce.

Conclusion

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

By misinterpreting the TaNaK and the personage of Moshiach, the “church” disconnected itself from the Torah belief of Yisrael by an unbridgeable gap. The person and purpose of the Messiah had to be radically transformed. Yahshua established He had only been sent to the Lost Sheep of the House of Yisrael. He was subsequently changed into a Greek speaking “Christ” that came to free the Jews from the law and establish a “church”. “Christianity” would be a new religion antagonistic to Judaism. They forgot He came to “save His people (Yisrael) from their sins (lawbreaking)” and gather the Lost Sheep of Yisrael into ONE RENEWED MAN INTO THE COMMONWEALTH OF YISRAEL. This transformation fabricated a religion with a completely altered conception of salvation firmly established upon Greek philosophical duality (see Torah lesson #6 at www.bnaiavraham.net). This different religion used Hebraic themes, words, and symbols to set forth an entirely contrary structure from anything understood by Yahshua and His talmidim. He would not recognize anything that is taught there today.

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

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