

Beginners Torah Lesson: Part 3 “Renewing the Mind to Hebraic Thought”

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

‘And do NOT be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the RENEWING of your mind, so that you prove what is that good and well-pleasing and perfect desire of Elohim.’ Romans 12:2 *the Scriptures*

²Stop allowing yourself to be conformed to the Olam Hazeh, but be transformed by your hitkhadeshut haDa'as (regeneration/renewal of knowing), so that you may (individually and corporately) ascertain what is the ratzon Hashem (the will of Elohim), what is good, acceptable, and perfect -OJBC

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

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

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

EXAMPLE: GRACE This is perhaps the most misunderstood word in the Scriptures. First we must know that the *D’var* Yahweh or Torah is TRUTH (Yochanan 17:17; Tehillim 119:151,160). Now, is GRACE the opposite of Torah? If it is, then all the above passages are FALSE. No, we see from Scripture that GRACE is synonymous with Torah or law. Grace in Hebrew is #2580/81 *CHEN* or *CHESED* #2616/17. In the *Brit Chadasha* the word is *CHARIS* or *ELEOS*. *CHEN* means charm, beauty, lovely, and favor and is found around 70 times in the *TaNak* and 233 times in the *Brit Chadasha*. *CHARIS* means the EXACT same thing in the GREEK. Both are translated by the English word GRACE/FAVOR in the Scriptures. It never means to be set FREE or liberated through undeserved kindness or favor. Whoever has received GRACE/*CHEN* from Yahweh (Gen.6: 8; Mishle –Prov. 31:30; Luke 2:52) is also shown favor by Yahweh in the sense He says to them, “YOU are precious in My sight and eyes.” *CHESED* / *ELEOS* means undeserved favor in the sense of grace, pity, loving-kindness, or mercy. *CHESED* is used around 251 times in the Hebrew Scriptures and only 50 times in the *Brit Chadasha*.

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

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

Hebrew Thought Patterns

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

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

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

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

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

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

Yahshua taught this in **Matt.7: 13-14**. The early congregations called their walk –THE WAY (**Acts 9:2, 19:9, and 22:4**). This is what we mean then by *halakah*- “the way of walking, proceeding or going”. *Halakah* provides a roadmap from the start (birth) to the finish (death) of one’s journey through life.

History to the Hebrew mind is linear, durative, and progressive. To the Roman mind history is circular and tied to the cycles of nature. Hebrew history is not a cycle of purposeless happenings. Nor is time viewed as a race towards death in which you try to escape the clutches of time. No, in the Hebrew mind, time and history are going somewhere; it is a route to a goal, a race to be run to its fullest. The consummation of time will be the *OLAM HABA*, or age to come (**Zech.14: 9**). Yahweh brings meaning to Hebrew history and the Yisraelites journey through life. Yahweh is actively present in time and history. The Hebrews have learned to sanctify TIME.

But, That’s not Logical Captain!

We recall the show “Star Trek” and how Mister Spock (Leonard Nimoy a Levite) would say, “That’s not logical!” What is known as BLOCK LOGIC is a part of Hebrew thought. The Western world thinks in Greek logic. It is a step by step logic that argues from premises and arrives at a logical conclusion. It is done in a coherent, rational, logical sequence. Therefore, THE CONCLUSION IS LIMITED TO ONE POINT OF VIEW! THAT CONCLUSION THEN IS THAT PERSONS VIEWPOINT OF REALITY.

In contrast, the Hebrew mind uses BLOCK LOGIC or concepts that are expressed in one unit or block of thought. These blocks do not necessarily fit together in a rational harmonious pattern of thought. As Yisraelites we understand that one unit or block represents man viewpoint or perspective of truth and the other block is from Yahweh’s perspective. This results in what appears to be a contradiction of thought or paradox that is held together by tension-or even illogical relationship to the other block of thought.

This concept creates great difficulty to the “gentile” mind whose thought patterns run after the Greeks and Romans more than the Hebrews. Ephraim’s minds were conditioned this way in the assimilation into the nations (*goyim*). Now you can understand why Rav Shaul wanted our minds renewed to the Torah!

Block logic reconciles the Scriptural ideas of predestination/election and free will/human freedom. We must understand that Divine Sovereignty and human free will are not incompatible as the ‘church’ has argued for centuries. Yisrael knows there is no violation of their free will as Yahweh accomplishes his purposes upon the earth and in history. There is no such thing as “fate” (a false deity in **Is.65: 11**). Fate is a blind force, which dictates to man, what was to happen to him. It was inescapable. The Hebraic view is that the future is not totally unalterable, for this viewpoint (the pagan one) limited Yahweh’s mercy and omnipotence. Rabbi Akivah said, “All is subject to providence, yet man possesses free will.” This is the correct view; otherwise prayer does not make sense at all and is an exercise in futility and fighting against Yahweh. The Hebrew mind then can handle this tension that exists in block logic.

The Hebrew mind does not claim to be a” know- it- all “either. Everyone thinks they have to have answers to all their questions and expects the rabbis to know it all. All things concerning Yahweh and His Word do not have to be rational. The Hebrew mind then will accept truth that is taught on both sides of the paradox in block logic. Yahweh cannot be put in a box or charted out on charts for all to understand as some would try to have us believe. Yahweh has an unpredictability about Himself that sometimes defies all reason (**Is.55: 9**) and human logic.

We learn as Yisraelites to experience TRUTH not to just think truth. TRUTH is an ENCOUNTER with Divine reality through DOING the *mitzvot*. DEED IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN CREED TO THE TRUE YISRAELITE! We do not need to reconcile all that seems to be reconcilable in the Scriptures. Walking in TRUTH and experiencing TRUTH is more important than rationally analyzing truth. Most questions are unsolvable in block logic. We should not fear contradictions we seemingly find in the Scriptures. That means we accept the fact that the irreconcilable is reconcilable only to Yahweh. We search to see and understand what Yahweh wants us to DO more than studying Him in dead seminaries. Building great theological theories and systems is just plain risky business. As we study the Torah then we need to understand that there will come up apparent paradoxes in logic and unanswerable questions. We need to learn that to the Hebrew –that is all right.

A Renewed Mind is a Terrible Thing to Waste

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

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

- “Who is wise and understands these words, discerning and knows them? For the ways of Yahweh are straight and the righteous walk in them, but the transgressors stumble in them.” **Hoshea 14:9**

Please, do not be one who stumbles over the ways of Yahweh. Learn discernment by renewing your mind to His Torah and the Hebraic mindset.

Return O Yisrael-Return to Yahweh. (**Hoshea 14:2**).

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