
MORDECHAI'S PERICOPE #91

MORDECHAI 9:49-50

BESB

⁴⁹ Every fire will purify, and every sacrifice is purified with salt,
⁵⁰ Salt is beneficial, but if the salt becomes insipid by what [means] will you have seasoning in yourself with salt and bring peace with one another?

Greek

⁴⁹ πᾶς γὰρ πυρὶ ἀλισθήσεται καὶ πᾶσα θυσία ἀλὶ ἀλισθήσεται,
⁵⁰ Καλὸν τὸ ἅλας· ἐὰν δὲ τὸ ἅλας ἄναλον γένηται ἐν τίνι αὐτὸ ἀρτύσετε ἔχετε ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἅλας· καὶ εἰρηνεύετε ἐν ἀλλήλοις

DELITZSCH HEBREW TRANSLATIONⁱ

כִּי כָּל־אֵשׁ בְּאֵשׁ יִמְלַח וְכָל־קֶרֶבֶן בְּמַלַּח יִמְלַח: וְאִם־הִמְלַח יְהִי תִפְּל בְּמָה תִּתְקַנּוּ⁴⁹
וְאִתּוֹ יְהִי־לְכֶם מְלַח בְּקֶרְבְּכֶם וְיְהִי שְׁלוֹם בֵּינֵיכֶם:

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INTRODUCTION

What question or questions were asked of Hakham Tsefet to generate the answer of our present pericope?

Hmm... I wonder where that question came from.

I am amazed at Scholars who so quickly dismiss what is right before their eyes. While I must admit that, the translation of these two “simple” verses was not an easy task, a little research and brain sweat brought to light the interpretation of the passages at hand. The reason that so many Scholars have trouble with these passages is that they fail to realize that a Hebrew mindset and text was behind what we now read. Sometimes in translating, we must concede to things we do not agree with. Therefore, Scholars reject the translation we have given when the truth lies before them. They look for things more Grecian and would rather admit defeat than accept our translations.

Everyone or everything?

The opening of our pericope is often translated “Everyone will be salted with fire.” Why have I deviated from this translation? Every scholar who approaches this set of verses will inevitably scratch his head in wonder. William Barkley notes that these passages are among the most difficult in the Nazarene Codicil.^a The reason being, that the Greek text and Grecian point of view sees this statement as nonsense. So how do we make sense of this seeming impossible passage? As stated above we must rely on the Hebrew mindset to clarify these thoughts.

Many scholars contend that these verses (49-50) must be interpreted with the previous pericope in mind. (verses 42-48) I will agree with strict limitations. We MUST read these two verses as distinct from the previous pericope. These two verses MUST be read as their own distinct pericope. The Greek conjunction, γὰρ *gar* (*for*) shows continuity. However, we do not need to make the previous pericope the criteria for interpreting and translation the present pericope. Likewise, the insistence that these verses are a part of the previous pericope is refuted here, demonstrating that we are at a point of conclusion (for the chapter).

The Greek text reads, πᾶς γὰρ πυρὶ - every (πᾶς) for (γὰρ) fire (πυρὶ). The word order should be for (γὰρ) every (πᾶς) fire (πυρὶ).^b The word, every (πᾶς) must be qualified. Here the qualifying noun is fire (πυρὶ). This demands the translation of “every fire” not “everyone.”

Salt and Purity

The above noted problem of translation “every and everyone” is minimal when compared to trying to master the next word of the sentence. The next word of this particular sentence is the word ἀλισθήσεται. Lexicons labor to define this word as does the TDNT.^c This word is used only three times in the Nazarene Codicil. Two of those times are in the present pericope. ἀλισθήσεται is used only one other time in Midrashic form in the book of Matityahu.

Mordechai 9:49 πᾶς γὰρ πυρὶ ἀλισθήσεται, καὶ πᾶσα θυσία ἀλὶ ἀλισθήσεται,

His Eminence, Rabbi Dr. Yoseph ben Haggai has cited M.D. Hooker^d on pages 14-15 of his document. ([Shebat 17, 5771](#)) Hooker tries to translate the passage “Everyone will be purified with fire.” While such a concept does exist in Judaism this is not the case in point. The P’shat and grammatical rules demand that we translate the verse “**every** fire will purify.” The Greek word ἀλισθήσεται is best translated “purified” in this context I believe that Hooker got this part right.

Hooker cites enough material to note that the Greek word ἀλισθήσεται indicated purification. John Parkhurst elaborates on the same thought in his Hebrew Chaldee Lexicon.^e

^a William Barkley, *The New Daily Study Bible, The Gospel of Mark*, Westminster John Knox Press pg 271

^b Those not familiar with the Greek word order should note that Greek word order is not the same as English or Hebrew.

^c *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* 1:226-228

^d Hooker, M.D. (1991), *Black’s New Testament Commentary: The Gospel According to Saint Mark*, Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, pp. 232-233.

^e John Parkhurst, *The Hebrew and Chaldee Words of the Old Testament*, London, Printed for Thomas Tegg, 73, Cheapside; William Baynes, Paternoster Row pg286ff

Consequently, I have translated this phrases “Every fire will purify” because it makes perfect sense from a Hebraic point of view.

Ellen Frankel and Betsy Palkin Teutsch in their book *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Symbols* tell us...

“Salt is used in Kashering of meat, leaching out blood, which cannot be consumed. Thus salt serves to purify and consecrate.”^f

Sacrifices and Salt

In several Greek translations of Mark 9:49 looks like this...

⁴⁹ πᾶς γὰρ πυρὶ ἀλισθήσεται (everything is purified with fire)^g

Our text looks like this

⁴⁹ πᾶς γὰρ πυρὶ ἀλισθήσεται καὶ πᾶσα θυσία ἀλὶ ἀλισθήσεται,

The argument is that the final portion of the verse, which reads, “**and every sacrifice is purified with salt**” is not an original portion of the text. However, context demands that this is in fact a portion of the original text. Why and how can we make this statement? The statement “Every fire will purify” is inconclusive. Fire purifies most things; however, water and salt are also purifying agents. As a result, we need the remainder of the sentence to finish Hakham Tsefet’s thought.

Vayikra (Leviticus) 2:13 *Every grain offering of yours, moreover, you shall season with salt, so that the salt of the covenant of your God shall not be lacking from your grain offering; with all your offerings you shall offer salt.*

Contextually verse Mordechai 9:49 matches the thoughts presented in Vayikra 2:13. Every sacrifice was salted (purified) with salt.

The five main types of offerings were...

1. The *olah* – burnt offering. The burnt offering would demonstrate the first portion of our verse.
2. the *Minchah* meal offering
3. The *Shelem, zebah* peace offerings
4. The *hattath* the sin
5. The trespass offering.

In these offerings, salt plays a very important part. Every Israelite would have readily understood the significance of fire and salt. Therefore, it is easily understood that the argument for translation of the passage and the content of passage be as we have translated it above.

^f Ellen Frankel and Betsy Palkin Teutsch, *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Symbols*, Jason Aaronson Inc. 1995 pg 142-143

^g My translation of πᾶς γὰρ πυρὶ ἀλισθήσεται

What brought these two passages to Hakham Tsefet's mind for lecture?

Once again, I state that a pericope “cannot be correctly translated without connecting it to its appropriate Torah Seder!” And, as usual I am certain that my contemporaries will disagree with me.

The question above MUST be taken into consideration before translating and interpreting Mordechai's 91st pericope (Mark 9:49-50). Before proceeding further, I would suggest that the reader pause and reflect upon the associated reading of Numbers 2:1-34 to see if they can figure this dilemma out.

1. The Decay, decomposition and Salt

How did Hakham Tsefet make the leap between Numbers Chapter 2:1-34 and his statements made above?

The previous pericope left the impression of Gehenna as a place of decay and decomposition. The Jewish mind natural would have turned to fire and salt. Fire and salt in turn, would have caused the mind to remember the sacral system of the Mishkan and subsequent Temples. This is a natural process of thought in the Jewish mind. However, we still have to find out how to make the connection to the Mishkan and the second chapter of Numbers.

How did Hakham Tsefet make the leap between salt and the book of Numbers chapter two?

Hmm...

Let us look at the words of this pericope more closely and see if we can determine what Hakham Tsefet was thinking.

Language always betrays its root. If we look at the language very closely, we will notice that the language is that of the sacrificial system initiated in the Mishkan. The whole of this system is in Leviticus as we have read in the past.

However, Hakham Tsefet would have graduated the Mishkan. While I believe that he understood the inner workings of the Mishkan, it would be evident that He was more familiar with the intricate details of the Bet Mikdash (the Temple). Therefore, there must be a clue in the Bet Mikdash, which will disclose his secret.

2. The Mishkan and the Sacral System

The present Torah Seder details the structure of Israelites that surrounded the Mishkan. Consequently, what Hakham Tsefet (through his Scribe Mordechai) reflected upon in this pericope was the sacral system and how that played on the proximity of the tribes as they surrounded the Mishkan and Tent of Meeting. However, we have yet to divulge the key of connection between these two lines of thought.

The sacral system is elucidated in several tractates of the Mishnah. We do not have the time or space here to elaborate on these matters.

In my recent past, I was called upon to help with some research on the structure and workings of the Second Temple. Of course, this would have been the Temple with which Yeshua and Hakham Tsefet was both familiar. I do not want to sound vain glorious in joining myself to this immense project. My work was very simple I translated passages of Josephus from Greek back to English looking for clues. Please do not think that I am any sort of expert on Josephus. However, I have poured over texts in relation to the Temple's layout and structure.

In the Order (Seder) Kodeshim of the Mishnah, two Tractates are key to this research. Those two Mishnayot are Tamid and Middot. Tractate Tamid, as you may well know deals with the morning and evening burnt offerings offered continually (tamid) in the Temple. Tractate Middot deals with the measurements (middot) of the Temple and its component parts.

Middot 1:1 *In three places do the priests keep watch in the sanctuary: in the chamber of Abtinah, in the chamber of the flame, and in the chamber of the hearth.*

Tamid 1:1 *In three places do the priests keep watch in the sanctuary: in the chamber of Abtinah, in the chamber of the flame, and in the chamber of the hearth. And the Levites [keep watch] in twenty-one places [I Chron. 26:17–18]: five at the five gates of the Temple mount; four at the four corners on the inside [of the Temple wall]; five at the five gates of the inner courtyard; four at the four corners on the outside [the wall of] the courtyard; and one at the office of the offering [M. 1:6], and one at the office of the veil, and one behind the Mercy Seat [outside of the western wall of the holy of holies, M. 5:1].*

Num 18:4 *And they shall be joined to you, and keep the guard of the Tent of Meeting...*

1Ch 26:17-18 ¹⁷ *Eastward were six Levites, northward four a day, southward four a day, and toward the storehouse, two by two. ¹⁸ At the precincts, westward, four at the highway, two at the precincts.*

Eze 44:15-16 ¹⁵ *"But the Levitical priests, the sons of Zadok, who kept charge of My sanctuary when the sons of Israel went astray from Me, shall come near to Me to minister to Me; and they shall stand before Me to offer Me the fat and the blood," declares the Lord GOD. ¹⁶ "They shall enter My sanctuary; they shall come near to My table to minister to Me and keep My guard.*

What emerges from these two Mishnayot and the cited passages is the fact that the Kohanim stood guard throughout the Temple complex. A study of the overall structure of the Temple will reveal that the Priests actually surrounded the Temple much like the pattern demonstrated in our present Torah Seder.

Here we can see that Hakham Tsefet was aware of the Temple structure and design. He would have clearly understood how these chambers were oriented within the Temple's architecture. Reading the entire Tractates mentioned above would well orient the reader with an over design of the Temple. (Middot and Tamid)

We first make mention of the fact that there are "chambers" (*lishkat* - תוכשל) located in various places in the Temple. We also note that the Kohanim are stationed as guards in various points of the Temple. The location of the chambers and guard posts is one of great complexity. I have tried to locate these chambers by pouring over drawings of the Temple for many hours. Some seeming discrepancies exist between Mishnaic sources and their Gemara. Likewise, the Mishnah and Josephus often seem to disagree. Many times, there is no discrepancy at all. It is only a matter of understanding the complexity of the Temple complex. Unfortunately, I do not even qualify as a novice in this field of study. Nevertheless, I would like to call your attention to one more Mishnah that I think will be helpful in answering our question and putting all the pieces of our puzzle together.

Middot 5:3 *Six chambers were in the courtyard, three in the north and three in the south. Those in the north: the chamber in charge of salt, the Parvah chamber, the chamber for rinsing. The chamber in charge of salt: there did they put salt on the offering. The Parvah chamber: there did they salt the hides of Holy Things, and on its roof was the room for immersion for the high priest*

on the Day of Atonement. The office for rinsing: for there did they rinse the innards of the Holy Things, and from there did a passageway go up to the roof of the Parvah chamber.

Tractate Middot has MUCH more to say concerning layout, structure and measurements of the Temple. I think that we have inserted enough Mishnayot to make our point. The northern and southern chambers formed the same structure that we see in the Torah Seder for this week. Three in the north placed one on each corner, east and west, and one in the middle. The three Kohanim of the south were in similar positions. It should also be noted that the Levites kept guard in twenty-one more locations. Priestly guards surrounded the Temple in the same way that the Mishkan and Tent of Meeting were surrounded. Here the Priestly guards served as Royal guards to the Mishkan, Tent of Meeting and the subsequent Temples. This “guarding” was not against marauders or criminals. The guards served to make the Temple a palace of the Highest King with palatial honor.^h

Note that we have specific chambers for **flame (fire), and salt**. The **chamber of salt** was located on the southeastern corner of the *azarah* (inner courtyard). Suffice it to say, that Hakham Tsefet would have easily made the connections we have drawn upon here.

Order

The Tanach is a very structured document. It notes the organization of ordered minds. Bereshit (Genesis) tells us of the creation process in a very structured and methodical manor. Likewise, when we read of the sacral system in Vayikra (Leviticus), we can see the structure and order that HaShem decreed for the Kohanim.

When we read that Yoseph invited his brother to dinner we saw that, he placed them in the order of their birth. G-d is G-d of order!

***Abot 5:7** There are seven traits to an unformed Golem, and seven to a sage. A sage does not speak before someone greater than he in wisdom. And he does not interrupt his fellow. And he is not at a loss for an answer. He asks a relevant question and answers properly. **And he addresses each matter in its proper sequence, first, then second.** And concerning something he has not heard, he says, “I have not heard the answer.” And he concedes the truth [when the other party demonstrates it]. And the opposite of these traits apply to a Golem.*

His Eminence, Rabbi Dr. Yoseph ben Haggai has taught us that each talmid should seek to become a Hakham. The above quote from Abot demonstrates the structured order of a Hakham’s mind.ⁱ

Our present Torah, Seder as did the previous, is all about order. The order in the present Torah Seder is the order, which surrounded the Mishkan.

The Death of Jacob

After Jacob had blessed each of his sons separately, he addressed himself to all of them together, saying: "According to my power did I bless you, but in future days a prophet will arise, and this man Moses will bless you, too, and he will continue my blessings where I left off." He added,

^h Phinhas Kehati, The Mishnah, Seder Kodashim Volume 3, Dept. for Torah Education and Culture, 1995 (Tamid pg2) The Mishnah, Artscroll Mishnah Series, A New Translation with Commentary Yad Avraham Anthologized from Talmudic Sources and Classic Commentators, Seder Kodashim Vol. IV: pgs 2-8

ⁱ Rabbi Dr. Hertz Joseph H. Hertz, Sayings of the Fathers, Behrman House Inc, 1945 pg.90-91

besides, that the blessing of each tribe should redound to the good of all the other tribes: the tribe of Judah should have a share in the fine wheat of the tribe of Benjamin, and Benjamin should enjoy the goodly barley of Judah. The tribes should be mutually helpful, one to another.

Moreover, he charged them not to be guilty of idolatry in any form or shape and not to let blasphemous speech pass their lips, and he taught them the order of transporting his bier, thus: "Joseph, being king, shall not help to bear it, nor shall Levi, who is destined to carry the Ark of the Shekinah. Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun shall grasp its front end, Reuben, Simon, and Gad its right side, Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin the hindmost end, and Dan, Asher, and Naphtali its left side." And this was the order in which the tribes, bearing each its standard, were to march through the desert, the Shekinah dwelling in the midst of them.

Jacob then spake to Joseph, saying: "And thou, my son Joseph, forgive thy brethren for their trespass against thee, forsake them not, and grieve them not, for the Lord hath put them into thine hands, that thou shouldst protect them all thy days against the Egyptians."

Also he admonished his sons, saying that the Lord would be with them if they walked in His ways, and He would redeem them from the hands of the Egyptians. "I know," he continued, "great suffering will befall your sons and your grandsons in this land, but if you will obey God, and teach your sons to know Him, then He will send you a redeemer, who will bring you forth out of Egypt and lead you into the land of your fathers."

In resignation to the will of God, Jacob awaited his end, and death enveloped him gently. Not the Angel of Death ended his life, but the Shekinah took his soul with a kiss. Beside the three Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, only Moses, Aaron, and Miriam breathed their last in this manner, through the kiss of the Shekinah. And these six, together with Benjamin, are the only ones whose corpses are not exposed to the ravages of the worms, and they neither corrupt nor decay.^j

I have cited Louis Ginzberg's "Legend of the Jews" only for the sake of seeing the order of Jacob's children as they carried his bier. I am perfectly aware that these "legends" are primarily Midrashic in nature. Therefore, we will not elucidate these passages.

The Order of a Jewish Mind

The previous pericope of Mordechai (Mordechai 9:43-48) left us the impression of Gehenna as a place of decay and decomposition. The Jewish mind natural would have turned to fire and salt. Fire and salt in turn, would have caused the mind to remember the sacral system of the Mishkan and subsequent Temples. Looking at the structure and design of the Temple would have cause the Jewish mind to remember the Torah Seder of Numbers where the Tribes surrounded the Tent of Meeting and Mishkan. This in turn would have caused the Jewish mind to remember the burial of Yaakov.

Or, perhaps you would read the whole system of connections in reverse.

^j Louis Ginzberg, Legends of the Jews Volume II chapter 1, The Jewish Publication Society of America 5730-1969 Twelfth Impression 1983 (The Death of Jacob) pg 147ff

The Ashlamatah for this week's reading is Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 55:13-56:8. The Prophet looks at those who have joined Yisrael. (Become one with Yisrael) These who love the name of the L-rd will come to the Holy Temple and worship there. These details tell us that those who have joined Yisrael have converted to Judaism. We know that they have joined Yisrael for several reasons. While the gentile can come to the Temple to worship, he was restricted to the "Court of the Gentiles." There was a barrier called the "soreg" which was a lattice fence of stone that marked the point, which a Gentile could not pass upon the penalty of death. Upon this fence, the warning of death was written in several languages. The Targum explains ...

Yeshayahu 56:3. Now let not the foreigner who joined the Lord, say, "The Lord will surely separate me from His people," and let not the eunuch say, "Behold, I am a dry tree." {P}

*Yeshayahu 56:3. **Let not a son of Gentiles who has been added to the people of the LORD** say, "The LORD will surely separate me from His people." And let not the eunuch say, "Behold I am like a dry tree."*

The Gentile who has joined the people of HaShem will be one with the people of Yisrael. Therefore, the Gentile barriers will not apply to them.

The mention of the House of G-d in the Ashlamatah further solidifies our point.

*Yeshayahu 56:7. I will bring them to **My holy mount**, and I will cause them to rejoice in **My house of prayer**, their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be acceptable upon My altar, for **My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.***

*Yeshayahu 56:7. These I will bring to the **Holy Mountain** and make the joyful in **My House of prayer**; their burnt offerings and their holy sacrifices will even go up for **My pleasure on My altar**; for **My Sanctuary will be a house of prayer for all peoples.***

I will reiterate one point here. The House of G-d will NOT be open to Gentiles in general. The Temple, when reconstructed will limit Gentile access to certain places within the Temple courts. This restriction will still exist in the Days of Messiah. Therefore, the begging of the foreign nations "Turn away your faces and take on our beliefs, and together we shall become one nation"^k can never happen. The Gentile must come to Judaism not the other way around.

When does salt lose its saltiness?

***Mordechai 9:50** Salt is beneficial, but if the salt becomes insipid by what [means] will you have seasoning in yourself with salt and bring peace with one another?*

The speech Hakham Tsefet uses is analogous. Technically, salt never loses its taste or saltiness. As His Eminence, Rabbi Dr. Yoseph ben Haggai has noted...

In the land of Israel "saltless [ANALON] salt," often a mixture of salt and impurities such as gypsum, was mined from the Dead Sea and frequently appeared as perfectly good salt. Yet such "saltless salt" was worse than useless, for it was not only unusable but also presented a disposal problem."^l

^k The Torah Anthology: Vol. 13 - First Journeys (Me'am Lo'ez Series), Moznaim Pub Corp (June 1, 1983) pg. 27

^l Stein, R.H. (2008), Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Mark, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, p. 449

“Worthless salt” is salt that is an admixture of salt and gypsum. Herein Yeshua gives an analogy of inappropriate mixtures. As mentioned above there is no such thing as a mixture of Jew and Gentile. The analogy is not hard to read. Yeshua warns his talmidim that mixing with outsiders is dangerous. This mixture of salt and gypsum makes salt insipid and loses its ability to season. The Jew mixed with the gentile makes the Jew lose his Jewishness, so to speak. Just as the whole world needs salt, the whole world needs Jews. Jews are the Priests of G-d to the whole world. They guard the sacred paths and keep the way of holiness. When the Jew will no longer guard the paths of sanctity or keep the ways of Holiness what benefit is he? When the talmid abandons the teachings of the Hakhamim (his Hakham), what good is he? We can play this scenario until we have exhausted it. I think the point is clear. The Tanach goes to great length to speak of mixtures not approved by G-d. We should learn this lesson well. Here the Master Yeshua our Messiah has established a halachic norm. Nazarene Jews are not to mix with non-Jews. The Nazarene Jew CANNOT remain a “Christian” and still be Jewish! The lesson could have been taught many different ways. However, the system at hand teaches us the logical ordered mind of a Hakham as noted above.

Rabbi Yitschaq Magriso makes an interesting and vital statement in his work.

“Turn away your faces and take on our beliefs, and together we shall become one nation.”^m

*But the Jewish people will reply, “What will you perceive in the Shulammite, [in this people that is **shalem**, complete with God; (Rashi); will you even see] the dance of the Machanayim ⁿ*

Israel saw their encampment under the banners and all its relative connections as such a privilege that the other nations could offer them nothing that would compare. Their ultimate desire was to be a Chariot for the Divine Presence. This is one of the highest goals we could ever seek to attain.

Approved Mixtures

Bring peace with one another

Rashi translates the word “*Shulammite*” to mean, “In this people that is *shalem*, complete with God”^o

Consequently, the mixture of Jew with Jew is a mixture approved and lauded by G-d. Yeshua calls for peace, *shalem* among the talmidim and Nazarene Jews. Again, we must wonder how this connection is made and how it is derived that there should be harmony between the Jewish brethren.

Jewish people take the Bible very literally. Therefore, when we are told that we are to put the Shema on the doorposts we take it literal and do exactly that. When we are told to place the Shema as a sign on the hand, we do exactly that.

Vayikra (Leviticus) 2:13 *Every grain offering of yours, moreover, you shall season with salt, so that the salt of the covenant of your God shall not be lacking from your grain offering; with all your offerings you shall offer salt.*

^m The Torah Anthology: Vol. 13 - First Journeys (Me'am Lo'ez Series), Moznaim Pub Corp (June 1, 1983) pg. 27

ⁿ Ibid

^o Ibid

Rabbinic authorities question whether every sacrifice was salted. The one thing NOT argued is whether grain offerings are salted. Consequently, consuming salted bread to this day has become the norm for Judaism. The P'rushim (Pharisees) saw themselves a nation of Priests. They only shared bread with those in their Chaver. They also saw the Table as an altar. Therefore, all that is eaten at the Table was similar to what was offered on the Holy Altar. The *Korbanot* (sacrifices) were salted and therefore our tables MUST have salt. And, we must have salt and bread.

Salt is also seen throughout the Tanach as a sign of the covenant. Salt is actually a sign of an eternal covenant therefore, we must be very careful with whom we eat bread. Rabbinic Halacha has forbid eating the bread of a Gentile (*pat akum*) for the sake of maintaining true Jewishness.^p

Yeshua' saying are directed towards breaking bread on Shabbat with our Jewish brothers. This harmony and unity is seen in the imagery of salt and covenant. However, the idea that brought us to Shabbat unity and fellowship is the imagery of the Camp of Yisrael as they traveled through the desert.

Conclusion

A lesson that we should be learning from this Torah Seder, The Psalm, Ashlamatah and Hakham Tsefet is one of appropriate unity. This lesson teaches us that everyone has his particular place and space. No one can fill that place or do your job. The person (Tom Brady) that I work with has a saying that I believe is apropos here. When things look tough or we think we are not up to the task, he says, "it's our job we have to do it!"

When we look at the gifts, skills and talents of others we often tend to wish for other skills or talents. Any other person does, not possess the skills, talents and abilities we are given. We have our specific, special place. Therefore, unity is essential to the mission at hand.

I learned from His Eminence Rabbi Akiva Tatz that when certain mechanisms, which are built of many different parts work harmoniously each part seems insignificant. However, if we were to remove one-minute piece of that mechanism the whole operation comes to a stop. Each piece is worth the sum of the whole.^q This is a vital lesson for us today.

BS"D (B'Siyata D'Shamaya)
Aramaic: With the help of Heaven
Adon Dr. Eliyahu ben Abraham

CONNECTIONS TO TORAH READINGS

Torah Seder

Mordechai 9:49 is derived from B'midbar 2:2 The previous pericope (Mordechai 9:43-48) left the impression of Gehenna as a place of decay and decomposition. The Jewish mind natural would have turned to fire and salt. Fire and salt in turn, would have caused the mind to remember the sacral system of the Mishkan and subsequent Temples. Looking at the structure

^p The Kosher Kitchen: A Practical Guide : feliereisen Edition (Artscroll Halachah; the Kosher Kitchen) pg 256

^q Rabbi Akiva Tatz, Inner World, <http://www.tatz.cc/>

and design of the Temple would have caused the Jewish mind to remember the Torah Seder of Numbers where the Tribes surrounded the Tent of Meeting and Mishkan. This in turn would have caused the Jewish mind to remember the burial of Yaakov.

Ashlamatah

The Ashlamatah makes a wonderful connection to the Torah Seder by opening with the idea of the **everlasting sign**. It goes further to discuss those who will be joined to Yisrael and possess the ability to partake in the events of the House of G-d. **Hakham Tsefet made a natural connection between the House of G-d, the offering that were offered there and salt.** Consequently Mordechai 9:49 discusses fire and salt, two key elements in Temple structure and order. Yeshayahu 56:7

Yeshayahu 56: makes a connection through the idea of harmony, shalom (completeness and wholeness) and the slat of the Shabbat table alluded to in Mordechai 9:50

Tehillim

Targum to Tehillim 91:15. He will pray in My presence and I will answer him; I am with him in distress, I will save him and glorify him.

Prayer in the “presence” of G-d would be understood as one who prayed at the Temple. **Hakham Tsefet would have made a connection with this verse knowing that the salt of the korbanot had brought the offerer near to G-d so that his prayers would be heard.** He would have understood verse 1 (Tehillim 91:1) to be the banners of the collected tribes under the shadow of the Almighty making a connection between the second chapter of Numbers and the Temple. This would have been the relationship between fire, salt and peace.

Endnotes

ⁱ The Delitzsch Hebrew New Testament was translated from the Elzevir 1624 Received Greek Text by the 19th century German scholar Franz Julius Delitzsch (1813 to 1890), co-author of the well-known multi-volume Keil and Delitzsch Commentary of the Old Testament. Delitzsch's New Testament was first published in 1877. Since the first publication his work has been republished with only minor revisions, and it has maintained its literal style for the Hebrew of Delitzsch's day. This was before Modern Hebrew was created, and consequently the Hebrew leans heavily on the Tanakh for vocabulary, words and expressions. Students of the Tanakh should therefore be able to understand Delitzsch's translation without much difficulty.

The current text was entered by Ewan MacLeod and proofread against a printed copy of Delitzsch's work. As Delitzsch's work goes back to 1877, it is now in the public domain.