

ACTS CHAPTER 10

Acts 10:17-33

And while Hakham Tsefet reflecting within himself on the meaning of the vision which he had seen, and behold, the men who were sent from Cornelius had asked for Shim'on's house and **stood at the gate**.¹ And they called and asked if Shim'on whose name is Tsefet was staying there. And while Hakham Tsefet was still going over the vision in his mind, the Ruach² (spirit of prophecy)³ said to him, "Behold, three men are looking for you. **Therefore, arise and go down** and go with them without discrimination⁴ towards Gentiles, **for I (God) have sent them.**" And going down to the men, those sent to him from Cornelius, Hakham Tsefet said, Behold, I am the one you are looking for. For what reason have you come? And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a man of piety and a God fearer, and one of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was **commanded⁵ from God by a holy messenger to send for you** to come to his house and to hear the Oral Torah⁶ from you. Then he (Hakham Tsefet) invited⁷ them in and gave them lodging. **And on the next day Hakham Tsefet went away with them**, and certain brothers⁸ from Yafu went with him. And the next day they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius was waiting for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends. And as Hakham Tsefet was coming in, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and paid obeisance.⁹ But Hakham Tsefet took him up, saying, **Stand up!** I also am a man myself. And as he talked with him, he went in and found many who had assembled together for prayer.¹⁰ And he said to them, **You know that it is a forbidden¹¹ thing for a man, a Jew to keep company with or to come near to one of another nation. But G-d has shown me not to call any man common or unclean** (but his kitchen is unclean). Therefore, I came without complaint, being sent for. I ask, then, for what reason have you sent for me. And Cornelius said, "Four days ago I was

¹ The allegory here shows the attempt of the Shammaite School to hold the Gentiles at a distance. They "Stood at the Gate" is an allegorical statement, which interpreted means that the "Prayed at the Gate." Or, they could only come to the position of being a "Ger Sha'ar."

² The Ruach – Voice of Prophecy can be none other than G-d.

³ The ambiguity of the vision disappears with the voice of Prophecy heard internally by Hakham Tsefet. This means that Hakham Tsefet through the "spirit of prophecy" learned the true meaning of the vision. Not only did he learn the true meaning of the vision, he understood (Binah) all the possibilities and intimate details of this vision. In this vision was the "secret – So'od" of the Malchut Shamayim, governance of G-d through the Hakhamim and Bate Din as opposed to human kings.

⁴ διακρίνω - *diakrinō* contains the notion of discrimination and separation. While there are places where the Jewish people and Gentiles must be separated, we cannot discriminate against them. It also contains the idea of hesitation. Therefore, Hakham Tsefet is sent immediately, without hesitation and without making a distinction between Jew and Gentile as far as superficial interaction. This excludes ideas of table fellowship etc.

⁵ Verbal connection to B'resheet (Gen) 45:19

⁶ **ῥήματα** can only be the Oral Torah. While λόγος can be either written or oral, **ῥήματα** can only be words spoken orally.

⁷ The use of εἰσκαλεσάμενος is found only here in the Nazarean Codicil and sparingly in Greek writings. Here we note that it is not problematic to have the Gentile invited in. While under the supervision of the Jewish host, the Jewish house is not deemed unfit. However, the problem occurs when the reverse is the case, as we will see.

⁸ Jewish brothers who believed Yeshua to be the Messiah

⁹ It is most likely that Hakham Shaul is showing the Cornelius was equating Hakham Tsefet with the supernatural visitation he experienced beforehand.

¹⁰ The phrase "until this hour" will reveal that the "assembly" was for the sake of saying the afternoon prayers together with his household and those pious soldiers who had accepted Jewish authority. Furthermore, we note that Cornelius accepted the authority of the Jewish Bate Din because he supersedes the Seven Laws of Noach. Or, we might say that he understood the Seven Laws of the B'ne Noach in Acts 15 as a "pars pro toto." We make mention of this because Cornelius has accepted the yoke of Jewish Siddur, Tsedaqah and other acts of piety.

¹¹ We must take caution when trying to understand this phrase. Hakham Tsefet is NOT saying that the Torah forbade interaction between Jew and Gentile. Actually, there are a number of instances in the Torah where we are clearly taught how to interact with the Gentiles. In the present case, we have a dogma, which Shammai established concerning the interaction between Jews and Gentiles. ἀθέμιτος also means not permitted or not allowed. It is not a halakhah in any sense.

fasting until this hour. And at the ninth hour (three o'clock, the time for the afternoon prayer) I prayed in my house, and behold, a man stood before me in luminous clothing. And he said, Cornelius, your prayer is heard, and your acts of tzedakah have been remembered by God. Therefore, send to Yafo and call there Shim'on whose name is Tsefet; he is staying near the house of Shim'on, a tanner by the seaside; who, when he comes, will speak to you. Therefore, I immediately¹² sent to you, and you have done well to come. Now therefore we are all here present before God to hear¹³ (Shema) all things that are commanded to you concerning us Gentiles by God."

Acts 15:19-21

Therefore, my judgment¹⁴ is that we should not cause difficulty for those from among the Gentiles who turn to God, but we should write a letter to them to abstain from the pollution of idols and from sexual immorality and from what has been strangled and from blood. For [the rest you have] Moshe who has those proclaiming him in every city from ancient generations, because he is read aloud in the synagogues on every Sabbath."

¹² ἐξαύτης – (*exautēs*) is synonymous with, εὐθύς (*euthus*). However, ἐξαύτης – (*exautēs*) does not contain the idea of moral expediency like εὐθύς (*euthus*). Nevertheless, ἐξαύτης – (*exautēs*) shows Cornelius' readiness to obey the things of G-d "immediately."

¹³ **Na'aséh V'Nishmá** "We will do and [then] we will hear." cf. Exodus 19:8.

¹⁴ Verbal connection to Shmot 21:1. This is the "judgment" (פְּסָקָה) of Hakham Ya'aqob or his expression of desire to the Bet Din - noun first person singular, in "my judgment," this cannot be a legal halakhic decision. This is because a single Judge (Hakham) cannot make a halakhic ruling. Judgments are the result of a Bet Din [i.e.. multiple judges (Hakhamim)].