

COMMENTARY TO HAKHAM SHAUL'S SCHOOL OF REMES
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(2 Luqas - 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 Yafo 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 Royal 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

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 they "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 - *diakrino* 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 **ρήματα** can only be the Oral Torah. While **λόγος** can be either written or oral, **ῥήμα** 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.

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 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 tsedaqah have been remembered by God. Therefore, send to Yafu 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.”

RETURN TO EDEN

The idea we have posited concerning the return to Eden over the past months is not some fanciful idea. Jewish Scholars have shown that the path to Eden is through the Mitzvot (commandments), more specifically the Oral Torah. Kabbalistic teachings concerning “Tikun Olam” are not mere mystical musings. Furthermore, we noted above that the “Malchut Shamayim” (Governance of G-d) is actualized by accepting the authority of the Bate Din and Hakhamim. This machinery is the engine of G-d’s Kingdom, which depends on the principle of agency. Therefore, each Rabbi and or Hakham is an agent of G-d and a critical part of that engine. We have noted the salvific role of the Hakhamim above. As agents of the Messiah, we have the responsibility of redeeming our world. The Tanakh is replete with this Messianic idealism. Before any of these thoughts can be realized, we must learn to accept their truth. For example, making Talmidim “**Stand**” is not strictly the responsibility of the Hakham. This is equally the responsibility of the congregation as a whole.

Allegorically, Yosef is the redemptive vehicle for the Jewish people in the present Torah Seder. Yehudah is the agent of Messiah, i.e. Yosef, bringing redemption for his father and the rest of his family. In our present pericope, Hakham Tsefet is the Divinely appointed agent bringing redemption to the Gentiles. The two stories show the Jewish paradox. So, what is the grand message of this paradox? Salvation is by and from the Jewish people.¹⁴ Therefore, the final redemption when revealed will be by the hands of the Jewish people. To be more specific, the Divinely appointed agents bringing salvation in the present era are the Hakhamim. Without their presence, the world is lost and the redemptive plan nullified.

ANI YOSEF – WHO IS YOSEF

We only use the title “Ani Yosef” as a means for launching allegorical dialogue. Throughout the Tanakh, Messiah has taken many faces. While certain schools of thought cannot see “outside the box”, the Jewish reader can read between the lines. In the present pericope of 2 Luqas (Acts) we can see an allegorical picture of Messiah and Yosef being pictured in Hakham Tsefet. However, we can also broaden the picture to see the Jewish people as well. We extend the salvific role to the Jewish people as Messiah because we have a Divine investiture as Kings and Priests.¹⁵ The King, Priest and Prophets were “anointed ones.” Therefore, they were prototypes for Messiah, the “Anointed One.” Consequently, we see the Jewish people as led by

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 cf. Yochanan (John) 4:22

¹⁵ cf. Shemot (Ex.) 16:16

the Hakhamim as the salvific engine of global tikun. The present pericope shows Hakham Tsefet in remembrance of the Bat Kol and guided by the Ruach HaKodesh – the Spirit of Prophecy.¹⁶

We see in this pericope something very special. The voice of a special messenger spoke to Cornelius and his family as they prayed according to the Jewish Siddur per se. They prayed following their Jewish mentors' set times for prayer. However, there are two plays on words in this pericope, which are very revealing. The first being the allegorical statement, they "**stood at the gate**." This allegorical phrase shows that during the early part of the first century the general Jewish attitude adopted the Shammaite stance of accepting the Gentile as only a Ger HaSha'ar – "Proselyte of the Gate." Hakham Tsefet is told by G-d through the "Spirit of Prophecy" not to discriminate against the Gentiles, but their kitchens. Therefore, Hakham Tsefet knew the interpretation of the vision once he heard the voice of the "Ruach HaKodesh" (Spirit of Prophecy). And here, just as our Torah Seder pictures the B'ne Yisrael going into Eretz Yisrael to retrieve their father Ya'aqob, we see the Ruach HaKodesh (Spirit of Prophecy) driving Hakham Tsefet into diaspora among the Gentiles.

2 Luqas pictures Hakham Tsefet inviting his Gentile guests in and giving them lodging. Much like the Gentiles being brought under the wings of Hakham Tsefet's Tallit, we see them being brought into "**the house**"¹⁷ as a sign of their acceptance of Jewish authority.¹⁸ Their entering the Jewish home is also indicative of their submission to Jewish authority. When Hakham Tsefet enters the house of Cornelius, we surmise that the house was made ready for their Jewish guest. Again, we find here an allegory of the Gentile accepting the 613 mitzvot. Cornelius bowing to Hakham Tsefet should also be seen as submission to Jewish authority. The retort of Hakham Tsefet "Stand up," teaches us that Hakham Tsefet made the convert Cornelius to "Stand" as a Hakham is to do for his talmidim.¹⁹

What Messianic aspect can the Jewish people carry to the ends of the earth? The Jewish people carry the Mesorah because in it we find the mastery of the Yetser HaRa. Or, as Hakham Shaul has stated "freedom from the principle of sin and die." Here we refer to Romans 8:2 where Hakham Shaul speaks of being "freed from the principle of sin and death." We use the phrase "sin and die," because this was the principle which Adam HaRishon lived by in Gan Eden. Therefore, we can be freed from the principle of "sin and die" through understanding the Mesorah of the Master. The principle of "sin and death" is not the "Law of sin and death" with reference to the Torah as "Law." The principle of freedom from "sin and death" is found in the Torah/Mesorah. Therefore, we see that we can return to Eden when we accept the Mesorah and Torah of the Master.

YOU KNOW THAT IT IS A FORBIDDEN THING FOR A ROYAL MAN, A JEW TO KEEP COMPANY WITH OR TO COME NEAR TO ONE OF ANOTHER NATION

¹⁶ We bear in mind, that the title "Ruach HaKodesh" in present usage is G-d speaking to Hakham Tsefet prophetically. We must also realize that each "Title" of G-d depicts His interaction with humanity bringing about specific results and are therefore associated with special titles. Therefore, the "Ruach HaKodesh" is, as we have noted for the sake of depicting G-d in a specific course of action rather than a separate entity. Hakham Tsefet's hearing the Bat Kol and receiving the Spirit of Prophecy are two distinct parts of the current pericope. Through meditation, Hakham Tsefet first reached a level where he heard a Bat Kol, which is lower than the Spirit of Prophecy. His meditation continued to the level of Prophecy where he was instructed concerning the Gentiles. Note the words "**while Hakham Tsefet reflecting within himself on the meaning of the vision.**" These words show continued meditation. Therefore, we see that Hakham Tsefet receives the interpretation of that "Prophecy" by continued meditation.

¹⁷ "House" is an allegorical term for joining that specific community. It is also metaphoric for the Esnoga (Synagogue), Bet Midrash and Bet HaMikdash. Therefore being received is picturesque of learning Jewish worship and studying the Mesorah.

¹⁸ This picture is two-fold. Firstly, the Gentile must submit to Jewish Authority. And, secondly, the Jewish Hakhamim must accept the task of converting, training establishing (making them stand) the Gentiles as true talmidim.

¹⁹ cf. Abot 1:1

Yeshua's predilection for "talmudizing" the Gentiles²⁰ was not the norm of the day. This is evident from our pericope in 2 Lukas (Acts) 10:28. Hakham Tsefet tells Cornelius that it is "forbidden²¹" for a Jew (a Royal man) to have fellowship with a Gentile. While the Torah does tell us how to interact with the Gentiles, it does not forbid that interaction as we see from D'varim 7:3ff.²² Therefore, we must conclude that the Shammites enacted a dogma in their School, forbidding interaction with Gentiles. From the materials above, we conclude that, Hillel would not accept or enact these types of laws. Nor were these enactments realized through the Sanhedrin or any legal agency other than the School of Shammai.

Shammai was vehemently opposed to "Gentile Redemption." Furthermore, the day he took office as Av Bet Din he enacted eighteen rules **for his School**. In the discussion on clean and unclean liquids and hands, Shammai declares the Gentile and their lands unclean. From this ruling we see that when the Jewish people entered Eretz Yisrael they shook the dust of the foreign nation off their feet.²³ The Mishnah, Tosefta and Gemara are cryptic in that we do not understand the full discussion that took place between Shammai and Hillel. However, the House of Shammai was vehemently opposed to the possible interaction of Jew and gentile. The eighteen rules fostered greater separation between Jew and Gentile.²⁴

The Talmud describes this day as a day of infamy for the Jews.

b. Shab. 17a And on that day Hillel sat submissive before Shammai, like one of the disciples, and **it was as grievous to Israel as the day when the [golden] calf was made.**

Why was this day a day of such infamy? Hillel taught that one should Love ALL people and bring them close to the Torah.²⁵ When the Jewish people cease to be Kings and Priests they have ceased to function in their true occupation. Shammai's eighteen edicts created a rift between the Jew and the Gentile, which brought about great animosity between the two peoples. The Jewish people were destined to be Kings and Priests to and among the nations. On this day, Shammai is said to have driven a sword in the Bet Midrash and retarded this process.

While the measure of interaction with Gentiles is of vital importance, G-d's plan for the world is tikun. Adam was to cultivate the Garden of Eden (lit. pleasure). By his sin he brought separation and division into the world. G-d's plan of tikun, conceived in the Jewish people, is to bring about the restoration of the earth to that Pleasurable²⁶ state that Adam experienced in the Garden. And, to bring humanity, as a whole back into communion with G-d. This can only happen when the Jewish Hakhamim act as Priests to the Gentiles, and the Gentiles submit to their halakhic authority.

²⁰ We will see in the very near future that Yeshua also reached out to the Gentiles. He has already healed Cornelius daughter as we have seen in the past. We will also decode his mission in a later pericope to see that he determined to resolve the "Gentile Question."

²¹ This term refers primarily not to what is forbidden by ordinance (Torah) but to violation of tradition or common recognition of what is seemly or proper. Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000). A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature. "Based on Walter Bauer's Griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der frühchristlichen [sic] Literatur, sixth edition, ed. Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, with Viktor Reichmann and on previous English editions by W.F. Arndt, F.W. Gingrich, and F.W. Danker." (3rd ed.) (24). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

²² The things listed in D'varim 7:3 and following teach us what the Gentile must accept in having and association with the Jewish people.

²³ cf. m. Kel. 1:6-9. There are clearly degrees of Holiness as outlined by the Mishnah. We do not mean to imply that the Lands of the Gentiles contain the same level of Holiness possessed by Eretz Yisrael. However, the presence of the Jewish people in Galut is for the sake of "Global Tikun."

²⁴ Falk, H. (2003). *Jesus the Pharisee, A new Look at the Jewishness of Jesus*, . Wipf and Stock Publishers. p. 56

²⁵ Cf. m. Abot 1:12

²⁶ "Eden" means "pleasure;" therefore, we could translate Gan Eden as the "Garden of Pleasure."

Hakham Tsefet speaking to Cornelius says “**you know**” or you “have knowledge” of the enactments of Shammai concerning the interaction between Jew and Gentile. In other words, the enactments²⁷ of Shammai were so well known that even the Gentiles knew of these things. It would not be hard to believe Jewish encounters with Gentiles had advertised these middot (measures-rules).

It is evident from Hakham Tsefet’s response to the servants of Cornelius that the halakhic view of Shammai dominated Jewish life during the early part of the first century. His Eminence Rabbi Harvey Falk further elaborates on the fact that during a discussion at **Hananiah’s home**, members from Bet Shammai murdered students from Bet Hillel.²⁸ His Eminence Rabbi Harvey Falk further suggests that other groups were equally volatile during this period. He cites the possibility that the group who murdered the students of Hillel were the Zealot group of Sicarii.²⁹ What we must note from these quotes is that the “enactments” or “middot” did not occur in a Sanhedrin setting. While there was a period when the Sanhedrin was exiled from the Chamber of the Hewn Stone, where they officially sat, the date was near the death of the master not 20 B.C.E. Therefore, the setting is not in the Sanhedrin’s usual Chamber of Hewn Stone but in **Hananiah’s home**. Therefore, these so-called “middot” would not have been considered halakhah in the true sense of the word. They may have been standards followed by the School of Shammai but they were not halakhah! Therefore, they would not have needed to be rescinded by any Court of the Sanhedrin. It seems from the present narrative that these standards had far-reaching effects on the Jewish population of the first century. However, from the materials cited above it would appear that the Shammaite School was not estranged from using brute force when logic was not able to supersede the teachings of Hillel and the Master.

Hillel the Elder saw the “House of G-d” as a place where all people of the world should visit.³⁰ Therefore, we would opine that Hillel saw the “House of G-d” as a place for all the peoples of the earth to visit rather than being a strictly “Jewish” edifice. In the pericope containing Yeshua’s cleansing of the Temple we find that Yeshua followed the same ideals as his teacher Hillel.³¹ His Eminence Rabbi Harvey Faulk suggests that Hillel and Menaḥem the Essene³² were the innovators of a plan to “evangelize” the Gentiles.³³ Actually, the topic is far more reaching than this superficial statement. Menaḥem was Hillel’s original counterpart, Av Bet Din to Hillel. The Mishnah records his leaving the office of Av Bet Din.

m. Hagigah 2:2 Hillel and Menaḥem did not differ. Menaḥem departed, Shammai entered.³⁴

From the cited-Mishnah, we are able to see that there was a unity between Hillel and Menaḥem. An interesting observation when reading about the Zugot³⁵ is that the only two of the Zugot that are in diametric opposition are Hillel and Shammai. None of the other Zugot seem to have the proclivity towards opposition. While it is true that the Av Bet Din seems to hold the stricter view of the Torah, we are not told that any of the other Zugot was in diametric opposition. This brings us to a very interesting point.

Some materials and Scholars suggest that Shammai forced Menaḥem out of office. Herein lays the possibility of a great conspiracy. It appears that Hillel and Menaḥem may have collaborated on how to resolve two great problems of their day.

²⁷ cf. Shabbat 13b-17a

²⁸ Harvey Falk, *Jesus the Pharisee, A New Look at the Jewishness of Jesus*, Wipf and Stock Publishers, pg 57ff

²⁹ Ibid pg. 57

³⁰ t. Sukkah 4:3

³¹ While Yeshua did not sit directly under Hillel, we note that he possessed all the same ideals. We have posited the opinion in previous commentaries that Yeshua’s Hakham was Shimon ben Hillel.

³² The identity of Menaḥem, the former Av Bet Din and counterpart to Hillel, is contested by several Scholars. The Encyclopaedia Judaica identifies him as Menaḥem the Essene. Cf. Thomson Gale. (n.d.). *Encyclopedia Judaica*, (2 ed., Vol. 14). (F. Skolnik, Ed.) 2007: Keter Publishing House Ltd. p. 25

³³ Falk, H. (2003). *Jesus the Pharisee, A new Look at the Jewishness of Jesus*, . Wipf and Stock Publishers. p.39ff

³⁴ Neusner, J. (1988). *The Mishnah : A new translation*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. p. 330

³⁵ Heb. Pairs

1. The First was the “Gentile Question”³⁶
2. The Second was the Priestly problem

The “Gentile question” was how to bring “salvation” to the Gentile, or how to bring the Gentile to G-d. The Second question was how to correct the problem of the defunct Priesthood. If Menaḥem did depart from Hillel, his office as Av Bet Din and go to the Essenes, we would have reason to believe that this is true. There were a great number of legitimate “Kohanim” among the Essenes. We do not believe that Menaḥem intended to try to bring a revolution, which brought about the restoration of the “Levitical Priesthood.” However, it seems plausible that Hillel and Menaḥem did have, or try to construct, a plan to restore the priesthood of the first-born and “talmudizing” (evangelizing) the Gentiles. Yeshua received his predilection for “talmudizing” from Hillel. He passed this predilection for bringing the Gentiles to G-d on to his talmidim. Because he is the product of Bet Hillel, we should realize that he received this predilection from his teacher.³⁷ One might further opine that Yeshua was a part of that plan.³⁸ Yeshua in turn passed this penchant on to his talmidim.

THERE IS NO MESSIAH AND YOU'RE IT

In the recent work “There Is No Messiah and You're It,”³⁹ His Eminence Rabbi Levine shows that history is filled with Messianic people. Therefore, we deduce that the “Spirit” of Messiah is always present. With the absence of one Messianic figure, another soon emerges. Understanding these statements, we now look to the allegory of Yosef as the “Saviour” or “Messiah” of the world during his time. The present pericope of 2 Luqas shows Hakham Tsefet as the “Messiah to the Gentiles” per se. In this pericope, Hakham Tsefet is an allegorical figure of the saviour of the world. Yet, better said, is the fact that the Jewish Hakhamim are now invested with the “Spirit” of Messiah. The recent films titled “Men in Black” revealed a very Kabbalistic idea by presenting “men in black”⁴⁰ as the saviour/guardians of the world. We can see this idea presented allegorically in the present pericope in the Jewish Hakham Tsefet. While we most certainly believe in Messiah’s return, we do not accept any of the Christian versions. The Final Redemption will mimic the first redemption. And, now the whole mystery is solved. In the meantime, the allegorical Messiah of the world has appeared in the form of the Jewish Hakhamim.

PERORATION

While it may be disconcerting for some readers to read these allegorical words, we must come to the realization that each of us has his or her place in the role and occupation of tikun. His Eminence Rabbi Levine is not actually purporting that there is not Messiah. His work is a call to arms per se. Each of us has a job to do, and it is time to be about the Mater’s business.

אמן ואמן סלה

³⁶ This is my phrase. By the “Gentile Question”, I posit that the Rabbis struggled with how to bring the Gentile to Torah.

³⁷ Here we would conjecture that Yeshua was taught in the School of Hillel, and that his master taught him to have this predilection for bringing about a “Universal Judaism.”

³⁸ Harvey Falk suggests that Hillel was sympathetic with the Essene community because Menaḥem the Essene was a part of his Bet Din. We know that the Essenes were a secretive community. This may account for the great deal of secrecy surrounding Yeshua’s teacher and the mission he (Yeshua) embraced.

³⁹ Levine, R. R. (2003). *There is No Messiah, and You're It*. Woodstock, Vermont: Jewish Lights Publishing.

⁴⁰ By use of the term “Men in Black” we are not referring to the ultra-orthodox Jewish dress. This is not to diminish their roll in the earth. However, we look at things from a VERY Orthodox Sephardi perspective and approach.

