

The Road from Unbelief to Understanding

Introduction:

In our previous teachings we discovered that according to Hebrew tradition the time from “Bikkurim” (Feast of First Fruits) to Shavuot (Pentecost) is a time of introspect or of self-examination, a time of developing the characteristics of YHWH based on the Commandment from YHWH to count the days up to Shavuot (Pentecost). For this purpose we follow daily reflection with each day adding a new dimension to those personal aspects that will prepare us to receive the Torah (the Word of YHWH) at Shavuot (Pentecost). Since a true change in our personality cannot be achieved by our own strength in my last teaching I showed that at the Resurrection Yahshua imparted to the Talmidim (the Disciples) his RUACH (Spirit) that they would have the ability to develop faith and be implanted with the character of YHWH working in them to empower them for the work that was ahead of them. We clearly saw how Kepha (Peter) in his own strength was unable to follow through on the things he had spoken and when the moment of test came he denied the master three times. We saw however that upon receiving the strength of the RUACH (Spirit) and by seeing the risen Master their lives drastically changed from Disappointment to Faith. Today it is my desire to see the means by which the Master would bring his disciples from unbelief to Understanding. For them as it is for us a further dimension for this time we call “Sefirat HaOmer” “counting of the Omer” was needed because we know that the disciples during this time did not only follow the normal counting as they do today but a far deeper dimension that we will endeavour to look into.

The understanding of the Machiach (Messiah):

[In Judaism today the concept of the Mashiach (Messiah) is as follows. The Mashiach will be a great political leader descended from King David:

YermeYahu (Jeremiah) 23:5 “Behold, *the* days are coming,” says YHWH (the LORD), “That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.

The Mashiach is often referred to as “Mashiach ben David” (Messiah, son of David). He will be well-versed in Yahudi (Jewish) law, and observant of its commandments:

YeshiYahu (Isaiah) 11:2-5.

He will be a charismatic leader, inspiring others to follow his example. He will be a great military leader, who will win battles for Yisrael. He will be a great judge, who makes righteous decisions:

(Jeremiah 33:15).

But above all, he will be a human being.]

Quoted from Judaism 101 (www.jewfaq.org/machiach.htm)

As we observe the Talmidim (Disciples) we get this same idea arising since they see Yahshua the Master as this upcoming leader Anointed by YHWH to restore the Kingdom of Yisrael but being ignorant of his true purpose in his 1st appearance as the Lamb of Elohim that came to bear the sins of the whole world.

Though the Talmidim (the Disciples) had experienced firsthand all his mighty miracles believing him to be the anointed of Elohim they were in great expectation of him establishing his Kingdom and we see something of that in the following:

MatithYAHU (Matthew) 16:28 “Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.”

As the Disciples lacked understanding they too developed a belief that Yahshua whom they believed was the promised Mashiach (Messiah) had come to establish the restored Kingdom with him ruling and them ruling with him:

Further we read of the incident that reveals more:

MattithYahu (Matthew) 17:1- 4 And after six days Yahshua took Kepha (Peter) and Ya'acov (James) and Yochanan (John) his brother and brought them up on a high mountain by themselves, 2 and He was transformed before them and His face shone like the sun and His garments became as white as the light. 3 And see, Mosheh (Moses) and Ēliyahu (Elijah) appeared to them, talking with Him. 4 And Kepha (Peter) answering, said to Yahshua, “Master, it is good for us to be here. *If* You wish, let us make here three Tabernacles: one for You, one for Mosheh (Moses) and one for Ēliyahu (Elijah).”

What is interesting in this reading is that there is an implication that this time was near the time of Succoth the Feast of Tabernacles since Kepha (Peter) speaks of making Tabernacles or Booths which are constructed before this Feast. What is also interesting is that among the Yahudim (Jews) there is and was a belief that the Mashiach (Messiah) would come to establish the restored Kingdom during this feast.

We read just after Yahshua had said that he would die, this word from the Mother of Yochanan (John) & Ya'acov (James) showing their total misunderstanding of his purpose and a belief that he was about to establish His Kingdom just like Judaism believed with regards the Mashiach (Messiah).

MattithYahu (Matthew) 20:21 She said to Yahshua, “Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom.”

Hope turned to sheer unbelief:

As a result of a misguided understanding of the Mashiach (Messiah) we find the Talmidim (Disciples) coming together out of fear of the Yahudi (Jewish) leaders and overwhelmed by Sorrow and misunderstanding that their Master had been taken from them since they were hoping for so much more.

With this mindset that had turned to despair the Talmidim (Disciples) had great difficulty believing that Yahshua had risen according to the words of the Women. Today without a Hebraic understanding of sin and the Sacrificial System people may find it difficult to understand the need for the death and resurrection of Yahshua. This belief in the Resurrection however is imperative to us as Sha'ul (Paul) writes in:

1 Corinthians 15:14 And if Messiah is not risen, then our preaching *is* empty and your faith *is* also empty. ¹⁵ Yes, and we are found false witnesses of Elohim, because we have testified of Elohim that He raised up Messiah, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. ¹⁶ For if *the* dead do not rise, then Messiah is not risen. ¹⁷ And if Messiah is not risen, your faith *is* futile; you are still in your sins! ¹⁸ Then also those

who have fallen asleep in Messiah have perished. ¹⁹ If in this life only we have hope in Messiah, we are of all men the most pitiable.

It has also been suggested that Thomas was not with the others because of his great sorrow that tore him apart so much he needed solitude. This great sorrow so overwhelmed him that when he came together with the disciples he could not believe what the other disciples were telling him.

It was only when the Master appeared again that we read of his faith:

Yochanan (John) 20:27- 29 *Then He said to T'oma (Thomas), "Bring your finger here, and see My hands. Bring your hand and put it into My side - and do not be unbelieving, but believing."* **28** And T'oma answered and said to Him, *"My Master and my Elohim!"* **29** Yahshua said to him, *"T'oma, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed."*

Remember none of his disciples understood correctly the Scriptures concerning him since they still had to overcome the traditions taught them by the Pharisees which they would have grown up on.

It is not unlike the difficulties faced by Christians who come into the Netzarim movement. They face many different teachings that conflict with the traditional teachings which so often are hard to break, though confronted with truth.

Even today few Yisraelites understand about Yahshua fulfilling the role of the Mashiach (Messiah) and have adopted the idea of a Mashiach Ben Yoseph (Messiah Son of Joseph) being the suffering servant and a different person being the Mashiach Ben David (Messiah Son of David) the promised ruler and descendant of King David.

The result was that the disciples were left with their hopes crushed. Hope is such a fickle thing. The hope of seeing the Kingdom established by Yahshua with his Disciples at his side was what drove them but now that was totally crushed. The hope of seeing our circumstances change often finds us in a depressive state too but faith strengthens us to remain firm:

Ibrim (Hebrews) 11:1- 2 *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. ² For by it the elders obtained a good testimony.*

Though the Elders did not see their hopes realised they were a great example of faith. Yahshua demonstrates the example of the faith & hope of Abraham in:

Yochanan (John) 8:56 *Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad."*

Concealed to be Revealed:

On the day that Yahshua appeared to the Disciples we also find two of his Talmidim (Disciples) on the road to Emmaus leaving Yerushalayim & feeling despondent as we read:

Luke 24:13 *Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Yerushalayim (Jerusalem). ¹⁴ And they talked together of all these things which had happened. ¹⁵ So it was, while they conversed and reasoned that Yahshua Himself drew near and went with them. ¹⁶ But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him.*

There is a question here to be raised! For what purpose did Yahshua keep from them who he was?

One thing we notice throughout the Mission of Yahshua is that he never outright said who he was. We find him however asking his Talmidim (the Disciples) who they thought he was & Kepha (Peter) says this in:

MattithYAHU (Matthew) 16:16-17 Shimon Kepha (Simon Peter) answered and said, “You are the Mashiach (Messiah), the Son of the living Elohim.”

¹⁷ Yahshua answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Shimon Bar Yonah (Simon Bar-Jonah), for flesh and blood has not revealed *this* to you, but My Father who is in the Shamaiyim (heavens).

Interestingly Yahshua however gives this Commandment to his Talmidim (Disciples):

MattithYAHU (Matthew) 16:20 Then He commanded His Talmidim (disciples) that they should tell no one that He was Yahshua Ha Mashiach (The Messiah).

Rather than Yahshua revealing himself on this road as he speaks to his Disciples we see him concealing his identity as we read:

Luke 24:17- 27 And Yahshua said to them, “What kind of conversation *is* this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?”

¹⁸ Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, “Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?”

¹⁹ And He said to them, “What things?”

So they said to Him, “The things concerning Yahshua of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before Elohim and all the people, ²⁰ and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. ²¹ But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Yisrael. Indeed, besides all this, it has been three days since^[1] these things happened. ²² Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us. ²³ When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of Malakim (angels) who said He was alive. ²⁴ And certain of those *who were* with us went to the tomb and found *it* just as the women had said; but Him they did not see.”

Note 1 Many Scripture versions have “today is the third day” but the Greek word is “Apo” which tends to mean away from or separated from so it should read that it is “three days from the Crucifixion.” Therefore they were separated from the event by three days.

The Great truth is Revealed:

What we find in the actions of Yahshua is that this time of “the counting of the Omer: is especially significant to his disciples since we will see that it was a time of Spiritual growth. Yahshua used a great means to bring these Talmidim (Disciples) into understanding not just by him proving he had risen:

Luke 24:25-27 Then He said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Ought not the Machiach (Messiah) to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?” ²⁷ And beginning at Mosheh (Moses) and all the Prophets (Nevim), He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

Here lies the great truth of Yahshua's purpose. He desired that his Talmidim (Disciples) would come to an understanding of his purpose through the words of the Torah & the Neviim (Prophets) that they too could prove to others the truth of his suffering & Resurrection based on Scripture. He most likely revealed the needed suffering of Mashiach (Messiah) through the writings of the Prophet YeshiYahu (Isaiah) chapters 52 & 53 and also through Mosheh by quoting possibly the following:

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 18:15-18 YHWH your Elohim *shall* raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brothers. Listen to Him, **16** according to all you asked of YHWH your Elohim in **Ḥorēb** in the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of YHWH my Elohim, nor let me see this great *fire* any more, lest I *die*.' **17** "And YHWH said to me, '*What* they have spoken is good. **18** 'I *shall* raise up for them a Prophet like you out of the midst of their brothers. And I *shall* put My Words in His mouth and He *shall* speak to them all that I command Him.

Surely Yahshua would have also opened their understanding to the many Images that are revealed in other books of the Tanakh like the image of Yitschaq (Isaac) who Abraham offered with the result that a Ram became his substitute.

The Disciples' Eyes Opened

Rather than Yahshua simply revealing who he was he determined to allow the RUACH Ha Kodesh (The Holy Spirit) that would from now on teach them all things to begin to reveal the truth to them through the Scriptures:

Luke 24:28-32 Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther. ²⁹ But they constrained Him, saying, "Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." And He went in to stay with them.

³⁰ Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke *it*, and gave it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.

³² And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?"

The Great truth of the purpose for Yahshua's concealment is that true revelation comes best with a diligent search of Scripture for with that as we saw with these Talmidim came a burning of the heart produced by the RUACH Ha Kodesh which so impacted them that they had to return to tell the others of their great experience and understanding.

The Purpose revealed:

This time we call "Sefirat Ha Omer" now became an extremely significant time for Yahshua's Talmidim (Disciples) because it was more than developing a heart to receive YHWH's commands signified by the remembrance of Sinai.

Since the Talmidim (Disciples) did not have the easy access that we have to the Scriptures as they were only available in the study halls of the Beit HaMikdash (the Temple) they truly needed the presence of the RUACH Ha Kodesh (The Holy Spirit) working in their midst.

Sefirat Ha Omer (the Counting of the Sheaves) or the countdown to Shavuot therefore became for them a time of fellowship, of intense prayer and revelation from the Master and through the RUACH Ha Kodesh (The Holy Spirit) that would see his Talmidim (Disciples)

transformed from fearful intimidated people of unbelief to an assembly of faith filled emissaries who now understood Scripture, and were suitable for use by the Master.

The Master himself began that transition after his Resurrection by empowering his Talmidim (Disciples) with the RUACH (Spirit) & giving them understanding as we read in:

Luke 24:44-45 Then Yahshua said to them, “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled that were written in the Torah of Mosheh and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.” **45** Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, **46** and said to them, “Thus it has been written and so it was necessary for the Messiah to *suffer* and to rise again from the *dead* the third day, **47** and that repentance and forgiveness of *sins* should be proclaimed in His Name to all nations, beginning at Yerushalayim.

Make the Omer Count:

As we progress from Pesach (Passover) through Sefirat Ha Omer (the Counting of the Sheaves) I hope we receive its full impact as the Talmidim (Disciples) did. It should be for us also a time of seeking the presence of YHWH through the RUACH Ha Kodesh (Holy Spirit) not only to bring us to a renewed personality shaped by the Father but also a renewed heart & mind by a deeper understanding of Scripture that we too can be better equipped to receive the fullness of his word and fulfil more completely his Mitzvot (Commands) that like with the Sh’liychiyim (Apostles) we too would be changed in heart & mind to be in Echad (Unity) with each other and with YAHWEH our beloved Father and that of his son Yahshua to fill the Nations with the Besorah (Good News) of repentance and remission of sin in his name:

Final Note:

TRANSFORMATIONS TO THE EXECUTION TREE & THE TOMB

To illustrate the transformations that His resurrection has already made, think about the Tree & the tomb.

1. Before His resurrection, the Tree was known only as an instrument of horrible death. So terrible was this form of execution that the Roman Empire prohibited the crucifixion of Roman citizens. Crucifixion was only for the worst of slaves & enemies of the empire.

But today, because of His resurrection, it is a thing of beauty, for all around the world the execution Tree or the Cross with Christians is seen as a symbol of hope, & a reminder of the love of YHWH our great Elohim.

2. And what about His tomb? Before the resurrection, for most of the world, the grave was looked upon as the final chapter, the closing of a great door, the end of everything.

But because of His resurrection, we can rejoice today that beyond death is where life really begins, & it will never end. Amein.