



**THE HIGHEST FORM OF WORSHIP  
IS STUDYING THE WORD**

**Proven out of YHWH's Word**

**WE INFORM – YOU CHOOSE**

**PROFESSOR WA LIEBENBERG**

# **THE HIGHEST FORM OF WORSHIP IS STUDYING THE WORD**

By

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## Preface

YHWH "God" has called us to do two things. First, we are to never give up studying and seeking the correct interpretation of any given Bible passage. Second, such opportunities are golden moments for us to learn to show grace and love to others whose understanding of a given passage may differ from ours.

Throughout the HRTI's teachings, we use a slightly different vocabulary to that which some might be accustomed. We have chosen to use what many refer to as a Messianic vocabulary. The reasons being: Firstly, using Hebraic-sounding words is another way to help you associate with the Hebraic Roots of your faith. Secondly, these words are not merely an outward show for us, they are truly an expression of who we are as Messianic Jews and Gentiles who have "taken hold" of our inheritance with Israel.

Instead of saying "Jesus," we call our Saviour "Y'shua," the way His parents would have addressed Him in Hebrew. In addition, rather than referring to Y'shua as "Christ," we use the word "Messiah," which is an Anglicized version of the Hebrew word, Moshiach.

"Yahovah" is the name of God in Hebrew, where it is written as four consonants (YHWH or YHVH, as the W and V is derived from the same Hebrew letter 'Vaw'). These four letters are called the Tetragrammaton (Greek for "[a word] having four letters"). Jews ceased to use the name in the Greco-Roman period, replacing it with the common noun Elohim, "God," to demonstrate the universal sovereignty of Israel's God over all others; at the same time, the divine name was increasingly regarded as too sacred to be uttered, and was replaced in spoken ritual by the word Adonai ("My Lord"). From about the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> century the Masoretes, Jewish scholars who were the first to add vowels to the text of the Hebrew Bible, used the vowel signs of the Hebrew words Adonai or Elohim as the vowels for YHWH, and later on the artificial name Jehovah was produced. Christian scholars and translators after the Renaissance and Reformation periods replaced the sacred name YHWH with GOD and LORD (all in capital letters in the Bible); which was a strategic move of Satan as to not using the Name. The Sacred Name occurs 6,828 times in the Hebrew text of the Bible, proving YHWH wants us to use it.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, biblical scholars again began to use the form Yahweh; and it is now the conventional usage in biblical scholarship, but leading Hebrew Scholars suggest YHWH should be pronounced as Yah-oo-VaH (Y'shua is derived from YaH-shuvah which means YaH saves).

# **We were wrong—prayer is not the highest form of worship**

## **Introduction**

When Christians think of worship, images of the Sunday morning worship service come into view with singing, praying, giving, preaching, and sharing the sacrament.

Study is perceived as something that is done in gaining knowledge for improving worship; but Christians usually don't conceive study itself as an act of worship—even the highest form of worship.

The highest form of worship in our Saviour's culture and according to YHWH's Word is not prayer or singing, but rather to study His Word. Study, therefore, is when we learn to hear from YHWH and when *He speaks to us*—whereby when we pray, *we are doing the speaking*.

As a Believer reads his or her Bible, such a person may feel they fully understand the passage. However, without insight *into the culture of the writer*, the true and deeper meaning of the Scripture is hidden from their eyes. This is not to say that we don't obtain some understanding of the basic idea of a message, but we cannot gain full insight into it if we do not understand the mind and heart of the writer. How can we honestly say that we fully understand a message written in Scripture or say we have gained insight into its true meaning, if we have never understood the writer's background or culture?

Most Christians do not know it, but Torah study in Jewish culture is as much a part of their life as regular schooling is to Western culture. Y'shua would have, by the age of thirteen, learned to read *and memorize* the Torah and the Hebrew Scripture writings. It was later that He learned His father's trade as His father's apprentice.

Y'shua's three favourite Books where He often quoted from were Deuteronomy, Isaiah, and the Psalms. He knew the Scriptures and what YHWH's will is. Study of the Word of YHWH is the most reliable way in which YHWH can speak to us and cause us to understand His will and His ways.

## **Background**

As Believers read their Bibles from a distance of many centuries as well as from an entirely different language and culture, they are often left scratching their heads in confusion or misinterpreting something as they attempt to apply understanding from their current perspectives.

It is important to retune our thinking so that we can better understand the *thinking pattern* of our Jewish Saviour and His people. We are transformed in the way we have perceived what Y'shua meant when He spoke and quoted from the Torah<sup>1</sup>, Prophets and the Writings when we begin to focus on the Jewish culture of Y'shua. These are the three main sections of the Original Covenant<sup>2</sup> that many have deemed unimportant until now.

The mark of an excellent student in Jewish culture is his ability to explain the Scriptures well—and how can one explain well if he or she lacks thorough knowledge of the Bible?

We read that Y'shua was already teaching in the Synagogues at the age of twelve. He was making sophisticated contributions at the highest level of conversation that was going on among the Rabbis.

The two main Jewish schools of thought in Y'shua's time, Hillel and Shammai, had many of the debates among them recorded in a book called the Mishnah<sup>3</sup>. This book was compiled to preserve the discussions of great Jewish thinkers from between 200 B.C. and 200 A.D.

Later, during Y'shua's ministry and at different points, He was asked to comment on some of these rulings. At one point, when Y'shua was asked to give His opinion and whose side He took on divorce, He not only showed His wisdom by quoting *directly from the Torah* but He *expounded* on it—building on the ideas of these great thinkers and bringing them to a whole new level.<sup>4</sup>

So, as Believers we must learn to apply the same Jewish thought and culture to every aspect of the words we follow in order *to understand their full meaning*.

Some may think, "*Yeah, but it's really just about a relationship with our Saviour, so what does all this other stuff matter?*" My answer: "*Exactly. If you desire to have a relationship with the Creator, the composer of Scripture, you must get to know and understand His Son intimately. After all, He is God's Word made manifest!*"

## **The Synagogue is the Model for Studying**

The importance the Jewish community attaches to study is reflected in the life of the synagogue, which is the focal point of the Jewish experience since the time of the Babylonian captivity. The word "synagogue" is from

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<sup>1</sup> The Law which contains the 613 Instructions from YHWH in the first five Books in the Bible which Moshe (Moses) wrote.

<sup>2</sup> Known by Christians as the Old Covenant or Old Testament.

<sup>3</sup> The first part of the Talmud; a collection of early oral interpretations of the Scriptures.

<sup>4</sup> Matt 19:4-11.

the Greek word *sunagoge*, which was used by the Septuagint scholars to translate the Hebrew *Eda*, the word which referred to the meeting of the congregation of Israel. The word synagogue was also used to translate *moed*, which meant "*an appointed place of meeting*".<sup>5</sup>

In ancient times, the synagogue was probably the assembly of the people in homes for social interaction—for prayer and for study. Later, these meetings were housed in buildings designed specifically for such use; which took on the name of the meetings themselves and were called synagogues.

The synagogue has had three traditional functions which were manifest in the names given to it: *Beit Kneset* (House of Assembly or Meeting Place), *Beit Tefillah*, (House of Prayer), and *Beit Midrash* (House of Study or Learning).

The synagogue was a place where the Jewish people assembled for the interaction of their collective lives. It was probably first a simple meeting place (kneset) of the people or their gathering for the administration of justice (din) through the rabbinical court. Then it became a place for corporate prayer (tefillah), which requires a *minyán* (quorum) of ten men. This underscores the Jewish mindset that salvation and interaction with the Divine is a collective, rather than individualistic exercise. Over time, however, the emphasis in the assembly of the people became more and more to study, learn, or investigate (midrash) the Torah. The Beit Midrash was most often attached to the synagogue, and the functions of both tended to overlap. Eventually, the Beit Midrash came to be viewed as *more sacred* than the rest of the synagogue.

The continuing recognition of the synagogue as a house of study is seen in the fact that many Jews today prefer the Yiddish term *shul* over the term *synagogue* to identify their place of meeting. Shul literally means school and probably is related to the Latin schola, from which we get the words scholar and scholastic.

## **The Hebrew letter Lamed**

The largest letter in biblical Hebrew is the *lamed* (ל). This letter is positioned at the very center of the aleph-bet<sup>6</sup>, towering over all the other characters. It is the only letter that ascends above the top line. For this reason alone, it stands out and is instantly discernible in all texts. The lamed, therefore, has been the cause of much reflection by Israel's sages

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<sup>5</sup> Psalm 74:8

<sup>6</sup> Hebrew alphabet.

throughout the millennia. Since YHWH does nothing by coincidence, they reason, there must be significance in the fact that the lamed is so tall.

We gain insight into a significant part of our Hebraic heritage that has been obscured from Christian view for centuries when we analyze the meaning and significance of the lamed in both biblical and post-biblical contexts. Now, a deep well of insight and understanding that has enriched the lives of countless Jewish people throughout history is being recovered for them when they reconnect with the Jewish roots of their Christian faith—including the language of Scripture itself.

It is important that we understand that each of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet was, in ancient times, a pictograph<sup>7</sup>. For example, the first letter in the Hebrew alphabet is the aleph (א) and it originally represented the picture of an ox head; the bet (ב), a house; and the gimel (ג), a camel. The lamed (ל) was originally a pictograph of a spur—the principal instrument for training and directing oxen in the ancient farmer society.

The letter *lamed* is the foundation of the word *lamad*, which, interestingly enough means both teaching and learning. The simple form of the verb means "to learn", while the intensive form means "to teach". This is a great lesson that teaching and learning go hand in hand and that each of us should be both a learner and a teacher for life. When learning ceases, teaching ends. This is the reason that the most learned teachers among us are called Scholars from the Latin word *scola*, which means "school"—fundamentally "student", as said earlier.

From the moment of birth (and perhaps before), learning begins as the newly created life exercises every aspect of sensory perception to gather information which is then analyzed and acted upon. Infants learn at a phenomenal rate from their parents and siblings and then from extended family and others.

Lamed, the ox spur, is intrinsically involved in both learning and teaching. Indeed, learning is the irritating process of being spurred into proper and productive action through the rigors of discipline. It is the process of being trained, so that one becomes accustomed to and comfortable with knowledge and understanding. It is the pain that brings the gain of a richer, fuller life in which one is positioned to act rather than constantly being acted upon. It is the bleeding that precedes the blessing.

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<sup>7</sup> In a manner similar to hieroglyphic.

## Humanity's Highest Gift

Learning is absolutely vital to life. It equips human beings with the knowledge necessary to exercise the power of reason, which separates them from the rest of YHWH's creation. The capacity for learning is YHWH's majestic gift to humankind—the endowment of being made in the divine image and likeness. Since YHWH has no form, humanity's creation in His image and likeness has nothing to do with physical characteristics; you are primarily spirit first, and then flesh. The image and likeness of YHWH are the power of reason and the free will to act on what is reasoned. *Intellectual capacity* and *conscience* is the connection between *the brain* and *the heart* to enable human beings to develop a consciousness of the Divine. We learn of His Word and will and by grace through faith to experience and express spirituality.

Learned people who have attained wisdom stand head and shoulders above the rest of the crowd of humanity, like the lamed does in the midst of the Hebrew letters of the biblical alphabet. They have subjected themselves willingly to the discipline of study, analysis, and reflection. Therefore, they live enriched lives of success, fulfillment and of service to their fellow humans. Their learning becomes teaching both through the dynamic modeling of their actions and through their words of wisdom and challenge. Therefore, learning has always been sacred to the Hebrew people. The progression from knowledge to understanding to wisdom has been the quest of prophets and sages, of apostles and teachers, of men and women of YHWH from time immemorial. The *passion to know* with a *view toward doing* is central to Jewish individual and corporate identity. Literacy and education, therefore, have long been hallmarks of YHWH's chosen people and have contributed to their success.

## The Fundamental Core of Discipleship

Another form of lamed is the Hebrew word *limud*, which means "learner" or "disciple". A disciple, then, is one who is taught, one who has been subjected to the *discipline of learning*. There is no discipleship *without discipline*. It is the discipline of study that produces the disciple, the learner and the scholar. Those who through laziness or indifference shun discipline **will never be** disciples!

Limud was first used of disciples in 1 Chron 25:8: "*And they cast lots, ward against ward, as well the small as the great, the teacher as **the scholar***". The word limud is the root of talmid, meaning "scholar"—which eventually became the most common term for student, learner, or disciple within the Jewish context. It was also the term that Y'shua Himself used when He spoke of His own disciples (talmidim). Originally, the word talmid was



applied to a student of music. This, of course, confirms to us that the disciple was not merely a repository for musical knowledge. Music is enjoyed only when it is performed—translating the theory into an enjoyable sound through the discipline of practice. A disciple, then, is both a learner and a doer—one who "learns" in order to "do". James tells us, "*But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves*".<sup>8</sup>

Discipleship as learning is also confirmed in the Greek term for disciple that appears in the Apostolic Scriptures. *Mathetes* means "learner", "pupil", or "disciple". It is the root for the word *mathematics*, which everyone understands as a discipline that requires study and application. Neither mathematics nor discipleship is mastered without rigorous discipline. It is important that we recognize that the word "Christian" is used only twice in Scripture, while the word "disciple" is used 270 times. The ultimate function of the Christian ministry is not to make "Christians" or even "Believers". It is to make disciples, which in essence is to make learners or students of the Word of YHWH. Matt 28:18–20 teaches us, "*Then Y'shua came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and **make disciples** of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age'*".

Discipleship is not a case of the warm fuzzies, the emotional crescendo of an existential moment. Singing songs over and over till you are emotionally hyped up—no, it is the discipline of learning about YHWH and doing His will. Discipleship is not just feeling—it is doing.

Y'shua even emphasized the fact that the discipline of Christian discipleship is demanding and rigorous: "*And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me **cannot be My disciple** ... Whoever of you does not forsake all that he has **cannot be My disciple***".<sup>9</sup> YHWH's *lamed* of discipline may well place demands of self-discipline upon the disciple that will be painful. However, the rewards of yielding to the spur of discipleship produce the benefits of partnership with YHWH and the blessings that accrue thereby.

Again, this is the core message of Christianity's "Mega Mitzvah", the Great Commission. Y'shua instructed His talmidim in this manner: "*Go therefore and **make disciples** of all the nations...teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you...*"<sup>10</sup>. The *foundation of Christian discipleship is learning and teaching* and the foundation of learning and teaching **are**

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<sup>8</sup> James 1:22

<sup>9</sup> Luke 14:27, 14:33

<sup>10</sup> Matt 28:19–20

**the commandments of Y'shua**—meaning the deeper explanation of His Father's Torah.

Converts are made to the faith of Y'shua, so that they may become disciples through the discipline of obedience to His Father's *divine instructions*. The fundamental meaning of the term that Y'shua used to describe His followers sheds an **entirely different light** on the true nature of Christian discipleship. Christian discipleship is an exercise of learning through the discipline of instruction in Messiah's teaching. It is yielding oneself to the spur of training, permitting the pointed lamed to prick one's heart to group one's actions in the right and proper direction to the God-determined end.

With the lamed imagery in focus, Y'shua's invitation in Matt 11:29–30 becomes much more clear and understandable: "*Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me...*" The metaphor is the same: Being yoked together with Y'shua means learning—learning the teachings of Y'shua, which are, after all, "easy". And one could just as readily say that Y'shua's lamed (spur) is not cruel, inflicting unnecessary and excessive pain. It generates just enough discomfort to move the heart in the right direction of a closer relationship with YHWH and with one's fellow man.

### **Learning to Follow in the Footsteps of your Teacher**

Returning Christian discipleship to the environment from which it was birthed brings greater understanding of both the concept and practice of discipleship. In the time of Messiah Y'shua, discipleship was expressed in the teacher-student relationship. The dynamic exchange of knowledge, understanding, and wisdom that this relationship produced was and remains the essence of discipleship. The learning process was carried out *in relationship, even apprenticeship*, as it were.

The *greatest honour* of first-century Israel was to be "covered in the dust of the rabbi". The learning process featured a "come walk the road with me" dynamic in which one followed the teacher and thereby was engaged in the great lessons of life in the course of everyday living. The rabbi-talmid (teacher-student) relationship was one of continual engagement, and the learning process was often one of imitation of practice more than an exchange of philosophical concepts. It was an exercise of following and learning by example. Classic examples that demonstrate the teaching-learning process produced by the following are seen in the Moshe-Joshua, Elijah-Elisha, and Paul-Timothy relationships. Joshua served as Moshe's personal attendant and servant for decades before he was appointed to lead Israel. Perhaps the most important work that Elijah the prophet did occurred at the end of his career when he disciplined Elisha and equipped

him with the skills he would need for a "double portion" ministry. Paul carefully instructed Timothy in YHWH's Word, so that he could replicate the apostle's vision, passion, and commitment in his own ministry. All of these disciples learned the lessons of life and ministry as they carefully followed their instructors. They walked with their teachers on a path that led to success.

And so it was with the disciples of Y'shua. Those who had followed the Master on the dusty roads of Israel were covered with dust, but not just the sandy particles of the Judean roadways. They were covered with the dust of His teaching—"Y'shua dust", as it were. Others could tell that they had been with Y'shua, not because of their words, but because of their actions.<sup>11</sup> They had changed their lives to His actions in following the Master so the Messiah now lived in and through them.<sup>12</sup>

To follow is more than a physical act. *Mimetes*, the Greek word for follower, means to "imitate". Herein is the essence of the Christian life: To be "Messiah-like" is to imitate the life of Y'shua in keeping His Commandments. When Y'shua instructed His disciples to "follow" Him, He was asking them to commit themselves to a life of imitation in which they would mime the Master's actions. Those who followed Rabbi Y'shua were able to give this instruction to others: "*Follow my example, as I follow the example of Messiah*".<sup>13</sup> Their actions so imitated the life of Messiah that they became "Believers", demonstrating dynamic models of the biblical lifestyle. For a *true disciple*, there is no greater pleasure or fulfillment *than replicating the knowledge and actions of his teacher*. This is the reward of intense observation, of insightful analysis, of unending rumination and of practical demonstration. True disciples faithfully replicate the life of the Messiah, their Master, as they follow in His footsteps.

## **Walking with YHWH is an Ancient Biblical Concept**

This idea of walking in fellowship with the Master and learning through the process is as old as humanity itself. YHWH walked with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, communicating to them His will for their lives. Later, Enoch walked with YHWH in such a pleasing way that he was translated and did not experience death. Abraham walked with YHWH and was perfect before his Maker because he walked in faith and faithfulness. He believed YHWH, and he acted instantly and without reservation upon YHWH's instructions. For this reason, YHWH was not ashamed to be called the God of Abraham.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Acts 4:13

<sup>12</sup> John 14:23; Col 1:27

<sup>13</sup> 1 Cor 11:1

<sup>14</sup> Heb 11:16

Enoch's walk with YHWH was of particular importance in that his very name in Hebrew, *Hanoch*, means "dedication" but with an emphasis on *education*. (The term Hanukkah comes from the same root and also means "dedication".) It has been suggested that Enoch was the first scientist, the first truly educated man. Because of his dedication to learn of YHWH, Enoch pleased YHWH and was received into YHWH's presence supernaturally.

Micah spoke of the value of walking in dedication to YHWH and gave his understanding as the summation of humanity's entire duty toward YHWH: *"Do justly...love mercy, and...walk humbly with your God"*.<sup>15</sup> Doing right, seeking justice, rescuing the oppressed, defending the orphan, pleading for the widow—these things are the *product of learning*.<sup>16</sup> When one has so studied and learned divine instruction in the Scriptures that he is able to conduct all of his affairs with justice and mercy, he has attained unto a position of walking humbly with YHWH and is a true disciple.

John the apostle emphasized this kind of relationship: *"This is love, that we walk according to His commandments"*.<sup>17</sup> Rabbi Sha'ul (Paul) fully agreed with this assessment: *"...We urge and exhort in the Lord Y'shua that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please YHWH."*<sup>18</sup> Walking in obedient submission to YHWH's instructions and commands (Torah) is a walk of freedom.<sup>19</sup> The prompting of the Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit) will always turn the Believer who is so exercised into the path of truth and justice; where there is, indeed, no condemnation.<sup>20</sup>

## Receiving YHWH's Instruction

What is a disciple to do? What should he learn? A good place to start is with the apostle Rabbi Sha'ul's instruction to his star pupil, talmid Timothy: *"Be diligent to present yourself approved to YHWH, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth...From infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Messiah Y'shua. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."*<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Mic 6:8c

<sup>16</sup> Isa 1:17

<sup>17</sup> 2 John 6a

<sup>18</sup> 1 Thes 4:1

<sup>19</sup> James 1:25

<sup>20</sup> Rom 8:1–2

<sup>21</sup> 2 Tim 2:15, 3:15–17

The **first and foremost purpose of every disciple must be to study YHWH's Word.** The study, however, must be with a view towards *doing* YHWH's Word. Like Ezra of old, the talmid has to set his heart to study YHWH's Word, so that he may *first do it and then teach it.*<sup>22</sup> This mindset was the focus of the holy men and women of YHWH with whom YHWH dealt in ancient times and through whom He conveyed the understanding encapsulated in Scripture.<sup>23</sup> As they studied what YHWH had already communicated to His servants, they received additional insights into His will and purposes for their own time and were thereby empowered to accomplish YHWH's designs for their lives and communities.

Learning without doing is *equivalent to sin, for one who knows to do good and fails to do it is a sinner.*<sup>24</sup> It is similar to believing without decision and action. Theory without practice is meaningless and even deceptive. Anything that is not *practical and practicable* is not spiritual, despite the elevated emotion or euphoria that it may bring out. The evidence of belief is *action based upon understanding and belief.* Without such evidence, discipleship is never established.

A *true disciple* of Messiah will *automatically be a student* of YHWH's instruction. Such a person will desire to study YHWH's Word and will be passionate about it. YHWH is the first and foremost teacher, and He has taught His people through Prophets and Apostles, who were the authors of both the Original (Hebrew Scriptures) and Fulfilled Covenants. The primary body of this knowledge of YHWH is the Torah with His special Instructions contained in the first five Books of the Bible. It is unfortunate that this ancient and honourable Hebrew word has been translated as "Law" in English versions. Its true meaning is "instruction"—the words of insight from a wise Father. Moreover, the word Torah comes from the root *yarah*, which is an archery term meaning "to aim at a mark and hit it".

Is it any wonder, then, that King David exclaimed, "*I desire to do Your will, O my God; **Your Torah is within my heart...**I long for Your salvation, O Lord, and **Your Torah is my delight.**"<sup>25</sup> History's wisest human observed, "*For the commandment is a lamp, and the Torah a light; reproofs of instruction are the way of life.*"<sup>26</sup> Indeed, the incarnate Torah Himself, Y'shua HaMashiach, declared, "*If you love Me, **you will obey what I command...**If you **keep My commandments,** you will abide in My love, **just as I have kept my Father's commandments** and abide in His**

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<sup>22</sup> Ezra 7:10

<sup>23</sup> 2 Pet 1:19–21

<sup>24</sup> James 4:17

<sup>25</sup> Psalm 40:8, 119:174

<sup>26</sup> Prov 6:23

love.<sup>27</sup> If Y'shua, who is our perfect example, demonstrated His submission to the will of His Father by *obedience to His instructions*, how much more should Christian disciples submit to the Lordship of Y'shua by *keeping His commandments*!

Studying YHWH's Word is essential to discipleship. This truth is further illustrated by another Hebrew word that is derived from lamad. This is the word Talmud, the title for the expansive group of knowledge that the sages and teachers of Israel derived over centuries of study in the Torah. The Talmud is comprised of the Mishnah, a compilation of oral tradition and commentary developed from study of the Torah, and the Gemarrah, a compilation of further commentary on the Mishnah. It is appropriate, therefore, that the term used to describe centuries of Jewish investigation and commentary is Talmud, which is directly related to talmid, or disciple.

Christians who desire to be true disciples of Messiah must learn to honour and study YHWH's instruction manual for successful human living. They must become students of Scripture, permitting the lamed of YHWH's instruction to prod them toward right conduct and proper posture in their relationship with God and man. Love for God and man (the two greatest commandments) will be fulfilled in their lives because they will learn from the Torah (particularly from the Ten Commandments) how to do so.

Many, if not most, Believers would agree with Solomon's assessment: "*Be warned...of making many books **there is no end**, and much study wears the body.*"<sup>28</sup> Study is indeed hard work, which is part of the discipline of the learner or disciple.

### **Study—the Highest form of Worship**

The Jewish people have long believed that study is the highest form of worship. How, we might ask, can study be worship? The words for "worship", both in Hebrew (*segad*) and Greek (*proskunéo*), mean to "prostrate oneself in the presence of the Deity". The ultimate form of prostration before YHWH—submission to His will—is demonstrated in the study of the Scriptures with a view toward doing what YHWH has said. Study of YHWH's Word, particularly of the Torah, then, is a form of worship or submission to YHWH.

Ancient Jewish Sages encapsulated the Jewish approach to study by saying that while the *Greeks study in order to understand*, the *Hebrews study in order to revere*. YHWH's Word and ways are indescribable: Only by doing them does one understand them. Study of YHWH's Word in order

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<sup>27</sup> John 14:15, 15:10

<sup>28</sup> Eccl 12:12

to mold one's lifestyle to that Word *is worship in the truest sense* of the English word "worship", which means to "ascribe worth to". When we fully submit our lives to YHWH's Word—when we study what He has said with *complete devotion and intensity*, we do, indeed, ascribe worth to Him: we worship Him!

## A Lifestyle of Learning

Hebrew's tallest letter brings life's greatest rewards and, in the end, the "*strength of salvation*"<sup>29</sup> and eternal life. The goad of learning, the rigor of study, promotes understanding that leads to wisdom. The lamed prods ever onward and upward those who yield to its unrelenting pressure. It produces and maintains a mindset of instruction that ever enriches and blesses. As wisdom grows, learning continues to increase: "*A wise man will hear and **will increase learning**...*"<sup>30</sup>

This lifestyle of learning opens one to YHWH's profound promise: "*See, God is mighty...in strength and in mind...He opens their understanding **by discipline**...If they **will serve obediently, they shall spend their days in happiness, their years in delight.***"<sup>31</sup> Disciples are talmidim, yielded to the flexible and easy lamed with which Y'shua gently prods those who are yoked together with Him. With biblical discipline, they are assured that their lives will be filled with happiness.

They experience the exercise of receiving divine wisdom and insight, which brings abundant life. "*The words of the wise are like goads (spurs), their collected sayings like firmly embedded nails... When all is said and done, **this is the conclusion of the matter: Revere YHWH and observe His commandments** (Torah)! For this applies to all mankind.*"<sup>32</sup>

## Closing Thoughts

The word "education" comes to us from the Latin *ex ducere*, which means to be led out. It is a simple fact that learning leads us out of ignorance, out of darkness, out of superstition, out of misery, out of suffering. You may have also heard someone talk about the 'Shekinah glory.' Usually the emphasis is on the 'i' in shekinah. They would often say Sha - k'EYE - nah glory. The word in English should be pronounced with a short 'i'. It is She-KEE'-nah.

"Shekinah" is not a Biblical word, but it comes from a root word found in

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<sup>29</sup> Isa 33:6

<sup>30</sup> Prov 1:5

<sup>31</sup> Job 36:5, 36:10–11

<sup>32</sup> Eccl 12:11, 12:13

the Scriptures. Shekinah comes from the root word 'shakan' or 'shaken', which means to settle down, abide, or dwell. In ancient Judaism, the Shekinah and the Holy Spirit were pretty much one and the same. The Shekinah spoke of YHWH's actual presence—sometimes visible, but more often simply felt.

There were various developments in the use of this word. The sages spoke of it in a particular way with regard to the study of the Scriptures. What they said was that when a group gathered for the study of the Torah, the Shekinah passed between them. To Jews, the highest form of worship is the study of the Torah.

Y'shua may have had this in mind when He said, "*Where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst*".<sup>33</sup> Beloved Friend, if you want YHWH and His Son Y'shua, the Living Torah, in your midst, then prostrate yourself in the highest form of worship: study His Word unceasingly to educate yourself, and of course also: "*Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.*" (Prov 22:6).

*Something mind boggling is happening right now before our eyes! What can only be seen as a sovereign work of the Ruach HaKodesh is breaking forth as Christians around the world are working to restore the Hebrew foundations of Christianity. After being stained for more than eighteen centuries by Judaeophobia, anti-Judaism, and anti-Semitism, Christianity is being impacted by an unprecedented revolution of restoration. Scholars, clergy, and laity from virtually every nationality, ethnicity, and denomination are reconnecting their faith in Messiah Y'shua with its historical Hebraic roots.*

**AMEN**

**We inform – You choose**<sup>34</sup>

Never be guilty of: "**By your traditions you make the Word of God of non effect**"<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Matt18:20

<sup>34</sup> The truth of the Torah makes you see the mistranslations in the New Covenant. It's amazing how you can look at the epistles of Rabbi Paul one way and it looks like he's leading the body of Messiah away from Torah; when in reality, he's leading them **to** Torah. A paradox of vantage point. Let us remember, the intent of the law maker constitutes the law. We need to walk a mile or two in our Hebrew Messiah's shoes

<sup>35</sup> **Matt 15:3** *But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?* **Matt 15:6** *And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.* **Mark 7:9** *And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition*



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