

The Identity Crisis

A Study in Identity According to the Turah (Scriptures).

By Sha'ul bayn Yahukhenun ha Yahudah

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The Way of the Most High

“Exalting belief in our Father, the Most High יהוה (YaHUAH), through His Turah, the 5 scrolls of M'shih (Moses).”

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"And now (wa-aytah), if (am) you will guard (sh'muai), you obey (tash'maiu) My voice (b'qoli), and you guard (wa'sh'mer'tam) My oath (b'riti), then you will become (wa-ha'yitam) to Me (lee) a jewel (sagalah) from all (m'kal) the peoples (ha'aymim). For (kee) Mine (li) is all (kal) the (ha) land (arats)" (Sh'moot (Ex.) 19:5).

From the moment that Adawm (Man – male and female) was created, there has been a need for identity, knowing who we are. Some people search all their lives. Some spend days and years in the study of books, practice of prayer, travelling the world, doing varied types of employment, all in a search to accomplish something and find their identity. People have formed a "coat of arms," tribal or family flags and banners, passed on inheritances and lineages. Some have been very keen to have all the necessary accurate details maintained. But what if you didn't? What if you didn't know who your father was, or your father's father? What if you couldn't trace your forefathers back 10 or 30 or 100 generations? Well, that is precisely the problem with people today. The majority of the world today is unable to produce details of their lineage. They cannot trace their forefathers back hundreds of generations ago. Even if they could do that, they admit they cannot trace it all the way back to the 12 sons of Yaiqob (Jacob).

For those who accept their identity as a follower of יהוה (YaHUAH), there are a number of words that draw a line in the sand, that illustrate a variance between black and white, right and wrong. Distinction. Separation. Difference. Scripture's message is one which continually calls us back to our Creator's intentions for us. A specific identity and way of life. Intentions for prosperity, peace, living with Him, with one another and the planet He created... in harmony and righteousness. How few have truly realized this distinction and what that means for our lives? From the very beginning, we read of real people in the Turah (Scriptures) who were called with a distinct and vivid calling from the Most High. These people were separated from the people of their respective times and places, to be different, to be witnesses to higher standards and way of life. Scripture makes a clear division between those that are "separated" from the rest. "For I am יהוה (ki ani YaHUAH) your Mighty One (Alahaykam). And **you are to separate yourselves (wa'hayt'qodasham), and you will be set-apart (qodashim), for I am set-apart (ki qodush ani)** (Wa'y'qora (Lev.) 11:44)." How few have truly heard the call to be separate from the rest?

Those who choose to believe in the Most High and follow His Turah (Scriptures) are no longer "gentiles, heathen" or "pagan." They are no longer to think of themselves as **"Canadian, American, Jamaican,"** or otherwise. **Such terms are only modern terms applied to the flags of the nations which are truly corporate logos for corporate companies/countries.** What a loaded statement that is. It is real. All currencies, stocks and trade are dependent upon the existence of corporations. The countries, their names and flags are actually corporations and logos. These corporations (countries) have little individual corporations called "persons," which boil down to you and me. It is a grand pyramid scheme. M'tsrayim (Egypt) all over again. That is anyone who was given a birth certificate printed by the bank of their country on bank note paper. Check the fine print for yourself. Now do you wish to proclaim yourself as "Canadian, Jamaican" or otherwise? I believe the Most High has a better identity for us.

A lot of people form identities based on clues, assumptions as to who they are and where their ancestors come from. But a troubling fact remains that over the course of

only ten generations, a person's ancestors can go from black to white, white to black, Native American to black and other variations. And if one does not know the exact lineage of their fathers, what their physical appearance and land of origin was, then they will never have it right based on "clues" alone. If a person wanted to be Irish, Italian, Roman or Greek, they could easily make a case for it by twisting a number of facts regarding their last name, finding that name in certain places and picking character traits. This is not how we ought to identify ourselves. Our identity will be based on what YaH says of those who accept His calling to "come out" and "be separate" to observe His Turah (Law).

Having considered this subject deeply, the Turah (Scriptures) shows that YaH desired Y'shr'Al (Israel) to be a light to the nations around them. It was to a mixed multitude whom **𐤅𐤓𐤕𐤓𐤕** (YaHUAH) had delivered from bondage that He spoke the words of Sh'moot (Ex.) 19-20 and numerous other great texts of the Turah (Law). Not in an arrogant sense of replacing Y'shr'Al (Israel) or claiming we are "Israel" based on belief in some Yeshua/Iesous/Jesus, but in an acceptance of YaH and His Government.

Sh'merunim (Guardians)

There is a group of people who are definitely an example of what we should be like. They only ever followed the Turah (Law), with the exception of a few traditions and understandings that they accepted over time which contradict the Turah (Law). They are called the Sh'merunim (Samaritans). They worship at the original place where YaH chose to favour and curse His people, and where YaH commanded that they ascend 3 times a year to observe the festivals of the Creator... at the base of Garazim (Gerizim) and Aybal (Ebal - D'bayrim (Deut.) 27:4,12-13; 11:29-30). "Sh'merunim" literally means "guardians." A people who guard the Turah (D'bayrim (Deut.) 6:4-9). Initially, a people whose goal was to guard the Turah (Law) and not add or take away from it (D'bayrim (Deut.) 4:2). In fact, the Sh'merunit (Samaritan text of the Turah - Law) agrees with the Septuagint in 1900 places where the traditional Masoretic text of the Turah (Law) does not, and bears a close relationship to the text of the Dead Sea Scrolls as well.¹ Psalm 119 and numerous other writings of the "TaNaK (OT)" in general were directing people to return to the Turah (Law) of YaH. Evidently, YaH was angry that His people disobeyed the Turah (Law), and according to the prophecies of M'shih (Moses), that they would return to the Turah (Law) eventually (D'bayrim (Deut.) 30:8). If we heed the words of M'shih (Moses), we would do well to listen and return to the Turah (Law) of **𐤅𐤓𐤕𐤓𐤕** (YaHUAH), to be Sh'merunim (Guardians) of His words.

Tribal Lineage and Inheritance

Y'shr'Al (Israel) will have a rich inheritance in various plots of land. If there be any tribal affiliation granted to the sojourner or stranger, it will be in the future, **𐤁𐤓𐤅𐤓𐤕𐤓𐤕** (YaHUAH) Himself, not by self-appointing. Our advice is that there is nothing wrong identifying oneself as Y'shr'Al (Israel) or belonging to YaH and choosing for oneself a Scriptural name. But we advise not to make assumptions as to what tribe you may be a

¹ Tsedaka, pg. xxix and xxvi of Foreword.

part of. This is something that numerous people since the rise of Orthodox Judaism and Christianity have done, and it does not originate in the Turah (Scriptures).

If we are to be placed among the tribes of Y'shr'Al (Israel), it will be appointed by the Most High Himself. The most blatant example of this is when **יְהוֹשֻׁעַ** (YaHUAH) Himself was literally amongst His people, and Kalab (Caleb) was linked to the lineage of Yahudah (Judah), although he himself was the son of a heathen/gentile/pagan/stranger. At that time also the priesthood of L'wi (Levi) was in effect to monitor the conversion and inclusion of strangers/sojourners/heathen as well. "From the staff (lineage - la'm'theh) of Yahudah (Judah), Kalab (Caleb), son of Y'paynuh (Jephunneh)." Who was Y'paynuh (Jephunneh)? He wasn't a descendant of Yahudah (Judah) in order to pass on that lineage to his son. No, he was the son of Q'nuz (Kenaz), as stated in B'medbayr (Num.) 32:12. From this we can understand that a true convert would be included within the tribes of Y'shr'Al (Israel), and we can have confidence that we are of the Yahudim (those who worship YaH) and that we are separate unto YaH. Yet this is not the arrogant tribal affiliation we see amongst the Jews, Christians/Messianic Jews and the "Black Hebrew" movement of recent years. In their desire for identity based on Scripture, they have attempted to insert themselves into the identity of the 12 tribes of Y'shr'Al (Israel). They were not told this by **יְהוֹשֻׁעַ** (YaHUAH). Nor was it done by the community of the nation of Y'shr'Al (Israel) being established. They often do this by fabricating a number of "clues" separated out of context from Scripture, assuming that such texts spoke about them and their ancestors. Or, if they are a Christian or Messianic Jew, they pretend that by believing in Yahushua/Jesus, they magically become part of the sperm, lineage or seed of Y'shr'Al (Israel). Although it is joyful when a New Testament believer renounces the New Testament and turns to YaH and His Turah (Scriptures) alone, it seems that they bring this Christian/Messianic Jewish teaching through such transitions. As stated in the paragraph before this, it is one thing to identify as belonging to YaH and Y'shr'Al (Israel), but it is another to claim tribal lineage and say you are of "Gad" or "Yahudah" when you have no paternal evidence, nor has the nation of Y'shr'Al (Israel) been established in the presence of the Tent of YaH. Nor is there the active priesthood of L'wi (Levi), appointed elders and judges.

The "Jews" are the greatest preponderates of this, claiming to be of a particular tribe of Y'shr'Al (Israel). Some of them have weight to their case. But their lineage most often is by their mothers in some haphazard way back to the 12 tribes... which is not Scriptural. Some Jews do it by their fathers, which IS the ONLY Scriptural method of making such an assertion. The word for seed or descendant in Scripture is "**zarai**." And in order to be the "**seed**" of Y'shr'Al (Israel), one must prove this by the seed or sperm of their father which planted them. It is certainly rare that they do, or have a very detailed lineage by their fathers going back 100's of years... let alone the 19th century. These are often fragile and faulty claims.

There are certainly plenty of websites, books and articles on the history and identity of Y'shr'Al (Israel), along with their dispersion throughout the world because of their transgressions. We have read a number of them. What is common to all of the ones we have seen or read was that they had an agenda. If it was written by a Jewish person, the agenda was to prove the Jews of today are who they say they are... descendants of the 12 tribes. If it was written by a Messianic Jew, it was to prove that the Jews of today represent the southern reign of 2 tribes out of 12, and that the Messianic Jews who

believe in Yeshua/Jesus are actually descendants of the other 10 tribes of the northern reign of Y'shr'Al (Israel). This is known as the "two-house" teaching and is quite rampant. The failure of this kind of teaching of course is that **all 12 tribes of Y'shr'Al (Israel) eventually were punished and thrown out** of the land of Y'shr'Al (Israel) to the four corners of the globe, because of their idolatry and lack of commitment to YaH, His laws and commands. From ancient times the tribes were dispersed, and the prophecy of M'shih (Moses) in D'bayrim (Deut.) 28 was being fulfilled. False priests were established under gentile leaders, and a new religion under them slowly developed which we now see as Orthodox Judaism.

No doubt there was a purpose to dispersing the 12 tribes. As the Most High said to Abrahaym (Abraham), all nations would be favoured in him (B'rasheet (Gen.) 18:18). He is balanced in His judgment, in His weights and measures. 𐤀𐤃𐤁𐤏𐤁 (YaHUAH) knows who descends from the 12 tribes and who does not. Yet the majority of people find it hard to admit that and simply accept it. YaH will be the one to gather Y'shr'Al (Israel) and call them out of their dispersion amongst the nations (D'bayrim (Deut.) 30:4). He will favour and exalt them, revealing them for who they are. I may be one. You may be one. But it is not our duty to assign ourselves a tribe of Y'shr'Al (Israel) based on clues of our physical appearance, falsified modern blood tests, name-word manipulation and other tactics that have been used in the reasoning of those who usurp the identity of specific tribes of Y'shr'Al (Israel).

Those who believe in the Most High and His Turah (Scriptures) are **"followers of the Way"** or "joined" to YaH. And yes, we may mark ourselves as belonging to Yahudah, those who worship YaH, Y'shr'Al (Israel) or "set-apart" to YaH. It means they have joined together with Y'shr'Al (Israel) and the Mighty One of Y'shr'Al (Israel). That is, if we accept the sign (aut) of Passover, or the sign of cutting the foreskin, or the sign of the Sh'bayt (Sabbath) days of YaH. This "way" of life and teaching is written of throughout Scripture, as in texts like D'bayrim (Deut.) 32:6-7. The strangers, foreigners and all peoples of the globe are invited to join themselves in an oath-relationship to the Most High (Sh'moot (Ex.) 12:48-49). Much like the people of M'tsrayim (Egypt) in the "Exodus" account, the people of the world today have an opportunity to be delivered from physical and spiritual bondage by joining themselves in conversion to the Most High. Much like Abrahaym (Abraham) in a heathen city, people are called to come out.

Speaking of deliverance, there are a number of things that should be clearly elucidated. Yes, the people of M'tsrayim (Egypt) came out with the Aibreem (Hebrews) in the account of Paysawkh (Passover) in Sh'moot (Exodus). They heard the oath, promises and commands given to Y'shr'Al (Israel) on Hayr Seen'ee (Mt. Sinai) and were as much responsible for those words as Y'shr'Al (Israel). Not only does YaH speak on Seen'ee (Sinai) to the people of M'tsrayim (Egypt) and to the Aibreem (Hebrews) that came out of slavery, but also to those who would hear this oath in the future. "And not (wa'la) with you alone (atakam l'baydakam) – that is the Aibreem (Hebrews) – am I (anuki) cutting (karat) this oath (at ha'brit ha'zat) and this swearing (wa'at ha'alah ha'zat), ¹⁴but with him who (ki at ashir) is (y'shinu) here (peh) with us (aym'nu) standing with us (ai'med) today (ha'yoom) – the people of M'tsrayim (Egypt) standing with the Aibreem (Hebrews) – in the presence (la'p'ni) of 𐤀𐤃𐤁𐤏𐤁 (YaHUAH) our Mighty One (Alahaynu), and with him who is (wa'at ashir) not seen in our eyes/does not exist (aynunu) with us here (peh) standing (aym'nu) today (ha'yoom - future believers and foreigners)" (D'bayrim (Deut.) 29:13-14 (verses 14-15 in Bibles)). Blatant. **YaH spoke**

His words here to three separate audiences. The Aibreem (Hebrews). The people of M'tsrayim (Egyptians). And all who would hear this oath and the commands in the future!

What readers often overlook is that **Scripture was not only meant for Y'shr'Al (Israel)**, and that **יְהוָה** (YaHUAH) has a plan for all nations and peoples. Anyone who doesn't have that mindset and is "racially" biased or bigoted will never see this big picture of the plan of our Creator for all people. When YaH performed mighty wonders in M'tsrayim (Egypt), was it not so the whole world would hear of the fame of His Name? That is the truth according to Sh'moot (Ex.) 9:16. The problem is that Jews and Christianity/Messianic Judaism focused all of their attention on the separation of Y'shr'Al (Israel) from the other nations. Judaism has often isolated itself as an exclusive club where the Turah (Scriptures) is a book given exclusively to Y'shr'Al (Israel), which of course refers to modern Jews in their estimation. Christianity took the opposite approach, in that YaH supposedly had a Son named Yeshua/Jesus by whom Y'shr'Al (Israel) was rejected and cast off. Thus, the Almighty Father then went to the gentiles or nations of the world. Messianic Judaism took a compromised approach, asserting that New Testament believers are a part of the 12 tribes of Y'shr'Al (Israel), as well as those who believe in the Turah (Scriptures). The only one of these that is remotely close to the truth is the concept which Messianic Judaism had, which is that belief or conversion can indeed include a person amongst the people of Y'shr'Al (Israel). Where Messianic Judaism failed of course was belief in the blasphemer (Jesus), and in failing to learn from the example of Kalab (Caleb) who was included in the 12 tribes as a convert. Again, this is the fact that a person can only be placed into a specific tribe when there is a community of tribes gathered and active, with the priesthood of L'wi (Levi) and the direct presence of YaH.

Prior to the twelve tribes of Y'shr'Al (Israel), **יְהוָה** (YaHUAH) had called a number of people to serve Him. Will people listen today? Will they simply accept that they can be called out of a world of wickedness to follow YaH and His oaths, promises and commands with the identity of a follower of YaH? Or will they continue to fabricate their own tribal identity and follow their own way of life? Ab'rawm (Abram) was from Ah-oor (Ur), and became known as the first "Aibree" or "Hebrew." As *The Stone Edition Tanach* explains, "Abraham was called the *Ivri* from the word עבר, *the other side*. Literally, this means that he came from the other side of the Euphrates. ... Alternatively, the name means that he was a descendant of Eber" (Sherman, 28). In this case, Jewish commentators are correct regarding B'rasheet (Gen.) 14:13, where Ab'rawm is first addressed as "ha'Aibree" (the Hebrew). We note here that Masoretic scribes and Jews do not pronounce the "ayin" in "Aibree" (Hebrew) or "Aibreet" (Hebrew script). Nor do they pronounce the letter bayt, but speak it as "vet," as "Ivri." The point here is that Ab'rawm was called out of the land of his forefathers to walk with the Most High to a place chosen by YaH. And so we can tell that Nuakh (Noah), Melki'Tsadaq (Melchizedek), Ab'rawm (Abram) and others throughout Scripture were called to follow and serve YaH.

The ruler of Sh'lam (Salem), **Melki'Tsadaq** (Melchizedek) was a priest of the Most High prior to the establishment of the nation of Y'shr'Al (Israel) and the priesthood of L'wi (Levi) (B'rasheet (Gen.) 14:18). The same is said of the priest of M'din (Midian) in Sh'moot (Ex.) whose name was "**Rai'u'Al**" (Reuel), meaning "friend of Al (the Mighty One)" (Sh'moot (Ex.) 2:16-18). References like these show that YaH had a plan for people to worship Him and serve Him before and apart from Y'shr'Al (Israel). YaH calls people out of the world to be

His own. Y'shr'Al (Israel) is not His only people. While the foreigner and stranger is not the literal seed of the twelve tribes of Y'shr'Al (Israel), they are invited to become a part of the people of the Most High and treated like one that is born of the twelve tribes of Y'shr'Al (Israel)... if they convert... even though they were not. In the future, it is understood that those who convert will be part of the 12 tribes. Be confident that you are a follower of the Most High and a guardian of the Turah (Law)... all other identities are irrelevant and YaH will straighten the rest out in the end **Himself**.

Orthodox Judaism today has set up a different kind of system in which people are known as "**Jews**," not by tribal affiliation. The convert to "Judaism" becomes a "Jew." This again is not Scriptural, but it was their way of solving the identity problem. **So "who is Israel today?"** That is a question a lot of people have. But **the answer is not for us to say. It is for YaH to establish and proclaim. In the future, under His reign, re-gathering and establishment of the tribes, it will be plain.** As converts or believers in YaH and His Turah (Scriptures), we can be confident of identity in Y'shr'Al (Israel), but tribal affiliation is future. The problem today is that most people are not comfortable with not knowing their lineage or imagining that they quite possibly do not descend from the twelve tribes. They cannot prove their lineage and they should simply say that they are a follower of YaH and His Turah (Scriptures), or belong to Y'shr'Al (Israel) in the general sense.

The only question now is whether or not you believe in the Most High and His Scriptures. If you do, then it is incumbent upon you to be like the righteous people we read of in the Turah (Scriptures), being called out of the nations and peoples and society around you... in order to be "distinct" (q'doosh). The people of the Turah (Scriptures) hardly ever identified themselves as "Y'shr'Al" (Israel) or by their country or land. **More often than not, they identified themselves by the Mighty One (Alahym) that they served.** In B'rasheet (Gen.) 14:19-21 a priest meets with Ab'rawm (Abram) and refers to the "Most High" whom Ab'rawm served. And the servant who obeyed Abrahaym (Abraham) identified himself by the Mighty One (Alahym) of his ruler, Abrahaym (Abraham) (B'rasheet (Gen.) 24:42). The people of the Turah (Scriptures) primarily identified themselves by their Creator and Sovereign, **יהוה** (YaHUAH).

A reformative move needs to happen in the lives of Scriptural believers today... they are too much **of** and **like** the world. The world needs to be called out of unrighteousness, not given approval for its ways. People are saying that "this is the day and age we live in, and we have to be adaptable to the world in order to reach them... right?" **WRONG.** That method has failed since the beginning of time. The path of the Most High is altogether different. His method is to pull people out of their comfort zone to be separated for Him. Such people then become a witness to the world of something dissimilar and awesome. They become a peculiar people.

Sources

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