

# **A call for Authenticity**

Have you examined yourself?

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This month of Elul is a month of repentance and personal reflection that culminates with Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Judaism teaches by tradition that repentance builds through the month of Elul to the period of Selichot. Selichot (סליחות) are special prayers for forgiveness. In the Sephardic tradition Selichot are said beginning with the month of Elul through Yom Kippur. The principle ingredient of all Selichot prayers is the mercy of God. Now, I don't want to talk to you about these special prayers, I simply wanted to set the stage for a very serious question.

## **Do you take for granted the mercy of God?**

As believers we have to look really hard at our hearts, do we truly believe the scriptures. As children of God through faith are our lives affected and do our lives demonstrate that we are members of his Holy Kingdom? In order to take a closer look at these important questions we will look at two things, (i) how hametz (leaven) is regarded in the scriptures and (ii) the parable of the wheat and the tares.

### **Hametz according to the scriptures**

Hametz which brings about fermentation is uniformly regarded in Scripture as typifying the presence of impurity, evil, or sin. To get a picture of this we can look at a few selected scriptures which talk about hametz. I highly recommend further reading into the scriptures rather than looking at only one verse at a time, however this demonstrates the point how hametz is regarded in the scriptures.

#### ***Exodus 12:15***

*12:15 "For seven days you are to eat matzah - on the first day remove the leaven from your houses. For whoever eats hametz [leavened bread] from the first to the seventh day is to be cut off from Isra'el. (CJB)*

#### ***Exodus 12:19***

*12:19 During those seven days, no leaven is to be found in your houses. Whoever eats food with hametz in it is to be cut off from the community of Isra'el - it doesn't matter whether he is a foreigner or a citizen of the land. (CJB)*

#### ***Exodus 13:7***

*13:7 Matzah is to be eaten throughout the seven days; neither hametz nor leavening agents are to be seen with you throughout your territory. (CJB)*

**Leviticus 2:11**

*2:11 "No grain offering that you bring to ADONAI is to be made with leaven, because you are not to cause any leaven or honey to go up in smoke as an offering made by fire to ADONAI. (CJB)*

**Deuteronomy 16:4**

*16:4 No leaven is to be seen with you anywhere in your territory for seven days. None of the meat from your sacrifice on the first day in the evening is to remain all night until morning. (CJB)*

**Matthew 16:5-12**

*16:5 The talmidim, in crossing to the other side of the lake, had forgotten to bring any bread. ... 16:12 Then they understood -- they were to guard themselves not from yeast for bread but from the teaching of the P'rushim and Tz'dukim. (CJB)*

**Mark 8:15**

*8:15 So when Yeshua said to them, "Watch out! Guard yourselves from the hametz of the P'rushim and the hametz of Herod," (CJB)*

**Luke 12:1**

*12:1 Meanwhile, as a crowd in the tens of thousands gathered so closely as to trample each other down, Yeshua began to say to his talmidim first, "Guard yourselves from the hametz of the P'rushim, by which I mean their hypocrisy. (CJB)*

**1Corinthians 5:6-9**

*5:6 Your boasting is not good. Don't you know the saying, "It takes only a little hametz to leaven a whole batch of dough?" 5:7 Get rid of the old hametz, so that you can be a new batch of dough, because in reality you are unleavened. For our Pesach lamb, the Messiah, has been sacrificed. 5:8 So let us celebrate the Seder not with leftover hametz, the hametz of wickedness and evil, but with the matzah of purity and truth. 5:9 In my earlier letter I wrote you not to associate with people who engage in sexual immorality. (CJB)*

**Galatians 5:9**

*5:9 "It takes only a little hametz to leaven the whole batch of dough." (CJB)*

A common practice of baking bread was to mix a little of a previous lump of dough from a former batch of dough to hametz the new dough. Looking at these selected verses from the Tanach and the B'rit HaChadashah we can see that hametz was forbidden in bread under various circumstances for example during the Pesach feast. For the moment, I want to point out how hametz is worked into and along side of the pure dough. This would be a heterogeneous mixture where the hametz and the pure dough are different from each other (incongruous) but mixed in such a way that it would be impossible to separate. With that point in mind, let us move on to the next part on the parable of the wheat and the tares.

## The Parable of the wheat and the tares

### **Matthew 13:24-30**

*13:24 Yeshua put before them another parable. "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; 13:25 but while people were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, then went away. 13:26 When the wheat sprouted and formed heads of grain, the weeds also appeared. 13:27 The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where have the weeds come from?' 13:28 He answered, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants asked him, 'Then do you want us to go and pull them up?' 13:29 But he said, 'No, because if you pull up the weeds, you might uproot some of the wheat at the same time. 13:30 Let them both grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers to collect the weeds first and tie them in bundles to be burned, but to gather the wheat into my barn.'" (CJB)*

This parable is also interpreted by Yeshua in Matthew 13:36-43

### **Matthew 13:36-43**

*13:36 Then he left the crowds and went into the house. His talmidim approached him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field." 13:37 He answered, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; 13:38 the field is the world. As for the good seed, these are the people who belong to the Kingdom; and the weeds are the people who belong to the Evil One. 13:39 The enemy who sows them is the Adversary, the harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. 13:40 Just as the weeds are collected and burned up in the fire, so will it be at the end of the age. 13:41 The Son of Man will send forth his angels, and they will collect out of his Kingdom all the things that cause people to sin and all the people who are far from Torah; 13:42 and they will throw them into the fiery furnace, where people will wail and grind their teeth. 13:43 Then the righteous will shine forth like the sun in the Kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let him hear!" (CJB)*

Examining the parable of the wheat and the tares we can see that the “good seed” is not the “word” as is discussed in a previous parable (See Matthew 13:19-23). Rather, the good seed is that which the word has produced, in other words, the children of God. The good seed (13:37) is sown by God because it refers to the believers in God’s kingdom. The seed is scattered here and there in the field. Here the field is a reference to the “world.” The world is both geographic and ethnic or the earth/world of men.

Next notice something, in 13:39, the wheat of God at once becomes the scene of Satan’s activity. Satan is actively working against God’s kingdom and plants seeds or people amongst the wheat (true believers). Where the children of the kingdom are gathered, there, among the wheat, Satan sows “children of the wicked one.” These children of HaSatan are from all outward appearances like the children of the kingdom of God. In 13:40-43, the children of the wicked one are so difficult to determine from the children of God that only the angels in the end can be trusted to separate them.

So great is the power of deception that the tares (children of the evil one) really suppose themselves to be children of the kingdom or the children of God. Now you may be thinking right now wait a second. That is impossible; surely someone who is not saved would know they have not really believed upon Yeshua. Well, have a look at Matthew chapter 7.

***Matthew 7:21-23***

*7:21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord!' will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, only those who do what my Father in heaven wants. 7:22 On that Day, many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord! Didn't we prophesy in your name? Didn't we expel demons in your name? Didn't we perform many miracles in your name?' 7:23 Then I will tell them to their faces, 'I never knew you! Get away from me, you workers of lawlessness!' (CJB)*

There seems to be a mingled/convoluted condition here where there are some who are truly saved and some who are truly deceived and yet believe they are saved. Many other parables and exhortations have this mingled/convoluted condition in view (See Matt. 22:11-14, Matt. 25:1-13, 14-30; Luke 18:10-14; and Heb. 6:4-9). The parable of the wheat and the tares is not a description of the world, but of that who profess to be a part of the kingdom of God. Furthermore, note not all unbelievers are called “children of the devil” rather only those who have wilfully rejected the light are so designated. (Make a comparison of Matt. 13:38 to John 8:38-44).

**Concluding thoughts**

I think we have just examined one of the greatest dangers we will ever face in our lives, as we journey towards eternity. This is a call for authenticity; authenticity in our faith, in our beliefs and to ask the question of whether we truly are children of the Living God? While reviewing hametz and the parable of the wheat and the tares two points can be made.

**Two Conclusions from scripture**

1. Hametz/Sin is worked into and along side of the pure dough. There are people around us who profess the faith, do good works, and all outward appearance seem to be our brothers and sisters yet are not.
2. There is such a powerful deception out there that it is possible to deceive ourselves into believing we are saved when we really are not!

Today, in this world, there is a system that is being set up that has the power to deceive even the most intelligent of persons. It is the idea of “Absolute Truth versus Relative Truth.” It is coming to the point in history, were each person will do according to what they believes is right in their own heart. The relativity of truth will enable one to (i) justify habitual sin, (ii) taking God’s grace for granted, (iii) believing we can work our

way to salvation, and (iv) Yeshua is something I will try to see if he will work for me or not.

Have you dabbled in the occult, astrology, numerology, and other religious practices (i.e. Yoga) without an after thought that God has commanded us “**NOT** to do the abomination of the nations” in the Torah? Have you played church or shul thinking attending is the right thing to do and makes you a good person? Doing so creates a false sense of hope and salvation which is a system of deception at its pinnacle. The moving away from God’s absolute truth to a more reformed and liberal version is the method of deception of choice today and is moving our culture (every man, woman, and child), in these last days, to the point where each individual can have his/her own religious belief system. A belief system that is a mix of this and a mix of that; this is a dangerous game to play and in the end can be the loss of your soul.

Our relationship with God begins with understanding how God wants us to relate to Him. The Torah explains to us how we are to relate to God and how not to relate to God. As a holy people it is important to seek God’s forgiveness in this month of Elul as we approach Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. But not only that, we need to closely examine our hearts, and our ways. Do you truly believe God’s Holy Word? Do you truly believe in God’s Messiah Yeshua and the atonement he made upon the cross? Has your heart changed (by the Ruach Hakodesh (The Holy Spirit)) that produces living evidence which demonstrates you are a child of the kingdom? Taking for granted the “mercy of God” can lead one to complacency, smugness, self-satisfaction and even to accepting Yeshua in your head, but never truly accepting the gift of salvation, in Yeshua the Messiah, in your heart. Please take the time today, to carefully consider the consequences of Yeshua’s words:

**“Then I will tell them to their faces, `I never knew you! Get away from me, you workers of lawlessness!”**

Heavenly Father,

I don’t want to be a look-a-like copy of a true believer; I want to be a real authentic believer. If I have committed the sin of complacency and self-satisfaction over accepting Yeshua in my heart please forgive me. If I have substituted head knowledge over asking for salvation in Yeshua Hamoshiach please forgive me. Lord, I truly and unconditionally believe Yeshua died for my sins; please Lord come into my heart to be Lord of my life. I truly believe Yeshua made atonement for my sins upon the execution stake on my behalf. Please help me and create in me a new heart. Restore to me the joy of your salvation Lord. Now, as an authentic believer please use me according to your will and purpose so I can be a blessing not only to you Lord but also to others around me.

In Yeshua’s Name I pray. Amen!

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**הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:**

Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,  
“Yeshua” King Messiah for ever and ever