

From Doubt to Confidence

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Introduction: As we come into this period called “Seferit Ha Omer” or the Counting of the Omer it is to our benefit to consider how the Sh’lichim (the Apostles) began in doubt and were finally transformed to prepare them for the outpouring of the Ruach Ha Kodesh (the Holy Spirit) at Shavuot. (Pentecost) It was uniquely this period of time that prepared them to become a powerful force from Shavuot (Pentecost) in the hand of Yahweh. This is not only a journey that they went on but it is one that Yisrael also journeyed, on their way to Sinai to receive the Torah . It is also one that we should desire to embark on that we may be fully committed both in character and purpose as we lead up to Shavuot (Pentecost). Fortunately we have the benefit of our 49 steps booklet to instruct us how to achieve this phase of development but merely reading through these portions will not be sufficient and so we need to truly willingly apply these to our lives by beginning to judge ourselves in all honesty. It is my desire that we observe the journey the Talmidim (Disciples) needed to go through for them to be prepared for the giving of the Ruach Ha Kodesh (the Holy Spirit) on Shavuot (Pentecost).

Understanding the Hebrew mindset of the Mashiach:

In the Hebrew mind the concept of the Messiah has traditionally be different from what we have grown up with and we get that from modern Judaism which speaks this way of the Mashiach:

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Judaism 101- <http://www.jewfaq.org/mashiach.htm>

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.

Judaism says that 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. But above all, he will be a human being.

This must have been the same pattern of thought that obstructed the Talmidim (Disciples) when Yahshua spoke often times about his subsequent suffering which they constantly did not understand since they thought he would resurrect the Kingdom of Yisrael to a new level of Esteem that was long hoped for. We see in the following an example that they may have hoped was the beginning of their expectation:

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MattithYahu (Matthew) 16:28 “Truly I say to you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

Surely these words only reinforced the Disciples expectations of the long awaited Kingdom. To further see how their thoughts were revealed we continue to read:

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MattithYahu (Matthew) 17:1 After six days Yahshua took Kepha (Peter), Ya’acov (James) and Yochanan (John) his brother, and led them up a high mountain. 2 There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his garments became as white as the light. 3 Just then there appeared before them Mosheh (Moses) and Eliyahu (Elijah), talking with him. 4 Kepha (Peter) said to Yahshua, “Master, it is good for us to be here! If you will, let us make three Sukkot (Tabernacles) here—one for you, one for Mosheh (Moses) and one for Eliyahu (Elijah).”

It is suggested that this time was approaching Sukkot (the feast of Tabernacles) and so these Talmidim (Disciples) thought that the Kingdom was about to be announced but at the Crucifixion all of them became confused & fearful when their expectations of the Kingdom were not realized.

It is with this thought that we come to the time after the Master Yahshua was crucified with the Talmidim (Disciples) in disarray and huddled together behind locked doors for fear of the Religious leaders.

Thomas is not alone in his Doubts:

So often doubt has been unduly attributed to the character of Toma (Thomas) though when we read the account of the women telling the Disciples that they had seen the Master their response was, in reality not any better than Toma (Thomas):

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Silus (Luke) 24:10-11 It was Miriam of Magdala and Yohanna and Miriam the mother of Ya’acov (James) and other women that were with them which told these things to the Emissaries. 11 And their words seemed to them as idle tales and they believed them not.

When we consider these words we come to the conclusion that a resurrected Master was so distant from their thoughts that they totally dismissed it though he had spoken often of it but their minds remained closed.

To understand Toma (Thomas) the person, we need to look at verses that reveal something about him. Why could he not believe by the testimony of the other disciples? This drama confronts many today when they face traumatic experiences in their lives. What we find of

Toma (Thomas) is that he tended to be rather pessimistic but he was also passionately loyal as we read his response when Yahshua hears about Eli'ezer known by most as (Lazarus) and desires to go to Beyth Anya (Bethany) which is near Yerushalayim (Jerusalem) knowing the Yahudi (Jewish) leaders were seeking his arrest:

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Yochanan (John) 11:16 Then said Toma (Thomas) who is called the twin, to his fellow disciples, "Let us go, that we may die with him".

We get a glimpse of the character through this verse and we come to see that the Scriptures tell us that at the arrest of Yahshua all the Disciples fled, so his desertion of his master must have hit him very hard. Unlike the other Disciples who came together in fear to comfort one another we see no sign of Toma (Thomas). Why was he not there? Is it possible that he was so shattered first by his failure to stand for his beloved Master and also because the rare glimpse we have of him reveals him being quite pessimistic so it is possible that he simply needed to be alone to wallow in his own sorrow!

Finally after 8 days Toma (Thomas) gathers with the other Talmidim (Disciples) and his doubts stemming from his deep pessimistic emotions emerge:

Yochanan (John) 20:25 The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Master." So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe."

As we examine the nature of all these Talmidim (Disciples) who by then are a far cry from being Sh'lichyim (Sent Ones) that could spread the Besorah (the Good News) we might wonder how it was possible for them to fulfil their high calling that the Master had called them to. It is amazing that just as Yisrael after being delivered from Mitzrayim (Egypt) after seeing all the miracles often displayed doubts & unbelief and so had a hard journey during the same period of time to prepare them to receive YHWH's divine Torah (Covenant Words) so too did the Disciples require that period to prepare them for the promise of the Father. They truly needed this time to develop their faith so they could say words like this with absolute conviction:

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Yochanan Aleph (1 John) 1:1- 3 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life— 2 And the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us— 3 that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Yahshua Ha Machiach (the Messiah).

This time of the counting of the Omer becomes therefore a critical time each year where we continue to weed out areas of our character symbolic of Leven that is detrimental to the purpose for which we are called that we may become that Echad (Unified) Assembly that YHWH desires:

The Great Turning Point for Toma (Thomas)

It is the encounter that happens 8 days later that sets Toma (Thomas) apart from even his Brethren for his words reveal the true depth of his conviction which appears greater than anything shown by any of the other Talmidim (Disciples):

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Yochanan (John) 20:26-29 And after eight days His Talmidim (taught ones) were again inside, and Toma (Thomas) with them. Yahshua came, the doors having been shut, and he stood in the midst, and said, "Shalom (Peace) to you!" 27 Then He said to Toma (Thomas), "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing."

This was surely the turning point for Toma for his doubts suddenly evaporated and his faith and confidence never again waivered for we read his great response:

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Yochanan (John) 20: 28 And Toma (Thomas) answered and said to Him, "My Master and my Elohim!" 29 Yahshua said to him, "Toma (Thomas), because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

We are however all certain that these Talmidim (Disciples) all engaged in the process of counting the Omer and surely understood its significance in developing the character that would prepare them for receiving the promise of the Father.

The Purpose of the Appearances:

Since we understand the difficulties the Disciples went through in dealing with the death of their Master whom they thought would establish the Kingdom, his appearances after the resurrection played a vital role in preparing them to bring the message to the World. We read in the following the vital reason for his appearance.

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Silus (Luke) 24: 44 And He (Yahshua) said to them "these are the words I spoke to you while I was still with you that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Torah of Mosheh (Moses) and in the Naviim (prophets) and in the Tehillim (Psalms) concerning me. 45 Then he opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scrolls of YHWH. 46 And said to them, this is how it is written, Messiah to suffer and to rise from the dead the third

day 47 And that repentance and remission of sin should be preached in his name among all Nations beginning at Yerushalayim (Jerusalem) 48 And you are witnesses of these things.

In this beginning of the journey to Shavuot (Pentecost) the witness of the Resurrected Saviour was so overwhelming but to dispel any concern as to his physical resurrection Yahshua even demonstrated that he had all the faculties of a normal human that no doubt could remain in any of his taught ones that he had been raised from the dead and was indeed flesh and blood:

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Silus (Luke) 24:41 And while they were still not believing for joy and wondered, he said to them, " have you any food? 42 And they gave him a piece of broiled fish and of a honeycomb. 43 And he took it and ate before them.

To inspire overwhelming confidence in the Resurrection the Biblical evidence of Yahshua's appearances are included:

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These Post Resurrection appearances of Yahshua are:

1. To Miriam- (Yochanan 20:16)
2. To the other Women- (MatithYahu 28:9)
3. On the road to Emmaus- (Luke 24:13-30)
4. To Shimon Kepha (Peter)- (Luke 24:34, 1 Cor 15:5)
5. To the 10 Talmidim (taught ones)- (Luke 24:36)
6. To the Disciples with Toma (Thomas)- (Yochanan 20:24-29)
7. by the Lake of Galil- (Yochanan 21)
8. On the Mountain in Galil appointed by the Master- (Mk 16:19)
9. To Ya'acov (James)- (1 Cor 15:7)
10. To the 500 that Shaul (Paul) speaks of- (1 Cor 15:6)

These appearances speak volumes of give them and us overwhelming proof of the Resurrection to empower these doubtful Talmidim (taught ones) and us to take the journey of Counting the Omer with renewed strength and purpose and confidence in the Truth.

The Sequence of the Post Resurrection Days

The sequence of days has been in dispute often but since the earliest instruction from the Malakim (Angels) to the women was as we read some conclusions can be drawn:

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Mark 16:7 And go say to his taught ones and Kepha (Peter) that he (Yahshua) is going before you into Galil. You shall see him there as he said to you.

This is also repeated in Mattithyahu (Matthew) 28:7 and since we read in Mark that the Eleven went away to Galil a distance of about 100 kms we can faithfully assume they went after the appearance with Toma. From this information I would like to postulate that the appearance on the seashore at Galil and the subsequent instruction on the Mount at Galil was not in the latter part of the forty days before the Ascension but rather early leading to their return to Yerushalayim (Jerusalem) to fulfil the counting of the Omer with new vitality and purpose.

Also what is of interest is that MattithYahu (Matthew) concludes with Yahshua appearing on the mount in Galil (Galilee).

Mark however concludes with the direction to go to Galil and the first appearance with the disciples.

Luke however seems to conclude with the first appearance blended with his last appearance since Yahshua tells them not to depart from Yerushalayim (Jerusalem).

Yochanan (John) concludes with Yahshua's appearance by the sea of Tiberius or the Lake of Galil (Galilee).

The Words of Yahshua to Toma:

When Yahshua says at his appearance to Toma gathered with the Disciples that "blessed are those that have not seen yet believed" the point was not to say that it is any easier for those but rather to challenge us on how passionate we are to transform ourselves to be like these disciples in preparing for the great day that awaited them with the outpouring of the Ruach Ha Kodesh (the Holy Spirit). Are we preparing in expectancy of renewed empowerment by the Ruach Ha Kodesh (the Holy Spirit) and with a deep desire for change with all our strength or are we just doing our 49 Steps just to feel good that we have done what is expected. Therefore, is there a true hunger and a desire to receive more of Yahweh through his Ruach. If not, then will anything change?

Now returning to Toma (Thomas) again an extremely interesting fact is that we have more information about Toma (Thomas) than any of the Sh'lichiyim (sent ones) apart from Kepha (Peter) and Shaul (Paul). There are traditions of Toma leaving his doubts behind and departing Yerushalayim (Jerusalem) passing through Babylon and Persia and making an impact with the good news of Yahshua as far as the southern regions of India. Various versions of the death of Toma have him running afoul to the Hindu Priests who envied his success and rejected his message. His tomb however can still be visited in Mylapore (Meliapore) India.

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Toma as is reported was tortured by the natives of Calamina, thrown into an oven and stuck through with spears in about AD 70.

The underlying need for Preparation:

With all this great revelation of the Resurrection of Yahshua one may wonder why a period of preparation was necessary. We know from the Pre-Pesach Fellowship Meal that the Disciples were still debating who was the greatest and from the women at the Resurrection they were instructed to meet Yahshua on the mount appointed by him in Galil for his instruction.

Surely it was not enough to just count the Omer and then appear at the Shavuot (Pentecost) feast but we come to understand that Yahshua needed them to be an Echad (unified) body with the same heart & mind to truly receive the Torah of YHWH imparted by the Ruach Ha Kodesh (the Holy Spirit) on humble hearts. And so it is with us!

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Summary Points

1. These Talmidim (Disciples) needed to be set free from their doubts & fears so they could be instruments for the good news of Yahshua.
2. True freedom is not when you begin keeping the Commandments. If it was then our Forefathers did not need Yahshua. I am sure they kept the commandments better than us. The orthodox do a great job at doing the list of Mitzvot (Commandments). True freedom is being filled with the mind of Yahweh through the Ruach Ha Kodesh (the Holy Spirit) which would become the power of Shavuot (Pentecost).
3. To be true Sh'lichyim (sent Ones) the Disciples needed absolute confidence in the Resurrection which they received by the appearances of Yahshua.
4. They also needed "Binah" understanding and "Da'ath" Knowledge which Yahshua gave them concerning his purpose.
5. Most importantly they needed preparation which the counting of the Omer gave them that they would dwell in love and fellowship with each other awaiting the promise of the Father.

Conclusion:

I am hoping that from this teaching we come to see that for us to be prepared to really receive the Ruach Ha Kodesh (the Holy Spirit) there truly needs to be a work of refinement. We need to judge ourselves and not others and challenge ourselves in many areas that have caused problems among the Brethren. Developing "binah" understanding & "da'ath" knowledge is greatly necessary but like with the Talmidim (Disciples) those characteristics needed to be tempered with the features that we endeavour to produce as we diligently apply ourselves to our 49 steps booklet leading up to Shavuot (Pentecost) in the great hope of exploring new dimensions of the Ruach Ha Kodesh (the Holy Spirit) that will enhance our experience with Yahweh and with the Body of Messiah. That includes those not totally acquainted with our full understanding that through our witness they may experience what we have which is ultimately why Yahshua at the pre- Pesach (Passover) meal said this:

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Yochanan (John) 13:34- 35 A renewed commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

