

MORDECHAI 105C—D

MORDECHAI 12:37B—44

BESB

37b ¶ And the large congregation heard him with delight.

Mar 12:38 And while he (Yeshua) was teaching them he said, Behold (with discernment) the Soferim (of the Tz'dukim), who like to walk around in (ceremonial) robes, and desire (honorary) salutations in the public places,

Mar 12:39 and chief seats in the Synagogues, and chief places (places of honor) at the festivals meals,

Mar 12:40 they seize the houses of widows, and make long pretentious prayers of piety. These will receive a more severe judgment.

Mar 12:41 ¶ And he (Yeshua) sat down before the treasury, and (Yeshua) watched the congregation putting coins into the treasury. And many rich ones put in large amounts.

Mar 12:42 And one poor widow came [and] put in two small coins, an insignificant amount.

Mar 12:43 And he called his talmidim near, and he said to them, Amen ve amen I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all the others depositing money into the treasury.

Mar 12:44 For everyone else put in out of their excess, but she in her poverty put in everything she had to live on.

GREEK TEXT

38 Καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς ἐν τῇ διδαχῇ αὐτοῦ Βλέπετε ἀπὸ τῶν γραμματέων τῶν θελόντων ἐν στολαῖς περιπατεῖν καὶ ἀσπασμοὺς ἐν ταῖς ἀγοραῖς

39 καὶ πρωτοκαθεδρίας ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς καὶ πρωτοκλισίας ἐν τοῖς δεῖπνοις

40 οἱ κατεσθίοντες τὰς οἰκίας τῶν χηρῶν καὶ προφάσει μακρὰ προσευχόμενοι· οὗτοι λήφονται περισσότερον κρίμα

41 Καὶ καθίσας ὁ Ἰησοῦς κατέναντι τοῦ γαζοφυλακίου ἐθεώρει πῶς ὁ ὄχλος βάλλει χαλκὸν εἰς τὸ γαζοφυλάκιον καὶ πολλοὶ πλούσιοι ἔβαλλον πολλά·

42 καὶ ἐλθοῦσα μία χήρα πτωχὴ ἔβαλεν λεπτὰ δύο ὃ ἐστὶν κοδράντης

43 καὶ προσκαλεσάμενος τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ λέγει αὐτοῖς Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ἡ χήρα αὕτη ἢ πτωχὴ πλείον πάντων βέβληκεν τῶν βαλόντων εἰς τὸ γαζοφυλάκιον·

44 πάντες γὰρ ἐκ τοῦ περισσεύοντος αὐτοῖς ἔβαλον αὕτη δὲ ἐκ τῆς ὑστερήσεως αὐτῆς πάντα ὅσα εἶχεν ἔβαλεν ὅλον τὸν βίον αὐτῆς

DELITZSCH HEBREW TRANSLATION

וַיֵּאָהֵב רַב הָעָם לְשָׁמֵעַ אֹתוֹ: 38 וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם בְּלִמָּד אַתֶּם הַשְּׂמָרוּ מִן־הַסּוֹפְרִים הָאֵלֶּהִים לְהַתְּהַלֵּךְ
עָטוּפֵי טָלִית וְשִׂישָׁאָלוּ בְּשִׁלּוּמָם בְּשׂוֹקִים: 39 וְלִשְׁבֹּת רֵאשֻׁנִים בְּבִתֵּי כְּנָסִיּוֹת וּלְהִסָּב רֵאשֻׁנִים
בְּסַעֲוֹדוֹת: 40 הַבְּלָעִים אֶת־בִּתֵּי הָאֱלֻמָּנוֹת וּמֵאֲרִיכִים בְּתַפְלָה לְמַרְאֵה עֵינַיִם הֵמָּה מְשַׁפֵּט גְּדוֹל יִתָּר
מֵאֵד יִשְׁפֹּטוּ:

41 וַיֵּשׁוּעַ יָשָׁב מִמּוֹל אֶרֶז הָאֲצָר וְהוּא רֵאָה אֶת־הָעָם מְשִׁימִים מְעוֹת בְּאֶרֶז הָאֲצָר וְעֹשִׂיִרִים רַבִּים
נִתְּנוּ הַרְבֵּה: 42 וַתְּבֹא אֱלֻמָּנָה עֲנִיָּה וַתִּתֵּן שְׁתֵּי פְרוֹטוֹת אֲשֶׁר הֵן רַבֵּעַ אֶסֶר: 43 וַיִּקְרָא אֶל־תַּלְמִידָיו
וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם אֲמֵן אֲנִי לָכֵס כִּי הָאֱלֻמָּנָה הָעֲנִיָּה הַזֹּאת נִתְּנָה יוֹתֵר מִכָּל־הַנְּתָנִים אֶל־אֶרֶז
הָאֲצָר: 44 כִּי כוֹלָם נִתְּנוּ מִן־הָעֵדֶף שְׁלָהֶם וְהִיא מִמְּחִסְרָהּ נִתְּנָה כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־לָהּ אֶת כָּל־מְחִיטָהּ:

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INTRODUCTION

THE CART BEFORE THE HORSE

I am certain that by now many of our readers will find my fascination and extolment of Hakham Tsefet fanatical. For this, I make no apologies. I believe that the materials and works of Hakham Tsefet form the infrastructure to the ENTIRE Nazarean Codicil. To keep the matter concise I believe that without this foundational material we would be remiss to explain who and what Yeshua really meant and did. No other writer of the Nazarean Codicil has received the level of acclaim achieved by Hakham Tsefet. When we look at the number of times, Hakham Tsefet’s name appears in the Nazarean Codicil we see that his name takes preeminence.^a

My reason for lauding Hakham Tsefet here is simple. Many scholars have the habit of trying to interpret Mordechai (Mark) through the lens of the other writers of the Nazarean Codicil. In my opinion, this is placing the cart before the horse. The past few pericope of Mordechai have shown the vitality of proper exegesis when studying the words of The Tanakh, Yeshua, and the authors of the Nazarean Codicil. In keeping with rabbinical style hermeneutic, we place Mordechai at the forefront of the other Nazarean

^a Hengel, Martin *Saint Peter, the Underestimated Apostle*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 2006 p.28ff

texts. This matches the hermeneutic demonstrated in the Talmud where the Mishnah is laid as the foundation and commentary (Gemara-remez) is applied to the P'shat. What appears in many of the commentaries of Mordechai is a failed exegesis of the text. I am not trying to criticize anyone or accuse of blatant mistranslation and interpretation at present. My point is that the contemporary commentators are preoccupied with doctrinal hype that truth. The construction of the "Christ" made by these commentaries usually results in a pseudo-Christ rather than a clear image of Messiah. This caused the late Vendyl Jones to pen the words of his book "Will the Real Jesus please Stand."^a However, there are those who are starting to see through the glass with greater clarity. This is the result of looking at the Nazarean Codicil through Jewish eyes. I have made these opening remarks because we will be looking at some of the comments of the contemporary commentators in this commentary on pericope 105c-d. I would ask the readers to read with acumen and care.

THE TROUBLE WITH GREEK

I have stated in the past, that translation is a painstaking process. I will reiterate my statement here. Again, to be concise, the real trouble with the Greek texts we have at present is that they are not the original documents from which the present text developed. This presents several problems. Firstly, we do not know exactly what was and was not contained in those documents, the problem compounded by the plethora of extant "Greek New Testaments." Secondly, our focus is to "weed out" the tampering that has been done with the text. Many of today's translations and commentaries are plagued with anti-Semitic remarks and opinions, which only serves to compound our work. However, we have particular tools with which to interpret the text. These hermeneutic tools must NOT be abandoned for the sake of opinion or bias. Consequently, we have to use the extant Greek texts, applying hermeneutic and forensics to uncover the truth of the text.

PERICOPE 105C

37B. ¶ AND THE LARGE CONGREGATION HEARD HIM WITH DELIGHT.

A number of the commentaries on Mordechai try to make the present pericope a continuation of the previous pericope. This allows them to make the Sofer (Scribe) previous pericope subject to the present criticisms of the particular Soferim. In these cases, the anti-Semitic agendas win over legitimate scholarship. We have broken the pericope according to logic and tradition. There is sufficient data to tell us that this is a pericope break. A look in to the commentaries on the Nazarean Codicil will demonstrate that we are not alone in breaking the text at this place.

The Greek conjunction *kai* (and) reflects the Hebraic foundation of the text. This can teach us that there is a continuation of thought and it can demonstrate the conclusion of a previous thought. The present conjunction serves to sever the present pericope from the previous, demonstrating a new thought and line of teaching. Because we use the hermeneutic of context,^b we are able to detect the pericope change and theme of the pericope.

Therefore, we must look at the present pericope as if the page "has been turned" rather than reading continuity with the previous pericope.

^a Jones, Vendyl, *Will the Real Jesus Please Stand*, Institute of Judaic-Christian Research, 1983

^b 7. Dabar ha-lamed me-'inyano: Interpretation deduced from the context.

THE CONGREGATION

The Greek text of 12:37b reads as follows ...

καὶ ὁ πολὺς ὄχλος ἤκουεν αὐτοῦ ἡδέως (ο *polus okhlos ēkouen autou ēdeōs*). Several translators translate this phrase as “common people.”^a Here I must ask a question. What would be indicated by the use of the phrase “common people”?

I think that the insinuation is simple to follow. If we use Oppenheimer’s definition of the “Am haAretz” we can infer some result.

The “am ha-aretz” were of two types, the “am ha-aretz le-mitzvot,” Jews disparaged for not scrupulously observing the commandments, and “am ha-aretz la-Torah,” those stigmatized as ignoramuses for not having studied the Torah at all.^b

Oppenheimer’s assessment the “Am haAretz” seems to be in conjunction with the Talmudic view of this group, which is the antithesis of a Scholar. If we read these people to be “Am haAretz” in the sense of the uneducated, we have no re-enforcement of Yeshua’s aptitude as a Sofer. Likewise, if we use Am haAretz” as “Jews disparaged for not scrupulously observing the commandments,” we still have a problem in that there is no solid propensity to follow the Yeshua’s teachings. I have noted that the teaching method of Yeshua was that of the Socratic Method.^c If we follow the Socratic Method of teaching, that teaching is supposed to reproduce conduct (halakha). Consequently, I do not see either case of the “Am haAretz” as being applicable to our case. Therefore, I believe that the best translation for πολὺς ὄχλος - *polus okhlos* is large congregation. This would incorporate those of both definitions of “Am-haAretz” as well as the Hakhamim of the area as indicated by the previous pericope. In other words, Yeshua’s words appealed to the Hakham and the Am-haretz as well. This would have inspired all the intended groups. The Hakhamim would have been encouraged to hear the echo of their teachings. The “Jews disparaged for not scrupulously observing the commandments,” would have been inspired to become more observant and “those stigmatized as ignoramuses for not having studied the Torah at all” would have been inspired to study and apply Torah to their lives.

BEHOLD THE SOFERIM

BEHOLD (WITH DISCERNMENT) THE SOFERIM (OF THE TZ’DUKIM),

The Greek phrase βλέπετε ἀπὸ τῶν γραμματέων (*blepete apo tōn grammateōn*) means to behold or look at with discernment. Many translations will translate the Greek “blepo” to mean beware. However, “blepo” is directly related to vision or physical sight. Here we have a play on words regardless of language. The desired result of the accusations made by Yeshua is that the Soferim desire to “be seen” or to “stand out” for reasons of false piety. Robert Gundry suggests a possible translation of “watch out”^d for the Soferim, which is more fitting to the thought conveyed by “blepo.”

I have translated the phrase to denote the targeted Soferim. Behold (with discernment) the Soferim (of the Tz’dukim),^e clearly demonstrates the class of Soferim to which Yeshua is referring. A careful look at the text

^a Cf. KJV Mark 12:37b

^b Oppenheimer, A., *The ‘am ha-aretz: a study in the social history of the Jewish people in the Hellenistic-Roman period*, E.J. Brill

^c I also suggest that the Socratic Method is synonymous with the teaching method of the Mishnah.

^d Gundry, R. H. (2004). *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: (Vol. 2). William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. p. 726

^e Some scholars have argued that there were no Scribes of the Sadducees. Cf. Gundry, R. H. (2004). *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: (Vol. 2). William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. p. 725. Joachim

will reveal their characteristics. The epicurean lifestyle presented will quickly associate the Soferim mentioned with the Tz'dukim. Consequently, Yeshua again criticizes the Soferim of the Tz'dukim.^a

Here I must note that while Yeshua criticizes the Soferim of the Tz'dukim that there were other possible proponents liable for the charges made by Yeshua. However, we must also note that while there are “bad apples” in every group, we cannot label everyone in that group a “bad apple.” Morna Hooker^b and Joel Marcus^c note that “some of the Soferim” were corrupted, which demonstrates that the Soferim as a scholarly class were not all given to the criticisms made by Yeshua in this pericope. This assessment is accurate, especially if we look at the Soferim of the Tz'dukim.

However, scholars such as Robert Gundry^d and Craig Evans^e tend to make the present pericope a continuation of the previous pericope. The rationale behind this cretinous scholarship is to place ALL Soferim in a bad light. Some Soferim qualified to be called “Doctors of the Law.”^f This title comes down to us today as a Lawyer. Thus, we might read the text of our pericope to say, “Watch out for the lawyers who like...”

SOFERIM AND YESHUA

I have spent a great deal of time commenting on the Soferim in the previous pericope. However, I would like to further a few important details here. In the Nazarean Codicil Yeshua frequently encounters the Soferim. Some of the occasions show what appears to be confrontation. In several of these cases, the “confrontation” is the Jewish system of Drash. However, in some encounters, such as last week’s pericope we see a positive exchange. I have made my notes to this pericope, which I will not replicate here. Yet, I have also noted that Yeshua would have found positive exchange with the Soferim from the School of Hillel. This would mean that Yeshua was opposed to the Soferim from the School of Shammai. Harvey Falk spends a great deal of time noting the differences and conflicts between the School of Hillel and the School of Shammai.^g Nevertheless, Yeshua would also have been opposed to the Soferim of the Tz'dukim. Hence, one might think that Yeshua was opposed to more of the Soferim than he accepted. On the other hand, theological debate (Drash) is NOT grounds for divorce, so to speak. Yeshua would have gladly accepted any Sofer who was willing and capable of honest exegetical Drash. Only the narrow-minded bigot cannot accept that others think differently. Judaism is notorious for having opposing opinions and views. This is all a part

Jeremias has proven by exegetical hermeneutic that the Sadducean Scribes did in fact exist. Cf. Jeremias, J. (1975). *Jerusalem in the time of Jesus: an investigation into economic and social conditions during the New Testament period*. Fortress Press. pp 231. William Lane’s description of the “robes” of verse 38 shows the robes to be the Priestly ceremonial garments. Cf. Lane, W. L. (1974). *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospel According to Mark*, . Grand Rapids, Michigan: : W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. p. 440. Consequently, Hakham Tsefet through his **SOFER** Mordechai may well have been trying to distinguish the varied types of Soferim when they used the phrase Scribes and Pharisees. Cf. Mark 2:16

^a Cf. [Mordechai 12:18-27](#) (Pericope 104c) and commentaries.

^b Sabin, M. N. (2002). *Reopening the Word, Reading Mark as a Theology in Context of Early Judaism*. Oxford University Press. p.101

^c Marcus, J. (2009). *The Anchor Bible Dictionary, Mark 8-16, A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. Yale University.

^d Gundry, R. H. (2004). *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: (Vol. 2). William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. p. 726

^e Evans, C. (2001). *Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 34b: Mark 8:27-16:20*. Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Publishers. p. 276

^f Cf. [Mordechai 12:35—37a](#) (Pericope 105b) See my discussion on Gamaliel.

^g Falk, H. (2003). *Jesus the Pharisee, A new Look at the Jewishness of Jesus*, . Wipf and Stock Publishers.

of being Jewish. The Western world has trouble with the idea of the possibility of more than one solution to or view of a problem.

Abot 1:6 Joshua b. Perahiah and Nittai the Arbelite received [it] from them. Joshua b. Perahiah says, (1) “Set up a master for yourself. (2) **“And get yourself a fellow disciple.** (3) “And give everybody the benefit of the doubt.”

Why did Rabbi Joshua b. Perahiah tell us to find a study partner? Rabbi Joshua b. Perahiah realized that not everyone thinks alike. Thus, having a fellow talmid is a way of exposure to other trains of thought. Yeshua and his contestants were all good Jews (even the Tz’dukim). They loved to debate Scripture. This was the only way to expand ones experience and knowledge of Torah.

William Lane^a suggests that Yeshua has more conflict with the Soferim of Yerushalayim than other places. This would fit what I have already stated above. Accepting Lane’s comment for his intention I must further the notion that the Soferim the School of Shammai dominated Yerushalayim. Joachim Jeremias notes that the dominant Soferim of Yerushalayim is the Soferim of the Tz’dukim and the Soferim of the Shammite School.^b

CEREMONIAL ROBES AND CHAIRS

I have translated the Greek phrase ἐν στολαῖς (*en stolais*) as ceremonial robes. The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament and Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature (BDAG) suggest that the mentioned garments are ceremonial or Kohanic (Priestly) garments.^c These garments serve as “equipment” for the specified office.^d While there may be those who would frown or disdain use of “robes” or other such equipment, our society is dependent on a system of “robes” so to speak. Office workers tend to wear the “white collar” while general labor tends to wear a “blue collar.” Uniforms and “robes” are a means of identification. These “robes” are requisite in our society. Such robes demonstrate that we live in a structured society. Uniforms identify spirituality, power and status. I will not try to elaborate on this idea. It is common knowledge albeit something that we may not focus on until we encounter situations that demand our observance. Society without “robes” is devoid of structure. However, I would submit that even what might be termed “primitive cultures” have marks or identifying clothing. Yeshua is not demeaning the wearing of robes. His critique is the false piety behind flaunting these robes in order to be lauded by those of lesser rank.

In my years of Biblical studies, I have earned three Doctoral degrees. In 2001, I was asked to speak at a graduation in a small Illinois city. The position of my Doctorate demanded wearing a Graduate robe at the ceremony. I was glad to wear my “robe” because I had justly earned my degree through years and hours of laborious Bible study. Each robe was marked distinctly so that the students could readily tell what degree of honor had been acquired. These robes demonstrate a structured educational system. I have purported that Yeshua was trained rabbinically. His training earned him the title and status of a Hakham. Consequently, in my opinion, he would have, on occasion worn some sort of ceremonial robe, gown or some ceremonial garb to indicate his elevation of status. Therefore, I reiterate, wearing the robe is NOT the issue at hand. The issue at hand is illegitimate use of such a robe or gown to gain appraisal or acclaim and illegitimate gain.

^a Lane, W. L. (1974). *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospel According to Mark*, . Grand Rapids, Michigan: : W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. p. 439

^b Jeremias, J. (1975). *Jerusalem in the time of Jesus: an investigation into economic and social conditions during the New Testament period*. Fortress Press. pp 234

^c TDNT 7:687 Cf. στολή Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000). *A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature*. (3rd ed.) (1996). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

^d See Appendix 4749 στολή below.

The situation can be furthered by realizing that the Synagogues had honorary positions and seats. These “seats” are not designed to intimidate those who have not earned the ability to sit in those honorary chairs. They are seats to foster motivation. However, I do not know any honest man or woman who will not enjoy his or her moment of fame. Ego is a natural and vital part of our structure, through this G-d given mechanism men ever strive for excellence. To suggest otherwise is a blatant lie.

The system of attributing a section or portion (aliyah) of the Torah to be read from an honorary position was established or at minimum promoted by the Sofer (Scribe) Ezra. Why would Ezra enact such a reform?^a It has been my personal opinion that Ezra’s great genius saw a way of rehabilitating Jews by making them read the Torah. I have discussed this at length in My [Midrashim](#) series on Ezra’s Tiknot.^b By having Jews from every strata of life read the Torah publicly, Ezra elevated the spiritual and honorary status of Judaism. Therefore, to criticize those honorary positions of reading the Torah and sitting in “elevated seats” we criticize the reforming acts of Ezra the Scribe and Prophet. To remove these honorary acts would be to return to the period before Ezra with the possibility of retarding the resultant spiritual elevations brought about by Ezra and the Men of the Great Assembly. When we review the reforms of Ezra, we will see that Yeshua conformed to those reforms, as did all the Jews of the First Century.^c

A superficial look at Ezra’s reforms makes one realize that reading Torah is of vital importance to Judaism. However, when we take a deeper look at the reforms we notice something profound. The core of Ezra’s reforms deals with Shabbat.

1. Torah should be read publicly on Shabbat
2. Beit Din should assemble on Monday and Thursday
3. Clothing should be washed on Thursdays
4. Garlic should be eaten on Friday.
5. Women should rise early to make bread.

Out of the eleven reforms, five deal with Shabbat or the preparation for Shabbat. A Shomer Shabbat will be able to understand how each of these relates to Shabbat.

PAINTED FACES

While our text does not directly use the word hypocrite, we can draw some applicable information from the word’s definition. The Greek notion of hypocrisy is the idea of an actor on a stage roll playing. Some scholars and dictionaries suggest that the Actor’s roll playing was under scrutiny ὑπόκρισις (*hypokrisis*), or under judgment (judged by the critics) therefore earning the title of “hypocrite.” Rabbinic literature tends to either looks on hypocrisy as “backsliding”^d or empty (barren) flattery.^e This is because the idea of pretention is foreign to Rabbinic thought. Lexicons such as the Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament^f translate the Hebrew word הַנֵּפִי *hanep* as hypocrite. However, this Lexical definition is inaccurate. “*Hanep*” should be understood from it Hebrew origins rather than latter Greek influence. Consequently, “*hanep*” is

^a Cf. b. B.K. 82a for a complete list of Ezra’s tikknuim. Also see the Appendix below

^b [Ezra’s Reforms p.1](#) [Ezra’s Reforms p. 2](#)

^c Cf. Lukas (Luke) 4:16ff Yeshua follows the typical reform of Ezra in reading the Torah publically on Shabbat. Here is only one small example of Yeshua following Ezra’s reforms.

^d שׁוֹבֵב *shobeb* Str. H7728

^e Cf. b. Yoma 86a, b. Sot. 42a

^f Harris, R. L., Archer, G. L., & Waltke, B. K. (1999, c1980). *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. Chicago: Moody Press.

something polluted, irreligious or profane. This is because the Hebrew notion of life, views life in a sharp contrast. A thing is either G-dly or not G-dly. That which is G-dly is holy. That which is not G-dly is profane. Man is either in harmony with G-d or *karet* – cut off from the Divine environment and state. Man makes connection to G-d through observance of the mitzvot. To violate one of those mitzvot is to separate one's self from G-d. Every relationship has elements of building and ruin. This is true of our relationship with G-d as well. We build our connection through the dynamic activity of the positive mitzvot. We destroy that connection (relationship) when we violate the static (negative) mitzvot. The painted face of the actor eventually came to be known as *hypokrisis*, the ones "under judgment" were the polluted "*hanep*." Therefore, the word hypocrite actually means someone who is irreligious or polluted and under judgment.

The Soferim of the Tz'dukim sought flattery and compliment, which the Talmud describes as "empty and vain" or "empty and barren," "*hanep*."

WIDOWS HOUSES

Abot 1:13 He would say [in Aramaic], (1) "A name made great is a name destroyed. (2) "And one who does not add subtracts. (3) "And who does not learn is liable to death. (4) "And the one who uses the crown passes away."

I have already noted that the Soferim are associated with "lawyers." Their understanding of the Torah (Law) enabled them to know how to deal with the legal aspects of the Torah and how to circumvent these Laws to their own benefit. Robert Gundry suggests that the term οικιας - *oikias* implies all or any possessions. This would indicate that the Soferim of the Tz'dukim illegally appropriated the possessions of widows.^a

Marie Sabin notes that the practice of the Soferim of the Tz'dukim is a violation of Yeshua's second Mitzvah, loving ones neighbor as one's self.^b

Yermiyahu 7:5. For if you improve your ways and your deeds, if you perform judgment between one man and his fellowman, 6. [if] you do not oppress a stranger, an orphan, or a widow, and you do not shed innocent blood in this place, and you do not follow other gods for your detriment,

Malachi 3:5. And I will approach you for judgment, and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers and against the adulterers and against those who swear falsely; and also against those who withhold the wages of the day laborers, of the widow and fatherless, and those who pervert [the rights of] the stranger, [and those who] fear Me not, says the Lord of Hosts.^c

These verses demonstrate that G-d has a love for the widow and orphan. That the Soferim of the Tz'dukim, take advantage of the widows demonstrates their depravity. I have noted Gundry's association of οικιας - *oikias* "house" with the possessions of the widow.^d I would take the illustration also to mean the properties or lands of these widows thereby connecting the present pericope with the Torah Seder. Given this possibility, the affront to G-d and widow deepens. G-d is the landowner. Taking the land and possessions of widows and orphans is a great affront to G-d. This demonstrates the level of depravity that to which the Soferim of the Tz'dukim had succumbed.

These Soferim have forgotten the principle of our Ashlamatah.

^a Gundry, R. H. (2004). *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross, Grand Rapids, Michigan: (Vol. 2).* William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. p. 727

^b Sabin, M. N. (2002). *Reopening the Word, Reading Mark as a Theology in Context of Early Judaism.* Oxford University Press

^c Both cited verses are Rashi's translation

^d Gundry, R. H. (2004). *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross, Grand Rapids, Michigan: (Vol. 2).* William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. p. 727

Targum Pseudo Yonatan 57:9. **When you performed the Law for yourself, you prospered in the kingdom,** and when you multiplied for yourself deeds, your armies were many; you sent your messengers far off, and humbled the strong ones of the peoples to Sheol.

These accusations by G-d demonstrate that the Temple will not be able to withstand the enemy when he approaches.

I must note here that it is not wrong to give and support the legitimate Soferim or Hakhamim. In many cases the Soferim and Hakhamim were poor because of their devotion to teaching Torah. As a matter of fact, it is our obligation to support the Hakhamim. William Lane aptly notes that the people were encouraged to support the Soferim and Hakhamim as a legitimate act of piety.^a

ELEVATED SEATS

I do not believe that I have accomplished the level of understanding that Hakham Tsefet really knew and tried to convey to a satisfactory degree. I usually refer to Hakham Tsefet as the man with slippery hands because he was a “[simple fisherman](#),” who wrote a “[simple gospel](#).” Trying to find the connections between the Torah Seder and the Pericope of Mordechai is often a daunting task.

This week’s pericope makes me realize just how much of the Talmudic materials were taught pre-first century. In other words, we know that the teaching of the Rabbis was orally transmitted before it was eventually written down. Yeshua’s talmidim have referred to the teachings of the Soferim.^b Last week Yeshua posited the question of how the Soferim had derived that Messiah was the son of David.^c These hints tell us that the materials of the Oral Torah were a part of first century education.

The daughters of Tzelofchad drew near The names of Tzelofchad's daughters are listed in different order in Numbers 36:11. Here, where they petitioned Moses on a matter of law, they are listed according to wisdom; but when the Torah relates their marriages, they are listed by age, because the older daughter usually gets married before the younger. This is in line with R. Ammi's way of thinking, who said: At a yeshiva where law is being studied, you should show preference to wisdom when making the seating arrangements: A brilliant young scholar should get a better seat than an older person who is an average scholar; whereas at a banquet, you should show preference to age in the seating plan (Bava Batra 120a).^d

Avraham Finkel notes the situation detailed by Yeshua in his accusations against the Soferim of the Tz’dukim. The Soferim of the Tz’dukim desire the best seats in the Synagogue. However, they may not be the wisest of the congregation. Their sitting in these illustrious seats made them appear more astute than they really were. [Pericope 104c](#) illustrated this with clarity.

The proper attitude is furthered in the mention of Yehoshua’s elevation of status.

The Talmud Teaches and lay your hand on him Rava said: What verse supports the popular saying: "Although the wine belongs to the owner, the drinkers thank the waiter"? The verse "God said to Moses: Lay your hand on Joshua . . . so that the entire Israelite community will obey him." And it also

^a Lane, W. L. (1974). *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospel According to Mark*, . Grand Rapids, Michigan: : W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. p.441

^b Cf. Mordechai (Mark) 9:11

^c Cf. Ibid. 12:35

^d Finkel, A. Y. (2004). *The Torah Revealed, Talmudic Masters Unveil the Secrets of the Bible*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass A Wiley Imprint. p. 249

says "Joshua, son of Nun was filled with a spirit of wisdom, because Moses had laid his hands on him. The Israelites therefore listened to him" (Deuteronomy 34:19) Although wisdom comes from God, Moses is given the credit (Bava Kamma 92b)^a

G-d invests Yehoshua with wisdom, but allows Moshe to take credit for this investiture. G-d demonstrates and attitude that we, His creatures should emulate.

PERICOPE 105D

MY TWO CENTS

Yeshua positions himself to observe the Temple treasury. He watches the givers with some sincere scrutiny. Yeshua noticed the "Rich" who placed monies in the treasury as well as one "poor widow." The rich give out of their excess or abundance while the poor widow gives everything she has. In affect the rich only maintain a static union with G-d.

Here I return to the idea of static versus dynamic power and connection. The connection to G-d made by the rich giving out of excess is static as noted above. This person is unable to make a positive connection to G-d by this means of giving. However, the poor widow giving from her personal sustenance is dynamically connecting herself to G-d. The dynamic connection of the widow is a partnership with G-d in building and repairing the world. Regardless of whether the widow put her money in the Temple treasury or giving to one of the Soferim, the widow understood how to build the Governance of G-d on a personal level.

His Eminence Rabbi Dr Yoseph ben Haggai noted that last week's Torah readings relate to the first penitential Shabbat. The period of the three weeks between Tammuz 17 and Av 9 are penitential Sabbaths. The accusations brought against the Bne Yisrael by G-d last week dealt with not giving tithes. This week's accusations overlap between the fast's true purpose of dealing personal sustenance to the poor and Shabbat observance. Therefore, the "poor widow" saw a way of repairing (tikkun) the wrongs committed by the previous generations and the wrongs of her own generation. The "poor widow" was dynamically involved in "tikkun olam."

In this time of penitence, how will we rectify the wrongs of former generations?

CONCLUSION

While the matter is somewhat disclosed to the naked eye, this pericope matches the Torah Seder and second penitential Shabbat of the "Three Weeks." The chief seats and places at festival meals match our Torah Seder's mention of Shabbat as a reason for G-d's accusations against the Bne Yisrael.^b

The selection of Yehoshua as a Hakham demonstrates that G-d honors wisdom regardless of age. The same things is seen in our special Ashlamatah this week. However, the story of Yehoshua tells another story that is germane to our pericope. When the Bne Yisrael came to Yericho they learned a lesson of collective unity. The entire congregation moved and acted as one unit. The second battle that the Bne Yisrael faced when they entered the Promised Land was at Ai. Here the lesson was dramatically different. The lesson of Ai was that of collective responsibility. ONE man's sin affected the entire nation. In the Torah Seder of Phin'chas we saw how one man brought a plague on the Bne Yisrael. Likewise, Ezra forces the Bne Yisrael to divorce their foreign wives. The select number who married foreign wives was very few. Therefore, we have a principle of accountability. Our pericope demonstrates how a single group affects the fate of the entire

^a Ibid pp. 249—50

^b Cf. B'Midbar 27:3

congregation of Yisrael. However, the single poor widow affects tikkun for the entire congregation. When the righteous cease to exist and affect tikkun on the world trouble will soon follow. I would surmise that the two cents offered by the poor widow offset the extortions of the Tz'dukian Soferim.

Ya'akov 5:16 Therefore, confess your sins to each other, and pray for one another so that you may be healed (made whole). The effective petition of a Tzedek man can accomplish great things.

BS"D (B'Siyata D'Shamaya)
Aramaic: With the help of Heaven
Paqid Dr. Adon Eliyahu ben Abraham

CONNECTIONS TO TORAH READINGS

TORAH SEDER

Mordechai speaks of the Soferim of the Tz'dukim who desire the chief seats of the Synagogue on (Shabbat and Festivals). These Soferim usurp the authority of legitimate Hakhamim spoiling the true nature of Shabbat just as Tzelofchad violated the Shabbat by blatantly gathering wood during Shabbat.

TEHILLIM

The Psalmist speaks of Egypt's suppression of the Bne Yisrael bringing them under undue slavery and oppression. Likewise, the Soferim of the Tz'dukim suppressed the Bne Yisrael by seizing the homes of widows. Furthermore, the demand for chief seats and positions was a form of oppression. These oppressions helped bring about the destruction of the Temple.

ASHLAMATAH

The Ashlamatah bridges the gap between last week's penitential accusation of violating the tithe and this week's violation of Shabbat. It connects with Mordechai through the oppression of the widow and poor who should have received monetary compensation from the monies of fasts.

SPECIAL ASHLAMATAH

Yermiyahu receives a prophecy demanding repentance. If the Bne Yisrael refuses to repent, the Temple will be destroyed. G-d calls the people to return to their youth and nuptials. In similar way, Yeshua makes accusations against the Soferim of the Tz'dukim trying to call the Bne Yisrael to repent.

MITZVOT

Torah Add	M#	Mitzvah	Oral Torah
B'Midbar 27:8-9	400	Precept of the laws of inheritance	m. B.B Ch8 b. Bekh 29a b. B.B. 115b, 126b, 130a

B'Midbar 28:2—3	401	Precept of regular Olah offerings offered daily	m. Tamid 3:2 b. Yoma 28a
B'Midbar 28:9	402	Precept of Musaf offering of Shabbat	b. Suk. 54b
B'Midbar 28:11	403	Precept of Musaf offering each Rosh Chodesh	b. Suk. 54b

QUESTIONS OR REFLECTION

1. What would be indicated by common people?
2. Was Yeshua opposed to all Soferim?
3. Which Soferim would Yeshua have been opposed to?
4. Why did Rabbi Joshua b. Perahiah tell us to find a study partner?
5. In this time of penitence, how will we rectify the wrongs of former generations?

APPENDIX

4749 στολή [stole /stol-ay/] n f. From 4724; TDNT 7:687; TDNTA 1088; GK 5124; Nine occurrences; AV translates as “robe” five times, “long clothing” once, “long garment” once, “them + 848” once, and “long robe” once. 1 **an equipment**. 2 **an equipment in clothes**, clothing. 2a spec. a loose outer garment for men extending to the feet, worn by kings, priests, and persons of rank.^a

EZRA'S REFORMS

6. Torah should be read publicly at minchah
7. Torah should be read publicly on Shabbat
8. Torah should be read publicly at minchah on Monday (yom shelishi) and Thursday (yom chemishi)
9. Beit Din should assemble on Monday and Thursday
10. Clothing should be washed on Thursdays
11. Garlic should be eaten on Friday.
12. Women should rise early to make bread.
13. Women should be wear a sinner
14. Women should comb their hair before Mikveh
15. Peddlers should be allowed to travel from town to town
16. Mikveh to those who become ritually impure

b. B.K. 82a The [following] ten enactments were ordained by Ezra: That the law be read [publicly] in the Minhah service on Sabbath; that the law be read [publicly] on Mondays and Thursdays; that Courts be held on Mondays and Thursdays; that clothes be washed on Thursdays; that garlic be eaten on Fridays; that the housewife rise early to bake bread; that a woman must wear a sinner;^b that a woman must comb her hair before performing immersion; that pedlars [selling spicery] be allowed to travel about in the towns, He also decreed immersion to be required by those to whom pollution has happened.

^a Strong, J. (1996). *The exhaustive concordance of the Bible: Showing every word of the text of the common English version of the canonical books, and every occurrence of each word in regular order.* (G4749). Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship.

^b A sort of garment, breeches (Rashi), or belt. The word is of doubtful origin.