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# TSEFET'S PERICOPE #78<sup>F</sup>

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וְנָתַתִּי נֹגַע צָרַעַת

“V’Natati Nega’a Tsara’at”

“And I put the plague of leprosy”

“y pusiere Yo plaga de lepra”

Vayiqra (Leviticus) 14:33-57

B’Midbar (Num.) 28:9-15

Ashlamatah: Isaiah 5:8-16 + 6:3

Special: Isaiah 61:10 – 63:9

1 Samuel 20: 18& 42

Psalm 78:56-72

Pirqe Abot IV:15

N.C.: I Tsefet (Peter) 5:12-14

Commentary by Dr. Eliyahu Ben Avraham (Walter Oakley)

BESB<sup>a</sup>

<sup>12</sup> By *the hand* of Silvanus<sup>b</sup>, (Silas) faithful brother (and scribe) as I present to you this brief (authoritative)<sup>c</sup> account<sup>d</sup> in writing and asking (urge – strengthen - exhort) you to bear witness to the truth of G-d by which means *you* stand. <sup>13</sup> *The congregation in Babylon* chosen together with *you* greets you, and Mordechai my son (talmid - scribe). <sup>14</sup> Greet each other with a kiss of love. Shalom to all of you in Messiah

Greek

Διὰ Σιλουανοῦ ὑμῖν τοῦ πιστοῦ ἀδελφοῦ ὡς  
λογίζομαι δι' ὀλίγων ἔγραψα παρακαλῶν καὶ  
ἐπιμαρτυρῶν ταύτην εἶναι ἀληθῆ χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ  
εἰς ἣν στήτε  
<sup>13</sup> Ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς ἡ ἐν Βαβυλῶνι συνεκλεκτὴ  
καὶ Μάρκος ὁ υἱός μου  
<sup>14</sup> ἀσπάσασθε ἀλλήλους ἐν φιλήματι ἀγάπης  
εἰρήνη ὑμῖν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ

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## DELITZSCH HEBREW TRANSLATION

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<sup>12</sup> בְּיַד סִלְוָנוֹס הָאֵחַ הַנְּאֻמָּן כִּי כֵן אֶחָשֵׁב כְּתַבְתִּי אֵלֵיכֶם בְּדַבָּרִים מְעֻטִּים לְהַזְהִיר אֶתְכֶם וּלְהַעֲד כִּי  
חֻסַּד הָאֱלֹהִים הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר עֲמַדְתֶּם בּוֹ אֵמֶת הוּא: <sup>13</sup> קַהֲלַתְכֶם אֲשֶׁר בְּבַבְלָה הַנְּבַחְרָה אֶתְכֶם וּמַרְקוֹס בְּנֵי  
שְׂאֵלִים לְשִׁלּוּמְכֶם: <sup>14</sup> שְׂאֵלוּ אִישׁ אֶת־רֵעֵהוּ לְשִׁלּוּם בְּנִשְׁיֶקֶת אֶהְבֵּה שְׁלום לְכֶם כָּלְכֶם אֲשֶׁר בְּמִשְׁיַח  
יְשׁוּעַ אָמֵן:

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<sup>a</sup> Beth El Study Bible – Translation and notes by Dr. Eliyahu Ben Avraham

<sup>b</sup> 2 Co. 1:19, 1 Thess. 1:1, 2 Thess. 1:1, 1 Pet. 5:12

<sup>c</sup> J.H. Moulton and G. Milligan, Vocabulary of the Greek Testament, Hendrickson Publishers, 1930 pg 377

<sup>d</sup> Ibid 132

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## INTRODUCTION

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**Silvanus:**

The name Silvanus appears four times in the Nazarene Codicil. (2 Co. 1:19, 1 Thess. 1:1 2 Thess. 1:1, 1 Pet. 5:12) Who is this Silvanus? First, we know that he is a scribe. The *hand* of Silvanus wrote this document of Hakham Tsefet. While some scholars would like to suggest that there is no connection between the Silas of Hakham Tsefet and Hakham Shaul<sup>e</sup> the idea is absurd. They are all the same person. His Eminence has pointed out all the possibilities for the name Silvanus. Other scholars readily admit that Silvanus must be the same scribe used by Hakham Shaul.<sup>f</sup> This scribe has are readily been mentioned throughout the Scriptures. What fascinates me about this verse is the fact that both Hakham Tsefet and Hakham Shaul both initially used the same scribe. I would surmise a couple of things from this verse.

1. Silvanus (Luke/Silas) was already a trained scribe when Hakham Tsefet uses him to write this authoritative document.
2. Secondly, that Marcus (the scribe who writes "Mark") appears to be a scribe in training now.

While that latter point is conjecture, it seems logical that the elder train the junior scribe. This all fits the theme, which we have followed in the previous two pericope.

Here I would purport that Silvanus (Silas / Luke) was the scribe of Hakham Tsefet and then later the scribe of Hakham Shaul, which I believe speaks volumes. This would account for a great number of similarities in writing styles and use of specific vocabulary. We could imagine the value of having a well-trained scribe. Silvanus (Silas –Luke) would have been well versed in Hakham Tsefet's vocabulary, writing style and content. This would be like having Hakham Tsefet's virtual library at your disposal when writing, studying and lecturing.

I have conjectured that the time Hakham Shaul spent under the tutelage of Hakham Tsefet was far greater than is mentioned in his accounts. There is a possible mention of this in Hakham Shaul's letter to the Galatians. In this letter, Hakham Shaul tells us that he spent "fifteen days" with Hakham Tsefet.<sup>g</sup> Because the letter of Galatians is not P'shat, we realize that the "fifteen days" does not have to be a literal "fifteen days." There remains that remote possibility that the "fifteen days" was actually fifteen years. This number closely corresponds with the amount of time that Hakham Shaul spends with the interval of "fourteen years" mentioned in Galatians 2:1. I have conjectured that Hakham Shaul served as the Talmid to Hakham Tsefet for this extended period. This would account for the vast understanding the Hakham Shaul has of Tsefet's p'shat. This p'shat would be priceless to Hakham Shaul later as he builds his Gemara - remez materials. This further reinforces the system of rabbinic hermeneutics. It demonstrates that power and vitality of p'shat. P'shat is the foundation on which all arguments for subsequent knowledge stand. Without p'shat, there can be not, remez, midrash or sod. All of these interpretations and elucidations sit firmly on the foundation of p'shat.

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<sup>e</sup> W. Robertson Nicoll, The Expositor's Greek Testament, George H. Doran Co, Volume 5 pg 79

<sup>f</sup> Joh. Ed. Huther, Th.D, Commentary on the New Testament, Funk & Wagnall's, Publishers, 1887,pg 337 " There is no reason to doubt that this Silvanus is the well-known companion of the Apostle Paul."

<sup>g</sup> Gal. 1:18

While I realize there is some conjecture and thesis, concerning Hakham Shaul being the talmid of Hakham Tsefet, we give the alternative to Hakham Tsefet's vast understanding of Messiah as revealed through Hakham Shaul in the present pericope. Again, Silvanus is the scribe of Hakham Tsefet later used by Hakham Shaul. Likewise, Hakham Shaul possessed the entire library of p'shat in the person of Silvanus.

I believe that many scholars who have noted that Silvanus was the scribe of Hakham Shaul has put the "cart before the horse" so to speak. The scholarly opinion suggests that Silvanus was the scribe of Hakham Shaul before he was the scribe of Hakham Tsefet. In my scholarly opinion, the reverse is actually true. These ideas suggest the idea that Hakham Shaul is superior to Hakham Tsefet. I must concur with His Eminence that the triad of Yaakov, Yochanan and Tsefet formed the superstructure of the Nazarene movement. This means that Hakham Tsefet was one of the preeminent members of the Nazarene authority. In the book Acts, we are told in that Shaul was a "young *man*" at the stoning of Stephen.<sup>h</sup> The language of Acts mirrors that of last week's pericope where the Hakham Tsefet exhorts "younger" "*neōteroi*" to submit to the Elder. From this and the material presented in Acts, we must determine that Shaul was a Pakid during that time. His Eminence pointed out to me that Hakham Tsefet would have become a Hakham on Lag B Omer in the year of Yeshua' ascension. Therefore, it is more likely that Silvanus is the scribe of Hakham Tsefet before he serves Hakham Shaul.

This week I was looking at a cryptic verse in Yaakov (James). I consulted a couple of commentaries, which purported that Yaakov borrowed from Hakham Shaul. All of this made me sick! Please understand that I am not demeaning Hakham Shaul. Again, I reiterate that that these scholars have put the "cart before the horse." You MUST have a foundation before you can build. Hakham Shaul could NEVER have written his Gemara - Remez without a p'shat. All of this demonstrates that fact that the materials of Hakham Shaul are NOT built on thin air. Close investigation of the Gemara will demonstrate my point immediately.

*Mishnah (p'shat) Berakhot 1:1 **From what time** may they recite the Shema in the evening? From the hour that the priests enter [their homes] to eat their heave offering, "until the end of the first watch"— the words of R. Eliezer. But sages say, "Until midnight." Rabban Gamaliel says, "Until the rise of dawn." M'H Š: His [Gamaliel's] sons returned from a banquet hall [after midnight]. They said to him, "We did not [yet] recite the Shema.*

*Gemara (remez) Berakhot 1A. On what basis does the Tannaite authority stand when he begins by teaching the rule, "**From what time...**" [in the assumption that the religious duty to recite the Shema has somewhere been established? In point of fact, it has not been established that people have to recite the Shema at all.]<sup>i</sup>*

Even the novice can see the point made here. The Gemara – remez builds on the text and structure of materials already written.

Therefore, I conclude that Silvanus was a great prize to Hakham Shaul. He possessed the library of Hakham Tsefet in personal form. One can imagine the power this gave Hakham Shaul. Rather

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<sup>h</sup> Acts 7:58

<sup>i</sup> I have not included all the Mishnah or Gemara here. This only serves as a illustration.

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than having to communicate extensively with Hakham Tsefet on matters of the p'shat of Hakham Tsefet Hakham Shaul would simply ask Silvanus.

### Time based Letters:

This week mulling Hakham Tsefet repeatedly in my mind, I looked for links in the chain so to speak. Looking at the reading schedule and Biblical Calendar an interesting point surfaced. It should be to no surprise that we are in the final week of Nachamu. The present pericope of Hakham Tsefet concluded the theme of comfort and strengthening. Comfort and strengthening is very much a theme of the last seven weeks in Hakham Tsefet's writings. Next week's readings will open the second letter of Hakham Tsefet. However, I am amazed at the synchronicity of Hakham Tsefet with the triennial calendar. Witnessing Hakham Tsefet's genius is amazing. I am amazed that some many scholars look at the writings of Hakham Tsefet as if he were some simpleton. I cannot fathom the genius of this amazing Hakham.

What does this week's pericope have to do with the Triennial Calendar? Hakham Tsefet ends his letter at the END of the year. Next week (before Shabbat), we will experience Rosh HaShanah. This letter concluded before we will open the next. Hakham Tsefet is again right on queue. This is amazing. This is the most appose place to end his treatise. Hakham Tsefet ends his treatise exhorting, strengthening and encouraging his fellow Nazarenes.

Some scholars suggest that the title for this treatise of Hakham Tsefet should be "λόγος παρακλήσεως" or the "word of comfort," "testimony or encouragement."<sup>i</sup> This exact phrase is used in the book of Acts<sup>k</sup> where Hakham Shaul, in the words of his scribe Silvanus, stands up to give λόγος παρακλήσεως.

What is equally amazing is that scholars suggest that the only way to understand what Hakham Tsefet is saying is to weigh this writing against the Tanach where the Greek παρακαλῶν must be translated פָּרַח. Hakham Shaul, through his scribe Silvanus also records the idea of comforting in his Letter to the Romans.<sup>l</sup>

The choice of words and word order tell us when Hakham Tsefet intended for this material to be read. Παρακαλῶν is selected as a preeminent word in verse 12. This tells us that the letter must be read so that the final seven pericope correspond with the seven weeks of Nachamu.

### Standing?

I see this as a flag to tell us prepare for the coming holy days. The Ramban, quoting Midrashic materials, calls Yom Kippur that "day of Standing."<sup>m</sup> Again, I find the connections of Hakham Tsefet to the location in the Triennial readings amazing.

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<sup>i</sup> W. Robertson Nicoll, The Expositor's Greek Testament, George H. Doran Co, Volume 5 pg.79

<sup>k</sup> Acts 13:15 μετὰ δὲ τὴν ἀνάγνωσιν τοῦ νόμου καὶ τῶν προφητῶν ἀπέστειλαν οἱ ἀρχισυνάγωγοι πρὸς αὐτοὺς λέγοντες· ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, εἴ τις ἐστὶν ἐν ὑμῖν **λόγος παρακλήσεως** πρὸς τὸν λαόν, λέγετε.

<sup>l</sup> Rom 12:8 εἴτε ὁ **παρακαλῶν** ἐν τῇ παρακλήσει· ὁ μεταδιδούς ἐν ἀπλότητι ὁ προϊστάμενος ἐν σπουδῇ ὁ ἐλεῶν ἐν ἰλαρότητι

<sup>m</sup> Ramban, The Torah, with Ramban's Commentary Translated, Annotated, and Elucidated, Sefer Vayikra, Artscroll Series, Mesorah Publications Ltd, June 2008 pg 407

## Χάρις (*kharis*) and χάρις (*kharin*)...

The word χάρις is translated frequently as “grace.” This word actually has more than one definition.

1. Grace or graciousness
2. Favor or favoritism
3. Thanks and gratitude

However, our text uses χάρις (*kharin*) noun accusative feminine singular common from χάρις.<sup>n</sup> This word creates complexities that are difficult to explain. Sources differ on how to translate this word. All agree that the source word is most likely Χάρις (*kharis*). Conversely, use of χάρις (*kharin*) forces this word χάρις (*kharin*) into a different context. I translate it “by which means” based on J.H. Moulton and G. Milligan’s definition of the use of χάρις (*kharin*)<sup>o</sup> as well as contextual, scriptural evidence.

I cite here an example of the word χάρις (*kharin*)...

*1 John 3:12 "not as Cain, who was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous."*

1 John 3:12 οὐ καθὼς Κάιν ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ ἦν καὶ ἔσφαξεν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ· καὶ χάρις τίνος ἔσφαξεν αὐτόν; ὅτι τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ πονηρὰ ἦν τὰ δὲ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ αὐτοῦ δίκαια.

In this context, χάρις (*kharin*) cannot be translated “grace.” Cain does not kill his brother in “grace.” “For what reason” χάρις (*kharin*) does Cain kill Able?

Likewise, “for what reason” χάρις (*kharin*) do we “stand”? We “stand” (Pray) in the truth of G-d. Furthermore, χάρις (*kharin*) is used only once in the LXX...

2Ch 7:21 καὶ ὁ οἶκος οὗτος ὁ ὑψηλὸς πᾶς ὁ διαπορευόμενος αὐτὸν ἐκστήσεται καὶ ἐρεῖ χάρις τίνος ἐποίησεν κύριος τῇ γῆ ταύτῃ καὶ τῷ οἴκῳ τούτῳ

*2Ch 7:21 And this House, which was exalted, every passerby will be astounded, and they will say: Why has the L-rd done this to this country and to this Temple?<sup>p</sup>*

The use of χάρις (*kharin*) is limited to nine other verses in the Nazarene codicil. (Lk. 7:47, Gal. 3:19, Eph. 3:1, 14, 1 Tim. 5:14, Tit. 1:5, 11, 1 Jn. 3:12, Jude 1:16) It is NEVER translated “grace.” Its primary translation is “for this reason.” If it is NEVER translated as “grace,” why would scholars translate it as “grace” here in this passage? I have no answer except that it must serve some ulterior motive such as “grace” as opposed to Torah. Actually, I find here a hermeneutic demanding that the word NOT be translated “grace.” While we always seem to find an

<sup>n</sup> J.H. Moulton and G. Milligan, Vocabulary of the Greek Testament, Hendrickson Publishers, 1930 pg 684

<sup>o</sup> Ibid

<sup>p</sup> Rashi’s translation

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exception to the rule, I believe that the appropriate way to translate  $\chi\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota\nu$  (*kharin*) is “for this reason” or as I have in the context of this verse “by which means.”

### **The congregation in Babylon...**

This phrase has been subjected to its fair amount of scholarly abuse. Here I must concur with His Eminence. We CANNOT drag Remez into P’shat to interpret this text. This would be an absolute violation of protocol. A sizable number of scholar’s actually reject any allegorical interpretation of this verse. Therefore, we must take the words at face value. Understanding this phrase is wrapped up in “napkin hermeneutic” of His Eminence. “Napkin Hermeneutics” are as follows “the end is in the beginning and the beginning is in the end.”

*1Pe 1:1 "Tsefet, an apostle sent one of Yeshua haMashiach, to the chosen sojourners of the Dispersion of Pontus, of Galatia, of Cappadocia, of Asia, and of Bithynia," BESB*

Hakham Tsefet has sent this letter to all the Dispersion. It is elementary to understand that great community of Jews resided in Babylon.

This brings me to another point. Hakham Tsefet must have sit in the School of Bet Emunah from time to time. I say this because Hakham Tsefet uses “napkin hermeneutics” as taught by His Eminence. (Surely, this is where Hakham Tsefet learned it - that is where I learned it) Notice the end in the beginning.

1 Tsefet 5:14 “Shalom to all of you in **Messiah**” (the ending) 1 Tsefet 1:1 “Tsefet, an apostle sent one of Yeshua **haMashiach**” (the beginning). 1 Tsefet 1:2 Also “May grace and peace (Shalom) be multiplied to you.”<sup>BESB</sup>

“The congregation in Babylon **chosen together**” ...

1Pe 5:<sup>13</sup> Ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς ἡ ἐν Βαβυλῶνι **συνεκλεκτῆ** καὶ Μᾶρκος ὁ υἱός μου

### **Mordecahi (Mark) my son ...**

There is not reason to believe that Mordechai is the literal offspring of Hakham Tsefet. This language was common to the period.

*Mishnah Berakot 1:1 From what time may they recite the Shema in the evening? From the hour that the priests enter [their homes] to eat their heave offering, “until the end of the first watch” — the words of R. Eliezer. But sages say, “Until midnight.” Rabban Gamaliel says, “Until the rise of dawn.” M’H Š: His [**Gamaliel’s sons**] returned from a banquet hall [after midnight]. They said to him, “We did not [yet] recite the Shema.*

Here the “sons of Gamaliel” are not his children. The “sons of Gamaliel” are his talmidim.

### **Greet the Brethren with a holy kiss...**

This language is reminiscent of Hakham Shaul and his Scribe Silvanus.<sup>q</sup> Therefore, we are forced to conclude that this must have been the ancient practice of greeting when engaging one another. Origen tells us that this was the practice after prayers.<sup>r</sup>

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<sup>q</sup> Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 16:20; 1 Thess. 5:26

<sup>r</sup> W. Robertson Nicoll, The Expositor’s Greek Testament, George H. Doran Co, Volume V pg 80

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## CONNECTIONS TO TORAH READINGS

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**Torah Seder:** Vayikra 14:33-57 B'midbar 28:9-15

**Vayikra 14:33-57:** The Torah Seder is primarily concerned with the house of a tza'arat regarding the ritual impurity generated by *tzaraat* and various discolorations described in the Torah of a house. This mitzvah includes all the laws associated with *tzaraat* of the house: under what circumstances does the house require quarantine, razing part of its walls, or complete demolition; and under what circumstances it becomes impure, and under what circumstances it can cause impurity to humans or objects. All of these conditions condemn the house and property of the tza'arat. Hakham Tsefet uses the word "Shalom" in his postscript. The word shalom does not only mean peace. Shalom contains the idea of complete restoration. I would conclude that the Leper has experienced "shalom" in his repentance. His possessions, property and health are all restored.

**B'midbar 28:9-15:** I believe that we can see that Hakham Tsefet alludes to the "beginning of months" in the fact that he is ending his letter before Rosh HaShanah. He will begin a new letter for Shabbat Teshuvah.

**Ashlamatah:** Yeshayahu 5:8-16 + 6:3

Yehayahu 5:16. And the L-rd of Hosts will be exalted **in judgment**, and the Holy God shall be hallowed with equity. Could be seen as a allusion to Rosh HaShanah. This would again connect to Hakham Tsefet's conclusory remarks for the seventh Shabbat of Nachamu and the coming of Rosh HaShanah. However the "the deed of His hands" is found in verse 12 which we also see in Tehillim "and with the skill of his hands he led them." The skill of his hands thematically connects to Tsefet in that "logizomai" and "graphō" are the skill or deeds of men's hands as they wrote the Letter of Tsefet.

Likewise, His Eminence has underlined the words of the thirteenth verse. Therefore, My people shall go into exile because of lack of knowledge, perhaps he is alluding to the connection between the exile and Babylon who housed the dominate population of exiled Jews.

The word house is a verbal tally in Yehayahu 5:8

The theme of the house is played upon throughout the entire Torah readings. Rashi's comments on Vayikra 14:34 are profound in that G-d inflicts the plague for a purpose. The theme of the house is contrary to the lack of shelter. Here we can see the comfort of G-d in providing a good house. I believe that there is even a slight connection to Hakham Tsefet's pericope this week. "The *congregation* of Babylon greets you." While the word "congregation" is not present, it is firmly insinuated. The congregation is often referred to as "beit" house. Again this plays on all the imagery and concepts that should be found in the "house."

**Special Ashlamatah:** Yeshayahu 61:10-63:9,

The Prophet is offering consolation and comfort to Yisrael. This special Ashlamatah is well suited to Shabbat Nachamu #7. In much the same way, Hakham Tsefet offers his final words of comfort and strengthening to his audience.

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**1 Shemuel 20:18 & 42**

I believe that we can see that Hakham Tsefet alludes to the “beginning of months” in the fact that he is ending his letter before Rosh HaShanah. He will begin a new letter for Shabbat Teshuvah.

**Tehillim 78:56-72:** The final phrase of Tehillim is “and with the skill of his hands he led them” referring to the skill of David’s hands. The skill of his hands thematically connects to Tsefet in that “logizomai” and “graphō” are the skill of men’s hands as they wrote the Letter of Tsefet.

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MITZVOT

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TZARAAT ON HOUSES

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**Positive Commandment 103**

We are commanded regarding the ritual impurity generated by *tzaraat* [various discolorations described in the Torah] of a house. This mitzvah includes all the laws associated with *tzaraat* of the house: under what circumstances does the house require quarantine, razing part of its walls, or complete demolition; and under what circumstances it becomes impure, and under what circumstances it can cause impurity [to humans or objects].

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RELATED MISHNAYOT

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Tractate Nega'im

Sotah 1.5

Eduyyot 5.1

Middot 2.5

Kelim 1.1,4-7, 27:4

Challah 4:11

Shekelim 5:3

Eduyyot 3:7

Parah 1.4, 7.1, 8.8, 11.8

Zavim 5:6, 10