

Study Two – “The Way of Life”

Didache Chapter 1, verses 2:

“Now the way of life is this: First, you shall love G-d Who made you; second, you shall love your fellow as yourself. Whatever you do not want to happen to you, do not do to one another.”¹

The Greatest Commandment:

For those from a Christian background these verses should be very familiar to us. The first two roll of our tongue easily and were most likely the basis for our position that the Torah has been done away with by the new commandments that Yeshua gave us, as we quote Mattityahu 22:37 – 40. And so, we see from the Teaching of Yeshua to the Grafted-In, that these two commandments are at the top, or centre, of The Way of Life. They are the guiding principles that we should live by when understanding and applying the principles in the Torah, as Yeshua said in verse 40:

If we are to be Talmidim, disciples of Rabbi Yeshua, our goal should also be that of our Master Yeshua, Who said He came not to (Mattityahu 5:17):

_____ the _____ and the _____

But He came to _____ them.

When we walk out, or live the Mitzvot, the commandments of the Torah, in the spirit of these two commandments, to love G-d with “all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength” (Matt 22:37 – CJB²) and love our neighbour as ourselves, then, like Yeshua, we too will be fulfilling the Torah and the Prophets, because all the commandments hang on the spirit through which they are fulfilled.

¹ *The Way of Life: The Rediscovered Teachings of the Twelve Jewish Apostles to the Gentiles*, The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles (p. 27), Toby Janicki, First Fruits of Zion, 1-800-775-4807, ffoz.org

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The Apostolic Constitutions (the full section is in Appendix 1) has a commentary on section 1.II, that parallels the Didache, which reads like this:

“The first way, therefore, is that of life; and is this, which the law also does appoint: “To love the Lord G-d with all your mind, and with all your soul, who is the one and only G-d, besides whom there is no other;” (Section 1.II, Apostolic Constitutions (Book VII) Concerning the Christian Life, and the Eucharist, and the Initiation into Christ.³)

For contemplation:

Compare Didache chapter 1, verse 2, with the Apostolic Constitution commentary, section 1.II, and Marcus 12:29 – 31. What important concept is missing from the Didache version, that both Yeshua and the Apostolic Constitution refer to (see also D'varim 6:4)? What may be the reason for this? Consider the words of Yaakov, Yeshua's brother, in Yaakov (James) 2:19 – 24.

The Sh'ma, which is part of the morning (Shacharit) and evening (Arvit or Ma'ariv) prayers, is the central affirmation of Judaism. The prayer expresses belief in the singularity of G-d, that is, in G-d's oneness and incomparability. In total it can be recited five times per day, including part of the morning prayers and bedtime prayer.

Yeshua started with the Sh'ma when He was asked what the most important commandment was – “Sh'ma (Hear), Isra'el! Adonai our G-d, Adonai is one.”

These are the words the Jew proclaims at life's culmination. Throughout the ages, Jews strove to depart life as they lived it—with the words of the Sh'ma on their lips. Why? In Judaism it is understood that when you call on the Name of the Lord (via the Sh'ma), on your death bed, you will be saved. A concept that is carried through to the Brit Chadashah (refer Romans 10:13).

Which G-d:

Now, there is another difference between the Didache (“... love G-d Who made you”), the Apostolic Writings (“... love the Lord”), and D'varim 6:5 (“... love Adonai your G-d”). D'varim implies a relationship between G-d and His people. The well-known Ten Words (Ten Commandments, aka Matan Torah) given at Mt Sinai, defines this relationship between G-d and the Children of Israel, in D'varim 5:6:

³ Anonymous. Book VII, Section 1.II, *The Apostolic Constitutions*. Unknown. Kindle Edition



For contemplation:

When relating the relationship that a non-Jew initially has with G-d, would it be more appropriate to describe Him as “your G-d, *Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, where you lived as slaves,*” or as “your G-d *Who made you*”?

Sirach⁴ 7:29 – 31 reads similar to the Didache:

“Revere the Lord with your whole being, and honour his priests. With all your might *love the One who made you*, and don't neglect his ministers. Fear the Lord and honour the priest.” (Sirach 7:29 – 31, CEB⁵)

“The G-d Who made you” is a description of G-d that would be more universally accepted by new, Grafted-In believers, than “the G-d Who brought you out of Egypt”. This aligns well with the purpose of Yeshua, as described in Yochanan (John) 3:16.

The Epistle of Barnabas expands on the Didache, through a form of parable, someone going on a journey to a destination:

“The way of light, then, is as follows. If anyone desires to travel to the appointed place, he must be zealous in his works. The knowledge, therefore, which is given to us for the purpose of walking in this way, is the following. You shall love Him that created you: you shall glorify Him that redeemed you from death. ...”⁶

Again, we see the reference to the G-d Who created us but notice a parallel to D'varim 5:5 – the reference to redemption. This knowledge is the knowledge that should be the source of our zealousness to do works, which accompany our journey, as summarised in Ephesians 2:8 – 10. Notice the parallel between the Apostolic Constitutions and Yaakov 2:19 – 24, the connection between belief/faith/understanding and action.

⁴ The Book of Sirach (aka Ecclesiasticus) is a Jewish work, originally written in Hebrew. It consists of ethical teachings, from approximately 200 to 175 BCE, written by the Judahite scribe Ben Sira of Jerusalem, on the inspiration of his father Joshua son of Sirach. Joshua is sometimes called Jesus son of Sirach or Yeshua ben Eliezer ben Sira.

⁵ Sirach 7:29 – 31, 2011 Common English Bible

⁶ Epistle of Barnabas 19:1 – 2



Love G-d:

For contemplation:

Compare D'varim 6:5 with Mattityahu 22:37. Yeshua's version differs slightly from that in D'varim. What word did Yeshua add?

In the *Ahavat Olam Siddur*, Rabbi Dr Itzhak Shapira writes the following about Yeshua's words:

"Yeshua added to the prayer the words **מדעד ובכל** (uv'chol mada'acha – and with all your understanding), giving a **חידוש** (chidush – renewal) to the Torah, but not changing it. The word **מדעד** (mada'acha) is rooted in the word in the word **דעת** (da'at – understanding). The essence, according to Yeshua, is not just the **עשייה** (asiyah – doing/fulfilling) but also the **דעת** (da'at – understanding/revelation) as we fulfill the mitzvot. In Pirkei Avot it is written ("the essence is not the study but the fulfillment"). Yeshua takes it a step further and He declares: (The essence is not to the action but the revelation)."⁷

By working through this course, Yeshua's Teaching to the Grafted-In, we will not only be fulfilling the Mitzvot by studying them, and learning the action, but by the Ruach, we will attain the revelation of what we are doing, and the Spirit of the Torah.

Love your Fellow:

Once the Didache summarises the two greatest commandments, it focusses firstly on our relationship with one another – "... you shall love your fellow as yourself." (Didache 1.2) Instruction on loving G-d is not addressed again until later in the chapter on idol food, fasting, etc.

For contemplation:

Why would the Didache now focus on relationship with one another, before relationship with G-d? Consider the words of Yeshua in Mattityahu 5:24 and Yochanan in Yochanan Alef (1st John) 4:20 – 21.

When Yeshua answered the question about the greatest commandment, He quoted D'varim 6:4 – 5 (G-d being One, and loving Him), and the last part of Va'yikra (Leviticus) 19:18 (love your neighbour, as yourself). Both the Didache and the Apostolic Constitutions connect the two commandments as Yeshua did. The Epistle of Barnabas has a slightly different, and probably more challenging version, but it is possible that the first two documents take their cue from Yeshua's teaching.

⁷ Rabbi Dr Itzhak Shapira, Shema footnote, *Ahavat Olam Siddur*, p. 30



However, this concept of connecting these two commandants is not a foreign concept to Judaism, as we can see in the Sirach. Both the verse (29 – 31) of chapter 7 connect loving or fearing G-d with honouring or not neglecting the ministers and priest, who were every person's "fellow".

The word (רֵעַ "rea") in Va'yikra, however, can be translate as fellow, friend, or neighbour, and is typically considered to be a fellow Jewish neighbour/fellow. So, without promoting being unloving to foreigners, Jewish interpretation has limited the definition to "your fellow Jew".

For contemplation:

How did Yeshua challenge and reform this understanding / interpretation in Lucas (Luke) 10:29 – 37? How did He bring a "chidush" (renewal) to the concept of neighbour?

Yeshua's chidush is not new to Judaism. Rabbis before and after Him have expressed similar understanding. Hillel⁸ declares:

"... Be a disciple of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving people and bringing them closer to the Torah."⁹

Rabbi Dr. Shmuly Yanklowitz references Rabbi Akiba¹⁰ in his commentary on Pirkei Avot 2:18:

"If we embrace the radical ontological notion that every human is created in the image of G-d, then it is our obligatory honor to show deference to the infinite dignity in every person. Treating others with kindness and dignity, no matter their class, their actions, or station in life, is commensurate with the building of a just, equitable world. This is not a peripheral point to the Torah. Rabbi Akiva taught that the great principle of the Torah is to love one's fellow as oneself."¹¹

In Pirkei Avot 3:18, we read that Rabbi Akiva used to say:

"Beloved is the human for the human was created in the image of G-d;"¹²

⁸ Hillel (aka Hillel the Elder, Hillel the Great, or Hillel the Babylonian) was a Jewish religious leader, sage and scholar associated with the development of the Mishnah and the Talmud and the founder of the House of Hillel school of Tannaim (writers of the Mishnah). He was active during the end of the first century BCE and the beginning of the first century CE, and died around 10 CE, not long after Yeshua was born.

⁹ Yanklowitz, Rabbi Dr. Shmuly. Pirkei Avot: A Social Justice Commentary (p. 39). CCAR Press. Kindle Edition.

¹⁰ Rabbi Akiva, born Akiva ben Joseph around 50 CE, was a descendant of converts to Judaism, and became a leading Jewish scholar and sage, a tanna of the latter part of the first century and the beginning of the second century. Rabbi Akiva was a leading contributor to the Mishnah and to Midrash halakha. He died on 28 September 135 CE.

¹¹ Yanklowitz, Rabbi Dr. Shmuly. Pirkei Avot: A Social Justice Commentary (p. 112). CCAR Press. Kindle Edition.

¹² Yanklowitz, Rabbi Dr. Shmuly. Pirkei Avot: A Social Justice Commentary (p. 170). CCAR Press. Kindle Edition.



Action Not Feeling:

The imperative to love our "fellow" (all humanity) is directly afterward defined with the statement, "Whatever you do ..." This defines our love, not as a feeling, but as an action. Yeshua said it this way in Mattityahu 7:12:

Again, we see Yeshua giving us the principle upon which we are to fulfill the Torah and the Prophets. The Epistle of Barnabas, possibly taking the concept of Yochanan 15:13 as a basis, takes this instruction to step further than just "loving your fellow as yourself":

"... You shall love your neighbour more than your own soul. ..." (Epistle of Barnabas 19:5)

For contemplation:

Did Barnabas take what Yeshua said in Yochanan 15:12 – 13 a step too far? Afterall, wasn't it only Yeshua Who would lay down His life for us. Or was Barnabas in line with the Apostles' teachings of the time (refer Yochanan Alef¹³ 3:15 – 17)?

Yaakov also makes the point clear that loving our neighbour is an action, through which we fulfill the "royal law" (or "attain the goal of Kingdom Torah" as the CJB puts it), when he wrote, in Yaakov (James) 2:8:

"If, however, you fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself," you do well." (James 2:8 – TLV¹⁴)

Rav Sha'ul¹⁵ (the Apostle Paul) writes in Galatians 5:14:

And again in Romans 13:8 – 9:

¹³ 1st John 3:15 – 17

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¹⁵ Saul of Tarsus was a well-trained and respected Rabbi. He himself explains that he trained under Gamli'el (Acts 22:3), learning every detail of the Torah of his forefathers. Gamli'el was of the school of Hillel. Rav is a shortened version of Rabbi. Sha'ul is the Apostle Paul's Hebrew name.



"Don't owe anyone anything—except to love one another; for whoever loves his fellow human being has fulfilled Torah. For the commandments, "Don't commit adultery," "Don't murder," "Don't steal," "Don't covet," and any others are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbour as yourself." (Romans 3:8 – 9 - CJB¹⁶)

Do Unto Others:

Rabbis Shammai and Hillel were the last two Zugot¹⁷ of the Sanhedrin just prior to Yeshua's time. They differed in many opinions (but were still close friends). Both were asked by a gentile to teach him Torah, while standing on one leg. Their response is recorded in Talmud Bavli (the Babylonian Talmud), in Tractate Shabbat 31a:

"There was another incident involving one gentile who came before Shammai and said to Shammai: Convert me on condition that you teach me the entire Torah while I am standing on one foot. Shammai pushed him away with the builder's cubit in his hand. This was a common measuring stick and Shammai was a builder by trade. The same gentile came before Hillel. He converted him and said to him: That which is hateful to you do not do to another; that is the entire Torah, and the rest is its interpretation. Go study." (b.Shabbat 31a¹⁸)

The Didache also uses the negative form of the Golden Rule, as expressed by Hillel, "Whatever you do not want to happen to you, do not do to one another."¹⁹

Yeshua is recorded as saying the positive form of the Golden Rule in Mattityahu 7:12 and Lucas 6:31, yet the negative form was quite popular at the time, and even in earlier Jewish literature. Rav Sha'ul writes it this way in Romans 13:10:

The Book of Tobit²⁰ expresses it this way:

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¹⁷ See Appendix 2 for more information.

¹⁸ Shabbat 31a, Babylonian Talmud, The William Davidson Talmud (Koren - Steinsaltz)

¹⁹ *The Way of Life: The Rediscovered Teachings of the Twelve Jewish Apostles to the Gentiles*, The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles (p. 27), Toby Janicki, First Fruits of Zion, 1-800-775-4807, ffoz.org

²⁰ The Book of (aka the Book of Tobias), is a 3rd or early 2nd century BCE Jewish work describing how G-d tests the faithful, responds to prayers, and protects His covenant community, Israel.



"And what you hate, do not do to anyone. Do not drink wine to excess or let drunkenness go with you on your way." (Tobit 4:15 - NRSVCE²¹)

Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, the Aramaic translation of the Torah used during Yeshua's time, and read in synagogues as a translation of the Hebrew Torah reading (since most Jews did not speak Hebrew at that time), translates Va'yikra (Leviticus) 19:18 this way:

"And you shall love your neighbour: whatever you yourself hate, do not do to him." (Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, Va'yikra 19:18²²)

There are many more examples, but the point is very clear. In Jewish ethical teaching, the Golden Rule, either in the positive or the negative form, is directly associated with the characteristics of *Tzedek* (righteousness). It's considered the foundation of the Torah:

"Love your neighbour / fellow as yourself."

Interestingly, the Didache now continues, in verse 3 of chapter 2, with the way to live out the positive form of the Mitzvah²³ (commandment) and then in chapter 2 outlines how to live out the negative form of the Mitzvah.

Next Study: "This is the Teaching"

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²² Pseudo-Jonathan Targum, Leviticus 19:18, *JESUS, JUDAISM, AND THE "GOLDEN RULE"*, iccj.org

²³ This is Mitzvah number 13 of the 613 Commandments categories by Maimonides (aka Rambam) in the Mishneh Torah. D'varim 6:4, to know that G-d is One, a complete Unity, is number 3, and to Love G-d (D'varim 6:5) is number 4.



Appendix I: Extract from Apostolic Constitutions – Book VII, Section 1.II²⁴

“Moral Exhortations of the Lord's Constitutions Agreeing with the Ancient Prohibitions of the Divine Laws. The Prohibition of Anger, Spite, Corruption, Adultery, and Every Forbidden Action.

II. The first way, therefore, is that of life; and is this, which the law also does appoint: “To love the Lord God with all your mind, and with all your soul, who is the one and only God, besides whom there is no other;” “and your neighbour as yourself.” And whatsoever you would not should be done to you, do not do to another. Tobit 4:15 “Bless them that curse you; pray for them that despitefully use you.” Matthew 5:44 “Love your enemies; for what thanks is it if you love those that love you? For even the Gentiles do the same.” Luke 6:32; Matthew 5:46-47 “But love those that hate you, and you shall have no enemy.” For says He, “You shall not hate any man; no, not an Egyptian, nor an Edomite;” for they are all the workmanship of God. Avoid not the persons, but the sentiments, of the wicked. “Abstain from fleshly and worldly lusts.” “If any one gives you a stroke on your right cheek, turn to him the other also.” Not that revenge is evil, but that patience is more honourable. For David says, “If I have made returns to them that repaid me evil.” “If anyone compels you to go one mile, go with him two.” And, “He that will sue you at the law, and take away your coat, let him have your cloak also.” Matthew 5:40; Luke 6:29 “And from him that takes your goods, require them not again.” Luke 6:30 “Give to him that asks you, and from him that would borrow of you do not shut your hand.” Matthew 5:42 For “the righteous man is pitiful, and lends.” For your Father would have you give to all, who Himself “makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends His rain on the just and on the unjust.” Matthew 5:45 It is therefore reasonable to give to all out of your own labours; for says He, “Honour the Lord out of your righteous labours,” but so that the saints be preferred. “You shall not kill;” that is, you shall not destroy a man like yourself: for you dissolve what was well made. Not as if all killing were wicked, but only that of the innocent: but the killing which is just is reserved to the magistrates alone. “You shall not commit adultery;” for you divide one flesh into two. “They two shall be one flesh;” Genesis 2:24 for the husband and wife are one in nature, in consent, in union, in disposition, and the conduct of life; but they are separated in sex and number. “You shall not corrupt boys;” Leviticus 18:22 for this wickedness is contrary to nature, and arose from Sodom, which was therefore entirely consumed with fire sent from God. Genesis 19 “Let such a one be accursed: and all the people shall say, So be it.” Deuteronomy xxvii “You shall not commit fornication;” for says He, “There shall not be a fornicator among the children of Israel.” Deuteronomy 23:17 “You shall not steal;” for Achan,

²⁴ Anonymous. Book VII, Section 1.II *The Apostolic Constitutions*. Unknown. Kindle Edition



when he had stolen in Israel at Jericho, was stoned to death; Joshua vii and Gehazi, who stole, and told a lie, inherited the leprosy of Naaman; 2 Kings v and Judas, who stole the poor's money, betrayed the Lord of glory to the Jews, John 12:6 and repented, and hanged himself, and burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out; Matthew 27:5; Acts 1:18 and Ananias, and Sapphira his wife, who stole their own goods, and "tempted the Spirit of the Lord," were immediately, at the sentence of Peter our fellow-apostle, struck dead. Acts v"



Appendix 2: The Zugot of the Sanhedrin

The term "Zugot" ("pairs of two identical objects") refers to the two heads of the Sanhedrin who were Jewish sages or scholars that maintained the chain of Oral Torah. The Zugot are seen as the link between the Prophets and the Tannaim (writers of the Mishnah).

The Sanhedrin was the successor to the Men of Great Assembly (the Anshei Knesset HaGedolah), and it functioned as the legislative body of the Jewish people. For a period of time, the head of the Sanhedrin was the "Nasi" (President) and second to him was the "Av Beit Din" (Father of the Assembly).

For about two hundred years (between c. 150 and 30 BCE), these Zugot were the spiritual guides of Jewish life, the transmitters of the Oral Torah and assumed Halakhic²⁵ authority²⁶. The Zugot were made up of:

- Yose ben Yoezer of Sereda, and Yose ben Yohanan
- Yehoshua ben Perahyah, and Mattai (or Nittai) or Arbel
- Yehudah ben Tabbai, and Simeon ben Shetah
- Shemayah, and Abtalion
- Hillel the Elder, and Shammai (The last of the Zugot, just prior to Yeshua's time)

After this period, the positions "Nasi" and "Av Beit Din" remained, but they were not Zugot. The title of "Av Beit Din" existed before the period of the Zugot, and his purpose was to oversee the Sanhedrin, the court of religious law also known as the "Beit Din". The rank of "Nasi" was a new institution that was assigned during the period of the Zugot. The first of the Zugot also introduced the Mishnaic style of transmitting the Oral Tradition (Torah).

Although Hillel and Shammai themselves had few disagreements, and were the best of friends, some of their positions on Halakah did differ considerably in some areas, and consequently their students had many disagreements. With the rise of their schools, Halakhic uniformity was being challenged. This is the background to many of the challenges that Yeshua faced from the P'rushim (Pharisees) and Torah Scholars (Scribes).

Halakha became a scholastic discipline that developed in academic rather than judicial settings, more and more issues remaining unresolved. There remained over 300 disagreements between the schools, therefore after this period of the Zugot, the "House of Hillel" and the "House of Shammai" came

²⁵ Jewish Law around "the way to behave" or "the way of walking". The word is derived from the root which means "to behave" ("to go" or "to walk").

²⁶ The Zugot debated how the Mitzvot of Torah should best be lived out under various circumstances. The winning argument was considered the rule of law, but the other side could also apply under certain circumstances. Therefore, the Torah could be applicable to all circumstances of life. Conservative Judaism applies a similar approach, to ensure that Halachah is always applicable in as many circumstances as possible.



Yeshua's Teaching to the "Grafted-In"



to represent two distinct perspectives on Jewish law, and disagreements between the two schools of thought are found throughout the Mishnah.

