

# Jesus as an Historical Figure

## **From 'Hebrew Yeshua' to 'Christian Jesus'**

Personal circumstances well beyond my control were such that at the age of eight I found myself pushed me into the girls' lineup for a Catholic Premiere Communion.

My parents who, at the time, were temporarily working in a remote area beyond the city limits of Tunis, Tunisia, in the early '60s, had enrolled me in a French nun-run boarding school reputed as the only establishment suitable for an expatriate child.

One year later followed the equally compulsory Confirmation.

The lovely pristine white habit-styled garment and the large pectoral cross notwithstanding, both rites constituted quirky happenings for one born of a Jewish mother.

These days, though not in the least bit interested in any religion or prophet, I have become curious. How did Yeshua, the young Jewish rabbi, wearing the tefillin according to the Talmudic obligation and sporting long earlocks end up, propelled centuries after his death, to the pinnacle of Christian religions as the Son of God?

Yeshua was not a cohen, a priest, but a mere teacher of the Torah. His wandering ministry was as common then as it is today. The main difference, these days, is that spiritual leaders and pioneers of science-backed spiritual theories travel the world by plane to 'preach' and induct their flock during hours-long, expensive seminars, workshops and retreats.

In ancient Galilee and Judea, as in modern Israel, as in most nooks and crannies of the planet, there has never been a shortage of individuals whose thoughts and teachings resonated in enough people hungry for love to generate a 'special' spiritual connection and a following.

The confounding thing for anyone in search of categorical pronouncements from modern, eminent secular scholars of early Christianity, regarding the authenticity of Jesus, as enshrined in the Christian doctrine, is that from what is known of his lifetime activities there are no such pronouncements and no proof of multitudes following him to be found anywhere.

Instead, most expository information concerning the data made available to such experts is couched in the amorphous fuzziness of recurring words such as interpretation, ambiguous or scarce evidence and items of contention. It fails to paint an accurate historical picture,

carrying too little information woven in and out of a great many cautionary 'It is believed' types of phrases and is further compounded by numerous mentions of questionable authorships. Even in the writings of Saul [Paul the Apostle], specific references to Yeshua, the man and his ministry, are sparse – and of course, they never met.

Josephus [né Yosef ben Matityahu], the Jewish historian in the 1st century, also wrote 'something' about Yeshua. His words as well as the texts of the first gospel by Mark, which has inspired every ensuing Christian doctrine, have been amended by a number of unknown monks and scholars. Each alteration was further compounded by the problems of translations from Hebrew, Aramaic - the common language of its time - to imperfect Greek translations of scrolls.

The end result is that just about every remnant of ancient texts found to this day is stamped with an objective caveat: *Authenticity contested by many scholars.*

Still, let us assume that the Hebrew man who made a grand entrance through the eastern gate of the fortified city of Jerusalem astride a donkey on one fateful day of Succoth did exist circa 33 AD.

Though the quasi-total lack of historical data makes this tenuous, let us agree for now that this man's name was, indeed, Yeshua and that Yeshua was one whole, real, individual who lived to die on the cross some thirty-three years after his birth.

It is generally assumed that Josephus wrote more about Yeshua and the era of early Christianity than has so far been found. One cause of the rarity of texts attributed to him is that, as a Roman collaborator, he was utterly despised by the Jewish intelligentsia, the ones who would have immersed themselves in academic writings. In fact, they collectively ignored his codex.

Throughout the various ferocious sackings of Rome, the epicentres of which were palaces, places of worship and libraries, a handful of Christian monks did manage to rescue 'something' of Josephus' body of work among others but proceeded to alter sections according to their personal interpretation while copying the texts onto fresh vellum.

Generally speaking, beyond the impulse of a succession of kings, emperors and scholar monks to cook the books, entire sections of the gospel narratives, there has to also have been many passages genuinely lost in translation.

Regardless, the body of these 'refreshed' documents was then moved from fiction to reality writing. Perhaps not surprisingly, the game of Chinese Whispers comes to mind.

All alterations made to every known shred of surviving texts of that era were intended to bolster the Christian beliefs of the time in the name of Divine Authority. One of the central beliefs was, of course, that Jesus had been a much maligned Messiah, a martyr, and that this Messiah born of Jewish parents along with his parents and all his Jewish disciples had to be re-cast as Gentiles, the term meaning non-Jews. Only Yehuda/Yudah (Judas) was allowed to remain 'tainted' by his Jewish blood, but only to be used within the Christian anti-semitic context of the betrayal of Jesus.

The Jewish rites Yeshua followed 'religiously' till his last moment, such as the Pesach/Passover Seder (dinner), were passed as new Christian rites.

Clearly, copyright and intellectual property were not an issue in those days.

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## **As Things Were**

Jewish scholars had written at length about the long succession of Hebrew kings from Saul, David, Solomon and the assortment of claimant-kings through the centuries of Roman rule. However, they were not culturally interested in collecting other cultures' artefacts for the sake of creating depositories in which to house them.

That narrow focus is another cause of the lack of source material relevant to the early years of Christianity, in Jerusalem, after the death of Yeshua.

Once Rome fell to the Barbarian, the population of Ancient Israel found itself deprived of its own leadership. It fell on even harder times. The scholars, as well as the people, turned inward to their own, rich and ancient spiritual system, one that had been sparked by Moshe's (Moses) conversations with God and the subsequent handing down of the Tablets – some 1300 years earlier.

Although the Temple libraries were brimming, the Temple Priests in office circa 34 AD and beyond did not appear greatly interested in what the 'neighbors' were getting up to – at least not in regards to their budding Christian spirituality.

When, in 70 AD, Rome finally destroyed Jerusalem in yet another attempt to quell yet another (provoked) Jewish rebellion, the massive Temple, known as the second Temple, the marvel of its time, was totally gutted by fire.

And if this combined state of affairs did not constitute enough peril for frail papyrus and thin parchment 'classics', along came 476 AD!

Rome finally fell, and it fell under the might of the Barbarian tribes.

Acting as the proverbial 'barbarians' that they were, they promptly ransacked libraries and places of worships, everyone's, destroying all manner of cultural significance - not out of any intellectual retribution, but more likely out of an intellectual void.

To that ever growing pile of vanishing original documents, let us add the fifty-two Gnostics texts rejected by the Church. The early Gnostics were a Jewish movement and the documents they wrote between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 4<sup>th</sup> centuries were based on the philosophies of various ancient prophets. It is said that some of their reflections included were on or about Yeshua/Jesus.

As modern-day writers of Apocalyptic Christian fantasy would like to suggest, who knows what original manuscripts, thought to have been long ago lost forever, have been resting in

the impregnable innermost coffers of Vatican City! It is safe to assume that whatever documents are still there must be considered important detractors of the party line, namely the authentication of Yeshua/Jesus as the son of God.

Be that as it may, one has to marvel at the amazingly rich posthumous life that has been crafted for Yeshua, one scroll at a time - one gospel at a time, one synod at a time – beginning some fourteen years after his death and spanning the millennia.

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## Miracle Healing

What historical facts and scholarly knowledge I have come to accept regarding Yeshua, the Jewish teacher intent on sowing far and large the spiritual wisdom of the Torah and the Books of the Prophets and Jesus, the Christian holy icon, have come to me via Moriya, my teacher of Spirituality. Moriya, herself, was an enthusiastic follower of Professor David Flusser who died in 2000.

“This man,” she explained, “is the greatest scholar on Jesus, Paulus and on all that has become Christianity.” A quick Google search will certainly position Professor Flusser as an eminent, if not the most renowned scholar of all that concerns the nebulous era when Christianity struck root from its Jewish stem.

Thanks to Moriya’s erudite knowledge of sacred texts, interpretive tomes and her infinite patience with our months-long flurries of Q & A emails [questions from me/answers from her supplemented by my own research that triggered more Q’s and therefore more clarifying A’s] I was set on my way.

I became interested in the distance between Yeshua and his avatar, Gospel-driven Jesus. The former was a ‘Torah-bashing’ young man who ardently defended his belief.

Merely praying so many times a day, he preached, *intending* to regularly act on each of the 613 commandments [from which the 10 Christian commandments were later derived], and offering God the sacrifice of an animal when one’s conscious prodded too much, were not enough to accede the Grace of God.

The later was an unknown entity I wanted to see fleshed out fully.

It is estimated that Yeshua, or Yehoshua, was born around 4 BC, in the last years of King Herod’s reign and that he died around 30–35 AD - the exact years remaining unconfirmed.

Some four centuries later, the Roman emperor, Constantine the Great, adopted Christianity around the age of forty.

He was the first Roman Emperor to convert.

Did he do that out of faith or did his already converted mother, Helena, prod him to do so for his own salvation?

Or did he convert to forge new political alliances?

That remains a moot point, but he most likely was a lapsing Christian, too attached to the paganism of his ancestors to truly turn his back on it.

Influenced by the beliefs that had ruled his mind until then, Constantine decreed Yeshua the new Sun god. He fixed Yeshua's birth on the shortest day of the yearly cycle, the 25<sup>th</sup> of December, said to be the birthday of the original Sun god. Thus, **Sunday** became the holy day of Christianity.

If the gospel writers have painted an accurate image of Yeshua's interactive skills, he was no doubt a charismatic, intelligent teacher of the Torah. There is little doubt that he was an inspired healer. He was well familiar with the magnetic field that surrounds all, the aura, the astral field. He was also a master in the secret lore of herbal medicine.

In bygone eras, none of these skills was the exceptional talent that it is today.

The power of these abilities, rediscovered and grouped under the umbrella name of Energy Healing or Energy Medicine, is confirmed by neuroscientific findings among others.

In temples throughout Ancient Egypt and much further afield in Tibet, gifted young adepts were trained at the highest levels in the sciences of healing, astrology, astral travelling and ministration of the soul.

Master Seers were as essential to the decisions of a Pharaoh or a Dalai Lama as were their chief officials.

In Ancient Israel, back in the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC, biblical prophets, Elijah and Elisha, had already been noted for their ability to revive ones who had stopped breathing and to perform miracles similar to that of Yeshua's feeding of 5,000 with just five loaves and the two fish. Though it said that Yeshua did not like the comparison some made between him and Elijah, perhaps because Elijah killed some of his enemies while Yeshua merely threw himself around shouting at them, a copy-cattng of anecdotes seems evident.

I Kings 17 recounts such an event when Elijah, sent to Zarepath on a mission from God, asked an old woman to fetch him water and a piece of bread.

<sup>12</sup> "As surely as the LORD your God lives," she replied, "I don't have any bread - only a handful of flour in a jar and a little olive oil in a jug."

Elijah reiterates his wish, explains that God said that what miserly quantities of flour and oil were currently at the bottom of her jars would remain untouched, then the disbelieving woman on her way.

<sup>15</sup> She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. <sup>16</sup> For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the LORD spoken by Elijah.

Some time later, the woman's son became ill and eventually stopped breathing.

<sup>19</sup> "Give me your son," Elijah replied. He took him from her arms, carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his bed. <sup>20</sup> Then he cried out to the LORD, "LORD my God, have you brought tragedy even on this widow I am staying with, by causing her son to die?" <sup>21</sup> Then he stretched himself out on the boy three times and cried out to the LORD, "LORD my God, let this boy's life return to him!"

<sup>22</sup> The LORD heard Elijah's cry, and the boy's life returned to him, and he lived. <sup>24</sup> Then the woman said to Elijah, "Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the LORD from your mouth is the truth."

II Kings 2:19 gives us the miracle of Healing of the Water.

City folks informed Elijah that the spring water was so foul that it was not even good for watering the land.

Elijah asked someone to bring him a new bowl in which he put salt. He threw the salt into the spring. <sup>21</sup> "This is what the LORD says: 'I have healed this water. Never again will it cause death or make the land unproductive.'" <sup>22</sup> And the water has remained pure to this day, according to the word Elisha had spoken.

All but the most ardent of miracle believers will agree that the early prophets, the Issiyim and Yeshua who had lived with them for many years, and others from various world cultures, did not truly perform 'miracles'.

Instead, it is more likely to think that a very advanced knowledge of healing through the magnetic field of the body and its energy systems, combined with expert skills at power-hypnosis, altered the participants' auric energy.

Modern-day faith healings spread across all religion. Shamanism and other indigenous spiritual traditions - from the Bolivian Andes to the Red Heart of Australia - working with the energy centers of the body and focussing on a humanist view of all life and creation on Earth do deliver very real holistic outcomes for the believers.

With minimal training, run-of-the-mill suburban folks can be 'trained' to walk on embers. True fire-walkers walk on hot coals. Not only are these people totally awake and free of pain, but their skin remains blister-free. It should not be surprising to hear that an African tribe has been thriving on a diet of poisonous scorpions for countless years.

We can set aside the power of the mind in regards to superstitions, amulets and potions as well as faith healings. Theoretically, seeing as we are souls in disguise, it should not be surprising to think that, once we have jettisoned cluttering aspects of our ego-persona, we are able to tap into genuine higher energies.

Then, our body can become impervious to many ills that would otherwise undo or kill us.

These universal energies, magnetic/cosmic/quantum/spiritual energies a.k.a. a Higher Intelligence can be accessed on our behalf by hard-to-find but selfless and pure channelers.

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## Delusion or Awareness

Yeshua's life was cut short after only a three-year ministry.

The Hebrew name for God is **Yehova**, respectfully abstracted in the double Yod character **י**. According to the ancient Jewish custom going back to Abraham, **Yeshua's** name which also begins with **Yod** ( **י** ) **ישוע** created a direct link from God to him through the sound of this character.

Abraham (né Avraham), one of the three Fathers of the Jewish People, named his only son Yitzhak. **יצחק**, meaning 'He who will laugh a lot' when his wife, Sarai, laughed herself gleefully upon hearing angels announce she would be blessed with a first-born.

At already 75 years of age such news, in these times, was indeed something to rejoice about particularly, perhaps, when the soon-to-be-father had already celebrated his ninety-ninth birthday.

The belief of this link to God through the Yod is still current in regards to all other biblical names such as Yakov, Yosef, Yudit, and Yudah; hence Yahuda, Judea, the land of God. Yod is also the holy link-letter in Yehoshafat, Yehoahaz (**יהואחז**), names belonging to various kings of Judea.

The first Christian gospel is generally attributed to Matthew, though it is believed that Mark's had been written some ten years earlier, therefore, forty years after Yeshua's death.

Matthew's account begins while Yeshua had one of the daily ritual baths as dictated by the ancestral Jewish rule of *Mikveh* which requires a daily immersion in a flowing body of water to cleanse the body.

On that fateful day, glimpsing Yeshua on the bank of the Jordan, Yohanan ha-matbil hailed him and invited him to bathe alongside him. Seeing as Yohanan and Yeshua were cousins on Maryam's side, it was hardly newsworthy.

Be that as it may, by the end of the 1st century, Matthew wrote that at that precise moment, Yohanan had sensed there was something quite unique about his cousin.

Yeshua, himself, had been entertaining the notion that he was a prophet akin to the ancient prophets whose prophecies he had been studying, interpreting, actively debating and arguing about with the Temple Priests.

As time went on, Yeshua's belief became more profound: the priests had to urge their

people to add elements of love and compassion to their dealings with others.

A firm belief in ritualized religion was no longer enough.

The priests had to lead by example. He asked them to 'walk the talk.'

From the writings of **Mark**, Yeshua was renamed Jesus and Maryam/Myriam, his mother, was reborn as Mary – a Gentile.

In **Matthew**, Yohanan, Maryam's nephew, himself of Jewish descent, as were all the people with whom Yeshua lived, ate and spoke to on a daily basis, were re-cast under the Christian moniker. Yohanan was thus recast as John the Baptist, and that positioned him as a Gentile, a non-Jew.

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## **The Other Protagonists**

Already in the time of Yeshua, the Torah had already been translated into Aramaic, and in Greek Septuagint, the form of ancient Greek used in the translations of biblical texts and thus, by then, the Torah was no longer the 'secret book of the Jews'.

It is generally accepted that Matthew's gospel, as well as some of the subsequent ones, were originally written in Hebrew. That is because of the numerous references made to the Torah and the Books of the Prophets, but in regards to who was Matthew-the-man, he may simply have been akin a modern-day obsessive collector of all sound bytes attributed to his hero – in this case, Yeshua, the already crucified teacher.

Having said that, in regards to the authorship of this gospel, the jury is still undecided as to whether the various sections of manuscripts were written by the one anonymous 'Matthew' or whether they were drafted collaboratively over a period of time by equally unknown persons.

The most important shrine that has linked the Jewish people to their God, from centuries before Yeshua through the various diasporas and to this day, is the Temple which stood in different states of repair and war-torn disrepair on Temple Mount from 957 BC to 70 AD.

Jewish King Herod the Great is remembered as The Builder because of the innovative architecture he commissioned throughout the land. It is in the temple known, post renovation, as the second Temple, Herod's Temple, that Yeshua had many loud quarrels, both with priests and temple-goers, over some of his grievances.

Under Roman rule, the Jews had retained their autonomy in regards to matters of religion. Religion [and politicised religion] were everything in these ancient times and the Jewish community in Yeshua's lifetime was led by three main sects:

The Perushim (known as the Pharisees in the New Testament) held the reins of local political leadership. They rejected what aspects of Greek philosophy had fate acting as the controlling agent of human destiny.

Instead, they expounded free will and that, as such, our daily deeds affected our destiny, here, now, and in the afterlife.

Rewards and punishments in the next world were part and parcel of their belief system but with a resurrection after the death of the body.

They also believed in the eventual arrival of a Messiah, a special being, but one of flesh and

bone.

According to their belief, the long awaited Messiah would be a political leader who would free the People of Israel from foreign rule and who would lead them according to the Law of God.

The Perushim led a modest lifestyle, and their doctrines are the ones followed today by Orthodox Jews.

The Zadokim (Zadokites/Sadducees in the New Testament) were wealthy, powerful.

Many were arrogant.

Many abused the power they had over 'commoners'.

Their area of control spread over all aspects of the religion including Temple life.

Their belief system was aligned with the Greek philosophy of the times, and thus, they did not believe in any resurrection.

They directed everything from the daily rites to daily blessings. They arbitrated in matters of interpretation of the Torah and the Books of the Prophets. They were essential to the sacrifices of animals according to the strict and humane rules of Kosher slaughtering, and they organized the religious festivals and the management of pilgrims.

It is from the Zadokim group that came most of the temple priests.

By ancient decree most came from the Kohanim lineage and that was certainly true of the High Priest.

They were extremely zealous.

Unlike resident monks, these priests often lived in other towns away from Jerusalem.

It is also from their ranks that judges were chosen for the Sanhedrin (the court system) and, by the time of the second Temple, the Sanhedrin was legislating on all matters of religious and political life – a coming together of power that was later not to play out in Yeshua's favor.

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## The Temple Priests

The priests operated according to a shift system called Mishmeret Cohanim or the Priestly Shift. There were twenty-four shifts divided among all the Cohanim families.

Each shift lasted one week. When a priest's shift came up, strong in his belief that he had been called to do God's duty, he moved to Jerusalem to take his turn as a servant of the Temple, sharing Temple duties with all others who had been selected for each twenty-four weekly shifts.

It is important to invest some time to understanding the shifts system.

It is that system that allowed Yeshua, at least while he was in Jerusalem, a great supply of temple priests with whom to debate the points of the Torah on which he focused his ministry. The points in the Books of the Prophets that touched on the matter of the coming of Messiah, a descendant of the House of King David, were also of great interest to him. Interestingly, whether Yeshua was the son of Yosef or the son of another man, he knew he could not claim such ancestral lineage – not even as the Son of God.

In a quirky clash of purpose, though Christian clerics were intent on establishing a connection to King David through 'a' father to posit Yeshua as the Messiah prophesied in the Old Testament of the Jews, they were equally attached to the idea of Yeshua being the product of a virgin birth.

"Each of these 24 groups was further divided into 6 clans or family branches. Every day of the week was presided over by one family group, and on the Sabbath, the week's entire priestly shift worked together." [1]

It was understood that each priest was so infused with desire to serve his God during his shift that there would have been great rivalry within the cohort. If it hadn't been for a very elaborate system of draws, each priest would have been vying for the 'holiest' of responsibilities. Presumably, divine decree fated each priest with a specific function to perform, thus sparing them any unholy stratagems among themselves.

Unfortunately for headstrong Yeshua, these Temple Priests were reputedly a quarrelsome lot who did not believe in the resurrection of anyone. Other points of dispute were the interpretations of words, lines and sections from the Torah and Prophets. Quarrelling and 'knit-picking' over scriptures is an all-consuming activity among clerics that has not yet gone out of fashion.

In the name of Jesus, Matthew wrote an excellent commandment: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself'. Was it an original thought or was it paraphrased from the Torah which, in Leviticus 19:17-18, warns: <sup>18</sup> "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD."

There is the additional *mitzvah* command 'To love all human beings who are of the covenant.' (Lev. 19:18)

That caveat might explain why, though Yeshua's controversial teaching of the Torah was about the importance of caring for one's neighbor as for a kin, he felt no spiritual obligation to care about the Romans, the pagan occupiers of his country.

He was not interested either in discussing the finer points of Judaism with them - which was all that preoccupied him.

Yeshua didn't have much time for the local Samaritans either, though they and the Jews had a common root in Abraham.

Politically speaking, Yeshua was a separatist, not very different from the Orthodox Jews who, today, live in the Mea Sharim ghetto, a suburb of Jerusalem.

Religious mythology aside, a worthwhile question to pose is: if Jesus was a credible, kind, compassionate man enhanced by divine energy, why did he attract so many enemies?

Why was he made to die such a violent death?

Why was he abandoned by all except a couple of women weeping within sight of his cross?

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1. [http://www.templeinstitute.org/day\\_in\\_life/24\\_shifts.htm](http://www.templeinstitute.org/day_in_life/24_shifts.htm)

## Yeshua - Prototype

When Matthew is able to distance himself from Jesus-the Saint, he occasionally injects a degree of realism in his gospel. Jesus, he wrote, warned his disciples: "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matthew 10:5)

It is essential to understand that Christian Jesus simply did not exist.

There was no worship of Yeshua while he was alive – there was only the tenuous resonance of his enhanced Hebraic teachings in the ragtag band of Jewish disciples.

We know there was no worship, as such because these men abandoned him at the crucial moment that preceded his arrest. When the disciples sensed danger for Yeshua, they would have known that the same danger faced them.

Between the possibility of being sentenced by stoning by the Jewish tribunal, the Sanhedrin, or being tied to a crossbar by Roman soldiers, their lack of intrinsic faith in the one they had called their Teacher saw them pretend they didn't know him.

For them, it was all rather simple: a Messiah, a great leader of men - in their kingdom or in the Kingdom of God - would have known how to extricate himself from the humiliation and the pain of a crucifixion. Or, as our current culture might see it, 'Only losers get nailed.'

Luke 22:54: Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house. Peter followed at a distance; and when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them.

Then a maid, seeing him as he sat in the light and gazing at him, said, "This man also was with him". But he denied it, saying, "Woman, I do not know him".

And a little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them". But Peter said, "Man, I am not".

And after an interval of about an hour, still another insisted, saying, "Certainly this man also was with him; for he is Galilean". But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what are you saying."

Having said that, Peter, himself a Galilean, would have known that before any Jew could be arrested by Roman soldiers, a minimum of two witnesses had to identify the alleged perpetrator. If Judah (Judas) acting his part was one, then, perhaps, Peter, in the absence of a supportive mob, preferred to give Yeshua a fighting chance by simply turning his back on him.

The earliest form of as a Yeshua-spiritual entity began with the belief he had resurrected. What would eventually become of the ministry of Saul (Paulus/St Paul) was actually triggered by Yacob (Jacob), one of Yeshua's brothers, years after the crucifixion.

Indeed, Yacob created a *knesiya*, a place of gathering where he and, presumably some of the disciples, as well as others who believed news of the 'resurrection', could meet. This meeting place, *knesiyat ha-nimolim*, would later be renamed the Church of the Circumcised, though one must realize that the word church, based on the German word *kirche*, was not used in the years that immediately followed Jesus' death.

As the name suggests, Yacob's new sect did not take in any non-Jew adherents for the same reasons that Yeshua kept himself separate from the pagan Gentiles, following the Mitzvah commandment mentioned above.

Under Yacob's guidance, this group of Orthodox Jews added the worship of Yeshua, the resurrected Messiah, to the scriptures of their Jewish faith. They became the first Messianic Jews, popularized today under the banner of Jews for Jesus.

All of that makes perfect sense inasmuch as we accept that Yeshua did exist. It makes sense in so far as we believe that this man is the only prototype for a historical Jesus, the one on which Christianity has been founded along with the pagan-inspired trilogy of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, which technically holds Christianity one hair's breath away from pure monotheism.

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## In the Gospels

Some fourteen years turbulent years later, after the undeterred priests were still throwing Saul of Tarsus (Paulus/St Paul) out of the Temple for attempting to teach the theories he had borrowed from Jacob's *knesiyat ha-nimolim*, he went into exile in Syria and Jordan. There, to non-Jews, he was finally free to teach a new belief system, a much-simplified version of the commandments topped by the worship of Yeshua resurrected adding, as he went, the epithet Son of God.

Mark and Matthew wrote their gospels a few years after that, only to have them altered by many anonymous brush strokes on parchments.

By the 4<sup>th</sup> century, Christianity had spread far and wide and ushered in the conversion of the first Roman emperor to Christianity, Constantine The great.

All of the events from the birth of Yeshua to his arrest constitute an unfortunate but rather mundane chain of events involving only a cast of Jewish characters. This would have been the case for any other Jew who expressed his religious opinions too freely and too loudly – loudly enough to annoy the Zadokim and the Perushim.

The entire situation was flashy enough to make the local Roman soldiers very tetchy as they observed the wild-fire hysteria crystalized on the man who had ridden into town from the eastern gate on a white donkey.

They watched as hordes of Jews reached towards this man, pleading, 'Rabbi, *hosha na*. Teacher, save us!'

It was on the day of Succoth, a day when pilgrims had arrived from far and wide from all corners of Israel and abroad to perform their religious duties at the Temple - the moment popularized in Christian liturgy as Palm Sunday.

The New Testament makes many references to Jesus arguing with the Temple Priests about points of interpretation of the Torah and the prophecies. Like the Perushim, but unlike the Temple priests, Yeshua believed in the prophetized arrival of a messiah, and one can easily imagine the oratory debates between them and Yeshua, with him challenging the manner in which they ran the Temple.

He challenged their complacency, that of the ones in cushy jobs known to abuse the power of their position.

He challenged them in their beliefs that complicated rituals, praying and imploring God for good fortune and forgiveness, offering the life of an animal as a sign of good-will were all their common God asked of his People.

It is quite imaginable that there would have been political factions and alliances made and unmade within the Perushim, the Zadokim and merchants.

They would not have liked much his main argument which was that it was not enough to follow rituals with scrupulous care and do external *mitzvah* while neglecting to tame cravings and greed; while neglecting to care for one another.

When push came to shove, perhaps because Yeshua had a sharp temper himself, he became the odd man out.

After all, freedom of expression was allowed then as now, even to mere teachers but, then as now, only up to a point. As Yeshua upturned merchants' stalls set up in the Temple court by priestly permission, as he quarrelled with the men in charge both of the religion and the politics of the faith, he made himself some enemies.

'And Jesus entered the temple of God and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. Quoting from the Torah, he shouted, 'It is written: "My house shall be called a house of prayer" before adding in his own words, 'but you make it a den of robbers.'(Matthew 21:12).

The third sect of note in the time of Yeshua was that of the Issiyim [Essenes] currently thought to be the originators of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Initially, they lived in high numbers in most towns but took to the desert as a protest against the way the Zadokim were tending to the spiritual health of the people.

Ideologically, Yeshua would have aligned himself with this group in this respect.

He would also have espoused their views on animal sacrifice.

They believed that meat, any meat, not just pig meat, was impure, regardless of the rigors of the kosher treatment of the animals before and after death.

These Issiyim enjoyed an ascetic, communal lifestyle which would have appealed to Yeshua's orthodoxy more than the lifestyle of the rich and powerful Zadokim and Perushim.

Somewhat different in hair and skin coloring from other Jews, the Issiyim considered themselves a group apart. In this respect, they allowed anyone to become one of them after a period of probation and they accepted in their midst children from other social groups.

Though their community was mixed, many of these men and women were celibate.

These men and women were spiritually enlightened.

They knew about telepathy.

They knew how to access higher energies and, in secret, they toiled for the triumph of the

Spiritual light over the darkness of the human mind.

However, though their belief system revolved around an apocalyptic event that would bring about a new Kingdom – it was not necessarily linked to the arrival of a messiah, the topic closest to Yeshua's heart.

It is believed that around Jesus' twelfth year, his parents, Yosef and Maryam took him on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. There, it is said, he discussed the Laws of the Torah with a group of Temple priests and that they were duly amazed by the wisdom of one so young. It is thought that, at some stage, Yeshua and his parents may have gone to Egypt.

After a gap of years, Jesus showed up again but in Galilee, preaching about the Kingdom of God. By then, because Yeshua's spin on the Torah and the Books of the Prophets resembled the doctrine of the Issiyim, it is believed that he might have spent some years in their midst, as a disciple. And it is believed that he kept very close ties with them while in Jerusalem.

It is thought that they assisted him, as only they could, in the hours of his crucifixion.

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All differences set aside, all three sects governed all the important aspects of Jewish religious and secular living circa 30 AD. They had at least one ancestral activity in common, that of the *Mikveh*, the daily ritual of cleansing immersion in a flowing body of water, living water, such as rivers and streams, or any rain catchment area that has garnered such attention the remix of events that is Matthew. *Mikveh* baths have been discovered as far out as Masada.

As every Jew in those days, each of the Temple priests followed at least one of the six hundred and thirteen commandments written in the Torah, the important *mitzvah* [good action] intended to cleanse the body by immersion in the water of the *mikveh*.

Thus, regardless of the weather and temperature of the water, they had to immerse themselves daily before serving in the Temple.

Archaeological digs of villas, such as the one named the Burnt House that can be experienced behind glass through an underground museum in the Jewish Quarters of Jerusalem have revealed them to contain many rooms for different purposes - even a separate room for the mikveh.

For the water to retain its spiritual properties of purity, it could not be 'drawn', brought in or installed on the sites and the canalisation needed to distribute water to these bathrooms,

was made possible by the Hasmonean viaduct, unearthed in 1985. It is estimated that its construction preceded the reign of King Herod.

While the priests purified themselves in private surrounds, the rest of the population made do with communal mikvehs and, as has already been discussed, in streams and rivers. This is the point where this narrative returns to the afore-mentioned Matthew's gospel, and the moment when Yohanan hailed Yeshua enjoining him to come in flowing waters of the Jordan.

How ironic that it should be such an innocuous moment of a mundane daily Judaic ritual that has been recast and enshrined in the gospel as the Baptism of Jesus!

In that particular scene, Yohanan is the central character cast as John the Baptist. He is a man with a penchant for the cilice (the scratchy goat-hair shirt of the penitent worn as undergarment) and a fondness for honey and locusts, the short-horned grasshoppers that are still culinary treats in various modern-day exotic cuisine.

As occurs so many times throughout the pages of the gospels, an ancestral Jewish rite is claimed by the writers of Christianity. It is, then, passed off as an established Christian rite, notwithstanding the reality that back in the days of Yeshua and Yohanan, Christianity did not exist, not even in anyone's thoughts, least of all in Yeshua's.

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## A Composite Man

On the topic of Judaic hygiene, the washing of hands, *netilat yadayim*, before or after specific activities such as praying, eating and bodily evacuation was another ritualized cleansing. And this ritual washing points to another of the anomalies found in Matthew's pages.

Yeshua, a Jewish rabbi, at a time of cultural orthodox observance, would NEVER have broken bread with a group of Gentiles - not even with one - if he could have brought himself to befriend one.

It would have been an insult to his God to do so.

Among Jews, all outsiders known for their lack of personal hygiene were referred to as the Unwashed.

Besides, a man as religiously principled as Yeshua would not have eaten unleavened bread in the days preceding Passover.

In Acts 11:2 Peter was reprimanded for having done so himself <sup>2</sup> So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him, <sup>3</sup> saying, 'Why did you go to uncircumcised men and eat with them?'

By the same token anyone familiar with the rigors of the Judaic protocol in vigor circa 34 AD cannot imagine, not for a moment, that Yeshua could have declared, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you." Luke 22:10

It is commonly accepted that drinking blood is at the very least freakish, if not utterly disgusting. The metaphor could not possibly have emanated from an Orthodox Jewish brain. The repulsion of blood is visceral, which is why from antiquity to this day, only Kosher meat, meat that has been drained of its blood while still on the carcass, and blessed by a rabbi, can be eaten by practising Jews.

Yeshua, who had espoused many aspects of the Issiyim beliefs was against the sacrifice of animals. He might have been a vegetarian, but even if he did eat meat, it could ONLY ever have been meat slaughtered the Kosher way – meat that had been entirely drained of its blood, seconds after death.

Adding to that, on the eve of Passover, during the Seder, ritual feast, it is customary to read the Haggadah. It is a Jewish text that sets forth the order of the Passover Seder [family dinner] and retells the story of the exodus from Egypt and the ten plagues God unleashed to convince the Pharaoh that it was in his own people's best interest to let 'His children go'.

The first plague is remembered as the Plague of Blood.

The Lord, it is said, struck the waters of the Nile and the river became one of blood.

The fish died and the people were no longer able to drink its water. Presumably, the water was also no longer suitable for either the beasts to drink or for irrigation – a disaster of true biblical proportion.

The Seder prayer ritual does request that each participant drink, at various key intervals four very small glasses of sweet wine. Each glass symbolizes one of God's promised deliverance: "I will bring out," "I will deliver," "I will redeem," and "I will take."

So, there is no doubt that Yeshua drank wine during his last supper, but the iconic lines written by Luke could only have been spoken by one who had once been a pagan and still thought as one – not by a Jew.

In spite of all improbabilities and incongruities, what is certain is that through the events Matthew mashed-up on his papyrus, Yeshua found himself reinvented as Jesus, teacher of goyim, a term from the Tanach that amalgamated all non-Jewish nationals.

With a modicum of real-time empathy for the real man, it is easy to imagine what a devastating turn of events this 'Christianization' would have been for Yeshua.

After all, his only spiritual aspiration, based on his interpretations of the Dead Sea Scrolls, was to convince kin and peers that he might be a bone fide contender for the role of Messiah of their Jewish God and his people.

And what would he make of the plethora of Sacred Heart images of himself that adorn Christian churches and homes?

What would he make of the throngs of people who, in millions of churches around the world, worship his scantily clad body carved out of wood, marble or painted cement, he, whose religion forbade the display of the body and the worship of idols?

Here again, it seems that the pagan beliefs of the early Christians were casting rituals of their old faith on to their newly found divine savior.

In short, it doesn't require a great leap of imagination to anticipate that Yeshua, the real man,

would have been totally incensed and repulsed by the grotesque misrepresentation, both of his cultural heritage and his creed, as well as by the posthumous theft of his identity.

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## Orthodox Living

It is generally assumed that Jesus was asexual, and this premise certainly does make things easier to manage at the level of spiritual Messianic-hood, but it is most doubtful that Yeshua was celibate.

Yeshua was a Jew living in Israel within the Orthodox Jewish community of his time. Like modern-day Hassidic men, the 'Men in Black' who keep the stereotypical face of Judaism alive in the streets of New York City, as in all the other main cities in Europe, he lived by the same ancestral code of conduct.

In every Orthodox community, not only the Jewish one, women are the unsung heroes. They go to bed only once the last of their numerous children has fallen asleep. Boys and girls are brought together by matchmakers and community pressures push them to marry, usually while still in their early teens. Experimenting and sexual fluidity were not options in the days of Yeshua and still not in today's ultra-conservative communities around the world.

But then, as now, it was inadmissible for a young woman to 'hang around' in the company of young men, be they married or otherwise. No single woman had such freedom. When transgressions were found out, making amends was, at times, very painful. Many violations ended in tragedy. These rules were those by which Yeshua and his people led their lives, including his disciples.

Though it was written by yet another unidentified source, the Gnostic Gospel of Philip confirms that Yeshua loved Maryam and that she was his 'lover', an entanglement that could not have been played out in the open if it had not already been sanctified by the vows of marriage.

The disciples have cornered Yeshua to express their qualms over the intimacy between himself and *his* Maryam: *"And the companion of the [Savior is] Mary Magdalene. [He] loved her more than all the disciples, and used to kiss her often on her mouth. The rest of the disciples [were offended by this]. They said to him "Why do you love her more than all of us?"*

*The Savior answered and said to them, "Why do I not love you like her? When a blind man and one who sees are both together in darkness, they are no different from one another. When the light comes, then he who sees will see the light, and he who is blind will remain in darkness.*

Though the words 'kissing' and 'mouth' in the original Hebrew of the text might have had a more general meaning of affection than that implied by the translation, the passage clarifies the nature and the intensity of the relationship between Maryam and Yeshua.

This love, though upsetting to the disciples, had to be endured, as the fruit of a lawful relationship between a man and his wife.

There is another interesting scene in Luke 10. It is interesting because it puts forward a scene that again, in those days, could not possibly have involved a single Jewish man and a single woman.

It is interesting, too, because it is difficult to ascertain whether it portrays Yeshua as absorbed in his own self-importance or absorbed by the woman at his feet who, herself, is absorbed in his words.

The moment takes place in the house of Martha, Mary Magdalene's sister and opens with Yeshua and his entourage, dusty from travel and presumably thirsty and hungry, arriving on Martha's doorstep. The word *Lord* clearly positions the extract as having been 'refreshed' by Christian hands.

*"As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called **Mary**, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed.*

***Mary** has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."* Luke 10:38-42

Here is Yeshua who strides in and knows that he and his friends will be tended to in the most hospitable of manners. He believes his high, chosen duties of wanderer-with-a-mission are above the humble, unavoidable duties of the hostess who has to accommodate a number of unexpected guests. Then as now, more than a few men have been known to bring 'the boys' over to sprawl in the entertainment room, but familiar as it may be, this attitude fails to reflect empathy and compassion for the plight of others.

*"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."*

The first half of the sentence positions Yeshua as a 'typical' male who has *no* idea of the work involved in feeding a band of men and their groupies.

The second half of the sentence positions him as a man in the early throes of infatuation who will not agree to have his love-interest taken away from him by a stressed-out sister-in-law.

John 2 contains a short piece entitled, The Wedding at Cana.

It takes place in Galilee, Yeshua's country of origin, and is best read in full at least once.

*"On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there.<sup>2</sup> Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding.<sup>3</sup> When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.'*

*<sup>4</sup>And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.'*

*<sup>5</sup>His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.'<sup>6</sup>Now standing there were six stone water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons.*

*<sup>7</sup>Jesus said to them, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim.<sup>8</sup> He said to them, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.' So they took it.*

*<sup>9</sup>When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom<sup>10</sup> and said to him, 'Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.'*

*<sup>11</sup>Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.<sup>12</sup> After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother, his brothers, and his disciples; and they remained there for a few days.*

In spite of obvious attempts to recast the participants in a fuzzy manner such as this one, *Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding*, it is still clear that Yeshua's mother, Mary/Maryam is portrayed in the role of the host. People had manners back in those days, too, and only the most uncouth of guests would have asked her son to bring out more jars of wine to keep the party going.

Sons had manners as well and when a line like <sup>4</sup>*'Woman, what concern is that to you and to me?'* is attributed to Yeshua addressing *his* mother as if she were a wench at a Roman tavern, that rings very false. In Orthodox Jewish culture, the love for one's mother, then as now, has always been expressed through respectful language and no dutiful son has ever lost this respect.

Looking at the more realistic aspects of the wedding narrative, Mary is concerned because 'the wine' is no longer flowing among the guests - as a modern-day hostess would be. As a mother of the groom, she asks him to remedy the situation, which he does.

The '*six stone water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons*' refers to the jars lined up for the Jewish ritual of hand-washing that always follows bodily function and always before sitting down for a meal.

Such big, filled jars, suggest numerous guests. This wedding, too, is an all-Jewish event. '*When the steward tasted the water that had become wine,*' suggests that the hosts had status – definitely not goat-herders.

Another odd thing about this short account is that, though it positions Mary (mother) as the hostess and Yeshua by her side as the man-in-charge, there is no mention of a father. Having said that, the oddest omission is in regards to the bride.

The piece reads as if the KGB had censored out her name with bold dark strokes.

It also reads as if, in its original state, the Wedding at Cana had been considered far too important to entirely 'rewrite' and, inadvertently, paraphrase wrongly.

And so, torn between head and heart, one or several early Christian monks have neither dared to 'lose' that page entirely, nor to preserve the name of the bride – at least not in their copy, the most recent official one that superseded the original.

This censorship of the bride's name notwithstanding, it does seem that Yeshua's Maryam was close to Mary and close, too, to Salome, her sister-in-law.

These three women are mostly 'the women' regularly mentioned in Yeshua's entourage until the last moment when they are observed weeping near the cross on which the son of one and the husband of the other is nailed.

And, as if to confirm it all, as per the custom of the times, Mary Magdalene, as wife of Yeshua, is usually always mentioned first. For example, in 27:61, Matthew makes a reference to two women at the site of the crucifixion: "*Mary Magdalene and the other Mary.*"

In Mark's text, this 'other Mary' is "*the mother of James,*" (originally known as Yacob). Yacob was one of Yeshua's siblings, the one who would soon be leading the first posthumous group of Yeshua/Jesus followers, the Messianic Jews.

Finally, in John 11:20 there is another clear confirmation of the relationship between Mary Magdalene and Yeshua, as well as evidence of more 'monk tempering'.

The piece begins when Yeshua arrives at Bethany, the village where Martha lives. They connect somewhere outside and Martha greets Yeshua with the news that her brother, Lazarus, has already been four days in the tomb and that his death would have been avoided if Yeshua had been around.

<sup>20</sup> *When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.* <sup>21</sup> *“Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died.*

<sup>22</sup> *But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.”* <sup>23</sup> *Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”*

<sup>24</sup> *Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”*

<sup>25</sup> *Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; <sup>26</sup> and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?”*

<sup>27</sup> *“Yes, Lord,” she told him, “I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world.”*

<sup>28</sup> *And after she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. “The Teacher is here,” she said, “and is asking for you.”*

<sup>29</sup> *When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. <sup>30</sup> Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him.*

<sup>31</sup> *When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there.*

Though the title, King of Jews, did historically benefit Yeshua, the Son of God epithet was purely a pagan, early Christian concept.

There are no Sons of God in Judaism.

In regards to “The Teacher is here,” she said, “and is asking for you,” here we have an edited approximation of *Your master/husband is here*, a greeting that was culturally appropriate, and the haste with which Mary Magdalene rises to greet him requires no explanation.

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## Someone's Husband

Then as now, a mind and soul devoted to religion and politics were not mutually exclusive of a heart and soul devoted to the love of a spouse. In fact, it is impossible to imagine that a man in Yeshua's community would reach the age of thirty and still be unmarried, just as it is impossible today – for the same reasons a rabbi cannot be an unmarried *man*.

Knowing that in orthodox communities, weddings are arranged soon after puberty before the onset of physical attraction to members of the opposite sex, it makes a lot more cultural sense to assume that Yeshua and Maryam were married in their mid-teen years.

*From Luke 8:1-3: After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another. The Twelve were with him, and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out—and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means.*

The telling last sentence links back to the social mores of today's Hassidic community in which the women support the men.

This suggests that Mary Magdalene came from a wealthy family and that she was able to help him with money from her dowry – which, again, she would not have been allowed to do, in any way, shape or form, if she had not been his wife.

Like modern-day Hassidic men, Yeshua didn't work.

For him as for them, from dawn to dusk, or so it seems, the hours of the day are spent in the yeshivas, synagogues or in the praying rooms. They are spent studying, interpreting and reinterpreting all ancient Jewish texts with their rabbis, as well as agreeing to disagree on any or many points of anyone's interpretation.

Now as then, many hours in these men's lives are also spent politicizing *their notion* of true Judaism with the view of restoring an ultra-rightist way of life within the construct of modern-day Jewish culture.

Yeshua, too, had politics on his mind.

Be they 'celibate' in intention, single or married, men of all faiths, even orthodox ones, are driven by the same impulses as other men.

When their sexual urges are addressed in a reasonably appropriate manner, they visit women prostitutes.

In biblical times, prostitutes were the absolute social 'lepers'.

It is this state of things that gave the earliest 'copiers' and the 'translators' of original manuscripts written in Hebrew a massively great idea.

When faced with the dilemma of how to recast the woman who was always at the feet of *their* Jesus and at the same time categorically claim that Jesus, the holiest of men, was as pure of body as of spirit, the manuscript writers recast Mary Magdalene.

With a few strokes of a quill dipped in ink, she became a nameless prostitute - an ever grateful one – one who contemplated her ‘savior’ with beatific love in her heart.

Luke the Evangelist, inspired by Mark, wrote in Luke 7: <sup>37</sup>And a woman in the city, who was a sinner, having learned that he was eating in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster jar of ointment.

<sup>38</sup>*She stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair. Then she continued kissing his feet and anointing them with the ointment.*

<sup>39</sup>Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, ‘If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him—that she is a sinner.’

Apparently, this random woman was blessed with very long arms and a greatly flexible body as it would be impossible for most women to stand behind a seated man to bathe, dry and kiss his feet while rubbing them with ointment.

However aesthetically pleasing it might have been to visualize Mary Magdalene wiping Yeshua’s feet with her long hair, presumably as a sign of devotion, such devotion for a man – not her husband – would have been cut short by both Maryam Magdalene’s and Yeshua’s families. Not for them the notion that the strapping teacher was quietly sublimating the sensual play of which his freshly washed feet were the focus!

It is entirely understandable that the early Christian monks, made ecstatic by their newfound belief in the resurrection, were intellectually unable to think of *their* Jesus as a man such as themselves - a man at times driven by sexual desire. So, again, with a few strokes of the brush, they recast Yeshua as one who embraced ‘lust’, but only to make it spiritually pure. Maryam Magdalene was recast as a possessed prostitute.

Once the re-writers and the ‘enhancers’ of original manuscripts had cancelled the matrimonial bond that linked Maryam Magdalene to Yeshua, it was written that Jesus, the healer and the maker of miracles, cleansed the prostitute of ‘seven demons’.

Though this conjures many arresting images, it probably only meant that Jesus had rid her of various symptoms of an illness.

Undoubtedly, Yeshua was a healer and it is not impossible to imagine that, through his wanderings and through his interaction with the Issiyim, that he may have been initiated to several practices involving energy healing, auric manipulations and herbal medicine among others.

This healing notwithstanding, imagining that *women* were allowed to travel through the countryside with Jesus and his disciples fail to make any cultural sense. That would have been a likely improbability, unless, of course, the women concerned were the lawful wives of men in the cohort.

In regards to the countryside *itself*, there is something about the topography of Galilee that is 'silent' in the New Testament. Although ever depiction of Jesus shows him walking, riding or standing on flat trails Galilee has a very rugged rocky terrain. Its hills rise between 500 to 700 meters.

In fact Galilee is a mountainous region and one might wonder how the men and the women managed the demands of the landscape as they 'wandered' from village to village over the three-year period of Jesus' ministry.

In Gnostic texts, written as a reaction to early Christianity, Maryam is represented as an influential leader of Yeshua's movement, one that encompasses his religious aspirations as well as his political ones.

In the schizophrenic manner of the early Christians re-writers of history, the New Testament, Maryam has been enshrined as a holy prostitute who was ultimately elevated to the rank of Saint – Patron Saint of the Prostitutes among others in a large, very large portfolio of sainthoods.

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## At the Temple

Had the books of the Torah Yeshua grew up with been whispered by Yahweh to Moses and, subsequently, written by his own hand or by that of his scribes?

Or had the Torah, like the New Testament, been shaped over the centuries by many 'pens'?

What had remained a moot point for centuries is now much clearer to most.

What is important to understand is that, though Yeshua grew up steeped in the way of the Torah and though he did advocate the love of others as ordered by the books of Moses, Yeshua, unlike his Jesus avatar, did not have a heart that poured out *unconditional* love and acceptance of all.

He did, however, follow the way of the Torah by not talking to the non-Jews.

He did not eat with them either because his religion forbade him to mix milk products with meat and to eat anything but kosher meat.

Similarly, he could not possibly have broken bread or *matzot* with anyone whom, he knew, sat down at the table – unwashed, uncleansed, impure. He did not immerse with the pagan non-Jews because it was not in their custom to do so in 'living', free-flowing water.

Though it seems that as a healer, he did have powers that, to some, appeared supernatural, he did not heal the non-Jews.

He did not share his bed with a *goy* either.

Nor did he do anything *for* or *with* them because, just like every other Jew in Ancient Israel who was not a collaborator of the Romans, Yeshua loathed them.

Matthew 15:21 contains a telling incident: *Jesus went away from there and withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and cried, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely possessed by a demon." But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, "Send her away, for she is crying after us."*

*He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."*

*But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me."*

*And he answered, "It is not fair to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs."*

*She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table."*

*Then Jesus answered her, "O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire." And her daughter was healed instantly."*

Though far from selfless, there is little doubt that Yeshua was a healer in the true sense of the word but, if he did perform great feats of spiritual healing that may have been called 'miracles', he did not perform them out of random, altruistic kindness.

In fact, one school of thought has it that the above account constitutes the *only* case in which Jesus healed a goy, however reluctantly.

Each day, while in Jerusalem, possibly many times a day, Yeshua walked past the Outer Court of the Temple, the area where non-Jews were allowed to pray.

In that court, they had to share the space with all manner of healthy animals found fit for sacrifices.

These animals, from birds to oxen, were bought by pilgrims and by anyone who felt it necessary to make amends with his God or to buy himself a bit of advance credit – according to his wealth, his need of status and, of course, according to the perceived gravity of his sins.

As he made his way past the outer court, Yeshua walked past a pillar stone that carried a dire warning to the non-Jews: *No foreigner is to go beyond the balustrade and the plaza of the temple zone. Whoever is caught doing so will have himself to blame for his death which will follow* – presumably by stoning, and that did not worry Yeshua in the least.

The Second Court could be accessed by all Jews, and their women provided they were free of any 'defilement'.

Yeshua, a *circumcised* Hebrew male of cleansed and purified body, had access to all areas of the Temple and he performed the worship rituals in what was known as the Third Court. He enjoyed all the privileges given to those Jewish males who lived by the Torah.

The Fourth Court was only accessible to priests in their vestment robes.

Clearly, if Yeshua had been converted by John the Baptist, as Christians believe, his presence in the court reserved to cleansed-only male *Jews* would have resulted in a considerably shortened life.

And, of course, none of his public interactions with the Zadokim, the Issiyim and the Perushim would have taken place because these men did not discuss private matters of the Torah with the pagans, be they Greek or Roman.

Thus, the chain of events that led to Yeshua's arrest, as narrated in the gospels, would not have taken place.

There would have been no reason for a placard inscribed with *King of Jews* to be slipped

over Yeshua's head.

There would have been no foggy circumstances leaving room for the possibility of a resurrection because the penalty of *death* by stoning, the penalty for trespassing into the Third court, meant exactly that.

No resurrection presupposes no Messiah, Son of God.

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## Prophecies

According to the Tanach, the Hebrew written Law believed to have been inspired by Yahweh to Moses, the word messiah encompassed several social positions ranging from anointed King, High Priest and acclaimed warrior - a political leader by any other name. The Jewish Prophets had, centuries prior, 'seen' the arrival of a Messiah, a descendant of the House of King David. This messiah, they prophetized, would rule Jerusalem and save the People of Israel by returning them to God and to their true destiny.

In Jeremiah 30 appears what might have been the prophecy that took ruled one aspect of Yeshua's life.

<sup>18</sup> <sup>1</sup> This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: <sup>2</sup> "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Write in a book all the words I have spoken to you. <sup>3</sup> The days are coming,' declares the LORD, 'when I will bring my people Israel and Judah back from captivity and restore them to the land I gave their ancestors to possess,' says the LORD."

<sup>12</sup> "This is what the LORD says:

"I will restore the fortunes of Jacob's tents  
and have compassion on his dwellings;  
**the city will be rebuilt on her ruins,**  
and the palace will stand in its proper place.

<sup>19</sup> From them will come songs of thanksgiving  
and the sound of rejoicing.

**I will add to their numbers,**  
and they will not be decreased;

I will bring them honor,

**and they will not be disdained.**

<sup>20</sup> Their children will be as in days of old,  
and their community will be established before me;

**I will punish all who oppress them.**

<sup>21</sup> *Their leader will be one of their own;  
their ruler will arise from among them.*

*I will bring him near and he will come close to me -  
for who is he who will devote himself  
to be close to me?' declares the LORD.*

Though the New Testament suggests that some Jesus prophecies did 'come true', objective scholars have not verified any. Having said that, a moment made poignant by its aftermath, the so-called betrayal of Judah can appear as a prophecy.

Matthew 26:17-30 20: *When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve.*

<sup>21</sup> *And while they were eating, he said, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me."* <sup>22</sup> *They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, "Surely not I, Lord?"*

<sup>23</sup> *Jesus replied, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me."* <sup>24</sup> *The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born."*

<sup>25</sup> *Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, "Surely not I, Rabbi?" Jesus answered, "Yes, it is you."*

If that moment happened thus, then it can be said that instead of delivery a prophecy, Yeshua was simply acknowledging that he was aware of his imminent arrest.

By telling Judas, 'It is you,' Yeshua was giving him, the only learned one of his disciples, the tacit order to proceed according to plan.

Let's not forget that, the bias of the New Testament notwithstanding, Judas was not the 'Jew in the hen-house', the traitor of *Christian* Redeemer.

All of Yeshua's disciples, mostly simple folks apart from Judas, were ALL as Hebrew as Yeshua himself – and it is important to remember that up to this point, the cast in these epic moments is still an all-Jewish cast.

In that light, a person giving his blessing to another, a friend, on whom he is relying to perform a deed, a hard, painful and demanding one, *at his expense* and *in the name of their friendship*, today, as then, is not totally unheard of.

The question begging is *Why, when Yeshua sensed mounting pressure, did he choose to stay in Jerusalem rather than take to the hills of the Negev and rejoin the Issiyim, his highly organized home-group of elusive, spiritual mystics and scholars, within which he would have been protected?*

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## The Baptist's Cousin

If there ever was a historical Jesus, it is important to understand the congruence of karmic events that set him on a path to the infamous moment when, with a kiss, Judah sealed Yeshua's fate in the Garden of Gethsemane. That event eventually led to his death on a cross, alone, except for, in the distance, Myriam/Mary, his mother, Salome, his mother's sister, and the 'disciple whom he loved', Mary Magdalene, his wife.

As an aside, considering the richness of biblical names for women - the Torah contains about 30 different ones, not to mention names like Deborah, Elisheva, Rebecca and Ruth belonging to women linked to other Jewish liturgy - it is odd that the principal women featuring in the New Testament have the same name: Mary/Miriam, Mary Magdalene, derivatives of the same stem name and Salome, the name given to Mary's sister and to Herod's daughter.

This limited control over names might indicate that the new Christians, ex-pagans, none of whom lived in Judea, were so unfamiliar with Jewish culture that they only latched on to the couple of names they were most familiar with.

Herod Antipas, who presided over Judea at the time of Yeshua's crucifixion, was merely a claimant-king under Tiberius.

The Israelites had a couple of reasons to not care much for him.

He was a foreigner from Edom, a land of anti-semitic people and he didn't speak their language fluently.

Even worse, he married Herodias, the ex-wife of one of his brothers, who was the daughter of another half-brother, Aristobulus.

This alliance made Herod a rare man - one married to a woman who was both his sister-in-law and his niece - a situation that quite contravened Jewish law.

Yohannan ha-Matbil renamed John the Baptist, a man of high principles, is said to have exchanged words with Herod about the way the King ran his personal affairs.

On the one hand, it is believed that Herod ordered his execution.

Why would a king take such umbrage from the comments of a humble religious zealot best known, *if at all*, for preaching the way of the Torah?

Zealots and other 'illuminated' folks were no more a rarity in those days than now.

In fact Zealots, militant Jews who opposed the Roman regime were very active in the mountains of Galilee.

Thus, it is also believed that the decision to do away with Yohannan was linked to his growing popularity among the local population and Herod's fears that the preacher's ravings would lead to rioting. But then, from the Gospel of Mark, came the now famous account of how Herod, derelict in his paternal duties, applauded his daughter, Salome, for the enthralling, but revealing dance with which she had regaled his guests – men for the most part, if not exclusively.

In these ancient times, a maiden's honor was guarded by her veils; these were not to be loosened lasciviously to expose bare skin.

Such exhibitionism was the domain of the professional belly dancers and harem girls.

It is said that when Herod asked his daughter to claim a reward for herself, instead of calling out for more jewels with which to adorn herself or a high-priced Ethiopian eunuch, Salome asked for Yohannan's head.

Why?

One answer is because Yohannan had spoken irreverently about her mother.

Again, why would a beautiful young woman wish to extract such an odd, gruesome and personal revenge for comments made by an ascetic preacher, however vociferous, permanently clad in a hair-shirt and known to survive on locusts and honey alone?

Might there have been a different reason altogether behind the murder of the Baptist?

Yes, there might have been a political one that linked Yohannan ha-Matbil to the Hasmonean dynasty, the end line of true Jewish Kings.

Because this last one, the Hasmonean dynasty [135 BC to 63 BC] though a 'priestly' one had been so cursed and plagued by dictatorial behavior, unbridled cruelty and conniving arrogance that all led to its demise by Roman decree, a legitimate heir in the person of Yohannan ha-Matbil would have undeniably positioned him as a messiah – a leader worthy of anointing; a leader who would fulfil the visions laid out by the Prophets centuries earlier.

According to them, 'the' *Mashiah* will be born of natural parents – supernatural beings, gods and demi-gods need not apply. Isaiah 11:2-5 prophesized that 'the' *Mashiah* will be "well-versed in Jewish law, and observant of its commandments."

Jeremiah 33:15 confirmed that the Jewish *Mashiah* will be "a great judge, who makes righteous decisions."

It was understood that this leader, like King David and of his lineage, would be a great military figure. Too, he could be a leader blessed with a great spiritual mind like King

Solomon.

Either way, this messiah would win 'battles' for Israel.

Ironically, it would only be after a long list of very specific, observable and measurable achievements related to political and spiritual redemption in the *here and now* - all pronounced by the prophets - that this person's credibility as a true Messiah would be confirmed.

This wise leader of strong moral fiber would need to be a very unique person.

Indeed! *This* righteous one would have to respect *all* the 613 Commandments.

That includes the 6<sup>th</sup> one, the one that had been systematically and formally flaunted throughout the millennia [and still is to this day].

### **Thou shall to not kill.**

Under explicit orders of leaders of every religion, as well as by factions and individuals, then as now, and always in the name of God, the prohibition against murder has systematically been zapped out of the waft and weft of any code of ethics, spiritual or other.

Presumably, this exceptional anointed Messiah, one who would be *blessed* with a smear of oil [a practice common to many religions and maintained by the Church of England during the 1953 coronation of Queen Elizabeth II] would understand that *this* commandment applied even to the 'enemies' of Israel.

The *only* piece of writing found to this day concerning The Baptist was written by Flavius Josephus, *possibly* around 93 AD - some 40 years after the death of Yeshua/Jesus.

This *Jewish* historian who fought in the Great Revolt of 66-73 was considered a turncoat by his fellow countrymen.

As his luck would have it, to this day, Josephus is, *by default* the ubiquitous authority regarding the trials and tribulations of Yeshua and his cousin, Yohannan, seeing as 'sections' of his writing provide the *only* extant "voice" from this very distant past.

And so, it came to pass that, in Greek, Josephus wrote an account of the history of Jewish people for his pagan patrons.

In this account, Josephus does name Yohannan ha-matbil/John the Baptist linking him to a skirmish between King Herod and a certain Aretas of Nabatea, an Arabian King, who happened to be the father of Herod's first wife Mariamne I.

In due time, Emperor Tiberius got involved on Aretas' side. He ordered a counter-offensive

that utterly trounced Herod's army.

Josephus explains that such a terrible defeat was truly an act of God – his measured retribution against Herod for having slaughtered the Baptist, a good man who believed that the washing of the body in the river purified not just the body but the soul as well.

Again, why would a local historian have been more interested in the fate of an itinerant preacher-prophet of which there were many self-proclaimed than by the death of Jesus - the one many had begun calling the Son of God?

Josephus' interest in this good man might have been because he knew, as Herod knew, that Yohannan the Baptist was the last direct heir to the Hasmonean line of Hebrew kings. Elisheva was his mother and his father, Zecharia, was a Temple Priest.

As his cousin on his mother's side, Yeshua had the right to make a claim. Visibly he had the support of the masses.

More *then* than now, politics in ancient Israel infused everyone's thoughts because the freedom of the Jewish people depended on Galilee and Judea freeing themselves from the yoke of Roman domination.

As a rough illustration of how much politicking and weighing of imagination-firing possibilities that had to have been on the Israelites' mind, the situation then, can be compared to that of a well-publicized modern-day equivalent.

It was from the Portuguese island of East Timor that, one day in 1991, a charismatic militant, Xanana Gusmão, alerted the world press to the massacre lead by the Indonesian Government that had occurred in the capital city of Dili. Eventually, Gusmao was tried by the Indonesian Government, convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment only to become the first President of East Timor in 2007 – all in the fullness of time – but not without numerous heart-stopping twists and turns for all parties concerned, over decades.

True Hebrew kings like Simon Maccabaeus, founder of this dynasty, were always closer to the heart of the Israelites than any of the claimant kings, such as Herod, who had to walk a tightrope between one Roman Emperor and another to keep their status and associated privileges.

Unfortunately, as in the case of all Yeshua/Jesus-related documents, this section of Josephus' writing is also subject to a controversy of authorship and dates. In this case, the reference to Yohannan being known only by a quotation from Origen cannot be dated any earlier than the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. And that is a long, long time after the eventful days when the

cousins [on their mother's side] Yeshua and Yohannan were doing their thing on the banks of the Jordan river.

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## The Rabbi

From Galilee to Judea, until the moment Yohannan/John the Baptist's head was severed from his neck on King Herod's orders, he and Yeshua, together and separately, had been pulling great crowds 'by the thousands.' One of the many references to such gatherings is found in Matthew 14: 13-21: *The crowd was so large that Jesus told his disciples to get a boat ready for him so that the people would not crush him.*

The challenging state of affairs for Jesus-sceptics is that

- if the converts being baptized were *Gentiles/pagans*, they would have had to leave their fortified Canaan-cities in Decapolis, as only very few except, of course, for the roman soldiers who lived in Jerusalem and in the regions of greater Judea and Galilee.

The flood of pagans from Roman cities should have been very newsworthy.

The Greeks and the Romans who taught such high arts to their children as classical music, the art of dramatic performances, as well as admiration for the 'body beautiful,' and who had their own elaborate religious rites, would hardly be motivated to follow a thin, long-haired, bearded Jewish preacher who only spoke Hebrew – not Greek or Roman.

In short, they would have been unlikely to follow one whose Torah teachings would have been mere ramblings, even if they happened to find themselves close enough to hear his words.

Matthew confirmed that Yeshua taught only the Law of the Torah, as a Rabbi does.

**Matthew 5:** <sup>17</sup> *“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets [...]”*<sup>18</sup> *For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.*

Every Jew in the land, then as today, already knew all about the Law, the Torah, the Prophets and the great assortment of Mitzvoth from whence came the admonishment to love one's neighbor because, even as children, they had grown up immersed in all matters of the Torah at their strictest.

As an example, in **Leviticus**, the third book of the Torah, the admonishment is clear: <sup>18</sup> *Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.*

Many centuries later, this admonishment was echoed in Matthew 22:36-40: <sup>36</sup> “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

<sup>37</sup> Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” <sup>38</sup> This is the first and greatest commandment. <sup>39</sup> And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ <sup>40</sup> **All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.**”

- if these unusual throngs were *Jews*, the fact that they were observed wading naked to the middle of the river to perform their daily ritual of immersion, and listening to talks by the same one or two men who seemed to magnetize them there, should have appeared newsworthy at the time.

Particularly so, as Herod and therefore Pontius Pilate, the Prefect, were very much aware of the extreme discontentment within the Judean and Galilean populations. The Sicarii, members of the organized Israelite armed resistance, were busting to mount another challenge against Roman rule and the authorities were on alert for plots intended to destabilize the status quo in place.

- the impact on local commerce and the supposed congestion on the well-trodden donkey trails resulting from such influx of people wherever Yeshua travelled and in Jerusalem were not found any more noteworthy than the rest – not even by a satisfied inn-keeper.

Yet, there is not one single *primary source* reference made circa 28-33 AD, however brief, however formal or informal, from any eye-witness regarding Yeshua/Jesus during the three years of his holy work.

Odd, really that not one such *faits divers* that gospel writers claim had alarmed the Romans aroused the curiosity or the interest of any scribe, scholar, politician or local historian, be they Jewish, Greek or Roman, over years that spanned Yeshua’s ministry.

In short, circa 27-30 BC, under the watch of the Prefect Pontius Pilate, there is no record of anything ‘unusual’ happening in that area. That is in spite of that period - one of *tight* Roman control over the regions of Galilee and Judea, known as Ancient Israel, and the capital city of Jerusalem - being richly documented as attested by the myriad of books and documentaries on Ancient history. Yet, there is nothing found, carved or written that would confirm the historicity of Yeshua/Jesus.

Serious question: how can it be that this man, Yeshua, who harangued the temple priests, upturned the merchants' tables, who was followed by far greater crowds than the Pied Piper of Hamelin, remain so private?

How can it be that this man who involved a multitude of his own kind in the Israelite ritual of purification (whereas the *mikveh*, though performed in public, was always a *private* act of Faith) and who made miracles that would have stopped anyone in mid-stride, not get mentioned in any way?

The bottom line question is this: how could the popularity, the trial and crucifixion of such a high-visibility 'nuisance' holy man deemed a high-profile risk to Roman rule not leave a 'paper trail'?

After all, the system of messengers was extremely elaborate. Then as now, headlines flew across the hills, the deserts, the seas and into homes, halls and chambers.

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## Eye-Witness Accounts

Feeding the masses with a couple of loaves and fish, successfully chasing seven demons out of an 'impure' body and reviving the dead were no more mundane occurrences than they are today. And yet, looking on from a distance, only three women were near the site of the crucifixion, crying for such a kind and remarkable man who had been blessed with abilities that clearly were out of this world.

The fifth book of the New Testament, Acts of the Apostles, is thought to have been written circa 60 BC [30 years after the death of Yeshua] by an anonymous Gentile scribe for an audience of emerging Christians.

Acts 2:1- 40 states that a few days after the crucifixion of Yeshua, the twelve disciples gathered to pray. They were presumably the same ones who, except for Peter, had abandoned Jesus in the hours of his agony on the cross.

Suddenly, <sup>2</sup> *a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.*

<sup>3</sup> *They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.* <sup>4</sup> *All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them."*

A few moments later Peter gave the following admonition, <sup>38</sup> *"Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. <sup>39</sup> The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."* <sup>40</sup> *With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation."*

The next verse adds that *"Those who accepted his message were baptized, and **about three thousand were added to their number that day.**"*

According to this verse, several crowds of a few thousand had gathered around Yeshua when he was alive. Then, three thousands on that particular day plus, presumably, another few thousands would have streamed past during ensuing days and weeks, as news spread like wildfire that the Spirit had enabled the disciples to fill them, Gentiles, with the 'gift of the Holy Spirit.'

Only in times of refugee displacement – or civil unrest - would the regions be so much in flux and yet, again, none of the eye-witnesses. Neither Roman nor Hebrew was moved to run to

the local scribes begging them to commit the news of these unusual spontaneous happenings on papyrus or parchment – and pass them on to respective authorities for praise or ... control?

After all, that was a period recorded in history as one of heightened tension between the Roman controlling agents and the downtrodden Jewish population who loathed them. Yet, from decanus to centurion, not one soldier in the Roman cohorts on patrol, not any of Pontius Pilates' bevy of spies sensed that what they witnessed, heard or overheard, was worthy of report.

So, the question begging is *Why not?*

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In the period concerned, crucifixions, however graphically inhumane they seem today, were a dime a dozen multiplied by hundreds at any given moment outside the Jerusalem city walls.

According to Roman law, crucifixions were as common as the chopping off of thieves' hands in other cultures, as common as our own citizens being hauled off to incarceration centers, as common, elsewhere, as the stoning of wives decreed guilty of adultery.

It's understood that a crucifixion would not have been a newsworthy item in those ancient times. That is unless the crucified one happened to be a local legend.

Or one as famous as Jesus-the-crowd-puller, the local stirrer known to harangue the temple priests. Or more importantly, Jesus the-maker-of-many-miracles, the man who walked on water, the man who fed a crowd of five thousand people with five loaves and two fish.

The man whom many in the crowds had begun calling the Son of God.

Significantly, nobody from the pagan camp, the camp of the Messianic Jews or the Orthodox Jewish camp, either in the spirit of worship, admiration or satire, seems to have written anything about the man – not even the Issiyim esoteric scholars whose student he had been, in all probability, a few years earlier.

The earliest artefact of biblical significance, the Merneptah Stele, places the Israelites on the list of nations conquered by the Pharaoh circa **1230 BC**. Therefore one can only assume that Christians must be holding on to the belief that snippets of evidence carved or written circa 30 AD have yet to be released.

And revealed, they might one day be either by earthquakes or by vaults, one day unlocked,

bu for now in the most secure places in Vatican City - and all shall be clarified in the fullness of time - hence the fervor that keeps them in the faith.

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## Yeshua Ha-Notzri

Interestingly, in Talmud manuscripts, a certain Yeshu/Yeshua known as *Ha-Notzri* [*The Keeper of the Torah or Mitzvoth*] is on record in Judea around 100 BC.

In the Tosefta, *Chullin 2:22-24*, another rabbinic treaty, a Yeshua ben Stada is also mentioned. And so is a Yeshua ben Pandera who was the disciple of rabbi Yehoshua ben Prachya, the head of Sanhedrin.

All three Yeshuas were men of evolved spiritual development.

Each had their followers who respected them either as troublemaker heretic, hermetic occultist or as Teacher of Righteousness.

Each was the son of an adulteress.

Each was either hanged or stoned to death and the general consensus is that these three Yeshua might have been one and the same man – the prototype for the Jesus of Mark and Matthew.

Though this notion might seem strange at first, if one were aware of the different ways in which one is remembered by friends, teachers, colleagues and neighbors whom one has known intimately, professionally or superficially throughout *any* decade, wearing different 'hats' and known by different names, nicknames, perhaps even titles – this notion would not seem so strange, at all.

Again, though such accounts are conflicted, Yeshua ben Stada is depicted as having led quite an interesting, if somewhat short life. It is said that he was a sorcerer, that he had a penchant for the occult.

In modern parlance, a sorcerer is a wizard or a magician.

Though the word 'occult' is, today, shaded by the notion of dealing with dark energies, the word itself is a neutral descriptor for *matters that are concealed, beyond human comprehension, available only to the initiated*.

The Hebrew word *kashaph* translated as *witch* or *sorcerer* can also mean *pharmakeia* which is perhaps no so oddly reminiscent of the word *pharmacy*.

A sorcerer dealing in the occult might simply have been a mystic able to deal with the multiple gradations of the conscious mind, the many forces that inhabit and control us as well as the manipulation of subtle energies of the higher order.

However, if the said sorcerer used idols in his practice, that practice became black magic

and religious law forbade such practices, which were punishable by death.

According to some accounts, he was hanged on the eve of Passover.

According to other accounts he was stoned to death.

Yeshua's excellence in matters related to the manipulation of higher energies positioned him as one who possessed considerable, secret, mystical knowledge. Perhaps it is as a result of this knowledge, that he is said to have been taught by the Issiyim/Essenes – if not with them, then within a religious sect which espoused similar interests in the functioning of the spiritual realm and seeking mystical fulfilment.

It is said that Yeshua spent many years in Egypt, a country that, in ancient times, was renowned for the high degree of spiritual mastery of its temple High priests.

It is understood that these temple priests intended to keep *occult* and private the advanced, unique, knowledge they cared to disclose to only a few initiates. It is therefore also understood that these temple priests would not have allowed even the tiniest shred of ancient scroll out of the inner sanctum.

Clearly, such vast esoteric knowledge that had been stored there over many centuries would have been far too involved to commit it all to memory.

The problem Judaism has with any kind of magic, even white magic is that it usually involves the use of objects linked to spirits and pagan gods – and sometimes even necromancy or the manipulation of unhealthy, gross entities - astral shells.

However, divinely produced miracles such as the hands-on/off healings done by spiritual healers were considered done by the grace of God and not by any strand of pagan witchcraft.

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Exodus/Shemot 22:17: תְּחִיָּה לֹא תִכְשָׁפָה יִזְ: *You shall not allow a sorceress to live.*

Imagine this: in an era when tattoos and 'scratchings' on the skin intended as 'signs' were punishable by death because such practices were thought to link one to dark forces, when Yeshua eventually left Egypt to return to Judea, he smuggled out of the country many of the most guarded esoteric formulae and diagrams - not in his saddle bags where they could have been found by guards, not even hidden under his robe.

He smuggled them out of Egypt ... engraved on his skin and cut into it!

In biblical days and still today, the strict observance of the Shabbath meant that come sunset on Fridays, one proscribed activity among many others is *writing* anything for any reason. It is forbidden to allow minors or to ask a Gentile to do anything on Shabbath that one is forbidden to do himself, including writing a note.

The Palestinian Gemara, another Jewish law treaty in vigor at the time, states that "He who scratches on the skin in the fashion of writing is guilty, but he who makes marks on the skin in the fashion of writing, is exempt from punishment.

Unfortunately for Yeshua, unbeknownst to him, he had been observed making *marks*, if not strictly speaking *words*, intended to create meaning, although they may not have been 'scratches' – not on parchment but on his skin. And certainly, the practice of inserting inside a self-inflicted cut a tiny document folded no larger than a thumbnail to have the skin heal over it until came the time, if ever, to retrieve it, was extremely taboo - but not totally unheard of.

These days, the practice of inserting a small stone or piece of metal under the skin falls under the umbrella term of body modification and subdermal implants.

Sacrificion is actually an ancient form of body art.

For Australian aborigines, it worked as a language inscribed on the body. Each deliberately placed scar told a story of pain, endurance, identity, status, beauty, courage or grief.

In our current society, tattoos have become common place.

Up to the mid-'90s, they had only been the honorific, identifying badge of secret sects members, sailors and of 'bad guys and girls' - outcasts in margin of society - who indulged the dark side of their ego.

Today, within our fashionable sub-culture, scarification with intent to adorn the body or shock value – still thought to be extreme and repulsive by many - is merely an extension of Body Art.

However, back then, whatever Yeshua had been up to was enough to have him charged and executed.

What dialogue then ensued between Yeshua's various accusers and defendants became very involved hair-splitting interpretation of the Mishnah 7.4, the tractate under which he was charged.

Meanwhile, for forty days, he was prodded through the streets of Jerusalem, preceded by a crier calling for witnesses in Yeshua's favor to come forward. No one did.

On the eve of Passover in 88 BC, about 100 years to the day of Jesus' crucifixion, one Yeshua, let's make it Yeshua ben Stada, was judged by the Sanhedrin, the Jewish judicial body composed of twenty-three judges and he was found guilty.

Yeshua was found guilty as charged of sorcery, idolatry and profanation of the Shabbath and sentenced to death by stoning. The same fate would have also befallen anyone found guilty of the crime of fornication with his mother, his mother-in-law, his daughter-in-law, with another man - or with an animal.

According to the stipulations of Tractate 6.1-4, Yehsua was stripped. The main accuser/witness would have thrown the first stone from a distance of about three meters. If that first rock had failed to kill him, everyone in the town who wished to would have had their turn until death was confirmed, which went a little way towards ensuring anonymous blame - a set-up reminiscent of the firing squad.

Always according to procedure, his hands would have been tied, his body affixed by some sort of hook to an outdoor beam or a tree. Or he may have been executed more quickly by hanging.

Either way, the practice of publicising such deaths must have been intended mostly as an on-the-spot deterrent because the next step of the procedure dictated that the body had to be taken down before sundown and had to be buried that same day.

From Yeshua Ha-Notzri, the preacher assumed to be from Nazareth, to the trial by the Sanhedrin, the forced march through the streets, the silence of everyone even the most committed followers, the *mise á mort* that ensued on the eve of Passover, these facts and events resonate with the content of the life and death of Jesus ... of Nazareth.

The similarities are such one could be tempted to say the gospel writers had been strongly 'inspired' by them.

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Besides switching the dark powers of Yeshua, the sorcerer, to the occult white magic of the good Jesus, miracle-worker, switching the charge of profanation to the charge of blasphemy, changing the mode of execution from the stoning of the Hebrew culture to the crucifixion favored by Roman law, and changing the site of the execution from Lud to Jerusalem, the main plot beats of the gospels were indeed as familiar to the Jews then as now.

As an aside, it is quite likely that in today's Courts of Law, the writers of the New Testament,

from Mark to John and Eusebius, would be charged with the offence of plagiarism.

If there is to this day no proof of an historical Jesus having ever existed, it does make reasonable sense to assume that the prototype inspiration was derived from a few, real or mythical, heroes gleaned mostly from the multitudinous pages of Jewish Scriptures and related Rabbinical treatises.

In fact, one pernicious possibility is that the aim of the gospel writers from Mark to John and later by the Church Fathers might have been to create a spiritual hero in such a way that through the narration of their cumulative writings *his* life and *his* destiny – as a Christian emblem - appeared to be the unequivocal realisation of Jewish prophecies such as those of Isaiah 2:11, 42, Isaiah 53 and Micah 5:2 and Jeremiah 30 and a plethora of other verses written five hundred years earlier.

*Why reinvent the wheel, the Church Fathers might have thought, and create a new dogma when that of the Israelites spun such good values and had been made them resilient through centuries of utmost adversity?*

All except but the truly demanding acts of commitment to the Faith could be adapted. Demanding acts were the compulsory circumcision of infants at the age of 8 days [and of any adult wishing to 'convert'], respecting not 10 but the entire list of 613 good deed *mitzvot*/Commandments and - rain or shine - the daily mikvehs in natural flowing water. Most of the rigorous rituals of Judaism could be dispensed with, and presto – the Church Fathers had a ready-made, yet new, very accommodating religion to push through their interpretation of a Messiah.

As it is, the prophets' visions were mostly focussed on the much-anticipated arrival of *their* Jewish Messiah - a person of flesh and blood - a true leader of men and of their hearts who would redeem Israel and those who had lived by the Torah.

There is no allusion to any resurrection in either Talmud or Torah.

No Jewish scripture and no *Orthodox* Jew can *ever* conceive the notion of a supernatural savior born from a god to form a holy trilogy/trinity. Not any more than finding acceptable the shedding of blood, the symbolic drinking of blood, the worship of idols, be they on a cross or in any other form.

Such notions would have been understandably a lot more relevant and appealing to freshly converted *pagan* minds than to Jews who had been steeped in their religion-driven culture

for millennia.

In fact, the words in Jeremiah 30, as understood by the people from within which they originated many centuries earlier, are about the abandonment of Israel by all and the promise of its restoration as a nation – not about the Suffering Servant of God:

<sup>12</sup> *“This is what the LORD says: “Your wound is incurable, your injury beyond healing.*

<sup>13</sup> *There is no one to plead your cause, no remedy for your sore, no healing for you.*

<sup>14</sup> *All your allies have forgotten you; they care nothing for you.*

Ultimately, it is Eusebius of Caesarea, a Roman historian who became a leading Church Father circa 300 **BC** who gave these texts the final ‘brush over’.

The favor he carried with the then Emperor of Rome, Constantine the Great, encouraged him to canonize what was to become known as the New Testament – four hundred years AD.

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## Pilgrims

Exodus 23:14-17 and 34:18-23: **Three times each year**, every male among you must appear before God the Lord. Keep the Festival of Matzahs [Passover]...Keep the Festival of Shavuot through the first fruits of your wheat harvest. Also keep the harvest festival [Sukkot] soon after the year changes.

From all corners of Galilee and Judea, from Jordan, Egypt and Syria - from wherever they lived abroad - Israelite men and their entire families travelled on camel or donkey backs or in carts or walked the length of the journey to Jerusalem in the days that preceded Pesach/Passover - as commanded by the Torah.

As they came from all corners of the empire, this million of pilgrims was a pulsing economic artery descending on to the city of Jerusalem.

With them, they brought news of the political landscape well beyond the Jewish provinces and news, too, of all manner of innovations. They arrived three times a year ready to conduct their trade and wholesale, thus providing a living for large segments of the local population.

Even the constant exchange of currency benefitted all strata of this prosperous city.

Fresh from Galilee, the mountainous region where the Sicarii [Blade-Men] were notoriously fomenting an armed rebellion against Roman rule, Yeshua was on foot among the throngs of pilgrims nearing the walls of the city.

Although Israel is comparatively a small country, it is a harsh and rugged one to cover on foot, even on donkey back. In the days of the Ottoman Empire, roughly twelve centuries later, it still took three days of carriage travelling to cover the mere 42 miles that separate Jaffa from Jerusalem.

In those biblical days, very few sights would have been more common in villages than those of female donkeys and their colts and Matthew 21 tells how Yeshua had his disciples 'borrow' without permission a donkey on which to pass through the eastern city gate on his way to the nearby Temple.

*1 As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, <sup>2</sup> saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. <sup>3</sup> If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away."*

Question: Why did the preacher who had walked the proverbial 'hundred miles' from Galilee to reach the ramparts of the city not wish to walk the brief distance to the Temple Mount?

An answer is given in Matthew 4:

*12 Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee.*

*<sup>13</sup>He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the lake, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, <sup>14</sup>so that what had been spoken through the **prophet Isaiah** might be fulfilled.*

And to that answer, after the name of Isaiah, the names of the other prophets and seers can be added.

It has to be remembered that *every single pilgrim* gathered there – all Jews to the last of them - would have been very familiar with each of the prophets pronouncements made circa between 700BC and 250 BC. They were as familiar to each of them as the intricacies of the Bible are familiar to devout Christians today.

The well-known pronouncements included that of Ezekiel who, in 43:1- 4, made explicit the exact gateway through which the *Mashiah of the Israelites* would one day enter the fortified city of Jerusalem: “*Suddenly, the glory of the God of Israel appeared from the east. The sound of his coming was like the roar of rushing waters, and the whole landscape shone with His glory.*

*This vision was just like the others I had seen, first by the Kebar River and then when he came to destroy Jerusalem. I fell face down on the ground.*

*And the glory of the Lord came into the Temple through the east gateway.”*

In his 9:9 verse, Zechariah added another detail: “*Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.*”

A prophecy is a monologue, a soliloquy but, *centuries* later, Ezekiel's and Zechariah's lone voices were given a reply from Matthew 21: <sup>6</sup>*The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them;*<sup>7</sup>*they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them.*

Serious question: Why did some disciples put their cloaks on the donkey and her foal?

One possible answer is that they may have been intended it as a gesture of respect, obedience or submission, as owed to a king.

Was this gesture staged for the purpose of Yeshua's grand entrance through the eastern gate or was it spontaneous? That, too, shall remain a moot point.

Later again from Psalms 118: 25–26 came the fervent rejoinder of united pilgrim voices, "*Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. We bless you from the house of the Lord.*"

In short, some 600 years separate the original voice of the biblical prophet and the link made to it in the New Testament.

Questions, questions, always more serious questions: Was it Yeshua's intention on that sunny day simply to join the pilgrims in the religious rituals held at the Temple?

Or did he purposefully stage the time, place and manner of his appearance at a moment of extreme concentration of people in worship mode to admonish them, as many evangelical Christians still do, to immediately amend their ways to act from the heart, as commanded by their god in the Torah because the day of Redemption was upon them?

Did he imagine that his words would have maximum impact if the sight of him – on a donkey – coming through the eastern gate - automatically cued in the pilgrims to the words the prophets had proclaimed centuries earlier?

Or did the people, spontaneously sense in this anonymous preacher the presence of a divine Spirit greater than one's soul?

*Why*, indeed, did the pilgrims cheer Yeshua's arrival with such unbridled joy and respect, as his disciples rushed about to lay their cloaks in front his donkey's hooves, as peasants in other regions of the world have done in front of a nobleman's horse to help it across a puddle?

Was the Aramaic word, *Hossannah*/Save us, a plea to their God to infuse Yeshua with such energy that would render him able to 'move mountains' on their behalf?

Possibility #1: it was a plea for Yahweh, their god, to infuse all the people with the *true* ethos of the Torah?

Possibility #2: it was a plea for him to save them from the often compromised integrity of the High Priests chosen by the Emperor?

Possibility #3: because Yeshua did not present as a warrior, was it a plea to protect them, as a freedom-fighter would, from the ham-fisted, harsh and cruel control and abuses that Pontius Pilate and his legions exerted over the Judeans in the name of the Roman Emperor?

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## Passover or Succoth

Numerous palm fronds were waved at Yeshua that morning. These fronds would normally have been used in the ritual blessing of the *succahs*, the temporary huts each pilgrim family was building near the temple for the duration of their stay at the festival of Succoth. These huts symbolized the wilderness shelters in which the Israelites had lived during the forty years of Exodus.

From a Jewish perspective, the presence of people waving fronds presents a problem of timing in regards to *when* this very unique moment might have taken place.

The window of opportunity is very narrow because it is generally accepted that Yeshua arrived in Jerusalem one week before Passover. Succoth, however, is celebrated *six months before Pesach/Passover*.

Might Mark and/or Matthew have gotten the date wrong?

After all, as non-Jews who most certainly lived in Roman regions away from Galilee and Judea, they would not have had much first-hand knowledge of any Jewish festivals, rituals - or texts for that matter. They most certainly did not speak or read Hebrew.

It is most likely that they 'borrowed' the core of their texts from much older documents and radically 'edited' them to make them their own.

It could be said that their texts were 'based on' or 'inspired by' a variety of much older texts written in Hebrew.

The sum total of all *they* knew would have been passed on by sympathetic Israelites - years after the crucifixion of Yeshua.

This question of dates notwithstanding, were the fronds symbolizing victory and triumph over adversity in the same way as olive branches and wreaths, symbols of peace and victory? If so, triumph and victory over what?

Question: were these fronds the biblical equivalent of a current day ticker tape parade?

Question: was Yeshua recognized on sight by enough people to have news of his arrival spread like wildfire?

Question: was he being recognized as a last resort, but legitimate heir, about to unleash the Sicarii and return the ancient Kingdom of Israel to the Children of Israel through a return of

the Hasmonean *priestly* dynasty – now that Yohannan was no longer?

Certainly, the reunification of Israel and her freedom from the yoke of any conqueror had been clamoured for and anticipated by more than one prophet.

Question: were the people hailing, not a would-be warrior king, but the apocalyptic prophet they recognized on sight, the one who would lead them safely through Redemption?

Or both?

Indeed, a significant number of questions exist about the precise moment Yeshua was hailed by the people of Jerusalem, as it has been related in the New Testament. And it seems that no one except, perhaps, for devout Christians have ready answers.

What is clear is that one week later, Yeshua would be executed and died alone.

As an aside, it might be interesting to know that some 1500 years later, the eastern gate through which Yeshua trotted inside the fortified city of Jerusalem atop his borrowed donkey was entirely sealed by a foreign hand - and still is to this day.

Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent of the Ottoman Empire, having conquered the city had the gate sealed while his people were rebuilding the ramparts. This odd decision was not given because of *Yeshua* had passed through it fifteen centuries earlier, but because Jewish tradition had it [and still does] that the Divine Presence, Shekhinah, had already appeared through this gate and was expected to reappear again through that same gate.

Perhaps more interestingly, somewhere between 593 – 570 **BC**, therefore five centuries BEFORE Yeshua's week in Jerusalem, Ezekiel, in 44 spoke of a vision he had had:

*"<sup>1</sup> Then the man brought me back to the outside gate complex of the Sanctuary that faces east. But it was shut. <sup>2-3</sup> God spoke to me: "This gate is shut and it's to stay shut. No one is to go through it because God, the God of Israel, has gone through it. It stays shut. Only the prince, because he's the prince, may sit there to eat in the presence of God. He is to enter the gate complex through the porch and leave by the same way."*

Basically, some nineteen centuries AFTER Ezekiel's vision/prophecy, Suleiman, aware of the Jewish expectations of a great warrior sent by God, thought he would forever block the return of this *Mashiah* with an immovable pile of great stones.

As an extra precaution, Suleiman placed a Muslim cemetery right in front of this particular gate in the conviction that no holy man of the Jewish faith would allow himself defiled by walking through it.

In regards to mortal 'holy' men, certainly no Kohanim [the Cohen lineage of priests] would have set foot in that cemetery. To this day, they are forbidden to enter *any cemetery*, the belief being that the energies of the lowly astral shells gathered in such places, by definition devoid of the Spirit, are harmful to the soul.

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## A Mashiah

Be that as it may, in the second century AD, 'John's' **Book of Revelation** unveils the arrival of an apocalyptic supernatural being named Jesus, a celestial warrior who arrives astride a flying white stallion. <sup>10</sup>*And I fell at his feet to worship him.*

*And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*

<sup>11</sup>*And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.*

Interestingly, the biblical text that may have inspired this is from Isaiah 11:

<sup>1</sup>*A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.*

<sup>2</sup>*The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him - the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD—*

<sup>3</sup>*and he will delight in the fear of the LORD.*

He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears;

<sup>4</sup> but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth.

*He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked.”*

**Revelations:** <sup>12</sup>*His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.*

It could be argued that since no man knew the rider's name but *himself*, this apocalyptic figure with fire in his eyes is probably not the kind Jesus depicted in the famous illustration, a devotion to Jesus, the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.

**Isaiah's** prophecy continued: <sup>5</sup>*“Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist”* while **Revelation 13**, written some six centuries later, echoes in a somewhat heathen vein: <sup>13</sup>*“And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.”*

Isaiah's words talk of calm and peace all around: *“and the young child will put its hand into the viper's nest.”* <sup>9</sup> *They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea”* while the words of

Revelation 13-19:18, again possibly because of the lingering pagan mindset of the early Christians, convey a different approach altogether:

*“<sup>18</sup>That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.”*

Be that as it may and all prose aside, the Israelites shared a common understanding in regards to specific observable and quantifiable deeds their long-awaited leader-warrior, their *Mashiah*, a fundamental concept inextricable from traditional Judaism.

Enabled by the grace of their god, that special being would free his people from physical oppression and from flagging spirituality. Their Mashiah had to do more than ride in on a donkey, preach the way of the Torah and talk about Redemption to a captive audience of pilgrims.

- Though the ancient Hebrew word Mashiah has become overloaded with comparatively new Christian understanding of the title meaning an anthropomorphic Son of God, originally this word only referred to High Priest or to a king who had been anointed through the smearing of oil on his head by a prophet or a seer, such as Samuel who anointed Saul and David.

*Samuel 10: <sup>1</sup> Then Samuel took a flask of olive oil and poured it on Saul’s head and kissed him, saying, “Has not the LORD anointed you ruler over his inheritance?”*

In regards to the consecration of King Solomon, here is how it was performed according to I Kings 1: <sup>32</sup> *King David said, “Call in Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet and Benaiah son of Jehoiada.” When they came before the king, <sup>33</sup> he said to them: “Take your lord’s servants with you and have Solomon my son mount my own mule and take him down to Gihon. <sup>34</sup> There have Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him king over Israel. Blow the trumpet and shout, ‘Long live King Solomon!’ <sup>35</sup> Then you are to go up with him, and he is to come and sit on my throne and reign in my place. I have appointed him ruler over Israel and Judah.”*

The intent of this oil anointment was equal to that of a King or Queen laying a sword on the shoulders of a Medieval knight – the only spiritual element present in both traditions lay in the plea that God would guide this person’s hand for the good fortune of the country and its people. Interestingly, nothing in the Judaic texts suggests that the *mashiah* claimants can only be men.

In fact, several women have been remembered for having actively managed the highest of responsibilities as prophetesses, leaders and judges in biblical times.

The Jewish Queen Esther of Persia is said to have saved her whole nation by risking her life while interceding for her people.

According to Judges 4:4: Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel at that time.

There were also Huldah, Miriam, Noadiah and others.

If the gender of the person is not a qualifying criterion for messianic-hood, there is at least one criterion, a thorn in many a side, an obstacle that cannot be disposed of by stealth, glibness or a sleight of hand.

It comes again in the words of Isaiah in 7.13-15: *The mashiah, he said, will come from the lineage of the House of David. Hear now, you house of David! [...] The Lord will give you a sign: a young woman will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel ['God with us']. He will eat curds and honey when he knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right.*

Whether Yeshua's father was Joseph [family name unknown], or whether Yeshua had been born out of an immaculate womb or out of wedlock or whether he is believed to be the Son of God, none of these circumstances makes him a descendant of King David.

From I Samuel 8, *it is believed that God spoke directly to Samuel, the Seer, who ruled Israel for many years. <sup>16</sup>And he went from year to year in circuit to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places. <sup>17</sup>And his return was to Ramah; for there was his house; and there he judged Israel; and there he built an altar unto the LORD.*

Samuel travelled about like a modern day leader. His entourage followed him wherever he went, supposedly to not impinge on anyone's hospitality.

And perhaps because of this recurring flaunting of wealth through the power of his position, one day, God stopped talking to Samuel and Samuel's life became one of grief until he died. However, while in his prime 'Spirit-filled' years when Samuel was channelling the visions sent to him by his God, in 2 Samuel 7:12-13, he prophesied, "*When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.*"

Ezekiel 34:23-24 confirmed God's choice of ascendancy:

*"<sup>23</sup> I will appoint over them a single shepherd, My servant David, and he will shepherd them. He will tend them himself and will be their shepherd. <sup>24</sup> I, Yahweh, will be their God, and My servant **David** will be a prince among them. I, Yahweh, have spoken"*

And Jeremiah 23:5 corroborated that the *Mashiah* will come from the righteous branch of David: <sup>5</sup> *"The days are coming"—this is the LORD's declaration when I will raise up a Righteous Branch of David. He will reign wisely as king and administer justice and righteousness in the land."*

In 11:2-5, Isaiah added that this *Mashiah* will act according to the Spirit of the Torah, knowing that for the Ancient Israelites – as for today's Orthodox Jews, there was *no* other law: <sup>2</sup>*"The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him - the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD - and he will delight in the fear of the LORD."*

That meant that *this* leader would KNOW that there was no other God than that of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses.

It also meant that this leader would also understand that the covenant in which God spelt out Abraham's obligations had to be respected as well.

Circumcision would be once again compulsory for all male Israelites and for all the servants/dependants, even non-Jews, who worked for them - according to the agreement Abraham had made with his God a thousand years earlier.

*Genesis 17: "This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. <sup>11</sup> And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. <sup>12</sup> And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed.<sup>13</sup> He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. <sup>14</sup> And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant."*

It also meant that the Shabbath would be respected according to the numerous demands of this observance made in the Torah – in short, life would be led by everyone, according to the way of the Torah.

This, in turn, implies categorically that merely 'trying' to only follow the ten basic commandments and the seven laws of Noah, as Paulus of Tarsus/St Paul went on to advocate later, is merely a distilled version of the religion of origin.

It can be seen as a soft approach chosen by people who prefer to not have too many restrictions imposed on their days and lives – in the name of their God.

The worship of the trilogy/trinity composed of the Son of God plus God, Himself, plus the Holy Spirit plus the worship of idols/statues and relics together constitute a huge divergence away from the original doctrine taken as the root of Christianity.

These deviations alone would suggest that the writers of the first gospels did not quite understand how their Jesus Christ in-role as 'the' *Mashiah* was indented to play his part as the King of Jews – as the *mashiah* of the Jewish scriptures - such as it was understood by the biblical prophets, Yeshua and the people of his time.

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## The New Voice

It is difficult to make sense of Yeshua's arrest, the lightning-quick trial and the sentence of death by crucifixion – the most humiliating and the most horribly painful sentence in the books.

One way to inject a modicum of logic into the series of events that lead to his death is to place them within a context of sorts.

It was only 60 years earlier that the Roman general, Pompey, had captured Jerusalem. That act put an end to the independent Jewish state of Palestine. In one sense, it also put an end to the self-governed, Hebrew, Hasmonean dynasty.

Though Agrippa II, the grandson of the last king Agrippa I, found himself on the throne, it was by the good grace of Rome. For him, the concession of that crown implied walking a thin, tight rope held at one end by Tiberius and at the other, by the Israelites, his people.

By the time Yeshua was born, this dynasty had been well and truly terminated and, more and more, oppressed Jews dared voice their discontent. The fundamentalist Issiyim, however spiritually enlightened, were zealots in their own right and they were at the heart of a fomenting rebellion. It has been said that they were the quiet *brain* of the rebellion while the dagger-wielding, fanatic Sicarii were the *brawn*.

Then as now in many parts of the world, citizens have rebel-led however passively or however violently to eke a degree of independence from authoritarian regimes in situ. Frequent skirmishes broke out between Hebrew civilians and the Roman army.

Yohannan ha-matbil/John the Baptist was the voice of the Israelite rebellion.

The New Testament cast him as a visionary man, as a prophet. A prophet, he probably was not, but a visionary freedom fighter, he probably was.

Through 'preachings' in his native Hebrew, a language not understood by the Roman soldiers, he spoke of an apocalyptic end and the arrival of a mashiah who would be the leader of flesh and blood proclaimed in so many ways by the prophets a few centuries earlier.

No doubt, *some* of Yohannan's talks contained 'news of the front' intended to connect and hearten the men and women of Judea. In the eyes of many of his compatriots, he was the one, the leader, the mashiah, designated by karmic decree to lead the Zealot rebellion to an

apocalyptic conclusion that would see the total destruction of the Roman political rule over the ancestral of the Jews.

Out of Roman earshot, while performing in a body of flowing water the Jewish ritual of *tevilah* immersion with others, Yohannan was in all likelihood *also* networking as a militant activist. The added act of pouring a palmful of pure water on his companions' heads symbolised the bond of brotherhood between them. Yeshua eventually came down from Galilee and joined Yohannan in the communal act of mikveh-liaising.

Ready or not, the writing was on the wall! Soon after the political killing ordered by Herod cut short Yohannan's life, Yeshua stepped into the breach. He began what, in the New Testament, is referred to as his ministry.

In his sermons, also in Hebrew, the only language he spoke, Yeshua urged the people to live their lives by the 613 mitzvot. He urged them to not become lax in keeping the Sabbath, in performing the circumcision of their male children on their eighth day, in eating only bloodless meat and to refresh their total faith in YHWY [Yahweh], *Adonai* – their one and only God.

In his own way, he took over where Yohannan had left off. For all who understood the subtext, he confirmed the imminent arrival of the great leader, the mashiah/messiah that all Jews, young and old, had been taught to pray for.

It has to be understood that by then there had already been a couple of messianic-claimants, men whom others had designated in their lifetime - and *despite* the lack of any specific achievement - as a god-sent messianic leader.

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**Redemption:** the act of repayment of the principal amount of a debt; the deliverance from sin through the incarnation, sufferings, and death of a messiah.

## **I Am What I become**

The Gabriel Revelation inked in stone is said to have been written around the time of the birth of Yeshua. It refers to the tragic events that occurred in 4 BC, the year King Herod died. At that time no less than three messianic claimants were said to have been active in the midst of a massive rebellion.

Unfortunately, instead of bringing enlightenment and salvation in the form of political might and autonomy, they brought down the wrath of Rome. Cities were burned, and thousands were killed in heavy-handed episodes of repression.

According to Professor Israel Knohl's decipherment of The Gabriel Revelation, the text was written by a scribe from within the group that supported one such the messianic leader, Simon of Peraea, a former slave under Herod.

At one point in time, Simon became the 'face' of the rebellion, so much so that eventually some of his followers around the Jordan area had convinced themselves - and maybe him, too - that he must indeed be that long awaited leader, the one who through the Grace of God would make a unique and final difference to the political scene.

The belief was that such a god-chosen man would not only put an end to the oppression of the Roman Procurators but also eradicate the possibility of Israel being conquered ever again. Too soon, though, Simon was killed in action.

The Roman soldiers tossed his body unceremoniously outside the city walls.

Even in spite of the catastrophic failure and the bloodshed that Simon's vision had brought upon the people, his *small* group of dedicated followers were so convinced that this man had been the true leader sent by God that even the irreverent disposal of his body failed to diminish their belief.

They turned to the Scriptures for answers.

Long story made short, the result of their search for answers produced the first theory in the genre of Catastrophic Messianism and they wrote their belief on a stone.

The crux of the Gabriel Revelation is that this small band of men had become convinced that one special man's humiliation and agonizing death were all parts of the karmic plan or God's

decree for a messiah. Failure to be freed by divine intervention did not automatically rob such a man of the status of mashiah.

They added that humiliation, suffering and death were, in fact, the unavoidable par-for-the-course experiences of a true Mashiah - *and he shall rise from the dead three days after burial.*

This group became the sect from which originated the concept of messianic resurrection. It is through this process, says the Gabriel Revelation, that one man chosen by God and his selfless willingness to be tortured, to suffer and to give up his life, thus amending the sins of an entire population, would bring redemption to the people of Israel. The stone carving says it clearly: resurrection will take place and it will usher in the Messianic Age.

Though the term Messianic Age is another word that, these days, is loaded with all sorts of supernatural innuendoes, it simply refers to a distant future in which, thanks to the actions of one truly God-aware human being, a *universal*, just, kind peace will blanket the entire humanity – not merely the people of Israel.

It is probably from Yohannan ha-matbil/The Baptist and *his* connections to the *milieu* that Yeshua came across the staunch followers of the Simon of Peraea cult - some twenty years after the man's death.

If on the one hand, clearly, Simon had not yet resurrected, then on the other, Yeshua had found his ultimate purpose in this lifetime.

What God failed to bring upon him, he would bring upon himself and while he went about the business of the itinerant preacher who taught the ways of the Torah, he was also a leading activist for the liberation of his compatriots – and in the fullness of time, he imagined himself as their savior.

From then on, he set the wheel in motion. Slowly-slowly, planning and enacting one prophetic snippet at a time, he orchestrated every step of the path that would lead to this arrest through the predetermined betrayal of Judah and ultimately to a sacrificial death on a Roman cross.

This deliberate and methodical enactment has been recast in the New Testament as the divine 'fulfilment' of prophecies made by Isaiah and Zechariah.

Some five hundred years before Yeshua's visit to Jerusalem, while King David was organising the crowning of his son, Solomon, he ordered that his heir should ride *on a mule* to the temple where he would be anointed by the prophet Zadok as *King over Israel.*

1 Kings 1:31:<sup>33</sup> He [King David] said to them: *“Take your lord’s servants with you and set Solomon my son on my own mule and take him down to Gihon. <sup>34</sup> There have Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him king over Israel. Blow the trumpet and shout, ‘Long live King Solomon!’*

As explained in Matthew 4, seventy years after the passing of Yeshua: <sup>12</sup>Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. <sup>13</sup> He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the lake, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, <sup>14</sup> so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled.

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## Shabbath at the Temple

The Temple Mount compound, in Jerusalem, the site of Yeshua's altercations with the priests and the money lenders made famous in the New Testament, was very much unlike modern day synagogues and churches. It was not only Ancient Israel's single religious centre but also a financial turning plate where people came to pay their taxes and tithes.

Knowing that the Temple was the hub of all things Jewish, including political networking, the Roman procurators, through their prefects and their spies, kept a close watch on all manner of activities in that area and its surrounds.

It is said that some three years after he began his ministry, Yeshua, himself was at the Temple during the compulsory pilgrimage of Pesach/Passover.

This is what he would have seen: thousands of pilgrims and their families arriving from all over the region and far beyond milling around amongst the crowd of local Jews and Roman soldiers. The men were as much praying as they were conducting their financial affairs.

In the Outer Court, they wove their way around cattle and cages of fowl. They patted and checked the animals to find the best one they could offer in atonement for their sins. This court was also a place of prayer open to all, including the local pagans who were allowed to pray there, among the cacophony of animal sounds – as there was no Roman temple in Jerusalem.

All this may appear quite convivial until we remember that if any pagan ventured beyond the enclosure of the Outer Court and into the Second Court, he or she would be liable to death by stoning. *Everyone knew that.*

Yeshua, himself would have made his way to the Second Court. He would have walked past the pillar cornerstone that carried a dire warning to the non-Jews: *No foreigner is to go beyond the balustrade and the plaza of the temple zone. Whoever is caught doing so will have himself to blame for his death which will follow* – presumably by stoning.

That warning would not have worried Yeshua in the least, as he kept on walking to the Third Court. He, a circumcised man, who lived by the Torah and who, accordingly, immersed himself in flowing water in the daily ritual of *tevilah*, was a part of the religious 'elite' of men allowed in the Third Court. Only the priests in their vestments were permitted in the Fourth Court, the inner sanctum, where lay the tabernacle that housed the Ark, the Holy of Holies.

Understandably, the mere sight of tetchy Roman soldiers in the heart of their religious celebrations annoyed the people no end. Resentment was high, and it is within this snapshot of a Pesach festival at the Temple that, according to the historian Josephus, a very tragic incident occurred there a few years *before* Yeshua was born.

Picture this: Temple Mount and the surrounding area are teeming with Roman cohorts whose duty it is to apprehend anyone showing signs of disrespect to Roman rule and to *immediately* quell any sign of insurgency against Rome.

These areas, particularly at times of high people concentration such as occurred during religious festivals were 'Code red' and soldiers were on high alert.

As can be expected, ogling the Israelite maidens, taunting the men and jeering was many a soldier's favorite pastime on a quite watch.

One day, though, one such game of taunting ended tragically.

A group of young Roman 'flat-foots' were indulging in loutish behavior, laughing at the men's dark long robes, uncut hair and beards worn as signs that there was no place for vanity in their lives - another commandment from their god.

The Israelites used to such antics deliberately ignored the soldiers. They knew that any reply, no matter how provoked, would be severely punished. It was simply not worth their while and, on their side, self-control usually prevailed.

Some in the group of soldiers upped the anti that day, and the men nearest them kept a wary eye on the louts. The soldiers began making insulting gestures and in a reckless game of one-upmanship, one young soldier suddenly lifted up his tunic and aimed his backside at the men. No content with that, with his backside deliberately still pointing at the Israelites, he emitted very loudly an imitation of breaking wind.

Some men clamored for the removal and punishment of the offensive soldier, but the younger men lost their self-control. They picked up stones and hurled them.

A huge melee ensued. Fearing to be overrun and fearing this moment would be the one they had been apprehending - the spark that would ignite the powder keg on which Rome had been keeping a very tight lid - the soldiers raised the alarm.

Swords were drawn and in formation, reinforcements arrived briskly from all directions.

An incredible panic gripped the Israelites. A stampede broke out. With only one point of entry each, the various courts and adjacent rooms and workshops became traps. Men women and children, whoever fell to the ground, were unable to regain their feet.

They were trampled. Those closest to the walls and narrow exit doors were crushed to death

as the panicked pilgrims tried to out-run the Roman cohorts bristling with their swords and lances.

In *Jewish Antiquities*, Josephus wrote that on *that* day of Pesach, some 30,000 lives had been lost.

Over the next forty years, the rift between the ruling Romans and the Israelites had widened further. Hence the rebellion led by the Issiyim and the dagger-men, the Sicarii, that was fomenting in the hills of Galilee. Hence, too, both Yohannan ha-mabtil's and Yeshua's involvement with the insurgents and the news they propagated, each in his own way that the hour of deliverance was nigh.

The primary cause of the arrest and execution of Yeshua a few years later was the series of incidents he created at the Temple in Jerusalem. It has been suggested that Yeshua capitalized on the level of civil unrest by intentionally provoking his arrest.

After the grand entrance he had made a few days earlier through the eastern gate of Jerusalem, riding astride a lowly donkey - as proclaimed by the Hebrew prophet Zechariah and Isaiah centuries earlier - Yeshua's arrest was the next essential act in a series.

One day soon, with the cooperation Judah, his favorite disciple, he would transform from a humble preacher with an uncanny conviction that eternal Greatness awaited him, into the messiah, savior of the downtrodden Jewish people.

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## INRI for Short

Yeshua was called King of the Jews and King of Israel at two opposite moments in his life – at the moment of his birth and at the moment of his impending death. Interestingly, he, himself, is not on record *anywhere* as having used these epithets to refer to himself.

In the first instance, Matthew 2:1–12 claims that the magi, the famous wise men, asked where was, "*the child who has been born king of the Jews?*" Having observed the appearance of his star, they had come to pay him homage.

The second instance is about the iconic words that Pontius Pilate ordered to be written on the plaque that would be nailed to the cross above Yeshua's head: *Iesvs Nazarens Rex Iudaeorum* [Jesus the Nazarene, King of the Jews nailed to the cross] or INRI for short.

According to John 19:20, though only Jews and the Roman soldiers lived in Jerusalem, except for a few merchants, this inscription had also been written in Greek and, of course, in Hebrew.

Yeshua like those belonging to the Issiyim had always been pictured wearing a simple robe of undyed cotton. Shortly after his arrest, however, a robe, either scarlet or purple was thrown over his shoulders.

Both colors are the noble colors of royalty. Unless all abstraction is made of Yeshua's connection to the Issiyim, to the Sicarri, to Yohannan/the Baptist and to the political support he had across Galilee and Judea, there is no reason to assume that the kingly title was given to him in random derision.

Mark 15:17: They put a purple robe on him, then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on him.

Why such a grotesque charade for a small-time trouble-maker arrested for a moment of explosive anger directed at some of his own people while in the Temple compound?

Why did the next two gospel writers, Matthew and John, writing separately across several years, each one unknown to the other, choose to revisit this moment in their own text?

Probably because, embedded as everyone was, in the ongoing political turmoil between Rome and the Jews, they accepted the cue Mark had passed on to them from the original

scroll *he* had adapted. Matthew and John understood the true timeless political nature of the moment.

Matthew 27:28: They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him.

John 19:2: The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head.

They clothed him in a purple robe.

The fellow had been caught haranguing a few priests about their facile application of the Torah dictates. In anger, he had upturned a couple of the heavy, solid wood tables belonging to merchants and money-changers who, according to Yahweh's clear and uncompromising commandment, should have been ordered to abstain from dealing with money until sunset on *this and every* seventh day.

The priests should have sent the men home to observe Shabbat, the day God had set aside for rest and compulsory religious reflection.

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## Blasphemy or Incitement to Revolt?

The main reason given for the arrest of Yeshua brings up an odd sort of conundrum – a mishmash of accusations compounded by a psychotic confusion between two parties and their entitled right to apply *their* law.

What was Yeshua's crime?

Was it blasphemy through the arrogance of calling oneself the Son of God?

Was it 'disturbing the peace' at the temple? Or, was it inciting others to revolt against Roman rule?

If it was the former, the Sanhedrin, the judicial body of twenty-one priests/sages had the mandate to *apprehend and punish all religious infringements*, even those perpetrated by non-Jewish citizens.

The standard punishment for the ones found guilty of blasphemy was death by stoning.

If it was the latter, Rome, through her Prefect, Pontius Pilate, had the right to arrest and punish anyone, Jew and non-Jew alike, and the penalty for actions - real or assumed - that threatened directly or indirectly the Roman Empire was death by crucifixion.

Either way, *neither party needed the permission or the support of the other to apply the full force of the law*, if they so wished – from the arrest to the trial to the execution of the penalty of the guilty party.

So, the question begging is: why the shuffle between the Roman judicial body legally enabled to proceed as they wished and the Sanhedrin, the Jewish judicial body, also legally enabled to proceed according to their law?

Tiberius, the Emperor and Pontius Pilate, the Prefect, both well knew how Herod's father, Herod The Great, the first puppet-king allowed to rule over Judea only by the good grace of the Emperor, had precipitated the end of the Hasmonean dynasty by killing its last remaining males in order to clear the way for himself.

- Back in 36 BCE, in a fit of pique, Herod the Great had the high priest executed. He was Johnathan, known by the hellenized name of Aristobulus III of Judea. He was also the last scion of the dynasty and its 'golden boy' for, beyond his noble lineage, he was considered a very handsome man.

- Then, Herod married the dead man's sister, Mariamne, only to make her the victim of his unbridled jealousy. He executed both their adult sons, Alexander and Aristobulus IV.
- Six years later, he found a way to charge Prince Hyrcanus II of conspiracy and had him executed as well.

A great many years later, in 30 **AD**, Herod Antipas, *son* of Herod the Great, had Yohannan ha mabtil/the Baptist executed. It is thus that he removed one of the last two men who, though they had no direct claim to the throne, had more than enough supporters throughout Galilee and Judea to risk a challenge against Pilates and Herod.

The last man left standing was Yeshua.

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## How to Create a Messiah

According to Christian tradition, between 55 AD and 90AD, gospel writer Mark followed by Matthew, Luke and John contributed to a *collaborative biography* of Jesus, a wandering preacher/prophet a.k.a. Son of God, Christ and ... God, *their* God – but how can it be?

Back in those days and in that part of the world, the Gentiles/Pagans lived in the ten cities known collectively as Decapolis. These cities were the region's hub of all things that were Greek and Roman. They had been built on ancestral Jewish land given, or so the Jews believed, by Yahweh, their God, through the covenant He had established centuries earlier with Abraham, the first Patriarch.

Jews despised pagans and pagans despised Jews. Though not all Jews were impervious to hellenization, the free-choice adaptation of all things Greek, there was not a thing either in the religion-driven culture of the Jews or in their practices that appealed to either the Greeks or the Romans.

Besides, circa 33 BC, in those days of pre-Christianity, no one among the pagan scholars spoke Hebrew. None would have understood the classical Hebrew of scrolls and parchments that were the Torah, the Book of Prophets and the other associated scrolls [components of the Tanakh.

However, these texts happened to constitute the absolute essence of *Jesus'* teachings during the three years he wandered away from Capernaum, through the plains, up and down the harsh, mountainous region of Upper Galilee.

One reason for the inability of any Greek or Roman to speak or read Hebrew is that, besides living totally separate lives in their city states, the Gentiles cared very little for the odd mores and practices of the 'odd' Jewish people living beyond their fortified walls.

*After all, not only did these people look very quaint, they thought, with close-cropped hair offsetting weird earlocks and beards, but these were people who sliced off the foreskin of their eight-day-old baby boys!*

If that weren't 'horrible enough a thought', the Jews, they heard, demanded the same application of Yahweh's commandment from each of the male converts.

Basically, it can only be after some Jewish texts had been translated into Greek somewhere in Roman Syria that Mark came across source material that inspired him so much that he

decided to write a prototype Christian allegory.

Ironically, if his tale were to have a strong, inspiring spiritual thread running through the narrative, it had to be rich in Judaica.

It had never occurred to any Israelite, regardless of the century in which he or she lived, to isolate the *spirit of a mashiah/messiah* to separate it from any proclaimed *physical* and political achievements.

After all, as far as *their* untruncated religion had it, a mashiah could *only* be a unique person, one who would be able to physically free the people of Israel from their oppressors, return the country to the former greatness it had enjoyed until the end of King Solomon's reign – and trigger a revival of absolute religious integrity.

Obviously, Mark had never met Yeshua and, in all likelihood, had never heard of him.

It might need to be repeated that there were no Christians anywhere during Yeshua's lifetime. What disciples and followers/supporters he had were all Jews.

Saul of Tarsus/Saint Paul, himself, was not yet in the picture.

Though Mark lacked first-hand knowledge of all aspects of the religion-driven life and culture of a Hebrew man such as Yeshua, once he stumbled across little-known source manuscripts, it is easy to assume that he felt the thrill and excitement of any writer who has come across an amazing plot idea.

In an era free of copyrights and intellectual property, Mark took it upon himself to dramatically edit and even rewrite, not just the words, but the tenor of the original text. For him, these ancient scrolls were merely a trove of unique ideas which lead him to an inspired amalgam of it all that resulted in the creation of the hero of his newly acquired religious fantasies.

Or maybe this theory is totally wrong and what actually gave birth to the first gospel happened much later – almost four hundred years later.

In the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, Constantine, the first Roman Emperor to convert to Christianity, some said for purely political reasons, is said to have "*instructed Eusebius [his protégé Church Father] to organize the compilation of a uniform collection of new writings developed from primary aspects of the religious texts submitted at the council.*

*His instructions were:*

*"Search ye these books, and whatever is good in them, that retain; but whatsoever is evil, that cast away. What is good in one book, unite ye with that which is good in another book.*

*And whatsoever is thus brought together shall be called The Book of Books. And it shall be the doctrine of my people, which I will recommend unto all nations, that there shall be no more war for religions' sake."* (God's Book of Eskra, op. cit., chapter xlvi, paragraph 31) [1]

For what it's worth, it is interesting to note that there IS a 'Mark' manuscript held in the monastery of Santa Caterina. It is said that *that* manuscript does not contain any anecdotal references to any miracle, virgin birth or messiah in the making.

No mention is made of any Son of God.

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1. The Forged Origins of the New Testament by Tony Bushy, as found on [http://www.bibliotecapleyades.net/biblianazar/esp\\_biblianazar\\_40.htm](http://www.bibliotecapleyades.net/biblianazar/esp_biblianazar_40.htm) March 2007, extracted from Nexus Magazine Volume 14, Number 4 (June - July 2007) from [NexusMagazine Website](#)

## Eusebius and The Scribes

In the fourth century AD, Eusebius, protégé of Emperor Constantine the Great and the force behind the creation of the gospels in his role as Church Father, orchestrated a massive manipulation of *highly sensitive Jewish texts* – his venture paid off grandiosely.

A stroke of genius came to Eusebius when he ordered his scribes to mash together the unassuming characteristics of an orthodox preacher, one with a bit of a temper, who lived in the plains of Galilee with superior abilities that only the ones trained in the highest forms of mysticism were known to possess.

The mystics in question were the Jewish Issiyim who lived in the Negev region.

Once *Jesus*, the character, had been made strong by an arsenal of miracle-producing skills, Eusebius set his hero on the path of becoming a man-god – another mostly pagan concept.

Out of some ancient scrolls, Eusebius' scribes plucked out snippets that they had to rearrange cleverly. Their brief was to provide a rock-solid, ancient background – one that in reality had been slowly 'cured' over millennia, one karmic experience at a time, one generation at a time, one patriarch at a time, one God-deed and one God-commandment at a time, one prophet's proclamation at a time.

It would be against this solid, sturdy and authoritative patchwork of a framework that the Church Fathers would cast their paper-hero.

This character emerged, fully formed [except for a brief mention regarding his improbable birth] and with an impeccable pedigree that had roots as ancient as the world itself.

Indeed, Genesis, too, is originally a seminal text in Jewish Scriptures.

It is the first of the five books of Moses which constitute the core of the Torah.

More serious questions: Did Mark come up with the first gospel prototype 30 years after Yeshua's death?

Did Matthew use Mark as a springboard for his own text?

Could Mark have anticipated how his hero's character would be 'deepened' by Luke, an avid reader, a traveller, a highly educated man who enjoyed meaningful connections?

Did John use all the three texts to create his own - by adding, rewriting and deleting – inspired by his own muse?

Or was it Eusebius, the dark eminence behind the creative power of his scribes who, centuries after the death of Yeshua, engineered and released the four texts of the first ever Christian manuscript under four anonymous names?

Why release the documents in *this* manner?

Had Eusebius come across Marks' *original* text?

Could it be that the text now called Mark's gospel is actually not Mark's original work?

Truthful answers to any of the above questions should, by now, be quite irrelevant to all but mystery solvers because the process followed by one or the other is similar, and the end result is ... as it is.

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## The Making of Jesus

The irony is that the relentless rewriting of authentic Jewish material forced the Christian hero to act *uncharacteristically* and unrealistically from within his own culture.

It 'detached' him from his own people and from his own religion. Thus the *very essence* that had defined Yeshua as a man living by time-honored ancient ways and by God-given laws was disregarded.

It is as if he had been lobotomized and reprogrammed.

The metamorphosis began in the 'design' of Yeshua's hair.

Orthodox Jews, then as now, as ordered by the Torah, kept their hair short but their earlocks long.

According to the Torah [[Vayikra](#) 19:27] the commandment is clear: *Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard.*

The Mishnah on Makkot 20 further explains the prohibition of cutting the hair across the temples to make it even with the back – which means not cutting the *peos* or earlocks to make sideburns. *It does not state the hair has to be kept long.*

The gospel writers wanted a character who looked Jewish but not too Jewish.

They wanted a character whose physical attributes would resonate in the psyche of the early Christians whose very psyche was still very much impregnated with images of their other gods.

Zeus, with his unruly mane of hair, also seems to have inspired not only the designers of Serapis, the Egyptian version of Zeus, but also the 'first phase' visage of Jesus.

In the early years of his design, Jesus, with an unruly mane of hair looked a lot more like Zeus than Yeshua ever did.

Van Baburen picked up on that trait in his painting, the *King of the Jews*, a modern rendition in the classical style which shows a powerful body, a strong face with sharp features and sweat-matted, curly hair – no earlocks.

Mel Gibson's film, *The Passion of The Christ* is an enduring Christian box office hit in spite or, perhaps, because of the pagan motif of the blood fest it contains.

The actor cast in the role of Jesus, in spite of his dishevelled head and the absence of

earlocks, could also pass as a reasonable approximation of Yeshua, the real man - Yeshua the carpenter, Yeshua the rugged man who spent the best part of three years on the road through the heat of summers and the icy cold of winters.

But unlike the fiery Zeus, thunderbolt wielding god, Jesus, it was later decided, should ooze gentleness and serenity in paintings and carvings of his image. As an aside, carvings and paintings of gods, another pagan practice, were absolutely forbidden in Judaism which considered as pure idolatry the worship of such.

The penalty for the idolater was death by stoning.

Thus, over the centuries, Jesus has been re-cast as a much softer man.

Today, prayer book pictures of Jesus and Christian website banners depict him as slight man with golden skin. His eyes are large and pensive. They are either blue or green or grey. His beard is short and neat. His long hair is like liquid honey. The incongruence here is that, in Yeshua's time, only Nazirs or Nazirites kept their hair long. These Nazirs were not people from Nazareth, but persons who had vowed to consecrate themselves to Yahweh.

A Nazir *also* vowed to not touch wine and thus, a Nazir would not keep company with those who did - just as he would not break bread with uncircumcised men who, also, did not partake in the daily purifying ritual of the *tevilah* in the *mikveh* – and who did not wash their hands after bodily functions and before meals – all essential commandments in the Torah.

Numbers 6: <sup>1</sup> And the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying <sup>2</sup> Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them: When either man or woman shall clearly utter a vow, the vow of a Nazirite, to consecrate himself unto the LORD, <sup>3</sup> *he shall abstain from wine and strong drink: he shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat fresh grapes or dried.*

<sup>4</sup> All the days of his Naziriteship shall he eat nothing that is made of the grape-vine, from the pressed grapes even to the grapestone.

<sup>5</sup> ***All the days of his vow of Naziriteship there shall no razor come upon his head;*** until the days be fulfilled, in which he consecrateth himself unto the LORD, he shall be holy, he shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow long.

Nowhere in the New Testament is there a reference to Jesus having taken the vow of the Nazir. Moreover, Matthew 11 explains that <sup>19</sup> *The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.'* But *wisdom is proved right by her deeds."*

Having said that, there is a debate among some Christian scholars about the wine Jesus produced at the Wedding in Cana, the wine he referred to in Luke's New Wine in New Wineskins and whether the content of his goblet, the one that led to the Eucharist was alcoholic, non-alcoholic, fermented or not fermented.

This debate will rage on, but the above-mentioned verse from Numbers confirms that Yeshua was not a Nazir since he clearly was partial to a 'grape drink'. And since he was not a Nazir, according to the custom of his people, his hair would have been short and his sideburns long.

Looking at such modern images of Jesus, the Lamb of God, it is very easy to forget the strength of the real Yeshua. Indeed, the celebrated commotion he created in the Temple attests to both his explosive temper and his explosive power - the solid wood tables, some of which were laden with cages would have been too massive to topple.

*<sup>15</sup> And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves; <sup>16</sup> And would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple.*

No matter how 'righteous', anger **is** anger and is the enemy within as warns Ecclesiastes 7:  
<sup>9</sup> Do not hasten in your spirit to be angry, for anger rests in the bosom of fools.

From Judges 5:3, it is understood that confrontational behavior is at odds with the teaching of the scriptures Yeshua would have espoused as a preacher of the Torah.

*Anyone who is angry - if he is wise, his wisdom flees from him. If he is a Prophet - his Prophecy flees from him.*

Is Jesus thought to have been a prophet?

Even in James 1:20, *Man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.*

Another departure from Judaic understanding comes in regards to Jesus' wanderings.

Then as now, the terrain of Galilee has always been very rugged.

The hills of Upper Galilee are steep and the mountains are high.

They are snow-covered in winter. The temperature dips below zero.

Though much has been said about Jesus' ability to walk on water, nothing has been said about the amazing physical and mental resilience compounded by the abnegation of self required to trek - on foot - from the plains around Capernaum, his home, to mountain

villages, feet clad in mere sandals, clothed only in a thin linen or woollen robe and a cloak that doubled up as blanket, to eventually arrive in Jerusalem three years later.

Once there, it is said in the New Testament, he borrowed a donkey to make his entrance through the eastern gate of Jerusalem.

The site owner of [Keyboardsforchrist.com](http://Keyboardsforchrist.com) [1] has lovingly and methodically used verses of the New Testament to trace each of the journeys Jesus is said to have taken on foot up, up and down Galilee and Judea, including the 400-kilometer trek from Jerusalem to somewhere in Egypt.

Here is a sample of one such calculation: *“There is a very long trip by Jesus as He leaves from Capernaum and goes north up into Phoenicia to the cities of Tyre and Sidon (present day Lebanon).*

*Then He loops back south around the Sea of Galilee and into the area of Decapolis and back north to Capernaum. Depending on which way Jesus got to Tyre and Sidon, the mileage would be about 85 miles (136 km) north of Capernaum.*

*Then count about 120 miles (193 km) back around the Sea of Galilee to Decapolis then back to Capernaum would be about 50 miles (80 km). Mark 7:24-37 and Matt. 15:21-39*

***On this one trip Jesus walked about 255 miles (410 km)!***

The overall conclusion states that Jesus, not counting the many ‘short trips’ that are impossible to trace, is believed to have walked a minimum of 3,125 miles (5,029 km) during his three-year ministry – most of it under the hardous conditions presented by Israel’s hot, arid summers and freezing winters.

Two thoughts come to mind: either the reader is once again confronted with Jesus, unassuming superhero - or the writers of the gospels, Gentiles who lived in Roman regions, in countries away from Israel such as Syria, had only a very fuzzy notion of that ancient Israel’s geography and topography.

In short, the excision of Jesus from Yeshua, the person who belonged to a culture that was thousands of years old, who had beliefs rooted in that culture and who was only capable of ‘average’ possibilities because he had been conceived in the same manner as any other baby, culminated in Jesus orchestrating his own death – yet another act prohibited by Jewish Law.

Then as now, the taking of any life, including one's own - unless **not** doing so would result in the individual violating a religious prohibition – was a sin against God.

If Yeshua did have delusions of messianic grandeur, to die risking the wrath of *his* god or to die to become a god, himself, would have presented him with an amazing dilemma!

That notwithstanding, what would Yeshua make now of the throngs of people who in countless churches around the world worship his body carved out of wood, marble or painted cement, he, whose religion forbade the worship of idols?

Clearly and understandably, the early Christians chose to paint their newly found divine savior with the only brush their pagan minds was able to wield.

*"Make them to astonish,"* said Constantine [to Eusebius about the books he wanted written] and *"the books were written accordingly."* **Life of Constantine, vol. iv, pp. 36-39** [2]

And indeed they were!

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1. <http://keyboardsforchrist.com/Sandals.html>
2. The Forged Origins of the New Testament by Tony Bushy, as found on [http://www.bibliotecapleyades.net/biblianazar/esp\\_biblianazar\\_40.htm](http://www.bibliotecapleyades.net/biblianazar/esp_biblianazar_40.htm) March 2007, extracted from Nexus Magazine Volume 14, Number 4 (June - July 2007) from [NexusMagazine Website](#)

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## An ALL Jewish cast

It needs to be clearly understood that each of the prophets before *and* after Samuel, Ezekiel and Zechariah were Jews and that, in those days, every Jew was an orthodox Jew. As such, every male Jew religiously followed at least a few of the 613 commandments [*mitzvot*] the Sages have extracted from the Torah;

Clearly not every Jew, then as now, managed to love his neighbors, to refrain from anger, to practice forgiveness, to not kill anyone, not to make pleasurable (sexual) contact with any forbidden woman, 'not to covet and scheme to acquire another's possession' whether it happened to be an ear of corn, his wife or his cattle, 'not to steal money stealthily,' to desist from any sort of business and 'rest on the seventh day.'

However, presumably most Jews accepted 'not to muzzle an ox while plowing'.

They accepted not to wear women's clothes if they were men and men's clothes if they were women.

Most assuredly, all as one accepted to keep their sideburns uncut, if they were men, to perform full-body immersions [*tevilah*] in a flowing body of water [*mikveh*].

They accepted as well to adhere to the following *mitzvot* listed, below, in the order in which they appear in the Talmud:

[1] To know there is a G-d - Exodus 20:2

[2] Not to entertain thoughts of other gods besides Him - Exodus 20:3

[3] To know that He is one - Deuteronomy 6:4

[43] Not to listen to a false prophet - Deuteronomy 13:4

[44] Not to prophesize falsely in the name of God - Deuteronomy 18:20

[56] Not to make a covenant with idolaters - Deuteronomy 7:2

[76] To say the Shema twice daily - Deuteronomy 6:7

[79] To wear Tefillin on the head - Deuteronomy 6:8

[80] To bind tefillin on the arm - Deuteronomy 6:8

[81] To put a Mezuzah on each door post - Deuteronomy 6:9

[84] To have Tzitzit on four-cornered garments - Numbers 15:38

[111] Not to eat mixtures containing Chametz [*leavened food*] all seven days of Passover- Exodus 12:20

[180] Not to eat non-kosher animals [*or any other non-kosher food*] - Leviticus 11:4 and so on. [1]

Another, mitzvah, the greatest one of all, was commanded in Genesis:

<sup>17:8</sup>: *To you and your offspring I will give the land where you are now living as a foreigner.*

*The whole land of Canaan shall be [your] eternal heritage, and I will be a God to [your descendants].'*

<sup>17:9</sup> *God [then] said to Abraham, 'As far as you are concerned, you must keep My covenant - you and your offspring throughout their generations.*

<sup>17:10</sup> *This is My covenant between Me, and between you and your offspring that you must keep: You must circumcise every male.*

<sup>17:11</sup> *You shall be circumcised through the flesh of your foreskin. This shall be the mark of the covenant between Me and you.*

<sup>17:12</sup> *'Throughout all generations, every male shall be circumcised when he is eight days old.*

Yeshua, aesthetic, mystic preacher, would have followed these dictates *and many more* of the 613, which automatically rules him out of having entertained certain thoughts and involved himself in certain interactions he is said to have had with gentiles.

Until the arrival of Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great, a man from the country of Edom, and the Roman Prefect Pontius Pilate, in the story of Yeshua, the entire *truly* epic cast was Jewish.

There was Yahweh-the-Master and his prophets.

There were patriarchs like Abraham, Moses, Noah and Isaac as well as kings and priests. Of course, there was Yeshua, the peripatetic preacher, his mother, Mary, his wife, Mary Magdalene and his cousin Yohannan ha-mabtil.

Each and everyone lead typical Jewish lives with typical Jewish preoccupations and Jewish cultural-religious sensitivities.

The scene was always set on Jewish soil.

Interestingly, as in the case of the emotional wellbeing of a reckless one who, in spite of his the many twists and turns of his destiny, had solid 'parental' support, every scribed deviation from the Jewish reality of Yeshua's life was made credible *only* because, *no matter what*, it was always supported by the massive framework of Judaism - the 'parent' religion.

By hook or by crook, it seems, Eusebius and subsequent Church Fathers were determined to hammer out a Christian man-god out of the century-old beliefs and expectations that had been an integral part and parcel of the Jewish ethos.

*Surely, they thought, the key to success is to simply write for Jesus a scene for every one of the prophets' major prophecies* - and make the round peg fit into the square hole.

*That* they did well, but they omitted calling their New Testament a remake or an adaptation. If they had ... who knows what a difference that might have made to 'western culture,' as it has been lived out for more than two thousand years.

One can only presume that the many dark centuries of *'denounce or perish,'* of brutal harassment of native populations worldwide, of excommunications [the emotional blackmail hanging over the head of millions of Christians said to 'lead sinful lives' according to a long succession of popes] might never have happened – at least not in the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ.

Back to the original Jewish cast, the prophets could no more receive messages from their god's voice about the new man of a religion *that was still many, many centuries into the future,* than they could channel visions about little green men from outer space.

These men's visions and proclamations were about a Mashiah, a gifted leader blessed with exceedingly high moral values - an adult - not about a babe-in-arms.

Infants do not figure anywhere within Jewish liturgy, aside from Yahweh's commandment of compulsory circumcision. Neither does a birth from an Immaculate Womb which is somewhat comparable to the pagan myth of Venus born out of Jupiter's thigh.

Nowhere is there the suggestion that the Mashiah who intended to restore Israel to geographic and economic greatness and her people to spiritual glory would be a man-god. Judaism has no concept of men-gods.

Never have any of their sages written anything about a human morphing into a spiritual being.

Nowhere is it written that a human will ascend to god's side after death and resurrect.

Then and now, to orthodox Jews, each of these ideas was a blasphemous thought.

Back then, if found out, each of these ideas was punishable by death – back then, such ideas could only originate in pagan minds.

Indeed, with the exception of the 'modern' sect of Messianic Jews, if there is one thought that has been abhorrent to all Jews, over the millennia and still today, it is that of a Son of God.

For them, there is only one God - Yahweh is his name and Yahweh never needed to be seconded by human son.

As a result of the severe cut/paste/rewrite manipulations necessary to create the New Testament cutting across various ancient texts, time spans, places and intents, all is confounded. Yet, one well-rounded, tailor-made character has emerged: an entirely Jewish Orthodox man who, because of an uncanny aspiration for divine Greatness, through the ultimate sacrifice of self, would save the world.

Ah, no! Not quite.

Unlike Superman, the quintessential superhero always ready to save *the world*, this Christian 'messiah' will, of the planet's population, only save those who believe in his existence. That means the ones who believe in his existence *so much* that they will go to almost any length to convert 'the multitudes', one *soul* at a time, even now when the era of 'coerced' or 'induced' conversions is thought to have long passed.

A website article found randomly, written by Dr. Thomas A. Droleskey, a Catholic writer and speaker, contains a heartfelt message: *"The best way we can show our true friendship to our Jewish associates and colleagues and friends and neighbors is to pray for their conversion and to give them blessed Miraculous Medals and blessed Green Scapulars.*

*The Miraculous Medal prepared the Catholic-hating Jew named Theodore Ratisbonne to convert to the Faith when Our Lady appeared to him on January 20, 1842, as she appears on the Miraculous Medal.*

*Why do we doubt that it can work with our own friends and associates and colleagues and, in some cases, family members? Why are we so ready to put constraints on the power of God to work miracles by converting the most unlikely of souls to the true Faith?*

To give a balanced view of Dr Droleskey's rhetoric, in another paragraph he gives very sound advice that links directly back to the teachings of the Torah.

*"No human being has any right to hold on to any hurt or any personal offense or injury," he says. "Let me repeat this so as not be misunderstood: no human being has any right to hold on to any hurt or to any personal offense or injury whatsoever.*

*No such right exists. We must forgive and we must forget.*

*Those who do not forgive and forget as they are forgiven by the God Who forgets will wind up spending their lives in white rage as they strike out at anyone who they believe has ever slighted them even though they may have asked for forgiveness."*

In his conclusion, Dr Droleskey earnestly urges the reader: *"Isn't it time to pray a Rosary now?"*

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1. [http://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/756399/jewish/The-613-Commandments.htm](http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/756399/jewish/The-613-Commandments.htm)

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