

# FOUR LEVELS OF TORAH UNDERSTANDING

## RIGOROUS TRANSCRIPTION OF OLD TESTAMENT

Elohim's Word was written entirely in a Hebrew mindset, however, it has been translated and taught to us in a Greco-Roman mindset, and therefore, sadly, we have been robbed of so many precious spiritual truths. Everything in the Word of Elohim is so multi-faceted just like the Hebrew, letter - number system itself. There are four methods of interpretation in the Hebrew:

The concept of the Messiah in ancient Israel was transmitted in two ways: The first, by 'mesorah' which is a term meaning "to pass down through oral tradition," as father to son - Gen. 25:4-5 which Abraham passed on to Isaac; and secondly, through the interpretation of Messianic texts of the Tanakh (Old Testament) such as in Isaiah 53, Psalms 2 & 110, Malachi 4, or Ruth 2.

These passages, and numerous ones just like them, were expounded on using four levels of critical biblical explanations or interpretations, with each level building on the previous step resulting in forming a bigger picture of the total message. In Hebrew, the four levels are p'shat, remez, drash and sod (pronounced like 'sud').

### THE FOUR LEVELS OF TORAH



The four types of scriptural interpretations the Rabbi's have used for centuries are:

**1) P'SHAT** (simple) The plain, simple sense of the text. What modern interpreters call grammatical-historical exegesis. A literal understanding of the text.

**2) REMEZ** (hint) Peculiar features of the text are regarded as hinting at a deeper truth that is conveyed by its plain sense. Remez is often prophetic. Sometimes remez has us look back in order to see the future.

**3) DRASH OR MIDRASH** (search) Creativity is used to search the text in relation to the rest of the Bible, other literature or life in order to develop an allegorical or homiletical application

of the text. This involves eisegesis, (reading one's own thoughts into a text), as well as exegesis, which is extracting from a text its actual meaning. To seek out or to search out, parable or story revealing a hidden truth. Something hinted at or alluded to.

**4) SOD** (secret) A hidden meaning, a deep mystery to be revealed by God to us either now or sometime in the future. Sod includes: jots, tittles, and acrostics.

**ACROSTICS** Acrostics are where the first letter of each word in a phrase or expression carries a mysterious message within. Yeshua's crucifixion is a perfect example. When Yeshua was affixed to the stake, above Him was written on a sign: "Yeshua of Nazareth, King of the Jews". The sign was written in three languages, Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. The Hebrew title was four words. The first letter of those four words was

Yod, Hey, Vav, Hey. This is Yah's holy name, YHVH otherwise known as the tetragrammaton.

EXAMPLE:

**P'shat:** First of all, in the literal or P'shat, a 'well' is a construct that holds water, the basic necessity to preserving physical life.

**Remez:** Now when you compare a passage about a well with other passages having to do with wells, you can see a theme develop with similar surrounding characters and or events. As these unfold within the direction of spiritual revelation from the Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit), a pattern of spiritual truth or truths develop. This revelation is called a 'Remez.' 'Wells' are where the bridegroom went to find the bride and it's where the bride came to find LIFE.

For example, have you ever noticed how many times a 'well' is mentioned in the book of Genesis? Isaac's wife was found at a well. Jacob found his wife at a well. Moses found his wife at a well. These are all pictures of the Messiah and His bride.

The root word for 'well' is "ba'ar" and literally means 'to dig.' By analogy however, it means 'to engrave' and figuratively, it means 'to explain, declare and make plain.' So where has Yahveh declared and made plain His truths? Where has He 'engraved?' This is a reference to 'words on tablets' and is representative of the 'Torah.'

And what's in the well? Water; Water is always a symbol of 'LIFE.' People dig wells to find underground streams. When one is found, the well fills up part way. If the water is never used or taken out, it sits and gets rather stale and stagnant. But what happens when it is taken out and dispersed? More fresh water comes in and fills the well. By extension, this has so many awesome spiritual truths about giving the living water of 'life' and the 'fire' that comes from that. I can only keep the fire going as I give 'life' out. I can only keep my well fresh as I give to others. As I give out from my well, it continues to be refilled from the underground stream of Yeshua.

Let's look at another 'well.' Yeshua meets His bride at the well. **John 4:14**  
*"Faith comes by hearing the Word of Messiah." He washes His bride by the water of the Word. He told the Samaritan woman (picture of Messiah and the Church) at the well that He had the water that would forever quench her thirst. "But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life."*

Moses, in reference to giving the people God's teachings and instructions (the Torah) said in **Deut. 30:19:** *"I call Heaven and earth to record today against you. I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Therefore, choose LIFE, so that both you and your seed may live."* This is in reference to both the physical and the spiritual realms of life.

Another example of a Remez is the account in John 7 of Yeshua standing up during the great feast of Tabernacles and saying "If anyone is thirsty let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me as the Scripture said, *'From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.'*" This is a Remez in the sense that Yeshua is speaking of Himself 'pointing back' to their history to remind them of the 'Rock' who gave the people water for life in the wilderness. That He (Yeshua) was and is that Rock, and that the life He offers will be a perpetual flow for others just like the river of life that proceeds from the throne of

Yah that feeds the tree of life whose leaves are for the healing of the nations in Rev. 22. The Word of Yah is so very multifaceted, just as He is, because He IS THE WORD OF YAH.

**Drash**: An example of Drash would be the parable of the seed and the sower of Matt. 13, Mark 4 and Luke 8. This is a prime one because in Mark 4:13 the importance of it is given in Yeshua's words *"Don't you understand this parable? How will you be able to understand any parable?"* This seems to be the key parable to understanding all the others.

*And He spoke many things to them in parables, saying, "Behold, the sower went out to sow ..."* Now the first thing we may ask is 'where is the sower going?' The sower is certainly not headed to a rocky road. This is just the path on the way to the destination. Both in Matt. 10:6 and 15:24, the destination is made known. The field that the sower is heading for is the 'lost sheep of the house of Israel.' But just as the promise that the nations would be blessed through Israel, so the gospel of the kingdom goes throughout the world just as it was prophesied. The degrees of spiritual "shallowness" in the reality of the eaten, scorched or choked out 'word' has been evident to anyone who has witnessed to others personally or by observance. In Mark 4:11 Yeshua tells us that within every one of these parables are a hidden mystery of the kingdom. In the following verses of Mark, we see the gospel of the kingdom is referred to as a light (not to be hidden) and that it would be revealed and come to light to those who are truly His disciples.

**Mark 4:24** *And He was saying to them, "Take care what you listen to. By your standard of measure it will be measured to you; and more will be given you besides.*

Take care how and from whom you accept your teachings. Who has laid your foundational filter for truth—Yahveh or man? Only by this standard of measure will you be given more truth." **Mark 4:25** *"For whoever has, to him more shall be given; and whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him."*

**Mark 4:33-34** *"With many such parables He was speaking the word to them, so far as they were able to hear it; and He did not speak to them without a parable; but He was explaining everything privately to His own disciples." Are you a disciple in name only... or do you have that kind of closeness to the Way, the Truth and the Life?*

Another example of Drash is Luke 12:42-48. In a nutshell, Yeshua is alluding to the shepherds that are over His sheep. Are they faithful to His teaching and are they feeding His flock the true manna of His Word? Those who know His Will and do not, for whatever selfish motives, will receive His just measure of reaping what they sow (or what they don't sow). The shepherds who did not know the Master's full instructions and yet did not act on the little they did know will receive a punishment, though less severe. **Luke 12:48** *"From everyone who has been given much, much will be required;..." For to whatever degree of truth has been given, to that degree we are responsible... even if we reject it from being truth for we did not have an ear for it.*

These are the hidden truths of parables.

**Sod**: A mystery that has been, is being, or will be revealed. Sod is the hidden meanings, such as Yeshua referred to as the Lamb. Or the Torah being known as the Etz Chaim, Tree of Life, etc.....example of Torah as the Tree of Life. The spindles are made of Olive wood. A Kosher Torah scroll has 39 skins to write the scripture on. The skins or

pages are called leaves. A Tree of Life, and how many stripes did Yeshua take to His back, 39.

Let's look at some of the references to "mysteries" in Yah's Word: It is the glory of Yah to conceal things, but the glory of kings is to search things out. (Prov. 25:2)

It seems here that the glory of kings is to be a seeker of truth and the wisdom to know where to 'dig.' The glory is in the searching. This happens when we are digging in the well of life.

And what or 'whom' is the well of life? "... **Col. 2:2-3** *"that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of Yahveh's mystery, which is Messiah, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."*

In Romans 11:25 the mystery was the engrafting of the Gentiles to the olive tree (Israel). See Rom. 16:25-26 and Eph. 3:3-6

In Eph. 5:32 the reference of a mystery is made regarding the special relationship between the Messiah and His Bride. "This mystery is great" and yet not fully explained in this passage. It gives us the appetite to want to know and experience more. Will we 'ask, seek and knock' until we understand more???

Another good example is in Revelation 1:12-20 where Yeshua explains the mystery in the same passage. Then, in chapter 10, verse 7 we find the mystery given to the prophets will be completed at the end of the seventh trumpet blast. These prophets wrote about the ingathering and re-gathering of Israel and the obedience of the nations. – Rom. 16:25-26

**1Pet. 1:10-12** *"As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Messiah within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Messiah and the glories to follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven--things into which angels long to look."*

Another great example of the sod level also in the Renewed Testament is as follows: John 21:11 Simon Peter went up and drew the net to land, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not torn." Why 153 fish? Why not 142 or 156, why 153? It turns out that the Hebrew expression "enie Elohim" is 153 in value. Enie Elohim means "I am God". This miracle turns out to be a very powerful exhortation to the disciples who are about to go "fishing for the sons of the living God" in fulfillment of the great commission.

All scripture has these four levels of understandings. That is why some see a scripture one way and someone else, another way. And both can be right, in different ways.

It is not my intent to delve into the meanings of these many mysteries here; rather it is up to each person to pursue the deep things of Yah on their own. I hope that you now understand that the SOD of the Word is not something that can be attained by academia, degrees or doctorates. It is Yahveh who gives revelation and truth and only to those whom He chooses and is based on the condition of the heart and not the intelligence. It's based

on knees that bend, wills that obey and priorities and plans that are bound to His priorities and plans.



We can have confidence in the reliability of the Old Testament because of the rigorous transcription methods employed. Before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1948, the oldest Old Testament manuscript found dated around AD 900, approximately 1300 years after the completion of the Old Testament in 400 BC. The Dead Sea Scrolls, however are dated before the time of Christ (about 150 BC). The book of Isaiah found in the Dead Sea Scrolls verifies the precision of the method used to transcribe the Old Testament. The book of Isaiah from the Dead Sea Scrolls is identical to today's standard Hebrew Bible in greater than 95% of the text. The 5% variation is due to slips of the pen and variations in spelling. Incidentally, the Dead Sea Scrolls were found by a young shepherd boy herding his sheep in the area of Qumran on the eve of the day that Israel became a nation in 1948. Even here we see Yah had His hand in an incredible discovery. There they found over 700 scrolls in eleven caves. They are all thought to be inscribed by the Essenes people.

**NOTE...** The Book of Daniel is probably the only Book in the Old Testament that is thought to have some of its chapters in the wrong order. The contents are correct, but out of order. No one seems to know how this came about.

The Talmudists (AD 100 - 500) used a very strict transcription method. Synagogue rolls had to be written on specially prepared skins of clean animals and fastened with strings taken from clean animals. Each skin had to contain a certain number of columns. Each column had to have between 48 and 60 lines and be 30 letters wide. The spacing between consonants, sections and books was precise, measured by hairs or threads. The ink had to be black and prepared with a specific recipe. The transcriber could not deviate from the original in any manner. No words could be written from memory. The person making the copy had to wash his whole body before beginning and had to be in full Jewish dress. He could not begin to write the name of Yahveh with a pen freshly dipped in

ink. While writing Yahveh's name, he was to focus on his task, not even looking up if a king addressed him.

Because of the care taken to make copies, Talmudists were confident that they were exact. Talmudists destroyed older copies because they feared the older copies would become damaged and misinterpreted with age. That is why there are few older manuscripts.

The Massoretes (AD 500-900) also had a complicated system of ensuring that copies were accurate. By numbering verses, words and letters and calculating and enumerating various combinations, they were able to ensure precise transcription of the text.

We can also be assured of the validity of the Old Testament because Yeshua accepted it and quoted extensively from it.

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