

## Paul in Jewish Studies and Judaism

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### 1. Introduction

During my undergraduate days, I encountered Midrash literature (Jewish scriptural exegeses). Out of my surprise that such a fantastical world of ideas could be interpretations of scripture, I eventually entered the world of Judaic studies. Seen through Judaism, the Bible is human and unfiltered. This was fresh to me. I was fortunate enough to become a member of this university's School of Theology, and I have thought since that it would be nice to research a topic bridging Christian and Jewish studies. It is quite an honor to have this opportunity to give a presentation alongside Professor Murayama.

Thinking that I could present the topic of Paul from the Jewish perspective, as he was a key figure in Christianity who was also of Jewish origin, in the planning for this conference, I suggested that he be today's theme. There have been many discussions of Jesus within Judaism, so I thought it would be good to alter the focus to a discussion of Paul. However, I realized when preparing for this presentation that this was a somewhat foolish idea. I was amazed by the quantity and diverse content of the documents and letters allegedly written by him.

## 2. Paul in Jewish Studies and Judaism

### 2-1. Paul in Jewish Studies

Troublingly, I found that he has not received much attention in Judaism or Jewish studies. In the few discussions of Paul in Jewish studies, he is surprisingly treated as predominantly Christian, despite having described himself as an enthusiastic Jew. Furthermore, Paul and Paul's hometown of Tarsus are not mentioned in the Rabbinic texts of the era. Thus, I was blocked in all directions.

On the handout, I have listed the views on Paul by leading Jewish thinkers and experts in Rabbinic Judaism textual research. While they point out the continuity between Jesus' teachings and Judaic thought, they treat him completely differently than

Paul.<sup>1</sup> Abraham Geiger, a predominant scholar in modern German Jewish studies and a leader of German Reform Judaism at the end of nineteenth century, was the first person to engage in research on Judaism in terms of its relationship to the other monotheistic religions, including Christianity and Islam. In this research, he was a pioneer in Islamic textual research and contributed to the emergence of Islamic studies in Germany. However, he claimed that many Islamic teachings were inherited from Judaism, and thus, his work aimed to prove the truth of Judaism.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, he equated Jesus' teachings with the Judaism of the Pharisees,<sup>3</sup> emphasizing their commonalities. His intention was to highlight that the roots of Christianity lay in Judaism. Furthermore, the proponents of Liberal Judaism at the time (such as Claude Montefiore) saw Jesus as the embodiment of Judaism's essence by treating *halakha* as secondary and its prophetic and ethical aspects as primary.<sup>4</sup>

Criticism arose within the field of Jewish studies in response to these scholars on the grounds that they took an excessively friendly attitude towards Jesus. However, Geiger and Montefiore also took Paul out of his Jewish context. A. Geiger thought that Paul's criticism of Judaism was due to the influence of other religions, and Montefiore saw a misunderstanding of Judaism in Paul's criticism of the law.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, like Geiger, Leo Baeck, a member of the second generation of German Jewish studies who lived through the Shoah, saw Jesus as an embodiment of the Pharisaic Judaism. He stated that while Jesus adhered to Rabbinic Judaism, Paul departed from Judaism when he advocated salvation by faith only.<sup>6</sup> Martin Buber furthered these conclusions by arguing that Paul converted Jesus' teachings into an ideology, and he is thought to have seen Jesus as having espoused Jewish teachings.<sup>7</sup>

The great Jewish thinker Ephraim E. Urbach touched upon Paul in his monumental Volume: *The Sages*; however, he discussed him as the polar opposite of adherents to Rabbinical Judaism.<sup>8</sup> David Flusser, the flag bearer of academic research that sought to create a dialogue between Christianity and Judaism, saw Jesus initiating the first stage of Christianity which shared the message of Rabbinical Judaism, and Paul and post-Paul Christianity as symbolic of the second stage of Christianity which was influenced by the Essenes.<sup>9</sup>

In the research of comparative monotheism, Abraham is often the research theme. Without fail, the image of Abraham found in the Jewish scriptural exegeses (the Midrash) is contrasted with Paul's understanding of Abraham as represented in his Epistle to the Romans:<sup>10</sup> in the latter, we find an understanding of Abraham as a model for faith and obedience to God, while in the former, he struggles with and is troubled by

human problems. None of these comparisons of Jewish and Pauline views of Abraham take into account the fact that Paul himself was Jewish.

In fact, when I recently met two Judaic scholars from abroad, I asked about their opinion of Paul, to which they replied that he was someone who converted and someone that made Christianity unable to return to its Judaic roots.

However, in Pauline research, it appears that there is a considerable amount of research on Paul's identity as a Jew.<sup>11</sup> It is said that the consideration of Paul as a Jew has been a trend that has occurred to reconcile the two religions after the Shoah.<sup>12</sup> However, there is not much interest in Paul from the Jewish studies side.

## **2-2. Paul in Jewish Texts**

As far as I know Paul is not directly mentioned in Rabbinic texts. In database searches of these texts, there are no hits for the names or places associated with Paul (Paul, Saul, Tarsus etc.). It appears that Tarsus, Paul's birthplace, was conflated with Tarshish, which appears in the Book of Jonah. While it is said that Paul studied under Rabban Gamliel, a famous rabbi, if one checks a tree diagram of the rabbinic networks (which shows in great detail the human relationships of the Rabbinic world, including siblings, colleagues, parents, children, etc.), one does not find Paul or Saul of Tarsus.<sup>13</sup> As someone who harshly persecuted Christians and then left Judaism, one would think that there would be some indication of him in these texts. In fact, Rabbinical Jewish texts often mention people who crossed the boundaries of Judaism. For example, Rabbi Elisha ben Abuyah—the teacher of the famous Rabbi Akiva—is also called *Acher* (other one). Rabbi Elisha rode on a donkey on the Sabbath, which was prohibited. While worrying about his teacher, Rabbi Akiva walked alongside him until they reached the greatest distance allowed for walking on the Sabbath. Rabbi Akiva stopped walking, but Rabbi Elisha continued. As his nickname indicates, he crossed a boundary and went “over there,” that is, to an *acher* world.<sup>14</sup> Jesus is also mentioned (although briefly), as “Yeshu” and “Child of Panthera.”<sup>15</sup> Other figures appear to have meddled with heretical thought.<sup>16</sup> While it is possible that Paul was already being superimposed with the impressions of such people, we cannot point to any direct traces of him.

## **2-3. Approaching Paul**

Then, how can Paul be approached from the perspective of Jewish Studies and Judaism? Direct accounts are unlikely to be found. Therefore, I think we should look for environments in Jewish society of his era that could have given rise to his ideology.

Again, looking at Paul's texts from the perspective of someone engaging in textual research on Judaism, Paul often brings people's attention to and offers instructions regarding food and other aspects of daily life. He particularly highlights various issues related to eating with people from other religions. I was the most surprised as a reader when I encountered the following passages:

I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean in itself; still, it is unclean to the one who considers it unclean. . . . Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. For although all things are clean, it is wrong to cause anyone to stumble by what you eat. . . . But the man who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not do so from faith, and whatever is not from faith is sin. (Rom 14.14-23)<sup>17</sup>

With regard, then to eating food sacrificed to idols, we know that "an idol in this world is nothing," and that "there is no God but one." (1Cor 8.4)

From the perspective of Judaism, the conclusion that nothing is unclean is unacceptable. In this attitude that such things are only of concern to those who are worried about them, lies the danger of departing from the foundation of Judaism's vast legal structure. If there is nothing that is actually impure, or nothing that is actually an idol and the identification of impurity or idols is completely subjective to the individual, the purpose of the massive legal system regarding impurity or orders avoiding the worship of idols is brought into doubt. If one expands this way of thinking, it could lead to the idea that Judaism's various rules are not absolute because belief itself is not absolute. In other words, laws based on belief are dependent on one's personal feelings. It could thus shake the foundation of the Jewish faith.

However, from this perspective, a stance arises that counters the argument that everything is feeling dependent: one can assert that, despite understanding that uncleanliness and idols are not real, one still attempts to follow the rule of law. Thus there is a divergence between observable knowledge and belief. According to this argument, it appears that there is room for the freedom to choose a path according to one's own will.

I have previously analyzed and written about the concept of freedom in Judaism. Using the idea of freedom found in Paul's letters for comparative purposes, I have been overwhelmed by the differences in the ways that freedom is discussed in Jewish texts and

in Paul's letters. In the Rabbinic texts, "freedom" is only used in the sense of one's status within society. In other later contexts, one finds the beginnings of a concept of the "freedom" that comes from studying the Torah.<sup>18</sup> In contrast, Paul uses the word "freedom" frequently in a sense similar to the way we understand it (that is as personal freedom). It appears that Paul arrived at a more personal idea of freedom because a space appeared for individual freedom and volition (in terms of following or not following the law) as a result of his view that impurity did not objectively exist.

If one thinks that impurity actually exists, its existence necessitates acts to avoid it. However, the moment one says that the impurity does not exist, one has to choose whether he follows the law of impurity or not. Here are the core concepts of Paul's faith: freedom, conscience, and belief. These concepts are the foundation for the world of his faith, which is completely divergent from Rabbinical Judaism.

At the same time I suppose that the passages about gentiles in the rabbinic texts contain elements of Paul's faith. There are similar rules relating to non-Jews in the Mishnah. It appears that Rabbinic Judaism's *halakha* also confronts the same kinds of problems that Paul encountered: how to maintain a distance from non-Jews.

Paul is significant in spreading Christianity from the Judaic to the Hellenistic world and from the Jews to the gentiles. In other words, he lived in the border between Jewish society and the rest of the world. This relationship is reflected in his close ties with diaspora cities, such as Tarsus and Damascus (where Paul converted). Therefore, I searched for passages that reflect Paul's background, perhaps describing how gentiles were treated within Rabbinic Judaism. While there are no accounts specifically on Paul from Jewish sources, there are sources that explain how Jews treated non-Jews at the time, which can help us understand the core of Paul's faith

### **3. Gentiles and Those Who Worship Multiple Gods in Rabbinic Literature**

Let us consider how foreigners and those of others faiths are treated in Jewish texts, specifically the Mishnah and other legal texts, during the time of early Christianity.

The first text compiled during the early period of rabbinical Judaism, the Mishnah, is a collection of rules (*halakha*) regarding Jewish life. After the AD 70 destruction of the Second Temple, the center of Judaism shifted from temple rituals to the study of the Torah. With the loss of Judaism's center, *yeshivot* (schools) came into being, institutions focused on both interpreting the written Hebrew Torah and compiling the various oral

traditions surrounding the Torah. These oral transmissions, called the *Torah shebe'al pe* (Oral Torah), served as manuals for implementing the written Torah into everyday life and included detailed commentary. The massive legal framework made of both written and oral traditions was brought together in AD 200 as the Mishnah. The discussions found in the Mishnah were then further interpreted and studied, and eventually compiled into the Talmud. Those oral transmissions not included in the Mishnah were gathered into the Tosefta (i.e., the “supplement”).

This paper focuses on the Mishnah and its supplement, the Tosefta.

### **3-1. Distinctions Between Those Who Worship Other Gods (*'Oved Kokhavim*) and Foreigners (*Goy, Nokhri*) in the Rabbinic Texts**

I realized that there are different terms for “those of other religions” and “gentiles” in both the Mishnah and Tosefta. In rabbinic literature, *'oved kokhavim*, *goy*, and *nokhri* are all terms used for non-Jews. In English, these words are often all translated as “gentile,” however, there is a slight difference in meaning between *'oved kokhavim* and *goy* or *nokhri*. *'Oved kokhavim* refers to one who worships the stars or one who worships multiple gods. It seems to apply to followers of polytheistic religions; *kokhavim* is plural, implying multiple gods. On the other hand, the word *goy*, which means “nation,” does not necessarily suggest the worship of multiple gods. *Nokhri*, which was used widely in later rabbinic literature, simply means “foreigner” or “outsider”; it, too, does not suggest the worship of multiple gods.

The Mishnah generally uses *'oved kokhavim* in its plural or abbreviated form, while the use of *goy* or *nockri* is much less common. I found only a few instances of either word in the Mishnah (i.e., Mishnah Taanit 3.7, Yebamoth 7.5). In the description of the rules regarding idol worship (*'avodah zarah*), the Mishnah uses *'oved kokhavim*. That implies that the compilers of the Mishnah believed that those who were not Jewish worshipped multiple gods.

The usage of these three words in the Mishnah becomes even more intriguing when comparing their usage in the Tosefta, which is of the same genre but was compiled slightly later. In both Midrash *halakha* and the Tosefta, there were no instances of the word *'oved kokhavim*, only *nokhri* and *goy*. In other words, when referring to non-Jews, that is, people with other religious beliefs, both the Tosefta and Midrash *halakha* do not use the polytheistic term, but simply refer to them as outsiders.

Analyzing the use of the term *minim* gives us further insight into the Mishnah’s specific attitudes towards gentiles. While it is unclear exactly who *minim* refers to in the

Mishnah, the term was generally used to refer to heretics, and it is believed that early Christians were often referenced using this term. In a past CISMOR research meeting presentation,<sup>19</sup> I focused on rabbinic texts as a whole and addressed the uneven distribution of this term, hypothesizing that it could have been used to refer to people of other religions. However, when limiting my analysis to the Mishnah, it appears as if *minim* (heretics) and polytheists are differentiated. This suggests that at the time of the Mishnah, there were assumed to be two, opposing worldviews: the polytheistic beliefs of the *'oved kokhavim* and the monotheistic religion of Judaism. Within this structure, *minim* (largely early Christians) were still considered to be Jews—Jewish heretics, perhaps, but with a shared worldview.

However, in later rabbinic literature this understanding of the world breaks down. The term *minim* also appears in the Tosefta and *halakha*, where, as I have described, the term *'oved kokhavim* does not appear. There is a discussion regarding *nokhri*, which involves a conflict between a group of *minim* (probably early Christians) and rabbis.

In other words, while there was a differentiation between the *'oved kokhavim*, who worshiped many gods, and *minim* at the time the Mishnah was compiled, it appears shortly thereafter—at the time of the Tosefta, Midrash halakha, and other texts—Jewish *minim* (heretics, including Christians) were merged in the texts with *goy* and *nokhri*. All three were grouped together as non-Jewish others. This change was caused by the conflation of a variety of texts.

### 3-2. Relating to Gentiles

Followers of rabbinical Judaism came into contact with gentiles every day. We can assume this not only due to the nature of the legal collections, but from the fact that Jews during this time focused not on theological problems, but the important issue of how to relate to followers of other religions while following Jewish law in their daily lives. For example, consider the following text:

Beit Shammai says: One may not give anything to them, or containers to a launderer of the worships of multiple gods *'oved kokhavim*, unless there is sufficient time for them to complete the work that day. Beit Hillel permitted this. (Mishnah Shabbat 1.8)<sup>20</sup>

This passage is part of a debate between the Academy of Hillel and the Academy of Shammai. The debate centered on a specific rule for the Sabbath, namely, that one cannot

give hide to a tanner on the Sabbath, because to do so would be to make him work that day, which is prohibited. From this passage, we can see that it was acceptable, however, for Jews to bring their laundry to a non-Jewish launderer, and that there was a laundering industry. The text continues as follows:

Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel said: It was the custom in my father's house to deliver white garments to a launderer of the worship of multiple gods (*'oved kokhavim*) three days before Shabbat. Both schools agree regarding the beams of the oil press, and the cylinders on the wine press. (Mishnah Shabbat 1.8)

Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel was the son (*ben*) of Rabban Gamliel, and thus "my father's house" refers to the house of Rabban Gamliel, a very famous Rabbi under whom Paul supposedly studied. The reason white garments could not be given to launderers closer to the Sabbath was that it took more time to wash white garments than colored ones, and thus washing would not be completed by the Sabbath at sundown on Friday.

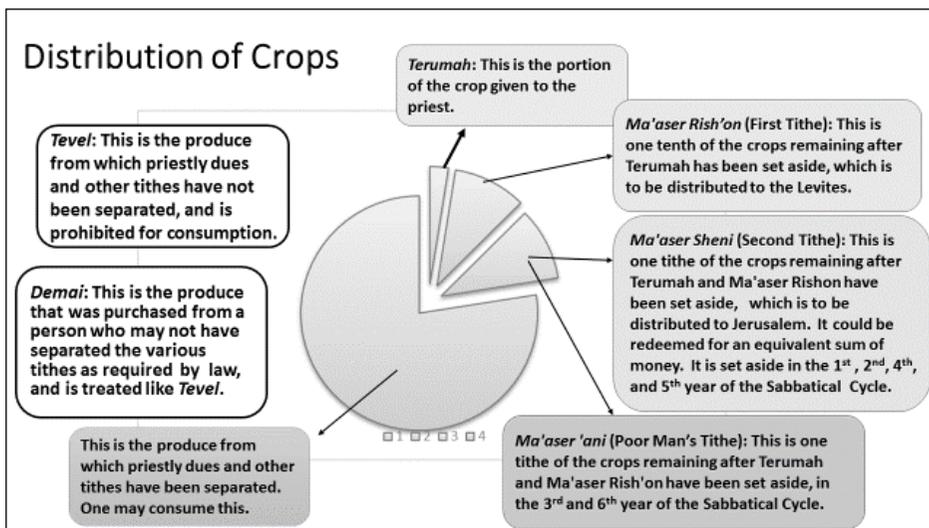
The quote also refers to olive oil and the wine press. Both Jews and gentiles used presses and worked together to make these products. In this joint work, if one continued using the press after the Sabbath had begun, they would desecrate the Sabbath. It was important that Jews and non-Jews use the same equipment and work together, thus the rules surrounding the presses.

In the next quote, we find the word *'avodah zarah*. While in English it is often translated as "idol worship" or "idols," in Hebrew it does not refer to idolatrous religions. Its original meaning was "odd worship."

One may not make jewelry for purposes of idolatry (*'avodah zarah*): necklaces, nose rings, or rings. Rabbi Eliezer says: It is permissible to do so for a salary. One may not sell them something that is connected to the ground. But it may be sold once it is chopped. Rabbi Yehuda says: One may sell it to them on the condition that they will chop it. One may not rent them houses in the Land of Israel, and we need not even mention fields. In Syria, they were rented houses. However, they were not rented fields. However, outside of the Land of Israel they were sold houses and rented fields. These are words of Rabbi Meir. Rabbi Yosei says: In the Land of Israel, they were rented houses but not fields, and in Syria they were sold houses and rented fields. Outside of the Land of Israel, they could be sold either one. (Mishnah Avodah Zarah 1.8)

This indicates that Jews made and distributed goods to followers of other religions. While there are various understandings what it means to rent houses and fields, we can see that it was possible for them to have a relationship that included this, whatever the exact definition was.

However, the renting and leasing of fields and joint cultivation brought about a complicated set of problems: It was necessary for some of Jewish people's crops to be set aside for priests.



As can be seen in this simple chart, Jews had to set some of the harvest aside for priests (*terumah*). From what remained, they removed that which would be given to the Levites (*ma'aser*; first tithe) and the *ma'aser sheni* (second tithe), the recipient of which would change depending on the year. After doing so, they could keep the rest. However, when renting fields from a gentile or cultivating a field alongside a gentile, it was important to account not only for who would pay the rent, but also at what point the jointly cultivated harvest should be divided. Thus, we find rules like the following:

If a man leased a field (on the condition that he would pay the owner a fixed proportion of the crop as a rent) from an Israelite, a worshipper of multiple gods (*'oved kokhavim*), or a Samaritan, he should divide up (the produce) in their presence. One who hired a field (for a prescribed quantity of produce, irrespective of the total yield) from an Israelite must separate the *terumah*

(produce consecrated for priestly consumption) and then give the Israelite the (rent). (Mishnah Demai 6.1)

This rule stipulates that when rent consists of a fixed proportion of the harvest there is no need to set aside *terumah*. Such rent should be a prescribed quantity that is divided after setting aside the *terumah*. Here, we can see how Jewish law made it possible to rent or cultivate a field with gentiles.

Furthermore, as we can see from the next passage, Jews were aware of gentile holidays.

And these, according to Rabbi Meir, are the festivals of a worshiper of multiple gods ('*oved kokhavim*): *Kalendae* (calendar beginning of the year), *Saturnalia*, (festival one week before the winter solstice), kings' days of accession, the day of birth, and the day of death. And the Sages say: every funeral in which a conflagration is present (thereby) involves idol worship. One that has no conflagration does not involve idol worship. The day on which a man cuts his beard or his hair (coming of age day), that he came ashore from the sea, and the day he was released from prison, and the day a non-Jew holds a wedding for his child: on these days, transactions with just this person is prohibited. (Mishnah Avodah Zarah 1.3)

This rule states that on such festival days, rituals to worship idols would be carried out, and thus, transactions should not be carried out with non-Jews. It was probably thought that to do so would be to take part in idol worship. Another rule discusses where to engage in transactions when there are idols on the town walls.<sup>21</sup>

The Mishnah also includes rules regarding the slaughter of animals. It discusses meat that might have been slaughtered for animal worship, the handling of meat slaughtered for gentiles' food, the slaughter of impure animals, and so on, focusing on issues such as acceptability when viewed from the law as well as the permissibility of eating and enjoyment.

. . . The slaughter of a gentile (*nokhri*) is a *nevelah* (meat from an animal that has died due to natural causes) and renders impure through carrying. . . . One who slaughters on Shabbat, or on Yom Kippur, even though he is liable for death, his slaughter is valid. (Mishnah Chullin 1.1)

Meat that is slaughtered for idol worship (*'avodah zara*), for offering its blood, and that has had its fat removed for idol worship is dead meat [is disqualified]. If after slaughter the blood is sprinkled for idol worship, if the fat is removed for idol worship, it is living meat. (Tosefta Chullin 2.13)

The slaughter of cattle and impure birds in the hall of the temple cannot be enjoyed. Of course, eating them is prohibited. Living livestock and clean birds can be enjoyed. While Rabbi Meir prohibits enjoyment of the slaughter of *terefah* animals (injured animals are already not acceptable) and animals which after slaughter are found out to be *terefah*, Rabbi Gamliel allows it. (Tosefta Chullin 2.14)

From these texts, we can see that prohibitions are discussed in terms of two stages: the procedure of slaughter and the usage of the slaughtered meat—eating or enjoying (receiving benefit). We can see that Jews during Paul's era were concerned about the same issues as he was when he discussed meat offered to idols. The number of rules in place indicate that it was necessary for Jews to eat meat dressed by gentiles. At the same time, gentiles ate meat that Jews had slaughtered. We can again see here how Jews lived open lives within the world of non-Jews. In Paul's texts, he discusses encountering gentiles in daily life. We can see that he was concerned with many of the topics that are addressed in the Jewish texts—such as when eating alongside gentiles, whether it is acceptable to consume meat offered to idols, how wine should be handled, and situations involving joint work with non-Jews.

Next, let us turn to texts that discuss the issue of impurity. Paul also dealt with this topic in his writings. It is said that Paul was an artisan who made tents, and tents were discussed in relation to impurity in the *halakha* of Rabbinic Judaism. This relationship is derived from the question of what could make the restricted space of a tent impure and how this impurity could be removed. An entire order (volume; Oholot) in the Mishnah is devoted to the topic. We can thus understand why Paul was sensitive to the issue of impurity.

Everyone is made impure by *Negaim* except for a worshiper of multiple gods *'ovedei kokhavim*. Everyone is valid for examining *Negaim*, except that the impurity and the purity (of the examined person) is in the hands of a priest. They say to him (i.e. the priest), "Say (he is) impure," and he says, "Impure."

(They say to him), “Say (he is) pure,” and he says, “Pure.” (Mishnah Negaim 3.1)

All clothing can become impure from *Negaim* except for a worshiper of multiple gods ‘*oved kokhavim*. One who buys clothing from a non-Jew should examine it (for signs of the *Nega*) and make it new. Sea creatures do not become impure from *Negaim*. If attached to that which is of the ground—even with thread or even a string—and is anything which can become impure, it is impure. (Mishnah Negaim 11.1)

Here, *negaim* refers to skin disease as well as mold on clothes and in houses. The Mishnah and Tosefta contain various discussions regarding whether these bring about impurity. Another important problem is how to purify *negaim*. However, as can be seen from the above text, Jews’ *negaim* do not make gentiles impure. This is because *negaim* itself is not impure. In other words, impurity depends on the receiver. This is similar to the idea expressed by Paul that surprised me: “It is unclean to the one who considers it unclean.”

In the Rabbinic Mishnah, it appears that when gentiles are involved, the concept of relative impurity and legal obligation appears: non-Jews are exempt from laws applied to Jews. In other words, the laws of Judaism state that they are not absolute ones that everyone must follow. If so, the focus shifts to the intention or volition of the person who carries out the law, that is, the person who acts. Therein, a gap between action and consciousness or belief emerges within Judaism, characterized by the unity of faith and action (the idea that to act is faith).

### 3-3. Between Belief and Action

Based on the above discussion, it becomes clear that a person’s intention was important in the laws regarding dealing with non-Jews. The rabbinic texts make the following statement:

(If on Shabbat) a worshiper of multiple gods ‘*oved kokhavim* lights a candle, an Israelite may use its light; but if (he lit it) on behalf of an Israelite, it is prohibited (to use it). If he filled (a vessel with) water to give to his cattle to drink, an Israelite may have his cattle drink (from that vessel) after him; but if he did so on behalf of the Israelite it is prohibited (to use it). (If) a worshiper of

multiple gods had (his) sheep pass, a Jew may (have his sheep) pass afterwards; but if (a worshiper of multiple gods had his sheep pass) on behalf of the Israelite it is prohibited (to do so). It once happened that Rabban Gamliel and the Elders were on a ship. A worshiper of multiple gods had the sheep descend [from the ship], whereupon Rabban Gamliel and the Elders then (had their sheep) descend. (Mishnah Shabbat 16.8)

Lighting a flame, filling a vessel with water, having sheep pass, and so on were forms of work that were banned on the Sabbath. However, there is no particular problem with gentiles doing such things. In other words, lighting a candle on the day of the Sabbath is not an absolute law, but one that must be followed by Jews. Furthermore, if a non-Jew lit a flame for himself, then even on the Sabbath, Jews can also use it. However, if the gentile lit the flame for a Jew, for them to use it would be to defile the Sabbath. In other words, non-visible intention—here, that of the gentile—becomes related to the execution of the law. The next passage lists things prohibited when buying and selling to and from gentiles:

It is forbidden to sell the following items to a worshiper of multiple (*oved kokhavim*) gods: pinecones, white figs and their stalks, frankincense, and white chickens. Rabbi Yehuda says: one is permitted to sell them a white chicken amongst a group of chickens; or, one is permitted to clip its toe and sell it, since they do not sacrifice blemished animals for idolatry. As for all remaining items, if [their intention was] not specified one is permitted [to sell them], but if there is a doubt about it, it is prohibited. Rabbi Meir says: fine palm dates, sweet dates, and the Nikolaos dates are also forbidden to be sold to non-Jews. (Mishnah Avodah Zarah 1.5)

It is stated that these items could not be sold to non-Jews because they could be used as offerings in their worship. This shows that Jews knew—in considerable detail—what kind of things were being used in such situations. Furthermore, they also knew the rules regarding their offerings: the above passage states that damaged items would not be offered. Other items were allowed if it was not specified what they were going to be used for. In other words, the act of selling things to gentiles itself and the things sold were not the issue. The problem was carrying out such an act knowing that it would be used for idol worship.

One who slaughters for a non-Jew (*nokhri*),<sup>22</sup> his slaughtering is valid. And Rabbi Eliezer declares it invalid. Rabbi Eliezer says: “Even if he slaughtered it so that the non-Jew will eat it, even just the diaphragm, it is invalid, for just thinking of a worshiper of multiple gods leads to idolatry.” Said Rabbi Yose, “These matters are *qal vachomer* (the principle of reasoning about major things based on minor ones). If intention brings about the result of invalidity (just like animal sacrifice), it is related to (only) the (intention of the) person carrying out the action. Furthermore, if that is the case, if intention does not make the result invalid (as is the case with beasts offered), it is (only) related to the (intention of the) person doing the slaughtering. (Mishnah Chullin 2.7)

This also shows that understandings regarding slaughter for foreigners were not unified. The anonymous opinion appears to be the general view of the time, but Rabbi Eliezer held a significantly different opinion. He said that just thinking of non-Jews could lead to idol worship. Subsequently, the discussion turned to the relationship between intention and results. Rabbi Yose said that if intention led to invalidity, this result was only related to the intention of the person carrying out the act. This could lead to the view that the law is not universal in nature but in the realm of individual intention. It appears that the beginnings of a criticism of the universality and absoluteness of the law can be found in Rabbinic Judaism.

#### 4. Analysis and Summary

In the past, as Leo Baeck has asserted, Judaism was a religion of acts. Action remains its foundation. However, when Jews come into contact with non-Jews—when they have to carry out their lives alongside them—a situation emerges in which the law itself has not always been applied to everyone. This variable application creates space for the individual to choose whether or not to carry out a given law.

Why did Judaism during the time of Paul go in a different direction (the unity of faith and action), while confronting the same problems that Paul addressed? I would like to look into this process more in the future. However, I do think that Jews, while being aware that the law was not absolute, consciously chose to follow it.

In the previous discussion of a flame lit by gentiles on the Sabbath, it is said that since gentiles do not have to observe the Sabbath, Jews may use the flame. However, here one would need to know the intention of the individual who lit the flame, that is,

whether it was done specifically for the use of a Jew. This intention is not clearly determined. One's intention does not have to be freely divulged, and one has the option to lie. If both Jews and non-Jews were silent about the matter, it would be possible for the former to use it. If one does not use it due to unknown intention, here we would find the law being carried out based on an individual's will characterized by the choice to not use it, even though one can. At the same time, space arises for freedom or conscience that influence the decision of whether or not to use it.

Even in the discussion regarding things that are prohibited from being sold, we can see that selling itself is not prohibited, but the act of assisting the other person in their idol worship is. However, one can overlook the issue of how to demonstrate the existence of the intention to use items for idol worship. Yet, by being aware of intention, a space emerges to make a choice. Those who think that the non-Jew has a certain intention and thus choose to follow the law are making a choice to carry it out.

Similarly, it is said that there is no impurity in the things of gentiles. If this is the case, one can arrive at the opinion that things themselves are not impure. If one thinks that everything depends on the eye of the beholder, there emerges a freedom from which one can either see something as impure and follow the rules regarding impurity, or not do so.

Paul and Judaism confronted issues regarding how to interact with gentiles in concrete daily life situations. In the boundary realm of interacting with non-Jews, the freedom to choose whether or not to carry out the law emerged. For Paul to make his way into the world of gentiles, it was necessary for him to develop his thought in the direction of the freedom to not carry out the law. Similarly, Judaism of the same era maintained thought that was based on the free decision to follow it.<sup>23</sup>

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## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Regarding modern and contemporary approaches to Jesus and Christianity by scholars of Jewish studies, see F. A. Rothschild ed., *Jewish Perspective on Christianity* (New York: Continuum, 1990); N. Stahl ed., *Jesus Among the Jews: Representation and Thought* (London

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- and New York: Routledge, 2012); S. Heschel, *Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), 239-242, etc.
- <sup>2</sup> Heschel, *Geiger*, 50-75.
- <sup>3</sup> Heschel, *Ibid.*, 127-130.
- <sup>4</sup> Heschel, *Ibid.*, 235-237.
- <sup>5</sup> Heschel, *Ibid.*
- <sup>6</sup> For excerpts of Baeck's words on Christianity, see Rothschild ed., *Jewish Perspective*, 42-108.
- <sup>7</sup> M. Buber, *Der Jude und sein Judentum: Gesammelte Aufsätze und Reden* (Köln: Joseph Melzer Verlag, 1963), 105. For excerpts of Martin Buber's words on Christianity, see Rothschild, *Ibid.*, 122-153. Particularly see "Introduction" by E. W. Stegemen in Rothschild, *Ibid.*, 111-121.
- <sup>8</sup> E. E. Urbach, *The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefs* (Cambridge: The Harvard UP, 1987), 34, 95, 258, 289, 293, etc. He contrasts them with Jewish sages in general and Rabbi Akiva.
- <sup>9</sup> D. Flusser, *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1988), XVII-XVIII, 23-74.
- <sup>10</sup> For example, P. Joyce, "Abraham from Christian Perspective," in N. Solomon, R. Harries and T. Winter eds., *Abraham's Children: Jews, Christians and Muslims in Conversation* (New York: T&T Clark, 2005), 18-27; Avigdor Shinan, "Ningen Aburahamu no shōgai: Rabi Yudayakyō, Kirisutokyō, Isurāmu ni oite" 「人間アブラハムの生涯: ラビ・ユダヤ教、キリスト教、イスラームにおいて」[The Life of the Man Abraham as Reflected in Ancient Jewish, Christian and Muslim Literature] *Yudaya gaku kaigi* 『ユダヤ学会議』[CISMOR Conference on Jewish Studies], vol. 4 (2011), 72-90.
- <sup>11</sup> R. Bieringer and D. Pollefeyt eds., *Paul and Judaism: Crosscurrents in Pauline Exegesis and the Study of Jewish-Christian Relations* (London, New York: T&T Clark, 2012); G. Boccaccini and C. A. Segovia eds., *Paul the Jew: Reading the Apostle as Figure of Second Temple Judaism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2016); K. Stendahl, *Paul among Jews and Gentiles* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1976), and many other works.
- <sup>12</sup> Regarding the developments in Paul research after World War II and their background, see R. Bieringer and D. Pollefeyt, "Prologue: Wrestling with Jewish Paul," in R. Bieringer and D. Pollefeyt eds., *Paul and Judaism*, 1-14.
- <sup>13</sup> R. Halperin, *Atlas Eytz Chayim* vol.4 (Tel Aviv: Hotsat haqadesh Ruach Yaqov, 1980).
- <sup>14</sup> Kohelet Rabbah 7.8.1. In this episode Deutscher sees a prototype for a model of a "non-Jewish Jew" who transcends the Jewish world and is active for all of humanity. I. Isaac Deutscher, *Hi Yudayateki Yudayajin* 『非ユダヤのユダヤ人』[*Non-Jewish Jew*], trans. Suzuki Ichirō 鈴木一郎 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1970), 35-36. Translation of *The Non-Jewish Jew and Other Essays* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968).
- <sup>15</sup> Tosefta Chullin 2.24, Jerusalem Talmud Sabbath 14.4, 14d, etc.
- <sup>16</sup> In Babylonian Talmud Hagigah 14b, there is a story about four wise men who enter a *pardes* (orchard). One of them was Rabbi Akiva, who returned safely. The other three are said to have deviated from the road in some way, in other words, turned to heretical thought. Rabbi Elisha was one of them.
- <sup>17</sup> This and the translation that follows are the New English Translation (<https://lumina.bible.org>). Accessed December 12th, 2016.

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- <sup>18</sup> Katsumata Etsuko 勝又悦子, “Yudayakyō ni okeru jiyū” 「ユダヤ教における自由」 [Freedom in Judaism], *Kirisutokyō kenkyū* 『基督教研究』 [*Studies in Christianity*] 77:1 (2015), 1-23.
- <sup>19</sup> Katsumata Etsuko 勝又悦子, “Rabi Yudayakyō bunken ni mirareru Rabi to mīnīmu (ikyōto, itansha) no taiwa” 「ラビ・ユダヤ教文献に見られるラビとミーニーム（異教徒、異端者）の対話」 [Dialogues Between Rabbis and *Minim* [Non-Jews, Heretics] in Rabbinic Literature] (2004 Academic Year 2nd Research Meeting in Tokyo “Isshinkyō no saikō to bunmei no taiwa” 「一神教の再考と文明の対話」 [Reconsidering Monotheism and Dialogues Between Civilizations], held by Doshisha University’s Center for Interdisciplinary Study of Monotheistic Religions); Katsumata Etsuko 勝又悦子, “Rabi to mīnīmu: T Chullin 2.20-24, Kohelet R1.8 o chūshin ni” 「ラビとミーニーム：T フリン 2・20-24、コヘ R 1・8 を中心に」 [Rabi and *Minim*: Tosefta Chullin 2.20-24; Kohelet R1.8], *Namar Port* 11 (2006), 35-54.
- <sup>20</sup> Quotations from Rabbinical literature in this paper generally use (sometimes with major modifications) the translations available at <https://www.sefaria.org>. Accessed December 12th, 2016.
- <sup>21</sup> Mishnah Avoidah Zarah 1.4.
- <sup>22</sup> As previously described, in the Mishnah, ‘*oved kokhavim* and its derivatives are used to refer to followers of other religions and foreigners. However, in this Chullin order (volume), we find *nokhri* / foreigner, and *nokhri* and *minim* (which often refers to early Christians) are discussed in relation to each other. This, in turn, would develop into the Tosefta’s discussion of *minim*. Here, we can see that when the term *nokhri* (which does not indicate a plurality of gods) was used to refer to foreigners, *minim*—which was distinguished from ‘*oved kokhavim* (roughly meaning worshippers of multiple gods)—was absorbed into it.
- <sup>23</sup> Here, we should take note of the *qal vachomer* technique applied at the end of Mishnah Chullin 2.7: using insignificant things to reason about significant ones. In this discussion, intention bringing about the result of invalidity is *qal* (minor things), and intention not bringing about the result of invalidity is *vachomer* (major things). In other words, Rabbinical Judaism faced an issue similar to Paul, in Judaism there was the view that emphasized intention not bringing about the result of invalidity. As a result, a situation became mainstream in Judaism in which while people were cognizant of intention, it did not lead to invalidity, and the religion developed to emphasize carrying out the law more than intention and the like.