

How Vain They Worship Me!

By Don Esposito

When we look at religion as a whole it is filled with either vain (useless) worship or even worse pagan, idol worship. Christmas is supposed to be about the birth of Messiah, yet we know 100% not only that Yahshua wasn't born on December 25th, as there would be no shepherds in the fields at this time in Israel, but this Christian holiday came from a mixing of the pagan Saturnalia, an evil feast of sexual debauchery and pagan mysticism.

As with all forms of false, idol worship there is always a physical object that is used to replace the focus of worship on the only one true Elohim who is not physical but is spirit, and you do not worship Him by sight but in spirit and truth (Joh 4:24).

This is Yahweh's pattern of true worship and this is why the day starts with the absence of the sun not the sighting of it, as well as the month starting at the conjunction (dark or absence of the moon) not the sighting of it, as well as the year starting at the equinox, which is known by the shadow of the sun, not the visual sighting of it.

Yahweh knows man's propensity toward idolatry and worship of physical things so He would never purposely put a stumbling block before humans, but actually continually warns us against any type of false worship.

However, many people coming out of pagan Christianity jump from the pot into the frying pan by exchanging the pagan customs of Christianity for the pagan customs of Judaism. Many will self-righteously mock Christians for their pagan practices, and then, turn to Jewish practices of mysticism and outright paganism.

What many coming out of Christianity fail to understand is that modern Judaism is a manmade religion started by Rabbi Akiva in the second century A.D., and has as much paganism as Christianity has under Constantine, from believing in reincarnation to the transmigration of souls, to wearing the pagan skullcap that is in honor of the false deity Hermes, modern Judaism is filled with legend, mysticism, and at times outright paganism. Yahshua rebuked the Jews in His day for their vain traditions.

Mar 7:6 And answering, He said to them, Well did Isaiah prophesy concerning you, hypocrites; as it has been written: "This people honors Me with the lips, but their heart is far away from Me;

Mar 7:7 and in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."

Mar 7:8a For forsaking the commandment of YAHWEH, you hold the tradition of men:

One practice that many Messianics have been hoodwinked into following in Judaism is *what is called Kabala Shabbat*. This is the manmade ritual that starts by having the woman of the house light 2 candles before Shabbat and wave her hands over the candles to invite in the Sabbath queen, and then, doing a mystical prayer over a loaf (or sometimes 2 loaves) of challah bread, and also praying a similar prayer over wine. If we look below we will see where this medieval mystic custom came from.

“Shabbat Hamalka *by Lil Arbel, Ph.D.*

Among the goddesses representing either the female side of [Yahweh](#) or his consorts, such as [Asherah](#), [Shekhina](#), [Anath](#), and [Lilith](#), Shabbat Hamalka has a unique personality and origin. Her myth strongly influenced Jewish thought, and contributed to the strength of home and family that had improved the odds for physical and spiritual Jewish survival.

The name means Queen of the Sabbath, and the entity is the personification of the Jewish day of rest, Saturday. She still possesses a prominent position in Judaic mythology. For example, Israeli children, even in completely nonreligious surroundings, still sing songs to her every

Friday afternoon (in Hebrew "ErevShabatt" meaning the Sabbath Eve) before the Queen "descends" from Heaven to grace the world for twenty-four hours. When the Jews started their return to Palestine, long before the state of Israel was declared, new mythology had to be created or recreated. Shabbat Hamalka, prominent and romantic, was one of the first candidates. The great National Poet Chaim Nachman Bialik, who was an expert on folklore and mythology, had a lot to do with preserving the image of the Queen in the renewed home of the Jewish People. He invented "Oneg Shabbat," meaning "Sabbath Joy," and combined the customs of group study, festive dinner, lectures, and singing of both old and new songs. The custom spread to the United States and is still observed by many.

Her origin is extremely ancient, and as the centuries rolled, Shabbat Hamalka acquired magical qualities, combining the character of Queen, Bride, and Goddess. In addition, she took on strong erotic/romantic and cosmic/spiritual significance. The usual Judaic connections to Akkadian myths exist in her image, because the word Shabbat resembles the name of the Akkadian feast of the full moon, Shabbatu. The romantic character of the two holidays also had much in common. For example, marital intercourse on Friday night was considered a sacred duty, exactly like the sacred sexual activity during Shabbatu. However, the Akkadians never had a weekly day of rest - the idea seems to start in the second chapter of Genesis.

Most important, one passage in the Talmudic literature (describing events in the 2nd and 3rd centuries CE) already shows the early personification of Shabbat Hamalka: "Rabbi Hanina used to wrap himself in festive clothes towards evening on Friday and say: 'Come, let us go to receive Shabbat the Queen.' Rabbi Yannai used to put on festive clothes on the eve of the Sabbath and say: 'Come, O bride, come, O bride!'"

In a Midrashic passage the image develops: "Rabbi Shimeon Ben Yohai said: The Sabbath said before God: 'Master of the worlds! Each day has its mate, but I have none! Why?' The Holy One, Blessed be He, answered her: 'The Community of Israel is your mate.' And when Israel stood before Mount Sinai, the Holy One, blessed be He, said to them: 'Remember what I told the Sabbath: 'The Community of Israel is your mate.' Therefore, remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.'"

Up to this point, she already embodied both Bride and Queen. The Cabbalists, however, developed the myth to its full spiritual and romantic capacity and infused it with mystical, cosmic meaning. They started it as early as the 12th century, with a landmark treatise by the Spanish poet Abraham ibn Ezra entitled "Epistle of the Sabbath," and developed the myth until the 16th century. The most famous poem on the subject is "LekhaDodi," written by Shlomo ben Moshe Halevi Alqabetz in the Kabbalistic center of Safed in Israel.

During this time, the gender of the Sabbath was debated, based on two verbs used in two versions of the Fourth Commandment. In Exodus, the Commandment declares "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." In Deuteronomy, the Commandment declares "Observe (or Keep, in some versions) the Sabbath day to keep it holy." The Zohar equates "Observe" with the female side of the Sabbath, and "Remember" with the male side, thus giving the Sabbath both genders. This is not as paradoxical as it sounds, **if one compares it to the description of Shekhina, who is at the same time the female aspect of Yahweh Himself -- and his wife. Duplicate divine personas happen often in Judaism, because it combines a strong patriarchal outlook with an equally powerful presence of the Goddess. So the male side of the Sabbath came to be associated with "Yesod," the male principle of God in the Kabbalah, and the female side associated with Shekhina, who is Queen, representative of the Community of Israel, and Bride of God. This allowed Shabbat Hamalka to become**

the Bride of Yesod, or simply put, the Bride of God. It also intensified the distinctiveness of a glorious female entity, ready to be worshiped.

At the end of the day, the men assembled again, usually at the rabbi's house, for the "MelavehMalka" ritual, meaning "Farewell to the Queen." The ceremony included singing songs in her honor, eating (challah) bread and drinking wine, and a lecture or discussion. The Queen then departed and the work week, full of hardship and sometimes suffering, was about to begin again. The entire community, however, was always keenly aware that Shabbat Hamalka would never be away from them for more than six days. '

So we can see that this ceremony is not something that is pleasing to Yahweh but is filled with mysticism, paganism and outright blasphemy to Elohim. However, some will say "But we do not do the candle lighting ceremony, we only pray over the challah bread and the wine"; but is this not exactly what Christians say about Christmas? Christmas was originated as a pagan, evil festival and yet today in probably 99% of Christian homes it is a harmless celebration remembering the birth of Messiah. Yet, Yahweh tells us not to take the ways of the pagans and change them around and try to give worship to Him!

Deu 12:28Take heed to listen to all these Words which I am commanding you, in order that it may be well with you and with your sons after you forever, when you do that which is good and right in the eyes of YAHWEH your Elohim.

Deu12:29When YAHWEH your Elohim shall cut off the nations from before you, where you are going in to possess them, and you shall possess them, and shall live in their land,

Deu12:30take heed to yourself that you not be snared to follow them after they have been destroyed before you; and that you not inquire after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their Elohim? And I shall do so, even I.

Deu12:31You shall not do so to YAHWEH your Elohim; for everything hateful to YAHWEH, which He detests, they have done to their gods. For they have even burned their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods.

Deu 12:32All the things that I command you, take heed to do them and you shall not add to it, nor take away from it.

This type of syncretism is not acceptable to Yahweh as He is the Creator and originator of all and He clearly outlines in Scripture how we are to worship Him, period! We need not add extra ceremonies and manmade rituals that He never asked for or commanded.

Deu4:2You shall not add to the Word which I command you, nor take from it, to keep the commandments of YAHWEH your Elohim which I command you.

Do we realize that when we are adding to the Word of Yahweh in supplemental ritualistic worship ceremonies we are doing exactly what every false religion, including Judaism, does today, and it is not acceptable to our Heavenly Father.

I have lived in Israel over the better part of the last almost 15 years and I have never felt comfortable with the Kiddush ceremony. Coming out from Christianity where Satan has hoodwinked them through religious, false rituals, they have abandoned the true Passover ceremony and exchanged it for either a weekly, monthly, or quarterly communion.

I believe the Kiddush is just another clever way of Satan to diminish the yearly commanded practice of using bread and wine to remember Yahshua's sacrifice that He made for us. To do the Kiddush ritual weekly with praying over challah bread and wine is adding to Scripture and diminishing the one and only true symbols of the Passover ceremony.

Also, on Passover once you pray over the symbolic unleavened bread and wine and sanctify it to Yahweh it has become set apart to Him and that is why we then must finish whatever was prayed over and it cannot just be discarded. Do you realize if you do the same, and pray over challah bread and wine every Erev (evening of) Shabbat, then you are also sanctifying this to Yahweh, but you then are

sanctifying something that He never said should be sanctified and you are in turn adding to the Word of Yahweh and breaking the above command?

Do you also realize that certain things that Yahweh has sanctified such as the holy incense in the Temple and also the holy anointing oil was forbidden to duplicate, and in like manner, when one is practicing Kiddush they are inadvertently duplicating the holy ceremony of Passover that is only to be done once a year in its season from year to year? (Ex 13:10).

To pray over a challah loaf and pass it around for all to take a piece of is setting bread apart that is not commanded in Scripture and is adding a ceremony to the worship of Yahweh that He never commanded in Scripture. Not only that, but it is adding a heinous ceremony that begins with worshipping a false pagan goddess that was originated with mystic, pagan Jews many hundreds of years ago and not created from Scripture.

Also, when we pray Yahshua gave His disciples an outline for prayer.

Mat 6:7 And when you pray, **you should not be chatters like the pagans for they hope that by many words they will be heard.**

Mat 6:8 Then do not be like them, for your Father knows what things you have need of before you ask Him.

Some translations state you should not pray in '*vain repetitions*' as in pagan religions they don't speak to Elohim in prayer but simply repeat the same words over and over, which Yahshua commanded against.

Yahshua then went on to give an outline for prayer that most know as the 'Our Father'. Most true believers understand that we do not simply pray those words of the 'Our Father' each day, but those words are an outline of how we are to speak to Yahweh by giving honor to His name, praying for His Kingdom, asking for our daily needs and for forgiveness, and praying for others.

In the Erev Shabbat Kabalah Kiddush ceremony the prayers are all repetitious prayers to Elohim, which Yahshua spoke not to do. The prayers themselves are not bad, as they state 'Blessed are you Elohim, king of the universe who has blessed us with Shabbat', and similar prayers over the bread and the wine.

And it would not be wrong in itself to start a prayer with the Kiddush blessing stated, but the caution comes when one realizes that all Jewish prayer is repetitious and memorized and not coming from the heart. Also, some of the prayers in the sedur are negative toward women and also against believers in Yahshua. Our brother Judah who only prays this way from an official prayer book may not know any better, but we do know better and should not partake in such contrary actions of Scripture.

I also want to mention on this discussion about the Kabala Shabbat ceremony that we don't forget that in reality we should be '*kiddushing*' the Sabbath. The word Kiddush simply coming from the root to set apart. The Sabbath should not be as every other day and from ancient historical sources it is stated that the Erev Shabbat was sanctified with special psalms read such as Psalm 91 and special songs sang such as the song in Exodus the 15th chapter and even doing Hebrew dancing. There are many ways to Kiddush or set apart the Sabbath such as cooking a special meal or even lighting a menorah or doing something special for that day that you don't do for others. However, when we turn from using a physical reminder of Sabbath, such as a special dish we only eat on Shabbat to a religious ritual such as the Kiddush, this is where it turns from a harmless anchor into an added artificial religious practice.

In closing, the Erev Shabbat Kabala Kiddush ceremony is filled with paganism, is not scriptural, and is a manmade custom of worship that Scripture warns us against and is not something that believers should partake in. There is nothing special or holy about challah bread or wine on Erev Shabbat that we should pray over physical items as such, and it violates Yahweh's commands of what He states is holy and what is not holy. We, as humans do not have the authority (except for Passover) to make certain bread and wine sanctified to Yahweh. The custom of Kiddush is simply another fabrication of man that is not supported by Scripture.