

Hillel

Hillel was a scholar in the Pharisaic movement during the first century BCE. He was the President of the Sanhedrin but shared this leadership with Shammai. Hillel and Shammai were leaders of the two premier academies of Torah study in their day. They took an almost opposing view of Torah in that Shammai taught what was called “the letter of the law” while Hillel taught “the spirit of the law.” They participated in several debates while leaders of their respective academies and many of those debates were revisited in the New Testament.

A good study of New Testament hermeneutics reveals a strong connection to Hillel and his teachings.¹ After Hillel died, his son Simeon took over the academy. Simeon was followed by Hillel’s grandson Gamaliel. Gamaliel, is mentioned in Acts 5:34-39 as defending the early Christians and is spoken of as the teacher of Paul in Acts 22:3.

Yehoshua’s teachings seemed quite compatible with Hillel’s. Some well know statements are almost quotes of Hillel’s teaching. For example:

"The Golden Rule;"

Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. (Matthew 7:12 NKJV)

This reads very closely with Hillel’s famous statement also called “The Golden Rule” within Judaism;

What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor, that is the whole Torah...(b.Shabbat 31a)

Hillel was one of the first to write down a set of rules for the purpose of Biblical Hermeneutics. These rules evidently preceded him since their use can be found in the Hebrew Scriptures. He may have been the first to recognize their use in Scripture and write them down. In doing so, he set the basis for determining the proper methods of interpretation which later were followed by Yehoshua and His disciples. To know these rules will help you understand the intent of the writers of the New Testament. Often, without understanding these rules, the original intent is missed and false conclusions are made because of the missing information.

The Seven Rules of Hillel

1. **Qal V'Khomer (light and heavy)** קַל וְחֹמֶר *This is not tov v'ra (good and bad)*

¹ This is not to say that God needed Hillel to teach Yehoshua how to properly exegete Scripture. If anyone is to influence the scholars of his day, he will need to use the accepted known methods. Since Hillel’s methods were the best scholarly work of the day, it is no surprise that Yehoshua and Shaul (Paul) used his techniques. The problem arises when a later reader does not recognize the use of a method and misunderstands the intent of the message.

Qal V'Khomer is the comparison of two similar objects, people, places etc., where one of the objects is of greater value, power, location etc. than the other. It is not a comparison of opposites. Qal V'Khomer makes a true statement concerning a lighter thing and shows that if it is true with the lighter thing it must be true concerning the heavier thing. When appropriate, the statement may be reversed saying if it is true about the heavier thing then it must also be true about the lighter thing. This depends on the association between the objects and the conclusion being made. To formulate this we would say: if B is greater than A and X is true about A, then X surely must be true about B. When this is done in Scripture, often the phrase, "how much more" is used. An example of the light to heavy comparison would be; if a man would care for his neighbors children (light), then how much more would he care for his own (heavy). Or an example of the reverse, if a king (heavy) must respect the rights of his subjects, then how much more should the sheriff (light). Both are good examples of light and heavy, and both are sound conclusions using this technique.

Qal V'Khomer can be applied in both a positive or negative manner. One might refer to a great thing then imply by this technique that something is greater. Also one might refer to a terrible thing, then imply that something is worse (greater terribleness). The intent will be obvious by the context. For the sake of explanation, I will use the terms *positive* and *negative* to designate the value of increase and will use the term *reverse* when a passage follows the King/Sheriff example. These terms are not used historically when teaching this technique, but for the sake of concise communication I wish to use them in the following examples.

Rabbinical writers divided this thought form into two types. They are *Qal V'Khomer Miforash* where the Qal V'Khomer argument appears **explicitly**, and *Qal V'Khomer Satum* where the Qal V'Khomer argument is only **implied**. Now we will look at examples in Scripture where Qal V'Khomer is used.

Qal V'Khomer Miforash in the Tanakh. (light and heavy explicit) קַל וְחֹמֶר מִפְּרָשׁ
(Reverse) And David said to Abishai and all his servants, "See how my son who came from my own body seeks my life. How much more now *may this* Benjamite? Let him alone, and let him curse; for so the LORD has ordered him. (2 Samuel 16:11 NKJV)

(Reverse Negative) If God puts no trust in His saints, And the heavens are not pure in His sight, 16 How much less man, *who is* abominable and filthy, Who drinks iniquity like water! (Job 15:15 NKJV)

Yehoshua uses Qal V'Khomer Miforash in the New Testament

(Positive) "Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds?..." (Luke 12:24 NKJV)

(Positive) "What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out? Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." (Matthew 12:11-12)

Qal V'Khomer Satum

(light and heavy implied)

קָל וְחֹמֶר סָתוּם

(Positive) (John 7:23 NKJV) “If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath, so that the law of Moses should not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made a man completely well on the Sabbath?”

(Reverse) (John 15:18 NKJV) “If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. 19 "If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. 20 "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also.”

Examples where Qal V'Khomer Satum is used but misunderstood

(Positive) (NKJV Col 2:16) So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, (17) which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.

This takes the dietary laws, festivals, new moons and Sabbaths, and calls them *a shadow*. The term “shadow” is used to imply that they are a *light* in comparison to the “substance” which is a *heavy*. Christianity uses this as if it were Tov ov’Ra (good and evil). One would never compare a great thing to a thing of unimportance. The *light* must be of like nature with the *heavy* in order for the comparison to be significant. If you state, “the prison food is awful, how much more my wife’s cooking,” I doubt your wife will feel complimented.

Since Qal V'Khomer also works in the negative, when comparing a bad thing to any other thing the second object is considered worse. Therefore, your wife should feel insulted by the previous comparison. A proper compliment would be paid in the following scenario. A business man and his wife are entertaining a client by taking the client and his wife to a very fancy restaurant. After the restaurant they go to a play on Broadway, then cap off the evening by going to the host’s home for a desert made by his wife. If the business man were to say, “Tiffany’s and The Music Man are a shadow of the good thing to come; my wife’s Chocolate Swirled Cherry Cake,” then the phrase would be properly used so that it would compliment his wife. This statement in no way degrades the previous experience.

Once we discover this use of “shadow” is Qal V'Khomer Satum, an *implied light and heavy*, the phrase let no one judge you becomes more understandable. One cannot keep someone from judging him.. If someone were perfect, still he would be criticized. Take all the criticism of Yehoshua for example. This should idiomatically be understood as a command to “behave properly in regard to,” or “act as Torah has prescribed.” Thus, the verse used by some in Christianity to argue against keeping the dietary laws, the festivals and the Sabbaths are actually commanding us to keep them as prescribed by Torah.

(Positive) (NKJV Hebrews 10:1) For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect.

The law and sacrifices are the shadow which is *light*; Messiah and His prophesied works are good things to come, thus the *heavy*. The law and sacrifices foreshadow the perfecting of the world by Messiah to be attained during and after the Millennial kingdom. Both are of God, both are of great significance; one does not eliminate the other.

If the exegesis made by many in these two previous verses were consistently applied, God should no longer take care of the ravens because he is taking care of man.

2. **G'zerah Shavah** (Equivalence of expressions) גִּזְרָה שָׁוְיָה

An analogy is made between two separate texts on the basis of a similar phrase, word or root

The writer of Hebrews uses G'zerah Shavah to develop a teaching. He takes the word *yom* which is translated *day* or *today*,² combines it with the phrase "My work" and the word "rest" to base a connection between Psalm 95:7-11 to Genesis 2:2.

Psalm 95:7 NKJV

For He *is* our God, And we *are* the people of His pasture, And the sheep of His hand. **Today**, if you will hear His voice:

⁸ "Do not harden your hearts, as in the rebellion, As *in* the day of trial in the wilderness,

⁹ When your fathers tested Me; They tried Me, though they saw **My work**.

¹⁰ For forty years I was grieved with *that* generation, And said, 'It *is* a people who go astray in their hearts, And they do not know My ways.' ¹¹ So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter **My rest**.' "

Hebrews 3:7 NKJV

Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "**Today**, if you will hear His voice,

⁸ Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness,

⁹ Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, And saw **My works** forty years.

¹⁰ Therefore I was angry with that generation, And said, 'They always go astray in *their* heart, And they have not known My ways.'

¹¹ So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter **My rest**.' "

associated with:

Genesis 2:2 NKJV

And on the seventh **day** God ended **His work** which He had done, and He **rested** on the seventh **day** from all **His work** which He had done.

Hebrews 4:4 NKJV

For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh **day** in this way: "And God **rested** on the seventh **day** from all **His works**";

² *HaYom* literally "the day" is an idiom translated as *today*. Whereas *yom*, without the definite article is translated as "day." These are considered the same Hebrew word.

Paul concludes

(Hebrews 4:5-9 NJB) ⁵ And, again, the passage above says: They will never reach my place of rest. ⁶ It remains the case, then, that there would be some people who would reach it, and since those who first heard the good news were prevented from entering by their refusal to believe, ⁷ God fixed another day, a Today, when he said through David in the text already quoted: If only you would listen to him today; do not harden your hearts. ⁸ If Joshua had led them into this place of rest, God would not later have spoken of another day. ⁹ There must still be, therefore, a seventh-day rest reserved for God's people,

Paul shows that the nation of Israel did not entered into God's rest when they entered the land. He points out that David stated "Today if you hear my voice." This is a time period long after they entered into the land with Joshua suggesting that the opportunity for all did not end when God stated, "So I swore in My wrath, 'they would not enter my rest.'" Since the rest did not come when they entered into the promised land the first time, but David spoke of another day, Paul concludes that there must still be a seventh day rest reserved for the people of God.

This future rest spoken of by Paul is referring to a return to the land of Israel, but the exact phrase that he uses lends to a dual meaning. I believe he intended this dual meaning. The word translated as *rest* in most translations, but as seventh day rest in the New Jerusalem Bible is the Greek word *sabbatismos*, literally meaning *a Sabbath keeping*. The keeping of the Sabbath is to be a remembrance of the creation.³ Paul referenced the creation story by quoting Genesis 2:2. Paul uses Psalm 95 to show there remains another chance to enter the kingdom and rest. This makes the Sabbath point toward a future rest. Therefore Paul is adding another reason for us to keep the Sabbath, not only to remember, but also to proclaim an entering into the Rest of God in the millennial kingdom.

(Hebrews 4:10-11 NKJV) For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God *did* from His. ¹¹ Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.

Notice in verse 11 he encourages us to be diligent to enter that rest. He cannot be referring to the Millennial kingdom at this time since they could not force Messiah's return. Is the refusal of the church to honor God's seventh day Sabbath the reason the doctrine of a literal kingdom was abandon for 1500 years and why the teaching of Evolution flourished over the last century?⁴

3. **Binyan av mikathuv echad** (Building a father from one text) **בְּנֵי אָב מִכְתוּב אֶחָד**

³(Exodus 20:11)For *in* six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

⁴ "A Sign Between You and Me," a book by the author of this manual, shows the historical change of the Sabbath to Sunday and reveals that the New Testament does not abate the Sabbath commands.

One clear passage serves as a basis for making a rule that can be applied to similar cases.

(NKJV Deuteronomy 22:8) " When you build a new house, then you shall make a parapet for your roof, that you may not bring guilt of bloodshed on your household if anyone falls from it.

This verse is *the father* to many decisions in American law. By using this as a father it has been determined that a property owner can be held liable for danger he created and did not protect against. If a property owner digs a ditch and does not properly rope it off or fence it, he will be liable for harm that comes to anyone crossing his property. It has even developed into excessive abuses since in the later years the decisions have been built on historical precedent rather than scriptural mandate. Today, the second part of this verse is forgotten. It states. "that you may not bring guilt of bloodshed on your household..." If you took the proper precaution, you were not to be held guilty. Today, even if you placed a fence around the hole, put a sign up in 25 languages, covered the ditch with a thick metal cover, and put out a no trespassing sign as you enter the property, you could still be prosecuted if someone trespassed, cut opened the fence, lifted up the cover and fell in.

(NKJV James 4:6-10) ⁶ But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." ⁷ Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. ⁸ Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *you* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *you* double-minded. ⁹ Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and *your* joy to gloom. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

(LXE Proverbs 3:34) The Lord resists the proud; but he gives grace to the humble.

James uses Proverbs 3:34 as *a father* to show that if you humble yourself before God, then He will resist the accuser on your behalf and the accuser will flee from you. We may recognize HaSatan⁵ as prideful and the lord of the prideful, but HaSatan means the accuser. The accuser scorns the righteous. The Hebrew word used in this proverb is לִיץ (litz) meaning both scorn and proud. In most English translations from the Hebrew the word is translated as *scornful* and James is assuming you know that the greatest *scorner* is HaSatan. Thus he concludes that humbling yourself before God will make HaSatan flee.

4. **Binyan av mishnei kethuvim** (Building a father from two or more texts) בְּנֵי אָב מִשְׁנֵי כְתוּבִים
Two or more passages serve as a basis for making a general conclusion

⁵ HaSatan is the Hebrew word which in English we derive the "name" *Satan*. However, this is problematic when we use Satan as a name. The direct article, (*the*) is never placed before a name in Hebrew, in the same manner "the Robert" is never said in English. The fact that *Ha* (*the*) comes before Satan leads me to believe that Satan is not a name, rather a description or title for a group. It means *the destroyer*, so it could be a description of an individual's work, or it may be a title for all the fallen angels who rebelled against God.

(NKJV Romans 9:24) *even* us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? 25 As He says also in Hosea: "I will call them My people, who were not My people, And her beloved, who was not beloved." 26 "And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, '*You are* not My people,' There they shall be called sons of the living God." 27 Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, The remnant will be saved. 28 For He will finish the work and cut *it* short in righteousness, Because the LORD will make a short work upon the earth." 29 And as Isaiah said before: "Unless the LORD of Sabaoth had left us a seed, We would have become like Sodom, And we would have been made like Gomorrah." 30 What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith;

Paul uses Hosea 1:10 & 2:23 and applies it to Isaiah 10:22 to show that God intends to bring the northern kingdom to a righteousness of faith and return them to the land. God will do this, even though they rebelled against Him and rejected his Torah and were scattered into the nations. In verse 23 of Romans, he speaks of the potter making vessels for mercy and vessels for destruction out of the same lump. All the northern kingdom were from the same lump some were to be lost in the nations. The word translated as destruction (**ἀπώλεια** *apoleia*) is often translated as lost. Of those that were lost, God planned to show mercy. After this declaration of mercy from verse 23 he continues to show how this mercy will be applied to those now considered Gentiles due to them being driven into the nations. This is used by some in Protestant Christianity to show that God has cut off Israel and has opened up salvation to the pagan. It becomes a proof text that the Church replaces Israel as the elect. In reality this is showing that the church is the *elect*, because of the covenant that God made with their ancestors; ancestors whom they have forgotten but a covenant that God has never forgotten. Paul may also have used (**גִּזְרַח שָׁוָה**) **G'zerah Shavah** in order to deduce this argument. Both the Isaiah passage and the Hosea passage use the same phrase, "... children of Israel be as the sand of the sea..." This could be Paul's reason for applying the Hosea passage to the Isaiah passage, yet, he does not clearly show this in his written argument. It could be an implied association that he expected his audience to understand. Maybe this is an example G'zerah Shavah Satum.⁶

5. **K'lal uf'rat**

(the general and the particular)

כָּלֵל וּפְרָט

A general statement is made which is followed by a passage that gives more details thus making more specific the earlier general statement.

Genesis 2:2 tells us that God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it. Yet it does not tell how He sanctified it, Genesis merely mentions that God rested that one day. However, the remainder of Torah gives more details on how it is sanctified.

(NKJV Genesis 2:2) And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done,

⁶ I find no historical basis for claiming a technique called G'zerah Shavah Satum. I am merely implying the possibility because we have record it was taught concerning Qal V'Khomer and it is obvious that the same *implied* technique is used by Paul and Yehoshua many times with most of the other rules of Hillel.

and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. ³ Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

(NKJV Exodus 20:10) but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God. *In it* you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who *is* within your gates. ¹¹ For *in* six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

The Exodus passage gives details on how to act in order to make it sanctified.

(NKJV Leviticus 23:3) ' Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day *is* a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work *on it*; it *is* the Sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings.

This passage tells us that there should be a sacred assembly on the Sabbath. These later passages give more details concerning what is to be done because the seventh day is sanctified. By combining the later passages with the former, we can clarify how God wishes us to behave on the Sabbath.

6. **Kayotzei bo mimekom akheir** (analogy made from another passage) כִּיֹּצֵא בּוֹ מִמְּקוֹם אַחֵר
Two passages may seem to be in conflict until a third resolves the conflict.

Command

NKJV Exodus 20:26 'Nor shall you go up by steps to My altar, that your nakedness may not be exposed on it.'

Conflict (10 cubits is about 15 feet, the altar is too high to avoid using steps)

NKJV 2 Chronicles 4:1 Moreover he made a bronze altar: twenty cubits was its length, twenty cubits its width, and ten cubits its height.

Conflict (Ezekiel envisions *steps* in the Millennial temple)

NKJV Ezekiel 43:16 "The altar hearth *is* twelve cubits long, twelve wide, square at its four corners; 17 "the ledge, fourteen *cubits* long and fourteen wide on its four sides, with a rim of half a cubit around it; its base, one cubit all around; and its steps face toward the east.

Solomon's construction of the temple in 2 Chronicles 4:1 and Ezekiel's Millennial temple seem to be in conflict with the command of Exodus 20:26 since the height of Solomon's altar (about 15 feet) necessitated an access to the top of it and Ezekiel's temple lists steps. However, Exodus 28:42 resolves the conflict by showing that the steps were not the issue, rather the covering of ones nakedness with trousers when ascending steps.

Resolution (wear trousers to cover your nakedness)

NKJV Exodus 28:42 "And you shall make for them linen trousers to cover their nakedness; they shall reach from the waist to the thighs.

7. **Davar halamed me'inyano** (Explanation obtained from context) דְּבַר הַלְמִיד מֵעֲנִינֵנוּ
The total context, not the isolated statement must be considered for an accurate exegesis. Hillel did not have the necessity to review as much information to determine context. He lived in a time that was much like the Tanakh narrative. He spoke the language in which the Bible was written. He understood the primary context. We must rediscover all the external context to the Scripture as we study it. This was reviewed extensively in the section on context in this manual. For additional reading on context, read the article *Context of Situation* by this author.