



Updating our Halacha on Speaking in Tongues

With Comments on Order in an Assembly

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During some recent gatherings in which we welcomed a number of people, both new acquaintances and some long out of touch, we were brought face to face with the need to update our *halachah* on the use of prayer language and speaking in tongues. Since then, the topic has come up several times with people in other assemblies. It appears that it may be time to share what we understand to help others make their own evaluations.

Guests are not obligated to agree with us, of course. We do ask that when visiting our community, whatever the setting might be, that they would honor our *halachah*. It seems to be a question of proceeding in an orderly fashion, respecting the boundaries, leadership and understanding when visiting this, or any other community.

Let all things be done decently and in order. 1 Corinthians 14:40

In general, some of these issues relate to the concept of boundaries, personal and corporate. In consultation and visiting with many Messianic assemblies, we have seen that this awareness of boundaries is lacking. In Scriptural language, we believe it represents the concept of walls sheltering a city and its inhabitants. There is also a parallel with the Good Shepherd who gathers His flocks together for protection, and then serves as the Gate at night.

We are continuing to evaluate how and when this issue of honoring order in an assembly does or does not apply to the concerns identified below, but in the meantime, ask that if any of us would be in error, it would be to err on the side of caution and respect for the Word and for the individuals and assembly at hand.

Review/Revision of SAM Halachah -- RE: Order, public use of tongues/prayer language, laying on of hands or physical touch, discerning of Kundalini unholy spirits/tongues, necessity of rapid intervention or not

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A Messiah Centered, Torah Pursuant, Relational Maturity Model Community

We are a community that came into existence beginning in January 2000. Originally, people were in need of support while in recovery from severe ritual/satanic abuse (SRA) but were attending their own churches for the first 1-2 years. Toward the end of that time, we determined that we needed to declare ourselves as a “Messianic” or Hebraic organization because we understood that His set apart people should certainly not be participating in any pagan practices if we were to be of help to anyone else! We had already been offering Messianic studies and worship regularly and soon offered weekly Shabbat gatherings as well as our recovery meetings.

As you might imagine, with a community that began with a majority of people who had experienced severe satanic ritual abuse, we had to give consideration to many things that the “average” home fellowship, Messianic or otherwise, does not. Two issues among them are relevant for this time.

The first is the laying on of hands. In our community, it has been true from the beginning that we do not lay hands on, or for that matter, hug someone, without asking their permission first. We recognize that some people are very effusive and this is natural for them, but it is not natural or comfortable for those who have experienced abuse, which includes violation of their personal boundaries. It is not an emotionally or spiritually healthy thing to bestow physical touch/hugs on others because of the personal desire to do so, without knowing whether or not it is welcome. It is especially important for men to be sensitive to this as they approach a woman in greeting or blessing.

Of course, it is also true that we would caution women in how they approach a man with a history of trauma. (For those of you who are not familiar with us, please know that since 2009, we have helped support 5 men on their release from prison as part of our involvement with Brown County Prison Aftercare Network. 4 of the 5 have been sex offenders, and 1 of those is considered a violent sexual offender.)

The second issue was that of speaking in tongues in an assembly, which immediately leads to the issue of determining the source of those tongues being used, and the purpose. So many among us were easily triggered into various forms of acting out and fear that we had to take a stand.

We agree and welcome the ongoing supernatural aspects of our faith in our Elohim, **not** being among cessationists, those who think that “the gifts” are no longer for today. We see no Scriptural support to believe that all gifts have ceased. We have also been aware of both the unholy aspects of the fallen angels/watchers as well as the dangers of emotionalism; and the increasing need for discernment.

*Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God,
for many false prophets have gone out into the world. 1 John 4:1 ESV*

Past Determination of Halachah

Our *halachah* has been to discourage public use of tongues in SAM assembly gatherings due to our awareness that counterfeits are possible, and the disruptions that so easily occurred in our assembly. We did, and do recognize the existence of “prayer language” but understand this to be for private use between the individual and our Elohim. Therefore, for guests, we asked that tongues not be used

except by specific agreement of our leadership being consulted ahead of time, and with the Scriptural requirement of an interpretation. Over the years, it has been quite evident that some people understood this caution while sadly, others did not.

If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God. 1 Corinthians 14: 27-28

For SAM members, we met with the individual for further assessment and prayer as to the source. If it became clear that it was demonic in source, we dealt with it. If it did not become clear, we asked the individual to keep the prayer language for personal use between them and YHWH alone, not in the assembly. In this way, we chose to defer making a final “judgment” in respect of the sincerity of the individual, since we understand that this is not a salvation issue. We have never been in the belief that tongues are required for one to be confirmed as a Spirit filled believer.

Revision and Updating in Light of Current Developments

For those of you who may not be familiar with this, we note that the infusion of many eastern practices into “Christianity” and Christian spirituality and practices has included a widespread infiltration of kundalini spirits into many Christian “Bible churches,” and groups, as well as Messianic groups. These groups may be identified as Pentacostal or Charismatic in a general way, but include many denominations. **We believe this fact merits even greater awareness and protective action.** We have compiled a number of resources on this topic if you are unfamiliar with the kundalini spirits and how they mimic the genuine *Ruach haKodesh*. We also have resource lists of the materials we have consulted as we are undergoing this revision, should you want to review them.

We acknowledge that some people will likely have a very hard time in bringing these topics under consideration, as has been true for many coming out of traditional Christian churches into a Messianic walk. When we declared as a “Messianic” or Hebraic ministry, we lost a number of those with SRA history. Some because they didn’t understand and chose to remain in a traditional church setting. Some because they didn’t want to face dealing with their history and wanted to remain in close contact with their families, despite their knowledge of the abuse. Some remain.

We have also understood in those intervening years that other kinds of trauma can be nearly as devastating, though much more common, and perhaps considered “normal” by many. Even those who did not experience SRA have had personal work to do to deal with Type A and B trauma. (A- The absence of the good things that should have been in their lives, and B- The bad things that should NOT have been in their lives, but were.) Therefore, despite a great amount of healing and restoration which has taken place, there remain a few who are more easily triggered by things that could be mistaken for unholy actions, or actually ARE unholy actions. Accordingly, we recognize that it may be difficult, but do strongly encourage all to study and consider the practices around speaking of tongues anew, with the awareness of the infiltration of kundalini issues.

The current questions we identified are:

1. Are tongues to be in a known languages or multi syllabic repetitive “words?”

2. Is a prayer language supported in the Scriptures?
3. Is it the same thing as tongues?
4. Is the use of tongues Scripturally appropriate in an assembly of believers?
5. The use of tongues as being somehow more effective in healing than normal language.
6. The use of tongues or prayer in “speaking to” parts of the body.
7. The use of tongues in praying for others, by and for guests, without the foreknowledge or opportunity to assess the source by SAM elders.
8. Is it orderly for the elders of a particular assembly to address requests for prayers by members or guests, **OR** is it orderly for visiting guests/elders of other communities to approach guests or SAM members with offers of prayer for healing.
9. The use of multi syllabic language/tongues in conversation with another individual speaking multi syllabic language/tongues.
10. How is bodily movement associated with prayers of various traditions?
11. The necessity or not, of rapid response or redirection in the event that Kundalini indications are demonstrated in the assembly. (The SAM community is familiar with the signs and will already be interceding for protection from ungodly elements observed.)

Our intent has been to evaluate, and re-evaluate all these concerns as closely as we can to draw forth the correct understanding of the Scriptures, which we hope is the desire of all involved.

As we have been able to pray, study and discuss thus far:

Some of these topics are much more readily resolved than others. Some are very complex, requiring more than I will be able to briefly summarize here. In no matter here are we proceeding on the strength of any of our personal opinions as a basis for our conclusions.

The first one, regarding personal touch, can be more easily understood as simply a matter of personal courtesy and boundaries, perhaps heightened by a sense of awareness of possible fears unwanted touch can trigger.

The second area of concern, tongues, seems more challenging to address. We have worked together to break it down to the simplest parts.

*To another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, **to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.** 1 Cor. 12:10*

Tongues: Strong’s G1100: *glossa* meaning a physical tongue, or a known language. This appears to be the primary Greek word translated as “tongues.”

Various or Diverse:” Strong’s G1085: *genos* referring to kindred, offspring, family, tribe.

Interpretation: Strong’s G2058: *hermēneia* referring to interpretation of what has been spoken of more or less obscurely by others.

Here, we confirm that the gift of “various kinds of tongues” and the interpretation of tongues is Scriptural. There is no obvious indication of anything other than known languages. We remain convinced that there are genuine “tongues” as well as counterfeit ones because we are aware that a

primary deception of the evil one is to present himself as “good.” The Kundalini—serpent energy from the base of the spine—is especially of concern.

In an overall sense, we recognize the potential divisiveness that already exists between those who have a Pentacostal background or experience and those who do not. It is our hope that we can overcome that hurdle through the awareness that all here are striving to act with good will toward one another, and that our primary objective is to honor our Father, as He has made Himself known to us through the Word, Written and Living. It is in the midst of conflict that the proverbial rubber meets the road, and we then more clearly see the maturity levels and good will—or lack of it-- at which people function.

We found it interesting once again, to see that most of the Scripture that relates to the issue in general of praying in tongues, is found in Corinthians. We suspect we may need to do additional research to further understand the context and what made it such a big issue in that particular place. Already knowing that Corinth was heavily steeped in pagan practices, we can certainly understand advocating caution in the use of tongues. But why is this issue not more clearly addressed in other places, which also had a preponderance of pagan activity?

Of course, our study involved a review of the history of Pentacostalism and how some of the practices came about. Briefly, some missionaries traveled fully expecting the gift of tongues to manifest for them. When it did not, they reviewed their understanding of it and modified it to more of what is accepted today among Pentacostals; which is somewhat as we observed at our Intro gathering.

The connection with those who consider themselves “Charismatic” was also considered. We have been aware for some time of those people who believe that someone must have the gift of tongues or they are not a genuine Spirit filled Believer, and as previously stated, do not agree with this nor see it as consistent with a Biblical worldview. There was NO indication at our recent Intro gathering that there was anyone who had a strongly expressed or disruptive view on this matter, although there was a **possibly more subtle indication** of this in prayers for “deeper anointing” which may be considered a socially acceptable way to indicate this as a need. We would be interested to check with anyone who found themselves praying in this manner as to what they thought it meant.

As written above, we do strive to apply Scripture when evaluating whatever circumstances are in question. **As we reviewed materials on this subject, we found that it appears that those who advocate tongues seem inclined to downplay testing with Scripture in favor of experience. This IS a matter of great concern.** Experience alone would not constitute a satisfactory Scriptural approval for us; not meeting the testing of the spirits in light of the Word. We are especially uncomfortable with the common practice of “teaching speaking in tongues;” where a person is encouraged to just speak rapidly until the syllables fall over one another. Since a genuine “tongue” is a gift of the *Ruach haKodesh*, we do not think that there would need to be such training. In assessing a “tongue” we would be checking how the person came to use it.

*So, my brothers, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues.
Let all things be done decently and in order. 1 Cor 14: 39-40*

1) Are tongues to be in a known languages or multi syllabic repetitive “words?”

Review of the Scriptures indicates to us that legitimate tongues are to be in a known language.

⁶ *And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. Acts 2: 6 Acts 2: 1-13 for context*

Technically, what is stated is that each one “HEARD” them speaking in their own language. Would this mean that it was what was actually spoken that was in their language, or only that they heard it already interpreted into their language? The usual interpretation is that they spoke in different languages.

*Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. **Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says “Jesus is accursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit.** Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; ..*
1 Cor. 12:1-14:40

Is “speaking in the Spirit of God” the same thing as speaking in tongues? If so, in order to know whether or not such a cursing or witness were being expressed, it would have to be in a known language.

It does not seem clear that the multi syllabic repetition of sounds would really constitute a language per Scripture that we have found thus far. There are at least two series of sounds frequently heard: one more involving S, Sh, Na and La sounds and another involving more B and D sounds. Both are very repetitive, more so than a language would seem to be. Could this be a prayer language?

*And these signs shall follow them that believe;
In my name shall they cast out devils;
they shall speak with new tongues (glossa); Mark 16:17*

...and here is a conundrum. This reference to “new tongues” is provided, but it is within the final verses of Mark that are considered controversial; the only place this language is used, as well as the “snake handling” verses. These words were found in most ancient texts, but NOT in the two oldest of them. Does this “new tongue” refer to a different language? Or could it be more in the sense of the “new moon” and refer to the renewal that happens when belief comes and the *Ruach* is present. Everything is seen with new eyes and understanding therefore it stands to reason that what is spoken would also be fresh and (re)newed!

2) Is a “prayer language” supported in the Scriptures?

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.
Romans 8:26

This reference identifies the intercession of the *Ruach* as being “too deep for words” so it would not seem to support a prayer language, but rather being aware of being without words, and yet being aware of anguish as the *Ruach* speaks for us.

*I thank God that I speak in tongues (**glossa**) more than all of you. Nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue (**glossa**). 1 Cor 14: 18-19*

Here we learn that Sha'ul/Paul apparently spoke "in tongues" more than all, but that he preferred to speak five words with his mind, in order to instruct others. Sha'ul apparently spoke at least 3 languages, possibly 4: Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic and possibly Latin. As a very educated man, he likely DID speak more languages than most others in the "known language" sense.

Even if it did refer to a private prayer language, Sha'ul was expressing his preference to communicate with others in assembly with known language.

3) Is it the same thing as tongues?

This is an unclear area with ongoing consideration. I thought this was the most relevant expression of the possibility of a private prayer language but upon examining it further, considering "glossa" and "genos" and "hermēneia" I am less inclined to think so now.

4) Is the use of tongues Scripturally appropriate in an assembly of believers?

Thus tongues are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers, while prophecy is a sign not for unbelievers but for believers. 1 Cor: 14: 22

This one seems more straightforward. The use of tongues is specifically stated to be for the purpose of meeting the needs of unbelievers. For our current consideration, we were in a small assembly in which we know all to be believers. Therefore, the use of tongues does not appear to have been Scripturally appropriate.

For one who speaks in a tongue (glossa) speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. 1 Cor. 14:2

*For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful.
1 Cor: 14:14*

These two references use the same word for tongue, but do not appear to be referring to a known language; sounding more like the idea of sounds that are unintelligible except to the human spirit and YHVH. They seem to go along with Sha'ul's theme that speaking so that the assembly can understand is his greater preference.

5) The use of tongues as being somehow more effective in healing than normal language.

This concept seemed to be implied by those who were speaking in tongues at our gathering by several phrases used. It would be difficult to "nail this down" but would like to hear what those who were

using tongues believe. We saw no indication in Scripture that some kind of unknown tongue would be more effective in prayer/healing than your own language. **The efficacy is in Him, not in us.**

6) The use of tongues or prayer in “speaking to” parts of the body.

Truthfully, whether it was speaking in tongues or speaking in English, we take issue with this practice. Here, we see the influence of the idea of the “Innate Intelligence” idea that comes through Hinduism, and again has infiltrated the western Christian worldview. We do not believe that the physical parts of the body have a cognitive ability to process information nor do we have “a piece of the divine” within body parts. The Creator is separate and distinct from His creation. Biblical understanding is dualistic while this kind of thinking is monistic. This is also the reason that we do not believe that any form of Applied Kinesiology, including muscle testing and sway testing, is within Scriptural guidelines.

7) The use of tongues in praying for others, by and for guests, without the foreknowledge or opportunity to assess the source by SAM elders.

This issue has not changed since our earlier considerations, except to have become even more necessary. When people are in our “gates” so to speak, we believe we have responsibility to and for them to maintain a safe, YHWH honoring environment so far as we are able. Since the eastern worldview has impacted so many Christian and Messianic groups, we still choose to err on the side of caution and ask that using tongues and laying on of hands in prayer be deferred among us, until our elders have a chance to speak with and consider the source.

8) Is it orderly for the elders of a particular assembly to address requests for prayers by members or guests, OR is it orderly for visiting guests/elders of other communities to approach guests or SAM members with offers of prayer for healing.

Closely related to the last question, this one considers the matter of order and boundaries.

But all things should be done decently and in order.

1 Cor. 14:40

*For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit,
rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ. Col 2:5*

*This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order,
and appoint elders in every town as I directed you— Titus 1:5*

We continue to consider this question. No one would argue with being orderly we think, but many do not understand the sense of boundaries that we believe need to exist within and around every healthy functioning assembly. Our study of walls and the Bride seem to support this. (Available on our website.)

In this manner, we would say that order involves respecting the authority of the assembly in which one is present, and honoring their *halachah*. Therefore, it would be OUT of order for people to function as though they were recognized as an elder in that assembly, until such time as the matter was addressed, and they ARE recognized as such by that community.

Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: James 5:14

To us, it appears that this Scriptural directive is that the individual who is sick is to seek out the elders to request prayer, not to be approached by others offering to pray for them. It is unclear again, but we think it is orderly that the elders referred to would be the elders of that assembly, or those recognized by that assembly as elders.

But it is also true that in the final verses of Mark, which are among those that are in question as to validity, in some translations, it appears to confirm that **all** believers are to pray for the sick. Certainly we encourage all believers to pray, but it may not include the laying of hands.

We would welcome other references regarding this.

9) The use of multi syllabic language/tongues in conversation with another individual speaking multi syllabic language/tongues.

For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. 1 Cor. 14:2

If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn, and let someone interpret. But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silent in church and speak to himself and to God. 1 Cor. 14:27-28

Therefore, one who speaks in a tongue should pray for the power to interpret. 1 Cor. 14:13

We have found no Scripture reference that would support speaking To ONE ANOTHER in tongues in conversation and thus would discourage this practice.

10) How is bodily movement associated with prayers of various traditions.

This question gets more into the evaluation of the normative body movements seen in prayer as opposed to the ones that indicate the possible presence of a kundalini spirit.

There is far too much to explain fully here but a summary is possible. In evaluating movement in prayer, it was learned that *schuckling*, or swaying in prayer—traditionally forward and backward for men, while sideways is common for women—is specific to Hebrew practice, going far back into antiquity, and not recognized in other religious practices we found this far. Postures of prayer include hands lifted, spread low, held together, dancing, head raised or bowed, kneeling or lying on the ground.

On the contrary, those who are being influenced by kundalini spirits experience loss of body tone or muscle control, especially of the spine, facial tics, involuntary twitching and spasms, eyes rolling back into the head, and so forth. People under the influence of kundalini have experienced loss of consciousness, stopped breathing and even died. (Kundalini yoga is only practiced by the masters and is considered extremely powerful and is about releasing the serpent energy from the base of the spine.)

Sometimes the twitching movements become more or less permanent, even when not under the immediate influence. Examples of these movements are shown in videos among our resources. It is possible to compare what is seen in Hindu Yogi Kundalini adherents and compare it to what is seen at charismatic/Pentacostal Christian groups. Barb and Janell have also seen this at a Messianic conference. **Seeing the comparison of the two is probably the most effective way to communicate the difference between what we understand is holy and what is unholy.**

There is no Scripture indication we could find that these movements indicating loss of muscle control, etc. as adherents of Kundalini yoga do, would indicate that these movements are appropriate for one filled with the *Ruach haKodesh*. This does not mean that we doubt the individual as being a genuine believer, but remain concerned about there being a mixed influence that is spiritually deception and dangerous and could ultimately lead away from faith in our Elohim.

We do believe that there is such a thing as a genuine “slaying in the Spirit” in which a person may be overcome with His Presence and fall to the ground, as evidenced by at the least, Moshe and Joshua. We also believe that there is both fraudulent activity to produce that reaction as well as unholy spirits that influence it. Not certain if it is significant or not, but those who fall in the Scriptures I believe fall forward, while many of those who experience the being “slain” seem to fall backwards. Would need further research to confirm if this is significant or not.

11) The necessity or not, of rapid response or redirection in the event that Kundalini indications are demonstrated in the assembly. (The SAM community is familiar with the signs and will already be interceding for protection from ungodly elements observed.)

The response is still under consideration, and may simply have to defer to observances of all, and discernment of elders as needed.

While we want to be respectful to brothers and sisters who experience a prayer language, we also want to be increasingly discerning as to the nature of the source given the wide spread infiltration/impersonation/mixing of the kundalini spirits with the *Ruach haKodesh*.

We will continue to pray and study and welcome prayerful input from others