

# Theological and Cultural Proposals

## Vero Essene Yahad

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### FOOD:

It is obvious from Scripture that the Israelites by-and-large were meat-eaters. It is impossible to get around the fact that at certain seasons of the year, humanely slaughtered meat from “cattle” was not only available, but abundant, and that the people who chose could eat as much as they wanted. If meat were forbidden, the Torah would certainly not contain an encomium of which animals were abominable to consume, and which were not. In their sojourning, Israel clamored for quail, considered a luxury in their time and this time, and were granted that meat by the Almighty. We could go on from here to mention the parables of the Master, the lack of meat for food in Jerusalem during the siege, and in the aftermath of famine, the consumption of foul and forbidden meats.

It is also obvious from Scripture that certain of the Nazorean Essenes prohibited themselves meat, and for a variety of reasons – there were vegetarian clans, there were self-imposed restrictions from animal flesh, the fact that flesh contains some vestige of blood, which was and is forbidden, that some considered meat, especially that from unclean animals, as infested; and certain sages such as Kefa and Ya'aqov were set out in the literature as iconic vegetarians, we might suppose to emphasize their holiness, frugality, passion for animals, etc.

These matters being the case, we propose new doctrinal legislation for the Vero Essene Yahad; that whether to eat meat or not is a personal choice. We have been told by some that veganism was the normative diet for Israel, citing examples from Adam and Eve to Daniel to Kefa; but after sufficient study, we adjudge that *neither veganism nor vegetarianism are/were normative, but exceptional*. And that Essenes are in no way obligated to make v / v a part of their religious life, but may if they so choose for the sake of making a statement: that the meat industry is on notice for not alleviating the suffering of it's prey, and that we are free to boycott such establishments that further the decadence of groaning creation. Yet the Yahad will not hold v / v as normative, nor will the Yahad criticize those who are vegan / vegetarian, but the Yahad will try its best to encourage the vegan / vegetarian in his/her quest for personal Scriptural holiness and wholeness.

### PAUL:

We acknowledge that Saulus-Paulus was a Herodian with ties to Idumeia and Cyprus, that he was a Roman raised in a Greek city as well; that he was a hell-raiser, rioter, agent of the High Priesthood and murderer. We also see that he was a genius with words, strategies, theologies – and that he developed a way for the hopeless to be saved – a way that he claimed came from no one but the Risen Messiah himself. Paul is an enigma,

and we as a religious organization calling ourselves 'Jewish-Christian' have been trying for many years to unwrap the puzzle of Paul with varying degrees of success. What we don't agree on is whether Paul ever got a commission from the Risen Messiah or not to preach his Gospel to the Gentiles. And we question the conversion experiences written up in Acts, that he himself never mentions in his authentic writings.

However, the Yahad finds that Saulus-Paulus' writings are invaluable for reconnoitering the faith that we profess. Without him, we would not know as much about the geopolitical climate of the times, nor would we know about spiritual resources, resurrection, assembly hierarchy, the names of early believers and where they lived, the day-to-day workings of the members of the assembly, the roles of women and men – and perhaps not even know the name of our Master, carefully written in the New Testament's earliest verse, 1 Thessalonians 1:1.

So the Yahad adjudges that, whether Paul's 'conversion' was true or not, or whether he was an Apostle or not – that our early literature concerning the Movement would be vastly diminished without the input, knowledge and information of his letters – and thus we affirm the continued use of them, including Romans, Corinthians, Philippians, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Seneca, Timothy, Titus & Philemon