

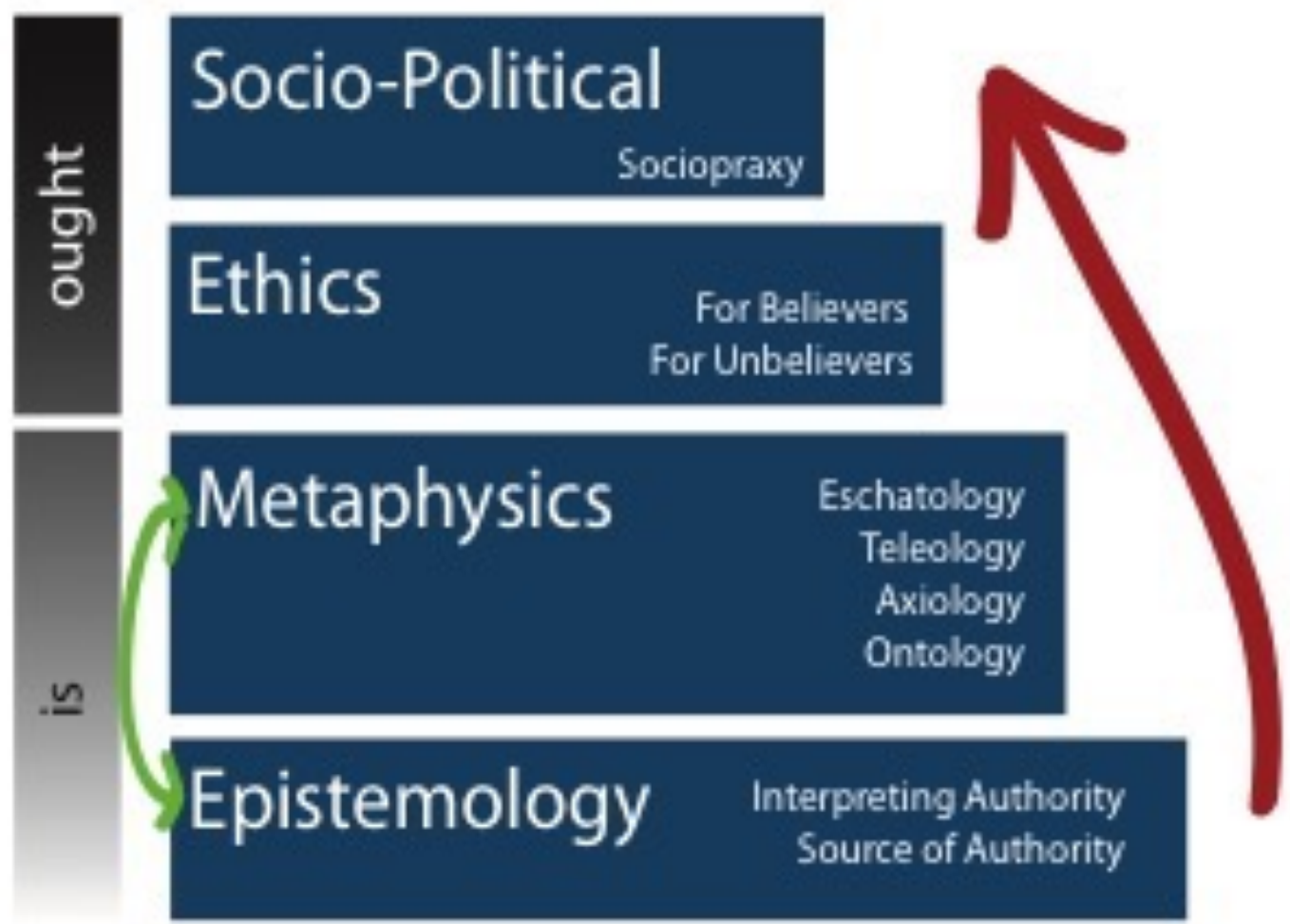
A CRITIQUE OF THE SEVEN INTERPRETIVE RULES OF HILLEL

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Components of Worldview



Hermeneutics Defined

- Hermeneutics – a set of principles utilized for the translation or interpretation of any given communication.

Introductory Concepts

- Who determines the meaning(s)?

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 - Authorial Intent
 - Reader's Response

Introductory Concepts

- Who determines the meaning(s)?
- Who is authoritative?

What's the goal?

- The goal is quite simple: Discover the author's intended meaning of the received communication.

IF GOD IS AUTHORITATIVE (JOB 40-42), AND HE HAS COMMUNICATED THROUGH THE SCRIPTURES (2 TIM. 3:16), AND THE SCRIPTURES ARE SUFFICIENT (PSALM 19:1-7), THEN THEY SHOULD BE UTILIZED TO PROVIDE THE DESIRED METHOD OF INTERPRETATION. GOD HAS THE AUTHORITY TO ESTABLISH METHODOLOGY WITHIN UNDERSTANDING. THIS CONCLUSION REQUIRES THE SCRIPTURES TO BE UTILIZED TO JUSTIFY ONE'S HERMENEUTIC APPROACH TO THE INTERPRETATION OF THE SCRIPTURES THEMSELVES. SAID ANOTHER WAY, ONE'S INTERPRETIVE METHOD MUST BE EXEGETICALLY DERIVED FROM THE PAGES OF THE BIBLE.

- “Rabbinic interpretation was concerned to increase the understanding of the text and its acceptability. The Rabbis also aimed to define legal requirement more exactly. The resulting explanations were primarily concerned with interpreting biblical passages in terms that were more understandable or palatable to their contemporaries and to provide exact definitions and interpretations for biblical vv. that had legal or ritual significance.” – “Classical Rabbinic Interpretation”, *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 1864–1865.

7 RULES OF HILLEL

RULE #1

- KAL VAHOMER (LIGHT AND HEAVY) – THE DEDUCTION FROM A MINOR CASE TO A MAJOR CASE
- “BEHOLD, THE MONEY WHICH WE FOUND IN THE MOUTH OF OUR SACKS WE HAVE BROUGHT BACK TO YOU FROM THE LAND OF CANAAN. HOW THEN COULD WE STEAL SILVER OR GOLD FROM YOUR LORD’S HOUSE?” – GEN. 44:8
- BUT MOSES SPOKE BEFORE THE LORD, SAYING, “BEHOLD, THE SONS OF ISRAEL HAVE NOT LISTENED TO ME; HOW THEN WILL PHARAOH LISTEN TO ME, FOR I AM UNSKILLED IN SPEECH?” – Ex. 6:12

RULE #1

- RULE #1 DOESN'T PERTAIN TO A RULE OF INTERPRETATION, OR UNDERSTANDING COMMUNICATION, BUT SIMPLY A LOGICAL DEVICE USED IN SCRIPTURE.
- WHENEVER USED EXPLICITLY IN SCRIPTURE, KAL VAHOMER IS NOT PROBLEMATIC, BUT WHENEVER UTILIZED TO IMPLY TRUTHS, THE INTERPRETER GOES BEYOND THE AUTHORITY THEY POSSESS AS THE DISCOVERER OF TRUTH.

RULE #2

- G'ZERAH SHAVAH (EQUIVALENCE OF EXPRESSIONS) – DRAWING AN ANALOGY BETWEEN TEXTS BASED ON A WORD IN COMMON
- “NOW, LET THE SONS OF ISRAEL OBSERVE THE PASSOVER AT ITS APPOINTED TIME (בְּמוֹעֵדוֹ.)” – NUM. 9:2
- “COMMAND THE SONS OF ISRAEL AND SAY TO THEM, ‘YOU SHALL BE CAREFUL TO PRESENT MY OFFERING, MY FOOD FOR MY OFFERINGS BY FIRE, OF A SOOTHING AROMA TO ME, AT THEIR APPOINTED TIME (בְּמוֹעֵדוֹ.)’” – NUM. 28:2
- BASED ON COMMON PHRASING, THE PASSOVER SACRIFICE COULD TAKE PLACE ON THE SABBATH, JUST AS THE DAILY SACRIFICE COULD.

RULE #2

- RULE #2 UTILIZES LOGIC TO FILL IN LEGAL GAPS PLACING THE INTERPRETER IN THE POSITION OF AUTHORITY, NOT THE LAW GIVER.

RULE #3

- BINYAN AB MIKATHUB ECHAD (BUILDING UP A FAMILY FROM A SINGLE TEXT) – APPLYING A PRINCIPLE DERIVED FROM ONE VERSE
- DOES THE HANUKKAH LIGHT HAVE SANCTITY THAT WOULD PROHIBIT ONE FROM USING ITS LIGHT? RAV YOSEF STRONGLY OBJECTED TO THIS QUESTION: WHAT KIND OF QUESTION IS THAT; DOES THE BLOOD OF A SLAUGHTERED UNDOMESTICATED ANIMAL OR FOWL HAVE SANCTITY? AS IT WAS TAUGHT IN A BARAITA THAT THE SAGES INTERPRETED THE VERSE: “HE SHALL SPILL ITS BLOOD AND COVER IT WITH DUST” (LEVITICUS 17:13): WITH THAT WHICH HE SPILLED, HE SHALL COVER. JUST AS A PERSON SPILLS THE BLOOD OF A SLAUGHTERED ANIMAL WITH HIS HAND, SO TOO, HE IS OBLIGATED TO COVER THE BLOOD WITH THIS HAND AND NOT COVER IT WITH HIS FOOT. THE REASON IS SO THAT MITZVOT WILL NOT BE CONTEMPTIBLE TO HIM. HERE TOO, ONE SHOULD TREAT THE HANUKKAH LIGHTS AS IF THEY WERE SACRED AND REFRAIN FROM UTILIZING THEM FOR OTHER PURPOSES, SO THAT MITZVOT WILL NOT BE CONTEMPTIBLE TO HIM. – SHABBAT 22A

RULE #3

- BINYAN AB MIKATHUB ECHAD (BUILDING UP A FAMILY FROM A SINGLE TEXT) – APPLYING A PRINCIPLE DERIVED FROM ONE VERSE
- SINCE ONE SPILLS BLOOD WITH THE HAND, IT MUST BE COVERED WITH THE HAND. THIS PRINCIPLE CAN THEN APPLY TO OTHER PRECEPTS GIVEN.
- WITHOUT EXEGETICAL PRECEDENT, THE INTERPRETER ADDS TO PRECEPTS UTILIZING LOGICAL INFERENCES WRONGLY PLACING THE INTERPRETER IN THE ROLE OF AUTHORITY.

RULE #4

- BINYAB AB MISHEME KETHUBIM (BUILDING UP A FAMILY FROM TWO OR MORE TEXTS) – APPLYING A PRINCIPLE DERIVED FROM TWO VERSES
- AN EXPLANATION OF TWO CONTRADICTIONARY PASSAGES USING A THIRD PASSAGE AS RECONCILIATION.

RULE #4

- “THE LORD CAME DOWN ON MOUNT SINAI, TO THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN; AND THE LORD CALLED MOSES TO THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN, AND MOSES WENT UP.” – EX. 19:20
- “OUT OF THE HEAVENS HE LET YOU HEAR HIS VOICE TO DISCIPLINE YOU; AND ON EARTH HE LET YOU SEE HIS GREAT FIRE, AND YOU HEARD HIS WORDS FROM THE MIDST OF THE FIRE.” – DEUT. 4:36
- “THEN THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, “THUS YOU SHALL SAY TO THE SONS OF ISRAEL, ‘YOU YOURSELVES HAVE SEEN THAT I HAVE SPOKEN TO YOU FROM HEAVEN.’” – EX. 20:22

RULE #4

- THE EXISTENCE OF SCRIPTURAL QUOTES WITHIN SCRIPTURE SHOWS THE NECESSITY OF UTILIZES SCRIPTURE TO UNDERSTAND SCRIPTURE.
- UTILIZING CONTEXT AND OTHER SCRIPTURE TO UNDERSTAND COMPLEX AND SEEMINGLY CONTRADICTIONARY PASSAGES IS GOOD PRACTICE.
- WARNING: TO ACCOMPLISH THIS EFFECTIVELY, ONE MUST UNDERSTAND PROGRESSIVE REVELATION. EVERY PASSAGE HAS A CONTEXT AND WAS GIVEN AT A PARTICULAR POINT IN HISTORY.

RULE #5

- KELAL UFERAT (THE GENERAL AND THE PARTICULAR) – MODIFICATION OF A GENERAL PRINCIPLE DERIVED FROM A PARTICULAR PRINCIPLE AND VICE VERSA
- "YOU MAY SPEND THE MONEY FOR WHATEVER YOUR HEART DESIRES: FOR OXEN, OR SHEEP, OR WINE, OR STRONG DRINK, OR WHATEVER YOUR HEART DESIRES; AND THERE YOU SHALL EAT IN THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD YOUR GOD AND REJOICE, YOU AND YOUR HOUSEHOLD." – DEUT. 14:26
- ONE CAN DEDUCE THAT THE MONEY COULD BE SPENT ON ANYTHING PERTAINING TO FOOD OR DRINK. – SIFREI DEVARIM 107

RULE #5

- THE CONTEXT OF THE PASSAGE DETERMINES THE CONCLUSION – NOT DRAWING SPECIFIC TO GENERAL. THE GENERAL PRINCIPLE IS GIVEN WITHIN THE PASSAGE AND PROVIDES SPECIFIC EXAMPLES.

RULE #6

- KAYOTZE BO MIMKOM AKHAR (ANALOGY MADE FROM ANOTHER PASSAGE) – PRINCIPLES DERIVED FROM SIMILAR PASSAGES
- “SHE MADE A VOW AND SAID, “O LORD OF HOSTS, IF YOU WILL INDEED LOOK ON THE AFFLICTION OF YOUR MAIDSERVANT AND REMEMBER ME, AND NOT FORGET YOUR MAIDSERVANT, BUT WILL GIVE YOUR MAIDSERVANT A SON, THEN I WILL GIVE HIM TO THE LORD ALL THE DAYS OF HIS LIFE, AND A RAZOR SHALL NEVER COME ON HIS HEAD.” – 1 SAM. 1:11
- “ALL THE DAYS OF HIS VOW OF SEPARATION NO RAZOR SHALL PASS OVER HIS HEAD. HE SHALL BE HOLY UNTIL THE DAYS ARE FULFILLED FOR WHICH HE SEPARATED HIMSELF TO THE LORD; HE SHALL LET THE LOCKS OF HAIR ON HIS HEAD GROW LONG.” – NUM. 6:5

RULE #6


- KAYOTZE BO MIMKOM AKHAR (ANALOGY MADE FROM ANOTHER PASSAGE) – PRINCIPLES DERIVED FROM SIMILAR PASSAGES
- IT CAN BE IMPLIED THAT SAMUEL WAS A NAZARITE BASED ON THE COMMON WORDING USED IN 1 SAM. 1:11 AND NUM. 6:5.

RULE #6

- “THE ARGUMENT BY ANALOGY IS CHARACTERISTIC OF RABBINIC INTERPRETATION AS A WHOLE. FOR EXAMPLE, THE COMMON BIBLICAL HEB PHRASE ‘ISH ‘ISH, IS OFTEN INTERPRETED AS INCLUDING CLASSES OF PEOPLE OTHER THAN MALES. THIS IS BECAUSE THE PHRASE IS CONSIDERED REDUNDANT.” – “CLASSICAL RABBINIC INTERPRETATION,” *THE JEWISH STUDY BIBLE*, P. 1868.

RULE #7

- DAVAR HILMAD ME' ANIMO (EXPLANATION OBTAINED FROM CONTEXT) – DEDUCTION FROM CONTEXT
- “YOU SHALL NOT MURDER. YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY. YOU SHALL NOT STEAL.” – Ex. 20:13–15
- “THREE MITZVOH ARE STATED IN THIS CONTEXT, TWO (“YOU SHALL NOT KILL” AND “YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY”) AND ONE (“YOU SHALL NOT STEAL”) AMBIGUOUS. JUST AS THE EXPLICIT ARE MITZVOH PUNISHABLE BY JUDICIAL DEATH PENALTY, SO, THE AMBIGUOUS MUST BE A MITZVAH PUNISHABLE BY JUDICIAL DEATH PENALTY. YOU CANNOT UNDERSTAND IT, THEN, AS PER THE SECOND OPTION (I.E., YOU SHALL NOT STEAL MONEY), BUT AS PER THE FIRST (I.E., YOU SHALL NOT KIDNAP.)” – MEKH., BA-HODESH, 8, 5



Defense of Literal Grammatical- Historical

Genesis model from www.drcone.com
<http://www.drcone.com/2015/04/13/the-genesis-account-as-early-model-for-scriptural-hermeneutics/>

Internal Modeling: Genesis

- Records roughly 2,000 years
- Alleges these are the first of human history (1:27, 5:1)
- Alleges the first 33% of historical chronology, and 50% of Biblical history
 - OT = 4,000 years, NT to today = 2,000 years
- Genesis provides a huge sample size for assessing an internal interpretive model

The Internal Model Test: Genesis

- **The Research Method:**
 - Examination of every time God is recorded as speaking in Genesis, and the responses
- **The Research Question:**
 - Do the recorded responses support one hermeneutic model over another?

Additional Considerations

- Do God's initial audiences take Him *only* literally or do they infer a deeper meaning than what would be normally signified by the words that were verbally expressed?
- Responses categorized in 2 ways:
 - C1 responses provide evidence that the initial speech act was **intended only for literal understanding**.
 - C2 responses provide evidence that the initial speech act was intended for **any understanding beyond the literal** meaning of the words verbally expressed.

The Speech-Acts of God and Responses In Genesis

- “God said” (36 verses), *wayyomer el* or *wayyomer elohim*
- “the Lord said” (19 verses), *wayyomer yahweh*
- “the Lord God said” (5 verses), *wayyomer yahweh elohim*
- “He said (24 verses).
- 84 total speech acts of God



Results

Data from “The Genesis Account as Early
Model for Scriptural Hermeneutics”
(www.drcone.com)

Results

- **God Said – 36 verses, at least 27 C1's, 0 C2's**
- **The Lord Said – 19 verses, at least 17 C1's, 0 C2's**
- **The Lord God Said – 5 verses, at least 4 C1's, 0 C2's**
- **He Said – 24 verses, at least 23 C1's, 0 C2's**
- **Total – 84 verses, at least 71 C1's, 0 C2's**



71 C1's / 0 C2's

- C1 responses provide evidence that the initial speech act was **intended only for literal understanding.**
- C2 responses provide evidence that the initial speech act was intended for **any understanding beyond the literal** meaning of the words verbally expressed.

Implications

- God intended for His words to be taken at face value, using a plain-sense interpretive approach
- Method known as the *literal grammatical historical hermeneutic* (LGH)
- Method recognizes that verbal expression has meaning rooted in and inseparable from the grammatical and historical context of the language used

Implications

- Any departure from LGH requires *explicit exegetical support for any change in method*
- Hermeneutic methodology for understanding Scripture is not arbitrary but is instead plainly modeled.
- Later Scriptures should be understood in light of the hermeneutic precedent provided by Genesis.

Six Basic Rules

1. Understand the Literal Grammatical-Historical

2. Understand the historical setting

3. Understand the original language and rules of grammar

4. Understand the context

5. Understand the Author's intent

6. Understand the progress in the writing

Building on the Basic Principles for the LGH



Scripture bears one meaning and should be understood in its normative sense.



Context should be used to determine this single meaning.



Let Scripture interpret Scripture while understanding progressive revelation.



Scripture will not contradict itself when progressive revelation is understood.



Utilize a primary and secondary application.