**Yadayim, Chapter Four, Mishnah Eight**

**Introduction**

In this mishnah the argument is no longer with a Sadducee but a Galilean "min." The word "min" is found in manuscripts of this mishnah, although in printed editions it says "Sadducee." A "min" is somewhat akin to heretic. The "min" is clearly a Jew, but is part of a group that is opposed to the rabbis/Pharisees. In later literature it could be used to refer to a Christian but it clearly does not refer to a Christian here. Nevertheless, Christian censors in the Middle Ages did not like this word and therefore they forced the Jews to change it.

**Mishnah Eight**

1. A Galilean min said: I complain against you Pharisees, that you write the name of the ruler and the name of Moses together on a divorce document.
2. The Pharisees said: we complain against you, Galilean min, that you write the name of the ruler together with the divine name on a single page [of Torah]?
   1. And furthermore that you write the name of the ruler above and the divine name below? As it is said, "And Pharoah said, Who is the Lord that I should hearken to his voice to let Israel go?" (Exodus 5:2) But when he was smitten what did he say? "The Lord is righteous" (Exodus 9:27).

***Explanation***

**Section one**: The "min" complains against the Pharisees that they write the name of Moses and the current Roman ruler together in the divorce document, the get. What this means is that they would date the document by referring to the year of the ruling of the current king (see Gittin 8:5) and at the end, they would write, "as is the religion of Moses Israel." This "min" seems to be attacking the Pharisees for accommodating themselves to Roman rule. Interestingly, this "min" is found in the Galilee, where the rabbis seemed to have lived in harmony with the Romans after the destruction of the Temple.

**Section two**: The Pharisees offer a cynical response. In Torah scrolls not only is the name of God and the name of Pharaoh written on the same page, but the name of Pharaoh comes first. Obviously, this is unavoidable, as can be shown from the verse in Exodus 5:2. So too, it is not a problem to write Moses's name in the same document as the Roman ruler's name.

Our mishnah concludes with another verse "The Lord is righteous." This verse is brought here so that the tractate does not conclude with a verse that says, "Who is God." It is missing in some manuscripts.

**Congratulations! We have completed Tractate Yadayim!**

As I always write, it is a tradition at this point to thank God for helping us finish learning the tractate and to commit ourselves to going back and relearning it, so that we may not forget it and so that its lessons will stay with us for all of our lives.

Yadayim was interesting, wasn't it? Among all of the issues in Seder Toharot this may have been the most practical. In addition, this last chapter was simply fascinating (and I think I'm going to teach it in my Mishnah class tomorrow!). The issue of hand-washing and the impurity of scrolls were both innovations of the sages or their predecessors, the Pharisees. So we get to learn some Second Temple halakhic history on the side.

As always, a hearty yasher koach upon completing the tractate and keep up the good work. Tomorrow we begin Oktzin—the last tractate of the Mishnah!