



Biblical Heritage Center's

Real Yeshua Handbook

Viewing His Words Through the Eyes of His Ancient Culture

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Transforming Belief Conflicts Into Relationship Building Opportunities

By Jim Myers

When Rabbi Jeffrey Leynor and I (Jim Myers) met, we were congregation leaders of two mutually exclusive monotheistic religions ó *Judaism and Christianity*. We were separated by an unbridgeable belief gap. A person must either practice Judaism or Christianity ó *but not both*. We wanted to learn how that gap developed, because we knew that both of our religions began as sects of another religion ó *Late Second Temple Period Judaism*. We soon discovered that before *Late Second Temple Period Judaism* there were *First Temple Israelite Religions* and after the Second Temple was destroyed in 70 CE Judaism and Christianity separated and followed very different paths.

The primary challenge facing Christians and Jews -- as well as members of other religions, agnostics and atheists -- is not a lack of information about our histories. *The primary challenge is getting new information past barriers created by our brains.*

Living in the *Information Age* provides us with more information about the human brain than any previous generation in history ó *and this gives us a distinct advantage*. Below is a quick overview of some things you need to be aware of about your brain:

The brain is a belief engine. . . Our brains evolved to connect the dots of our world into meaningful patterns that explain why things happen . . . Once beliefs are formed, the brain begins to look for and find confirmatory evidence in support of those beliefs, which adds an emotional boost of further confidence in the beliefs and thereby accelerates the process of reinforcing them, and round and round the process goes in a positive feedback loop of belief confirmation.¹

This is what your brain is doing right now as you read my words:

- *Feedback loops of “belief confirmation” are searching through my words for confirmatory evidence to support your most trusted beliefs.*
- *It is reformatting, revising and screening out things in my words that disagree with your beliefs.*
- *It does these things at the subconscious level and you are completely unaware of the process.*

The primary challenge we all face is getting new information past our brain's attempts to change, revise or screen things out of it. We will tell you much more about this process in future studies, but a good way to begin developing the skills you will need to override that process is to interact and study with a small group that includes people with different beliefs.

This is what I have been doing with Rabbi Jeffrey Leynor, Dr. Ike Tennison, my friends at Mabank and others for many years. Even though I am unaware of what my subconscious brain is doing, someone else will be able to see it because they have different beliefs and life experiences. I created the following guideline for participants in our meetings and each participant agrees to follow it.

*My Reality will be large enough to include all of the Facts,
it will be open enough to be examined,
and it will be flexible enough to change when errors or new facts are discovered.*

This is a key factor in creating open safe environments in which people feel safe enough to ask those questions they would never dare ask in church or synagogue. *Agreeing to follow the guideline gives participants permission to ask those questions about my beliefs and gives me permission to ask questions about their beliefs.* It creates **Belief Transparency** in our group.

As people interact with each other by using this guideline, an amazing thing happens. Instead of arguing about beliefs, they become members of a team working together to identify the origins of their beliefs and track the ways those beliefs evolved over time. Everyone's reality will change. It is through this process that new relationships are created and strengthened. Our goal is not to *resolve* belief conflicts *ó it is to transform belief conflicts into relationship building opportunities.*

¹ *The Believing Brain: From Ghosts and God to Politics and Conspiracies – How We Construct Beliefs and Reinforce Them as Truths* (by Michael Shermer book p. 5).

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