

RUE AND MINT

“But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.”

(Luke 11:42)

The rue plant is mentioned in the scriptures in Luke 11:42. The team that recently visited BCEA (Kenya) was introduced to this plant by our hosts at a stopover at an eatery specialising in Ethiopian cuisine. Rue is a common ingredient in Mediterranean and Ethiopian cuisine. This explains why it was grown in the Ethiopian restaurant.

The Rue Plant (Luke 11:42)

Rue was also valued as a medicinal plant during the time of the Lord Jesus Christ. This made it a highly prized herb. According to the Scriptures, the children of Israel were supposed to tithe items like grain, corn, new wine and olive oil (c.f. Deuteronomy 12:17; 14:22-23). There was no mention of the need to tithe pricey herbs like rue or mint. Nevertheless, the Pharisees insisted on adding the tithing of rue to their man-made traditions. They took great pride in tithing this pricey herb!



Further information on Wikipedia on how rue (ruda) was viewed in Jewish tradition made for interesting reading:

“In Sephardic Jewish tradition, ruda is believed to possess protective qualities against malevolent forces, particularly the evil eye. It is often placed near vulnerable individuals, such as newborns, children, and mothers, to ward off harm. Beyond its symbolic significance, ruda is valued for its medicinal properties. When combined with sugar, it is traditionally used to soothe eye discomfort and alleviate the symptoms of a mild cold. Additionally, inhaling ruda is thought to mitigate the effects of shock. Ruda's significance in Sephardic Jewish culture also extends to religious practices. During Yom Kippur, a Jewish holiday marked by fasting, Sephardic synagogues often pass ruda among congregants to revitalise them.

“Beyond the Sephardic tradition, Hasidic Jews also recognized the protective qualities of ruda. Hasidic Jews also were taught that rue should be placed into amulets to protect them from epidemics and plagues. Other Hasidim rely on the works of a famous Baghdadadi Kabbalist Yaakov Chaim Sofer who makes mention of the plant "ruda" (רודה) as an effective device against both black magic and the evil eye.”

Jesus condemned the Pharisees for their legalism and hypocrisy. The Pharisees were so intent on using the tithing of mint and rue to uphold the appearance of generosity and devotion to God before men, yet they were solely lacking in their love for God and fellow men. They were only concerned about their public image rather than pursuing a genuine devotion to God and His Word.

Dear friends, we must learn a precious lesson from the rue plant – legalism and hypocrisy kill. Do not be like the Pharisees who presented themselves as pure on the outside and were heavily critical of others so that they may appear better than the rest. However, inwardly they were rotting bones. The Pharisees may appear as trailblazers of ceremonial purity, but they were leaders of spiritual uncleanness in reality. They were guiding men head-on to destruction. Beware of modern Pharisees and do not follow them.



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