

UNDERSTANDING TORAH SOCIETY

by

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ONE TORAH FOR ALL

One Torah shall be to him that is home-born, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you.
Exodus 12:49

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Dedication

A few years ago our heavenly Father sent me back to college to help me improve my writing. One of the courses I took was “American Democracy/Citizenship” taught by Dr. Kathleen Morrison. This was by far the most challenging course I have ever taken. I knew it would be, going into this class. Even before the class began, the Spirit of YHWH impressed upon me that I could not drop this class under any circumstances. Little did I know that I would consider this many times throughout that semester. These thoughts were the result of operating in a different paradigm than the professor. Not only was my own paradigm vastly different than that of the professor’s, but my own paradigm was going to make a major shift as a result of this course, a shift which was one of the most profound and unexpected I have ever undergone.

I was constantly at odds with what was being taught in this course. I must say, I truly appreciate this and the constant challenge it presented to my thinking. Basically, I had to re-evaluate everything I knew and thought about government from the ground up. I dare say, it would be impossible for me at this point to delineate all of the “ah hah” moments I had as a result of this class and the interactions with the professor.

Dr. Morrison is of the highest caliber instructors I have ever had the privilege to sit under. The depth of challenge she presented during this course had a profound impact upon me, my walk with YHWH, and upon my writing. It was through the agency of Dr. Morrison and this class that this series of studies on “Understanding Torah Society” was inspired. I seriously doubt a series such as this would have been possible without the respect and instruction of Dr. Morrison.

It is because of my deep-seated gratitude towards her dedication, the dedication she has towards her students, and for the passion she has in teaching this material, as well as the impact she has had upon me as an individual and subsequently upon the building of His kingdom, that I dedicate this series to her. It is with the deepest of gratitude, I thank you Dr. Kathleen Morrison!

Zerubbabel ben Emunah

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Understanding Torah Society

Chapter 1 – An Introduction

Mattithyah (Matthew) 22:39

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

One question that seems to arise in nearly any discussion of Torah communal living is what type of structure, i.e., what type of government, is called for according to Scripture. Please consider what Mike Donnelly, an attorney with Home School Legal Defense Association, has to say about government and society: “State and society are not necessarily – in fact are not usually – synonymous. Indeed, a government’s interest in expanding its power may very well be at odds with the people’s interest in freedom.”¹ Surprising as it may seem, the respective government of any given society is nearly always at odds with, or in opposition to, the society which it governs. This is true whether one is discussing a political (state) government or some type of religious government. A respective government and society may not begin this way, i.e., be at odds with one another, but given enough time the government will become an entity unto itself wholly separate from the society which it governs. When this happens the government becomes a society unto itself. Thus, the governmental society will see the society-at-large as a threat and attempt to regulate it to its own end, attempting to make the society-at-large its slave.

Seeing that society and government are not synonymous may be such a new concept to many that it may take some serious contemplation to see the validity of this position. However, once one does see it, then one can begin to grasp what one finds in the Torah for a Torah based society, which in fact does not call for any government at all. What? We will make every attempt to thoroughly examine this question and show that a society based solely upon Torah does not need any government, yea, cannot have any government to function properly. That is, government in the common human sense of understanding.

This is more than just a matter of semantics, even though there are plenty of questions involving semantics that will need to be addressed in this study. Let us begin with the following passage about kings from the Torah.

¹ Donnelly, Mike. “A first: Homeschooling on agenda of global rights conference.” *Home School Court Report*, Nov/Dec 2011, 28-31. Print.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 17:14

“When you have come into the land which YHWH your Elohim gives you, and shall possess it, and shall dwell therein, and shall say, ‘I will set a king over me, like all the nations that are round about me;’”

Yes, YHWH through His Torah does provide for Israel to set a king over themselves. One might say, “Well, isn’t that a form of government?” And he would be correct in thinking such a thing. However, just because Torah provides for something like a king, does not mean that Israel should actually have such a thing like a king. It is important to note that it is Israel who decides to set a king over herself, not YHWH. YHWH does not need to decide to be the king over Israel since He is already her king. Let us prayerfully consider YHWH’s view on the matter of Israel setting a king over herself.

Sh’muel Aleph (1st Samuel) 8:7

And YHWH said to Sh’muel, “Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not be king over them.”

For Israel to decide to have a human king is to reject the kingship of YHWH. Now, honestly, is that the direction that Israel should want to go? I would think not. So, whether a human king is government or not government is really a moot point since YHWH has shown us that He does not want Israel to go in the direction of having a human king. Then why did YHWH give such a commandment? The answer is a simple one, for the same reason for which He gave the commandment of divorce.

Mattithyah (Matthew) 19:8

He said unto them, “Moshe for your hardness of heart allowed you to put away your wives; but from the beginning it has not been so.”

Just because Torah allows for something does not mean that one should actually do it. A man is to love and care for his wife. He is not supposed to divorce her. Torah allows for divorce because man’s heart is sometimes hard. Likewise, the need for a human king is not the way that Israel should go, as she is supposed to have only one King, YHWH. However, because of this same problem, hardness of heart, YHWH has allowed Israel to set over herself a human king. However, Israel would be better off not to have a human king! Notice what YHWH has Sh’muel tell the people of Israel concerning what will happen if they decide to set a human king over themselves.

Sh’muel Aleph (1st Samuel) 8:10-17

***10 And Sh’muel told all the words of YHWH unto the people that asked of him a king.
11 And he said, “This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: he will take your sons, and appoint them unto him, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and they shall run before his chariots;***

12 and he will appoint them unto him for captains of thousands, and captains of fifties; and he will set some to plow his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and the instruments of his chariots.

13 And he will take your daughters to be perfumers, and to be cooks, and to be bakers.

14 And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your olive yards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants.

15 And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants.

16 And he will take your men-servants, and your maid-servants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work.

17 He will take the tenth of your flocks: and you shall be his servants.”

This passage shows us exactly why Israel should not have a human king, because then Israel is serving that man rather than serving YHWH. Notice this human king takes whatever he wants from the people. Furthermore, this king takes the best that they have. Remember, YHWH states in His Torah that we are to give our best to Him.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 18:4

“The first-fruits of your grain, of your new wine, and of your oil, and the first of the fleece of your sheep, you shall give Him [YHWH].”

If the king is taking it for himself, then one cannot give his best to YHWH. Are you beginning to see how human government interferes with a society based upon Torah?

To help us in our paradigm shift, let us take a closer look at modern governments based upon a western model.

In modern developed nations government has been defined as governing three aspects of society: 1) it is the only legal means to enforce order; 2) it decides who gets what, when, and how; and 3) it provides those things that an individual cannot provide for himself, called *public goods*. First, let us consider the question of order in the context of Torah. According to YHWH as recorded in Scripture, order is provided by Torah with each person living Torah to the best of his ability. Order is each man under his own tree and eating from his own vine.

Micah 4:4

But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree; and none shall make them afraid; for the mouth of YHWH Tzava’ot has spoken it.

We will deal more fully with this passage later, but for now, suffice it to say that each person has his own property and is providing his own food and is secure that no one else will come and take that which belongs to him for any reason (including and especially no government seizing that which is his). Each man is living in shalom (peace) with YHWH, with himself, and with his neighbor.

Order is not forced upon anyone by a government, but rather, order is the natural outflow of the condition of each person's heart and his personal choices which he makes within the context of Torah. Namely, he chooses to let his neighbor live according to his own relationship with his Creator. No man attempts to be a god over another person. There is no "lording it over" others by anyone, something which Yeshua taught us that His followers should not be involved in doing. One would think that this "lording it over" should include one who is doing it, as well as those who would elevate another so he could do it, i.e., which is what is done in modern day elections.

Mattithyah (Matthew) 20:25-26

25 But Yeshua called them unto Himself, and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them.

26 It shall not be so among you; but whosoever would become great among you shall be your servant."

Since, according to Yeshua, no man is to lord it over his brother, we are to serve one another in the love of Mashiach. Therefore, proper Torah society is based upon servitude rather than upon a hierarchal system of bureaucracy. As we continue on in this study, the reader will begin to see the significance of this and how it develops in everyday life.

The idea in the second definition states that it is the government who rightfully decides who gets what, when, and how, as well as how much. According to the standard human government model, if you earn something, then it is the government who rightfully decides how much of what you earned or made that you are allowed to keep (if any at all). It uses the threat of force to enforce this upon the people, convincing them through propaganda that they are doing so voluntarily for the good of all.

No man or group of men has any right or authority to take another man's property. According to Torah, it is called stealing. This is what the government typically does to support itself as well as a means to control the masses of people under it. As long as Torah is not being violated, no man or group of men have the right or authority to decide who gets what, when, or how, for another individual. However, when Torah is violated, then there may be restitution called for, which we will deal with in a later part of this study.

Please consider the following example. If one man has ten acres and he decides that for his purposes he wants to cut down every single one of the trees standing on his own property, then another group (like environmentalists) has no right to come in and force him not to cut them down. The group who has done this is violating Torah by bullying the owner of the property through use of unlawful force. We use the term "unlawful" in this sense because it is against Torah, even though it may be according to the laws of man.

Once again the passage quoted above from Micah 4:4 comes into focus. Every man is on his own property and he is unafraid from his neighbor. Now that is a society worth having and working towards!

The third idea is that it is the government which is to provide those things that a person cannot provide for himself, namely, public goods. Public goods commonly consist of six categories: 1) order, 2) defense, 3) public health, 4) infrastructure, 5) education, and 6) social welfare. We will discuss each of these, but let us ask ourselves this question: Is there such a thing as “public goods?” Or, are these items simply things which have been taken away from individuals (by force) and given to other individuals who have not worked for them? Granted, there are moments in which tragedy strikes an individual in which he needs help. Torah even provides for this as we shall discuss below. But for the norm, it is YHWH who provides for Israel and for each and every individual within her, each according to each person’s ability. Not every person has the same ability. Some have a greater ability and some have a lesser ability. Should the one who has the greater ability be penalized? Should the one who has the lesser ability be rewarded? Not according to Torah! Scripture teaches us that it is YHWH who decides who gets what talents and abilities and how much of that talent and ability (Matthew 25). Furthermore, in the parable of the talents, each was rewarded according to how he used that ability. The one with more ability got more reward and the one with less ability got less reward. This is how our Creator has ordered it. Who is man to decide that this is not right or fair?

To forcibly take from one individual and give to another is to “play god” and is an act of idolatry as well as rebellion against YHWH. Whatever a person owns is his to do with as YHWH leads him to do. The exception to this is, of course, the tithe, which actually does not belong to the individual, but rather, to YHWH. It certainly does not belong to some human king. We shall discuss this more fully in another part of this study.

If YHWH chooses to give more to one and less to another, who is man to attempt to take from the one who has more and give it to the one who has less? Does man think he knows better than YHWH?

When looking at the political spectrum there are commonly three items examined in order to place one in the political spectrum, which are 1) order, 2) freedom, and 3) equality. For example, a person who places these three in order of importance as listed above would be seen as a conservative. If a person placed them in the order of importance as 1) equality, 2) freedom, 3) order, then such a person would be seen as a liberal. Before we move on, we need to define these three terms, not as is commonly understood, but as one would understand them with a foundation upon Torah.

We will examine freedom first. Freedom is not the ability to do as one pleases, but rather it is the ability to obey one’s Creator – fully and completely.

Romans 6:16

Do you not know, that to whom you present yourselves as servants unto obedience, his servants you are to whom you obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

If a person is serving a human government, then he is a slave of that same human government. If a person is serving YHWH, then he is a servant of the Most High!

Yochanan (John) 8:32

“and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

Every person is a slave and the one is a slave to the one whom he obeys. Either he is a slave of the lusts of the flesh or he is a slave to his Creator. His actions reveal the reality of who he obeys. Remember, no man can serve two masters!

Mattithyah (Matthew) 6:24

“No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.”

Therefore, freedom is having the ability to choose to obey one’s Creator from a heart of love and allowing one’s neighbor to do the same without attempting to dictate (force) his neighbor into doing it in exactly the same manner as his own convictions dictate to him. Freedom, then, is two-fold. It is receiving it, i.e., having it personally, which comes from YHWH. And secondly, it is giving it, that is, letting others receive it in the same manner as one has received it!

We have already spoken about order and will do so even more in this study. However, one other item should be addressed here. Order does not equal uniformity. Order is not every man doing exactly the same thing in exactly the same way. Rather, true order is every man obeying YHWH in a way that is pleasing to YHWH. If that is not pleasing to a particular individual, then he does not have the interests of YHWH in mind.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 6:5

“and you shall love YHWH your Elohim with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.”

The third item is equality. There is a lot of discussion and emphasis about equality in our world today. The majority of that discussion simply misses the mark. As was pointed out above, YHWH did not create every person equal. Therefore, individuals should not be focused in such a way as to attempt to make everyone equal. Rather, one needs to focus upon equal access. Equal access is not even close to being the same as equality. Equal access is about having equal access to health care, education, and justice. If these things are not provided free of charge, then there is no equal access. The tithes one pays are to

provide these services to all regardless of whether a person uses them or not. Furthermore, these things are to be of equal access to the native born and the stranger within our gates.

Shemot (Exodus) 12:49

One Torah shall be to him that is home-born, and unto the stranger that sojourns among you.

Union Army General Carl Schurz (1829-1906), a naturalized U.S. citizen who was German born and later became secretary of the interior under President Hayes stated, "If you want to be free, there is but one way; it is to guarantee an equally full measure of liberty to all your neighbors. There is no other."

General Schurz was correct and completely in line with Torah with the above statement. If an individual desires to be free, then that freedom which he desires, he must grant to his neighbor. This is the same idea in which Yeshua teaches that each person shall be judged in the same manner in which he judges others. It is also the basis of the Golden Rule.

Mattithyah (Matthew) 7:12

"All things therefore whatsoever you would that men should do unto you, even so do you also unto them: for this is the Torah and the prophets."

It is the same principle found throughout each of these ideas, that is, each person must have equal access to all of Torah regardless of his station in life.

The next portion of this study will deal with public goods.

May YHWH grant each one of us a perfect understanding of His nation.

Understanding Torah Society

Chapter 2 – Public Goods – Order

In the introduction to “Understanding Torah Society,” we briefly mentioned public goods. In this study we are going to examine the first of the six aspects commonly known as public goods—order. Once again, public goods consists of six categories: 1) order, 2) defense, 3) public health, 4) infrastructure, 5) education, and 6) social welfare.

According to the commonly held modern idea of government, it is government that should have the responsibility to maintain *order*. However, as we are about to see, according to Torah, it is not government which is charged with keeping order, but rather, it is every single individual member of Israel who YHWH has commanded to keep order. This is done by obeying His commandments.

1st Corinthians 14:40

But let all things be done decently and in order.

Regardless of what it is that Israel is doing as a nation or as individuals of that nation, it should all be done in order and according to Torah. When Israel is living according to Torah, then order is present. No man-made government can cause any person or group of people to keep and do the commandments of YHWH’s Torah. Obeying the commandments of Torah is an individual choice. When a person makes that choice and follows up on that choice with life actions, then the natural outcome is order in the society of Israel.

Shemot (Exodus) 12:50

Thus did all the children of Israel; as YHWH commanded Moshe and Aharon, so they did.

After leaving the bondage of Egypt, it is recorded that all of Israel was doing as YHWH was commanding them to do. There was order in the camp. However, it was not to be long lived. The following passages clearly illustrate what happens when Israel turns her back on YHWH and fails to obey His commandments.

Shemot (Exodus) 32:8

“They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made themselves a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed unto it, and said, ‘These are your gods, Israel, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt.’”

The first great sin which brought disorder into the camp of Israel was the making and worshipping of the golden calf. Sadly, they named this golden calf YHWH. While they had the name of our Creator correct, they did not correctly understand who and what He was/is. He was not one of the pantheon of idols that had been a part of their lives in Egypt, which is where they had borrowed the idea of the golden calf. The whole structure of Israel was temporarily changed because of this sin. One of the major changes this sin caused was that, instead of the first-born male of each family being a priest, all the firstborn were replaced with the tribe of Levi. This change also included provisions of sacrificial offerings, by which, if a person was to sin and break a commandment of YHWH, that same person could then be restored back into fellowship. In some of the more drastic cases of sin, a person would be temporarily cast out of the camp, and these offerings allowed such a person to re-enter the camp of Israel. All of this was to maintain order in the camp.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 4:2

“Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, ‘If any one shall sin unwittingly, in any of the things which YHWH has commanded not to be done, and shall do any one of them,’”

What follows this verse in the rest of the chapter is an outline of what is to be done to restore a person back into the full life of Israel. Depending on the individual, the sacrifice needed for restoration is specific for his station in life. There is also a specific sacrifice for the nation as a whole if the whole nation sins against YHWH. This was all for the purpose of keeping order within Israel.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 28:1-2

***1 “And it shall come to pass, if you shalt hearken diligently unto the Voice of YHWH your Elohim, to observe to do all His commandments which I command you this day, that YHWH your Elohim will set you on high above all the nations of the earth;
2 and all these blessings shall come upon you, and overtake you, if you shall hearken unto the Voice of YHWH your Elohim.”***

To encourage order in the camp of Israel, YHWH promises through His prophet Moshe, that if Israel is careful to do and keep all of His commandments, then Israel shall be blessed by YHWH, which includes being the leading nation in the world.

However, if Israel refuses to keep and do all of His commandments, then they shall be cursed until that day when they shall begin to keep and do all of His commandments.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 28:15-16

***15 “But it shall come to pass, if you will not hearken unto the Voice of YHWH your Elohim, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes which I command you this day, that all these curses shall come upon you, and overtake you.
16 You shall be cursed in the city, and you shall be cursed in the field.”***

If Israel as a nation, or any individual thereof, makes the unwise choice of not keeping and obeying each and every one of YHWH's commandments, then what will follow are curses—lots and lots of curses. No matter where he goes and no matter what he does, there shall be curses, once again, all to promote order within the camp of Israel.

In modern day society, man depends upon the local police force to keep and maintain order and to make sure that every person is obeying the law. However, this is not what one finds in Torah. What one finds in Torah is something quite different.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 19:17

“You shall not hate your brother in your heart; you shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him.”

Each and every member of Israel has the same authority when it comes to witnessing sin, i.e., wrong doing. When a person witnesses sin being committed by another person, then he is commanded by YHWH to go directly to that person and take care of it face to face. Yeshua also emphasizes this same principle.

Mattithyah (Matthew) 18:15

“And if your brother sins against you, go, show him his fault between you and him alone; if he listens to you, you have gained your brother.”

The verses following this passage then outline what is to happen if the person does not listen and put away the wrong doing from his life (which is the essence of repentance). This is commonly referred to as a Matthew 18 process. The process is designed to maintain order, including restoring order if it is lost. In the process of keeping order, to restore one who has broken that order, obeying Torah must be brought back in line. In this way order is restored and maintained.

Mattithyah (Matthew) 12:35

“The good man out of his good treasure brings forth good things; and the evil man out of his evil treasure brings forth evil things.”

Torah is a matter of the heart. What is in a man's heart will manifest outwardly for all to see, and become a witness against him if he is bringing forth that which is evil. Or, if a man is bringing forth good, it will be a witness for good. Furthermore, since no man can change the heart of another man, it is therefore impossible to force another person to do right, i.e., that which is good in the eyes of YHWH. Each man must be changed from within in order for him to be able to live Torah in his everyday life. This is why YHWH tells us through the prophet Yirmeyah that He shall write His Torah upon our hearts and minds. Only in this way can Israel as a nation and as individuals keep and do His Torah. Only in this way can order be properly achieved.

Yirmeyah 31:33

“But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” says YHWH; “I will put My Torah in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their Elohim, and they shall be My people.”

It is the writing of His Torah upon the minds and hearts of His people that will bring order to Israel. No outside force can do such a thing. Torah must be internalized in order to properly walk therein.

Galatians 5:22-23

***22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
23 meekness, self-control; against such there is no law.***

These are the things YHWH writes upon one’s heart when a person surrenders his heart to YHWH through Mashiach Yeshua.

In this time of Ephrayim waking up to his true identity and his return to YHWH and His Torah, there are many who are self-appointed “Torah-police.” These individuals have taken it upon themselves to attempt to force every other person to live and do as they understand Torah and the commandments thereof. This will never work, simply because those individuals who attempt to police the actions of others are not following Torah themselves, in that, rarely, if ever, do they go to the individual to lovingly dialog with the person in an attempt to restore. Rather, what often happens is the situation is used as an opportunity to show one’s knowledge of Torah and thus an attempt is made to “lord” it over others.

True order comes from within one’s own heart. True order is a by-product of one’s solid relationship with his Creator. That relationship then in turn will allow one to have a loving relationship with his neighbor in such a way that is pleasing to YHWH. As an individual of Israel, I do not need to force my neighbor to do YHWH’s Torah commandments in exactly the same way that YHWH has led me to keep and observe them. YHWH is his Elohim as well as my Elohim. As such, order is present when I give my neighbor the same freedom to obey YHWH as I expect to receive from him.

ABBA YHWH, teach us to live in harmony and order with You and with one another, in the name of Mashiach Yeshua. Amein.

Understanding Torah Society

Chapter 3 – Public Goods – Defense

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 20:4

“For YHWH your Elohim is He that goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.”

Part two of this series examined the first concept of the six public goods—*order*. To refresh our memory, the six public goods as commonly seen by government today are 1) order, 2) defense, 3) public health, 4) infrastructure, 5) education, and 6) social welfare. This study will focus upon defense, specifically of Israel, a society which is supposed to be based upon Torah.

The very first thing that needs to be understood about a true Torah society is that it is YHWH who has charged Himself with her defense. Since this is true, there are certain things that need to be understood about the defense of Israel pertaining to the involvement of its people.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 20:2

“And it shall be, when you draw near unto the battle, that the priest shall approach and speak to the people,”

When it comes to waging war against another nation, YHWH through His Torah has given Israel some very specific instructions He fully expects her to follow. When she does, then order is maintained and He is fully able to bless Israel in ways she has rarely seen manifested in her long sordid history of following YHWH. One of those ways in which YHWH shall bless Israel, is that He will protect her from other nations. Other nations shall not prevail against her.

In the passage above, it is instructive to take note of several things. First, please note that when it is time for Israel to go into battle, then the reigning high priest is supposed to speak to all the people (men of war) gathered. YHWH even specifies what the high priest is supposed to say to the men of war gathered at that time.

Also, please note that throughout this process, no human king is present or involved in this process of going to war. Human government is simply not needed as represented by a king.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 20:3

"and shall say unto them, 'Hear, Israel, you draw near this day unto battle against your enemies; let not your heart faint; fear not, nor tremble, neither you be afraid of them;'"

There are four passages in the book of Devarim which contain the phrase "shema Yisrael" (hear Israel), and one of those passages has this phrase twice for a total of five times. The passage above is the last "shema Yisrael" phrase in the book of Devarim.

The high priest is to remind the people gathered for battle that there is absolutely no need to fear, tremble, or be afraid of the enemy. This is true because of what the high priest says next.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 20:4

"For YHWH your Elohim is He that goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you."

It is not Israel who fights and wins the battles in which she engages with her enemies, but rather, it is YHWH our Elohim who goes before us and fights on our behalf. When Israel is walking in harmony with YHWH and with each other, then it is impossible for her ever to lose a battle. It is not who has the biggest army, or the most advanced weapons who shall win a respective battle. Victory is about living in harmony with YHWH through loving obedience to His Torah commandments. When Israel does that, then she cannot lose.

Also, please note that the victory won by YHWH is not just simply a victory over her enemies, but it is unto salvation in every sense of the word.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 20:5

"And the officers shall speak unto the people, saying, 'What man is there that has built a new house, and has not dedicated it? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man dedicate it.'"

After the high priest is finished reminding all the people gathered for battle that YHWH has already won the victory and that they are simply there to witness that victory, the officers have some very specific instructions they are to give to all the men of war.

First, if a man has recently built a house and has not yet moved into it, then he is excused and cannot fight this day. He is to return home. However, before he can return home, for all things to be done in the proper orderly fashion, he must show up for the muster of the people called for battle. No man has a right to take it upon himself to decide that he does not need to show up for battle. Every man must show up, and then as the Torah specified instructions are given, he may then return home.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 20:6

“And what man is there that has planted a vineyard, and has not used the fruit thereof? Let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man use the fruit thereof.”

Furthermore, if a man has recently planted a vineyard and has not yet had a harvest from that vineyard, then he is to be dismissed and return home. This is not his day to fight. Please remember, as discussed above, such a man must show up to hear these instructions and then be dismissed. This maintains proper order in a Torah society.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 20:7

“And what man is there that has betrothed a wife, and has not taken her? Let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man take her.”

If a man is engaged and not yet married, then he is not to fight in the battle of that day.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 24:5

“When a man takes a new wife, he shall not go out in the host, neither shall he be charged with any business; he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer his wife whom he has taken.

Furthermore, for a period of one year after being married, he shall not fight in the armies (host) of Israel. However, as was pointed out above, when the people are called together for battle, he still must show up for muster. Afterward, he shall be dismissed according to Torah.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 20:8

“And the officers shall speak further unto the people, and they shall say, ‘What man is there that is fearful and faint-hearted? Let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart melt as his heart.’”

The final instructions from the officers shall include that if any man is afraid for any reason whatsoever, then he is excused. He is to return home. He cannot fight that day. Therefore, if any man for any reason thinks that he should not be there, all he has to do is say he is afraid and he shall be sent home. It is better in the eyes of YHWH to have just a few men who are fully prepared to go into battle, than to have a great host whose minds are not focused upon YHWH and the victory He has already given in the battle at hand. For a man to be properly focused in this context, is for that man to know without any doubts whatsoever that YHWH has already won the victory. If a man has any doubt, then he should go home and not fight in that battle.

Let us remind ourselves of the account of Gideon, who went through this process. At the beginning of the process, thirty-two thousand men had showed up for battle. After sending the first group of twenty-two thousand back to their homes, YHWH told Gideon that the ten

thousand left was still too many for Him to give victory. YHWH had Gideon take the men through an additional weeding out step; He had Gideon take the men to the stream and watch how they drank water from the stream. When all was said and done, Gideon only had three hundred men left. It was exactly how many men YHWH needed to give the victory. The defense of Israel is not a numbers game or a game of strength of armaments. It is all about faith and obedience to His Voice. (Read a more detailed [study about Gideon here](#)².)

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 20:9

“And it shall be, when the officers have made an end of speaking unto the people, that they shall appoint captains of hosts at the head of the people.”

After all those who need to go home are sent home, then the captains are appointed. This seems to indicate that the captains may not always be the same men. YHWH shall raise up whom He shall at the time He needs for them to be raised up in that season.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 20:14

“But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shall you take for a prey unto yourself; and you shall eat the spoil of your enemies, which YHWH your Elohim has given you.”

As a reward for their faith in YHWH, specifically that He won before the battle even started, the few who remain after the weeding out process are to keep the spoils of war. That is, if the spoils of war has not previously been placed under a ban.

The spoils of war act as payment for their service to YHWH in this matter.

Standing armies cost money—a lot of money. It costs money to feed and equip them. However, Israel is not supposed to have any standing army. Every single able-bodied man is considered a “man of war,” and when the call to muster goes forth throughout all Israel, every single man is supposed to show up. Then the process outlined in Torah of selecting who shall fight in that particular battle is implemented. Those who go home do not need to be paid. Those who stay to fight need to be paid, and YHWH does that through the spoils of war.

As we have seen in this study, when one lives in a true Torah society, then there is no need for any standing army, which, by the way, is the greatest expense of human governments. However, when each person chooses to live according to Torah, then the need for a human government simply vanishes. Israel does not live in fear of the nations around her because it is YHWH who has charged Himself with her protection.

May we see the realization of this truth come to pass in our day and in our time!

² <http://www.onetorahforall.com/Studies2010/Broken for the Master.html>

Understanding Torah Society

Chapter 4 – Public Goods – Public Health

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 13:2

“When a man shall have in the skin of his flesh a rising, or a scab, or a bright spot, and it becomes in the skin of his flesh the plague of leprosy, then he shall go in to Aharon the priest, or to one of his sons the priests:”

To refresh our memory the six public goods as commonly seen by government today are 1) order; 2) defense; 3) public health; 4) infrastructure; 5) education; and 6) social welfare. So far we have examined order and defense. This study will examine public health. The idea of public health is that it is the concern of government to keep everyone healthy, but is that something that Torah actually calls for? We have already examined in Scripture the idea that a true Torah society operates and exists without any human government (at least none that anyone has ever seen). Then how does the idea of public health fit into a Torah society? Let us begin with a closer examination of the above passage.

Many English translations of the above passage render the last part of the verse as the man with the spot in his skin “shall be brought” unto the priest. However, literally the Hebrew reads that “he shall go in” to the priest rather than being *brought*. What the verse is actually teaching is that each person has a personal responsibility for his own health and well-being.

The rest of this chapter is devoted to describing what such a man is supposed to do to take charge of his own health care. The priest is simply overseeing the process to make sure that all is done in an orderly fashion and in particular to confirm the healing which shall come from YHWH when the man obeys YHWH. The responsibility for an individual’s health rests solely upon the individual.

Galatians 5:22-23

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

23 meekness, self-control; against such there is no law.

One characteristic of the fruit of the spirit is self-control. One of the aspects of self-control is taking responsibility for one's actions, choices, and in general, his life. One of those areas of self-control is one's diet. The Torah teaches what not to eat as well as what to eat.

Vayyiqra 11:2-8

2 "Speak to the children of Israel, saying, 'These are the living things which you may eat among all the beasts that are on the earth.

3 Whatsoever parts the hoof, and is cloven-hooved, and chews the cud, among the beasts, that may you eat.

4 Nevertheless these shall you not eat of them that chew the cud, or of them that part the hoof: the camel, because he chews the cud but does not part not the hoof, he is unclean to you.

5 And the hyrax, because he chews the cud but does not part the hoof, he is unclean to you.

6 And the hare, because she chews the cud but does not part the hoof, she is unclean to you.

7 And the swine, because he parts the hoof, and is cloven-hooved, but does not chew the cud, he is unclean to you.

8 Of their flesh you shall not eat, and their carcasses you shall not touch; they are unclean to you.

YHWH commands that His people are given animals that chew their cud and have cloven or split hooves as clean and may be used as food. All other animals which do not do both of these characteristics are not clean and may not be used for food. It is interesting to note that of those animals which have one or the other of these two characteristics, but not both, are listed to make sure that His people understand this commandment and are not confused. Of particular interest is the swine. In this case its uncleanness seems to be particularly odious as YHWH commands that it is not to be touched at all.

If a person chooses to ignore these commandments, then he will suffer in his own body with disease and sickness.

Romans 1:32

who, knowing the ordinance of Elohim, that they that practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but also consent with them that practice them.

Of course the Torah goes on to list other animals which can be eaten as food as well as those which are not to be eaten, which include catfish (fish which do not have both scales and fins), and birds not to be eaten such as raptors or carrion eaters like vultures and crows. YHWH commanded not to eat certain animals for the protection of His people in the matter of one's health and well-being. One cannot expect to have good health when he has a diet which includes those things which YHWH commanded not to be eaten.

In this way, the individual takes prophylactic action in having and maintaining good health for himself. It is much easier to stay healthy than to try to regain one's health after he has contracted some sickness.

For generations, many people have completely ignored the commandments found in Scripture pertaining to what to eat and what not to eat. As a result, the overall health and well-being of man has declined and shall continue to decline until such time that man stops eating those animals which YHWH commanded not to be eaten.

One of the excuses that man uses to ignore these particular commandments is the modern invention of refrigeration. Some wrongly suppose that it is because of refrigeration that these commandments were given and now because we have refrigeration those animals which were once considered unclean are no longer unclean. However, this does not stand up to logic. Please consider the animals which YHWH said were clean and may be eaten. There was no refrigeration for them either, way back when. The flesh of a clean animal would have spoiled at the exact same rate as an unclean animal's flesh. Truthfully, refrigeration or the lack thereof has nothing whatsoever to do with the fact that only certain animals were declared as clean and may be eaten. All others are unclean and should not be eaten.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 28:58-61

58 "If you will not observe to do all the words of this Torah that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and fearful name, YHWH your Elohim;

59 then YHWH will make your plagues surpassing, and the plagues of your seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance.

60 And he will bring upon thee again all the diseases of Egypt, which you were afraid of; and they shall cleave to you.

61 Also every sickness, and every plague, which is not written in the book of this Torah, them will YHWH bring upon you, until you be destroyed."

It cannot be over emphasized what a person shall receive in the flesh of his body if he chooses not to obey all the commandments of YHWH. This is perhaps the single greatest element in one's health, yet it is largely ignored. The bottom line is this: to sin brings plagues and sickness into one's life, so says YHWH in the above passage. Even though this seems to be one of the most likely causes of sickness in an individual sin is not the only source of sickness for Scripture teaches that it rains on the just and the unjust alike.

Mattithyah (Matthew) 5:45

"That you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He makes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust."

Even the talmidim of Yeshua understood the Scriptural principal that often sickness is a result of sin. Perhaps they did not understand that this was not always the case when they confronted Yeshua with this very question.

Yochanan (John 9:1-3)

1 And as He passed by, He saw a man blind from his birth.

2 And His disciples asked him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind?"

3 Yeshua answered, "Neither did this man sin, nor his parents; but that the works of Elohim should be made manifest in him."

Sometimes, perhaps not too often however, YHWH has things happen that are supposed to bring His glory and grace near to us. However, because we are not nearly as watchful as we should be, often we seem to miss these moments. It is each person's responsibility to earnestly seek out whether a sickness or disease is caused by sin in his own personal life. If sin is the cause of a sickness or disease, then it cannot truly be remedied until the sin is removed. Otherwise, if this is the root cause, then one is only treating the symptoms rather than the cause of the sickness. This is one of the areas in personal responsibility, which we spoke of above.

Truly the health of one's body begins with one's spiritual health and well-being. We have already quoted above several passages of Scripture which are clear indications of this reality. Westernized medicine has dichotomized the treatment of sickness and disease in one's body from any spiritual connection. This is not only unfortunate but woefully erroneous in nature, and one cannot truly have good health without a good relationship with YHWH our Elohim. Having a good relationship with YHWH (that is, hearing and obeying His Voice) is the most pro-active way to good health available.

Galatians 5:19-21

19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties,

21 envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that they who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of Elohim.

For now, we are interested in one particular word from the above passage, the word—sorcery. The Greek word is φαρμακεία (pharmakeia) from which we get our English word—pharmacy. The Greek word φαρμακεία (pharmakeia) means *sorcery* or *magic*. Please take careful note of the following passage.

Revelation 18:23

and the light of a lamp shall shine no more at all in you; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in you: for your merchants were the princes of the earth; for with your sorcery were all the nations deceived.

This passage is speaking about the Mystery Babylon of the latter days. Please note how it was that Mystery Babylon was able to deceive all the nations of the world; it was through

the use of pharmakeia. Now you as an individual will have to make your own choice in this matter as to exactly what this means, but one should not lightly dismiss (if at all) the idea that this is speaking about the big pharmacy companies and the control which they exert over the peoples and nations of the world. Please note that it states that the merchants of Mystery Babylon were the princes, i.e., rulers of the earth. Because of their deceptive practices, it was not deemed a good thing from the perspective of heaven!

We would like to briefly address one aspect of this *legalized* drug culture, that of vaccines. Vaccines are touted as being the cure-all-end-all of disease. However, this is not the case at all. For the big pharmaceutical companies, this is simply just good business. If they can convince you to get a few shots early in life which shall make you their slave for the rest of your life, then that means you will always be coming back to them for the answers. The answers shall never be found in returning to pharmakeia, but rather in returning to YHWH our Elohim and obeying His Voice, that is, obeying each and every one of His Torah commandments.

Just one simple suggestion, before you take a vaccine or give your child a vaccine, please, do your research and educate yourself to the side effects of these drugs. No one has your best interests in mind like you do. And anyone who gains financially from giving you *advice* should be suspect.

As we showed above, one's good health is based upon what one eats, and even upon what one does not eat. Please consider once again this passage from above.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 11:2

2 "Speak to the children of Israel, saying, 'These are the living things which you may eat among all the beasts that are on the earth.

Here we are interested in the word *eat*; it is the Hebrew word אכל – akal, which means to devour or consume. To inject oneself with a vaccine would certainly come under the meaning of אכל – akal. Many vaccines are made from animals (and in some cases human cell tissue) which YHWH in His Torah has commanded as being unclean to eat (אכל). For example, we are not to eat horses, as horses have neither a split hoof nor do they chew the cud. The tetanus vaccine is made from horses. Therefore, when one is injected with a tetanus vaccine he is consuming (אכל) a part of a horse.

Many vaccines, if not most, are made from unclean animals. And even if it is not made from an unclean animal, it most likely has mercury in it as a *preservative*. Mercury causes all kinds of maladies in the human body. Please for the sake of your health and the health of your family, educate yourself in this matter.

Health starts and ends with the individual. There can be no "public health" if there is no health for the individual. If there is a major public outbreak of something, then the cause of

that sickness needs to be sought. There is a high likelihood that it is not a physical cause at all.

Amos 3:6

Shall the trumpet be blown in a city, and the people not be afraid? Shall evil befall a city, and YHWH has not done it?

YHWH wants His people to return to Him. He has many means at His disposal to use to accomplish this including plagues and sicknesses. Furthermore, YHWH has stated that He will use these means to bring His people back to Him. I wonder if we are listening with ears that hear.

Is there such a thing as public health? There is if there is such a thing as public sin. If a group of people sin, then one should rightly expect at some point to see that same group succumb to some kind of plague or sickness in order to turn them back to YHWH.

B'midbar (Numbers) 11:33

While the flesh was yet between their teeth, before it was chewed, the anger of YHWH was kindled against the people, and YHWH smote the people with a very great plague.

It is recorded in the Torah Moshe repeatedly, the people who came out of Egypt sinned and YHWH would then strike them with some type of plague or sickness in order to discipline them in an attempt to get them to return to Him. While the people would immediately turn, in the long run they just didn't seem to get this truth.

In the west, the medical system is based upon sickness. That means that there is no money to be made if a person is well. The medical system seeks to sell its wares and drugs, not necessarily to heal the sick person, but to make money. For this reason, the western system of medicine does not care how a person lives, that is, one can do whatever he wants to do and then the doctors will fix him later.

The medical system found in Torah is not based upon the idea of doing whatever a person wants, but rather upon obedience to His Voice. If one obeys His Voice, then all will be well, including one's physical health and well-being. However, if one does not hear and obey His Voice, then like ancient Israel, he is in for plagues and sickness as was seen in the verse above.

Malachi 3:6

"For I, YHWH, change not; therefore you, sons of Ya'aqov, are not consumed."

Public health equals looking at the overall spiritual health and well-being of the nation. If the nation is not hearing and obeying His Voice, then the nation cannot be well. Only when Israel lives together in a true Torah society will each and every member of that nation enjoy health and well-being. Any medical system in a Torah society must rest upon the truth

demonstrated in this study, namely, it is obedience to His Voice which has a direct bearing upon one's health and well-being. Hence, when all members of the Torah society are hearing and obeying His Voice (shema), then public health is good and well.

Understanding Torah Society

Chapter 5 – Public Goods – Infrastructure

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 19:36

“Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin, you shall have; I am YHWH your Elohim, who brought you out of the land of Egypt.”

To refresh our memory, the six public goods as commonly seen by government today are 1) order, 2) defense, 3) public health, 4) infrastructure, 5) education, and 6) social welfare. So far we have examined order, defense, and public health. This study will examine Infrastructure. Infrastructure consists of everything needed for an organization or nation to run itself economically and physically. For example, part of the infrastructure of a nation would be its roads, bridges, electrical grid, monetary system, water and sewage services, and anything else needed for a country or society to exist.

The common thought by many today is that it is the responsibility of the government to provide for and maintain the infrastructure of a nation. However, as we are about to see, this is not necessary, nor the best option. To begin with, please note that historically, the electrical grid was not government owned or maintained, but privately owned, in many cases by co-ops. “Co-op” is short for cooperative, which means a group of individuals banded together for a common purpose. Also, banks have been historically privately owned and operated. The government did not really get involved in banking until 1933 after the crash of 1929, when it created the FDIC—Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. When a person looks at the beginnings of nearly every part of a nation’s infrastructure, it would have its roots in the private sector.

One aspect of government and infrastructure is the notion of *the right of eminent domain*. What this means is that the government has the right to confiscate any and all lands or private property which it deems necessary for the efficient function of itself. There are few limits upon this supposed self-given right. And who is supposed to oversee this power? The government is supposed to police itself in this matter. It is like sending a small child into a candy store and not placing any limits upon him except what he places upon himself. Few children would willingly constrain themselves.

Sadly, the power of a government to take is very far from Torah!

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 25:23

“And the land shall not be sold in perpetuity; for the land is Mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with Me.”

The earth belongs to YHWH by virtue of YHWH being its Creator. YHWH gave a small portion of the earth to Israel as a perpetual possession. They are His stewards of the land. The land actually belongs to YHWH as He is the Creator. As such, He assigns whom He desires to steward that land. In this case, His desire was for the children of Israel to steward the land of Israel. He had this land divided by lot and given to the tribes. The tribes then further divided the land to the families by lot. Once the land was divided by lot and assigned, it was to stay in that family forever. If a man fell upon hard times, he could sell the crop off of the land for a period of up to six years, but no more.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 15:1

At the end of every seven years you shall make a release.

When the year of שמיטה *shmittah* (literally—release) came, the land (crops) reverted back to the rightful owner. This is a law and a statute forever!

Please take careful note of this next passage.

Yirmeyah (Jeremiah) 34:17

“Therefore thus says YHWH; you have not hearkened unto Me, to proclaim liberty, every man to his brother, and every man to his neighbor; behold, I proclaim unto you a liberty,” says YHWH, “to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine; and I will make you to be tossed to and fro among all the kingdoms of the earth.”

One of the major reasons YHWH kicked Israel out of His land, was for not obeying this particular commandment, the commandment to observe the land shabbat.

Dibre Hayamim Beit (2nd Chronicles 36:21)

to fulfill the word of YHWH by the mouth of Yirmeyah, until the land had enjoyed its shabbatot; for as long as it lay desolate it kept shabbat, to fulfill seventy years.

Of all the sin and disobedience of which Israel (southern house of Yehudah) was guilty in not listening to and obeying the Voice of YHWH, it was not observing the land shabbat that caused them to be kicked out of the land.

In order to understand the infrastructure of a Torah society, the rightful ownership of the land must be rightly understood. YHWH is the owner of the land. YHWH has given the stewardship of that land to individuals within the nation of His people. YHWH has not assigned any of that stewardship to some government or government agency.

One of the weaknesses of a nation when it comes to being attacked from another nation is its infrastructure. Consider how much stronger a nation would be if there were no electrical grid. If there were no electrical grid, then there would be no way to attack or sabotage it. It is well within the technological advances today, that each and every person be sufficient unto himself in such a matter. If each and every farm had its own water system, its own electrical system, its own sewage system, etc., then it would be completely free to obey YHWH in all that He says.

However, if a man is dependent upon someone else, like the government, for such necessities, then when there is a threat of losing those necessities, he lives under constant coercion. He is not free to hear and obey His Voice.

Once we understand the true nature of the infrastructure, then we can begin to see how the infrastructure should be ordered in a Torah society. There are two aspects of the infrastructure which we need to briefly discuss here—money and roads.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 27:25

And all your estimations shall be according to the shekel of the sanctuary: twenty gerahs shall be the shekel.

There is a lot of information about money in the Torah Moshe. We will cover this in more detail in a later study in this series dealing with tithes and offerings. What we need to see here is that YHWH has already provided a means of trade amongst His people; a monetary system based upon weight—the shekel.

As the opening passage from Vayyiqra 19:36 states, a Torah society is to have a just and equal weights and measures system. Precious metals, like gold, silver, and copper, were the coinage, and the value of that coinage was based upon weight. There is to be no such thing as fiduciary money; a system of imaginary value. Paper has no true value. Taking a piece of paper and printing a number on it has no intrinsic value like precious metal. A Torah society's monetary system is based upon real value of items being exchanged. Gold, silver, and copper is spoken of as a means to trade, but it is not the only means. Even grains, such as barley and wheat, can be traded. This is also done by weight. Anything of value can be weighed and used as a trade medium.

We will go into a lot more detail in chapter fourteen of this series.

Of particular concern might be roads and bridges. What many people do not know, is that in this country (USA), a person's property extends to the middle of the road, and that such a person actually owns half of the road, and that because of the right of eminent domain, the government causes individuals to "grant" an easement across their property to itself and others. The government then takes the responsibility to maintain that access (road), effectively taking the ownership of that portion of a man's property away from him.

However, as we saw above, any given piece of land is to stay in the possession of the family to which it was granted. In one extreme case in Scripture, king Ahav took a portion of another man's property because he wanted it for his own purposes.

Melekim Aleph (1st Kings) 21:2-3

2 And Ahav spoke to Naboth, saying, "Give me your vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it is near to my house; and I will give you a better vineyard than it; or, if it seems good to you, I will give you the worth of it in money."

3 And Naboth said to Ahab, "YHWH forbid me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers to you."

The king (government) wanted this man's piece of land. In fact, when one reads the whole account, the king killed Naboth and took his land. As a result, YHWH sent a prophet to the king and pronounced judgment upon him and his household.

YHWH is serious; when He assigns stewardship of land to a family, it is to stay in that family. Once this truth is solidly fixed in a person's mind, then he can address the idea of roads and bridges. Basically, if a road or bridge is on a person's property, if he chooses to make a road or bridge, then it belongs to him. He is responsible for it. Yes, he can make agreements with other owners to work together to build and maintain such, but according to Torah, whatever is on a man's land belongs to him and he is responsible for it.

There is one final thought concerning the infrastructure—corporations.

In a Supreme Court of the United States ruling in 1933 in *Lee v. Liggett*, the court stated that corporations were a *Frankenstein-like monster*. Interestingly, corporations in the USA have the status and rights of a human being. However, what happens is that when an individual deals with a corporation, his rights get lost in the shuffle. Corporations are for the express purpose of shirking personal responsibility. In other words, corporations are not Torah friendly. Corporations cannot be justified in a Torah society. Cooperatives can certainly be seen in Scripture, but not corporations. When a person does or makes something, that person must be accountable for that action to maintain and preserve proper order. Because corporations are a legal entity, that is, a corporation enjoys all the same rights afforded to an individual person, if a corporation does something to harm or injure another person, no one is truly accountable to the same degree as an individual would be accountable. Corporations cannot be justified in a Torah society.

Infrastructure is about the interactions between the individuals of society. YHWH has given to us a general outline of what that structure is supposed to look like. Furthermore, He has recorded for our instruction many examples of what not to do.

1st Corinthians 10:6

Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.

The truth is, that most of what is recorded in Scripture in the way of history, is what not to do, rather than what to do. Historical Israel rarely got it right. And when they got it wrong, YHWH had it written down so we could learn from it.

The bottom line of understanding infrastructure is this: who is the owner? It is YHWH and He has assigned the stewardship to individuals, not to a government or corporation.

Understanding Torah Society

Chapter 6 – Public Goods – Education

Mishle (Proverbs) 1:8

***My son, hear the instruction of your father,
And forsake not the Torah of your mother.***

Once again, to refresh our memory, the six public goods as commonly seen by government today are 1) order, 2) defense, 3) public health, 4) infrastructure, 5) education, and 6) social welfare. So far we have examined order, defense, public health, and infrastructure. This study will examine education. Education is the process of acquiring or imparting knowledge from one generation on to the next. In this study we will examine that process; in particular, whose responsibility it is, as well as what type of knowledge is to be imparted in a Torah society.

The above passage helps one to understand the context of the whole book of Mishle; namely, that these proverbs are from a father to a son. It is one of the primary responsibilities of the parent to train, educate, and instruct one's own children, especially when it comes to the idea of passing on the culture of a Torah society. Namely, YHWH charges the parents in particular with the responsibility of teaching and passing on the Torah commandments to their own children.

In the above passage, there are two words which grab our attention: *instruction* and *Torah*. "Instruction" is translated from the Hebrew word מוֹסֵר *musar* – which means *discipline, chastisement, correction*. This teaches us that one should never forsake, but rather earnestly heed, the correction from one's parents in particular, and from one's elders in general. "Torah," which is often translated into English as *law*, means *instruction*. The difference between these two words is that the Torah is instruction in the primary since, whereas מוֹסֵר *musar* is instruction in the secondary since. What this means is that Torah (instruction) is given first and then it is acted upon. If a mistake or misjudgment results for some reason, then a slight course correction is needed to get the child back on the correct path; מוֹסֵר *musar* is needed. The primary person responsible for this according to the above passage, as well as other passages, is the father of the child. However, both parents are intimately involved in both Torah instruction, as well as מוֹסֵר *musar* correction.

As we stated above, according to Scripture, it is the responsibility of the parent to teach and train one's children. Here is one passage in which this commandment is found.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 6:6-7

***6 "And these words, which I command you this day, shall be upon your heart;
7 and you shalt teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up."***

Everything that a parent does should teach his children how to walk in Torah and to be a part of a society which loves YHWH and hears and obeys His Voice. This is one of the primary duties of a parent. If a parent fails in this, then he has failed. This is not to say that the success or failure is measured by whether a child accepts or rejects the Torah; for even after being fully trained to keep and do Torah, a child still must make his own choices in the matter. Rather, success is measured by whether a parent has done his very best to teach and train his children to walk in the way of YHWH. The primary way of teaching and training one's children is by keeping and doing Torah. Then, regardless of what the child chooses then, the parents have succeeded in obeying YHWH in the matter of raising their children.

It should be pointed out here, that the first thing mentioned in the above passage is that the Torah is to be upon one's heart. If it is not upon one's heart, then it truly is not possible to pass it on to one's children. Historically, this is exactly why ancient Israel failed as a nation in the past. It is also why YHWH spoke these words through the prophet.

Yirmeyah (Jeremiah) 31:33

"But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days," says YHWH; "I will put My Torah in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their Elohim, and they shall be My people."

The bottom line is this: if one does not own it, then he cannot pass it on to his children; it is impossible. However, if he does own it, that is, it is written upon his heart, then it is wholly possible to pass that which he has on to his own children. As mentioned above, the implication of the Torah being written upon one's heart means that one is keeping Torah. If one is not doing his very best to live Torah every single day, then the Torah cannot be written upon his heart. Thus, there is no way he could possibly pass the Torah on to his children.

Luqa (Luke) 6:45

"The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth that which is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth that which is evil; for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks."

It is this good treasure, Torah, which a parent is charged with passing on to his children. He may pass on other things as well, but if Torah is not passed on, then what point is there? None!

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 32:46

And he said to them, "Set your heart on all the words which I testify unto you this day, which you shall command your children to observe to do, even all the words of this Torah."

Please note that we are commanded to do all the words of the Torah and then to pass on all those words to our children. If we leave some out, that is, we teach them that it is not necessary to do certain parts for any reason at all, then we have failed to obey this commandment.

Ya'aqov (James) 2:18

But, a man may say, "You have faith, and I have works; show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works."

One cannot separate what is in his heart with what he is doing. The way a man lives is what is in his heart!

Ya'aqov (James) 1:22

But prove yourselves to be doers of the word, and not hearers only, who delude themselves.

If something begins to be manifested in a child's life that the parents do not like, the first place to look is in the mirror. This is the most likely source of that behavior. Obviously, this is not the only source, but it is the most common source.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 4:9-10

9 "Only take heed to yourself, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things which your eyes saw, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life; but make them known to your children and your children's children;

10 the day that you stood before YHWH your Elohim in Horev, when YHWH said unto me, 'Assemble Me the people, and I will make them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days that they live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children.'"

Please note that in order for one to teach and train his children, he is commanded to *diligently* watch over his own being (soul) first and foremost. In the training of one's children, this is a very important aspect that is often overlooked. This can and does have tragic results in the lives of the children, that is, when a parent fails to *diligently* watch over his own life.

As one lives Torah, YHWH does many things in his life. He is to use these eye-witness accounts to teach and train his children. In part, this helps the parent to pass on the knowledge that YHWH is alive and active in the lives of His people, specifically, in his own life. This will help the child to make the right choice to want to follow YHWH himself.

Shemot (Exodus) 12:26

“And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say to you, ‘What do you mean by this service?’”

We see that this is particularly true in obeying the commandments of Pesach (Passover). However, this should not just be true during the keeping of the days of unleavened bread, but it should be true all the time. Whenever a child asks questions of his parents, one or both of the parents should use that as an opportunity to teach and train their children about YHWH and His ways, and this from the early days on into adulthood. Once again, this is one of the primary duties of the parent. A parent cannot relegate this duty to another. Nor, can a parent pass off this responsibility before YHWH to teach and train his own children to another. One day, each parent shall stand before YHWH and give an account of this responsibility. Woe to him who thinks to say to YHWH that it was the duty of the government to train his children!

Romans 12:2

And be not fashioned according to this world; but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what the good and acceptable and perfect will of Elohim is.

It is the image of our Creator in which we were made. It is His image in which we should be formed. It is His image which we should cultivate in our children. We should not foster the image of the world in our children.

Mishle (Proverbs) 22:6

***Train up a child in the way he should go,
And even when he is old he will not depart from it.***

A parent cannot wait until the child is a certain age to begin his training. Training commences at birth and never ceases until death. When training begins at birth, then when the child is older, he shall not depart from that path. He may on occasion stumble on that path, as we all do from time to time, but he will not depart from the path.

Take a look at what YHWH says about Avraham for just a moment.

B’reshit (Genesis) 18:19

“For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of YHWH, to do righteousness and justice; to the end that YHWH may bring upon Avraham that which He has spoken of him.”

One of the apparent reasons YHWH chose him in the first place, was because YHWH knew Avraham would pass on to his children what YHWH taught him. Not only would Avraham do righteousness and justice, but he would teach (command) his children to do the same.

Not only are parents commanded to teach and train their own children the ways of YHWH, but the Levitical priesthood as represented by Moshe was also charged with this duty.

Shemot (Exodus) 18:20

“And you shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and shall show them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do.”

The context of the above passage is Moshe’s father-in-law, Yithro, speaking to Moshe under the inspiration of the Ruach Qodesh (Holy Spirit). His point in what he was teaching Moshe, which Moshe accepted as being from YHWH, was that no one person should bear such a burden alone. Thus, the Levites were to equip the parents with the tools and knowledge necessary for the parents to then teach and train their children.

The teaching of Torah to the next generation includes many things. For example, above we quoted Shemot 12:26 and Devarim 4:9-10. Both of these passages, as well as many others, show us the importance of teaching history to our children, both one’s own personal history as well as national and world history, not the type of history typically taught in public schools today, but rather a history in which YHWH is intimately involved in the lives of His people, leading, guiding, and lovingly correcting.

Furthermore, there is to be a strong emphasis upon mathematics.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 19:35-37

35 “You shall not do any unrighteousness in judgment, in measures of length, of weight, or of quantity.

36 Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin, you shall have; I am YHWH your Elohim, who brought you out of the land of Egypt.

37 And you shall observe all My statutes, and all My ordinances, and do them; I am YHWH.”

One can rightly understand that in measuring length or weight or quantity, he should be careful to be as accurate as humanly possible. This we are commanded to do by YHWH. We are to teach this to our children. However, this is not the only thing the above passage can mean. Please consider that in science and in the scientific method used today, in large part it is based upon methods developed and used by Galileo. He said:

“Measure what is measurable, and make measurable what is not so.”

Galileo was a highly religious man. Everything he did was to prove Scripture and to protect his church. The point of bringing this quote forward is to show that whatever we do,

whatever we investigate, it must never be divorced from YHWH our Elohim. When a person sets out to define something, he is in effect measuring it. Thus, when certain scientists today set out to define the existence of this world through the idea of evolution, it is in direct violation of the above commandments.

Mishle (Proverbs) 1:7

***The fear of YHWH is the beginning of knowledge;
But the foolish despise wisdom and instruction.***

It is the Levites who are to protect His people from going astray by making sure that what is being taught is according to Torah, that is, nothing added and nothing taken away. This is not to say that all subjects known to man today cannot be taught, however, they must be taught within the context of Torah. YHWH is the Creator, and as such, He is the Source of all knowledge. Whatever subject is taught, it must be taught with this as the foundation. Otherwise, it is only a perversion of the truth, that is, one would be teaching error.

1st Corinthians 12:18

But now Elohim has set the members each one of them in the body, even as it pleased Him.

There are several stages of one's schooling process. The first stage is what can rightly be called the homeschool stage. It is in this stage which the parents are directly involved in the daily instruction of one's children. The age of the child to which this training lasts most likely will vary from child to child. However, there are a couple of passages which should be considered here in this study to help guide us in a general way.

Shemot (Exodus) 30:14

"Everyone that passes over unto them that are numbered, from twenty years old and upward, shall give the offering of YHWH."

This offering is the half shekel offering that every single person is to give to make atonement for Israel. Please note that only those from twenty years old and up are to give this offering. This indicates to us that it is upon reaching one's twentieth birthday that one enters into the full life of the nation. This seems to indicate that by the age of twenty a child should be fully trained to function in the Torah society. We see this also reflected in the following passage.

B'midbar (Numbers) 1:3

"From twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel, you and Aharon shall number them by their hosts."

Notice that the men of war are also from twenty years old and upward, indicating there is a close connection between the half shekel offering for atonement and the men of war.

Now, let us prayerfully consider the years of the Levitical priests.

B'midbar (Numbers) 8:23-26

23 And YHWH spoke to Moshe, saying,

24 "This is that which belongs to the Levites, from twenty-five years old and upward they shall go in to wait upon the service in the work of the tent of meeting;

25 and from the age of fifty years they shall cease waiting upon the work, and shall serve no more,

26 but shall minister with their brethren in the tent of meeting, to keep the charge, and shall do no service. Thus shall you do to the Levites touching their charges."

In a nut shell, here is what we see per the above passages of Scripture. From birth to age twenty, a person is schooled in the elementary things pertaining to life. At the age of twenty he can, if he so chooses, go on to formal schooling until the age of twenty-five. At the age of twenty-five he enters into his profession and does that work until the age of fifty. At the age of fifty he stops doing and starts teaching those who are coming behind him, to pass on his knowledge and understanding gained through experience to the next generation.

Please understand that while the ages are specified for the Levites, they are not for the rest of Israel. Therefore, the ages are much more flexible for all the other tribes. However, this gives one a general picture of the stages of schooling in the life of a person who lives in a Torah society.

Please bear with me as we quote this passage once again.

1st Corinthians 12:18

But now Elohim has set the members each one of them in the body, even as it pleased Him.

YHWH has a special and unique plan for each and every single member of the body of Mashiach, which is the nation of Israel. It is incumbent upon us to discover where that place is and then do our best to fill up that which YHWH has given us to do. Please understand that even though each and every person has a unique place to walk in as given by YHWH, no single person can accomplish that which YHWH has given him to do by himself. He needs the help and assistance of his brethren.

We need to discuss one more item as it pertains to education—the school of the prophets.

Sh'muel Aleph (1st Samuel) 10:10

And when they came near to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the Spirit of Elohim came mightily upon him, and he prophesied among them.

The above passage is speaking about Shaul, who was about to be made the first king of Israel. However, what we are interested in at this time is *the company of prophets*. In Israel there was a *school of the prophets*. This school, also known as a *company of prophets* in the above passage, and *sons of the prophets* in other passages, served several purposes in Israel.

While prophecy is one of the gifts YHWH gives to individuals among His people, that gift still needs to be perfected, that is, the person receiving such a gift needs to learn how to use it properly. Just because a person receives such a gift does not give him carte blanche to do whatsoever he pleases. Along with the gift comes a great responsibility, which is why it is often spoken of as a burden in Scripture.

One of the primary purposes of this school was to be a means of accountability among the prophets of Israel.

1st Corinthians 14:32

And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets;

When a person had received a vision or dream or a word in any form from YHWH, then he would write that message down. After writing it down, then he would present that message to the school of the prophets. The prophets then judged the content of that message according to His Spirit that indwelt each one of them and according to Torah. If the message passed this stage, then it was approved for publication to the public. However, if it was not approved, then the receiving prophet had to revise or discard the message. This was one of the primary purposes of the school of the prophets, to make the prophets accountable among themselves. As it states in the passage, prophets are to be in subjection to prophets.

It is the duty of each and every person to find his place according to the Spirit of YHWH in His Torah based society. Only in this way is the good of the nation served. When each individual completely fills up the purpose to which YHWH has created him, then all things are in its proper order. Finding this place and preparing one to fulfill that which He has called one to do is the whole point of education from the beginning under the tutelage of one's own parents, to all the higher modes of education that one needs to accomplish the calling of YHWH.

Understanding Torah Society

Chapter 7 – Public Goods – Social Welfare

Matithyah (Matthew) 26:11

“For you have the poor with you always; but you will not have Me always.”

Once again, to refresh our memory, the six public goods as commonly seen by government today are 1) order; 2) defense; 3) public health; 4) infrastructure; 5) education; and 6) social welfare. So far we have examined order, defense, public health, infrastructure, and education. This study will examine the last of the public goods—social welfare. Social welfare are those programs in which a person or family who has fallen upon hard times can have their needs taken care of through the collective contributions of the masses.

The Torah has a lot to say about the poor and how the poor are to be treated as well as how the poor are not to be treated. To begin this study, we shall examine Devarim chapter 15, verse-by-verse, that is, verses one through eighteen.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 15:1

“At the end of every seven years you shall make a release.”

YHWH commands that every person in Israel is to make a full and complete release of all debts; nothing can be carried over. The word release comes from the Hebrew word שִׁמִּטָּה *shimittah*, which means *to release*. These verses are dealing with the Shimittah year or land Shabbat. We will deal with the Shimittah more fully in a later study. In this study, we are interested only in the Shimittah as it pertains to the poor.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 15:2

“And this is the manner of the release: every creditor shall release that which he has lent to his neighbor; he shall not exact it of his neighbor and his brother; because YHWH's release has been proclaimed.”

It is interesting to note that this release is only commanded for those who are neighbors and brothers.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 15:3

“Of a foreigner you may exact it: but whatsoever of yours is with your brother, your hand shall release.”

The word *foreigner* in the passage above is from the Hebrew word הנכרי hanakri, which means strange, thus foreigner by extension. This is a different word than that of גר ger, which means *guest* and *sojourner*. Therefore, we can surmise the difference between these two words is significant. A גר ger is a person who has come in from the nations and who has decided to become a part of Israel by keeping and doing all of YHWH’s Torah. This is suggested to us by the meaning of *sojourner*. His children would thus be considered as native born, that is, there is only one Torah for the native born as well as the *sojourner-ger* (Shemot 12:49). However, a נכרי nakri would be a person from the nations who has not attached himself to Israel and who has not decided to keep and do all of YHWH’s Torah, but is living with Israel nonetheless.

The year of release would include a גר ger, but not a נכרי nakri. It is important to note that while the year of release does not include the נכרי nakri through commandment, it is not absolutely commanded that one cannot release him in the shimittah as well. For one may well make such a choice and still be well within the perimeters of the commandments without adding to or taking away from His Torah.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 15:4

“Howbeit there shall be no poor with you (for YHWH will surely bless you in the land which YHWH your Elohim gives you for an inheritance to possess it),”

On the surface, this verse seems to present us with a contradiction with our opening passage which is the apparent recorded words of Yeshua. However, upon further examination, we find that both passages are conditional, that is, in order for either or both to be true, there are certain conditions which have to be met. In the above passage the blessing of not having any poor amongst our brothers is preconditioned upon the obedience of Israel: each and every member of Israel to each and every commandment of YHWH. If Israel does this, then YHWH shall bless her in such a way as there shall be no poor among us who are our brothers.

That is to say, there still could be poor who are foreigners (that is, נכרי nakri) living among Israel. Thus, we can see that both the passages in Devarim as well as the words of Yeshua are true.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 15:5

“if only you diligently hear and obey the Voice of YHWH your Elohim, to observe to do all this commandment which I command you this day.”

This is the condition of not having any poor among us who are our brothers. Israel is admonished to hear and obey (shema) the Voice of YHWH.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 15:6

“For YHWH your Elohim will bless you, as He promised you; and you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow; and you shall rule over many nations, but they shall not rule over you.”

One difficulty that some people have with the many promises which YHWH has given, they fail to see that most are conditional promises. If those to whom the promise is given fulfill the condition, then the promise will come to pass. In most every case that condition involves some form of obedience. If obedience is forthcoming, so shall the promise. However, if there is disobedience, then the promise is hindered and in some cases outright stopped from being manifest.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 15:7

“If there be with you a poor man, one of your brethren, within any of your gates in your land which YHWH your Elohim give you, you shall not harden your heart, nor shut your hand from your poor brother;”

Just to make it clear, and knowing how people are, we are commanded that if (when) there happens to be a poor man who is our brother, we are not to be harsh in our judgment or treatment of him. Humans being what they are would tend to point the finger at the poor man who is a brother and believe that it was his own fault for getting himself in such a predicament. However, YHWH wants us to be careful of such a mindset and make sure that we do not harden our heart towards our brother who has fallen upon hard times. The truth is it may not be his fault at all.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 15:8

“but you shall surely open your hand unto him, and shall surely lend him sufficient for his need in that which he has need.”

Whatever need that he has, we are to give it to him as a loan. Please understand that if his circumstances do not significantly change so that he can pay it back before the year of release, then it is no longer a loan, but a gift.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 15:9

“Beware that there be not a base thought in your heart, saying, ‘The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand;’ and your eye be evil against your poor brother, and you give him nothing; and he cry unto YHWH against you, and it be sin unto you.”

Truly, our Creator knows His creation—man. YHWH knows the heart and mind of man. It would be just like a man to think such a thought as we are commanded not to think in the above verse. Just because it is getting near to the year of release is not sufficient reason not to loan to our brothers in need.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 15:10

“You shall surely give him, and your heart shall not be grieved when you give unto him; because that for this thing YHWH your Elohim will bless you in all your work, and in all that you put your hand to.”

Not only does YHWH caution us about having such thoughts, but we are also not to have certain feelings in such a matter. Namely, we are not to be grieved that we are giving to our brother who has a need and the year of release is near because YHWH shall bless us in all that we do for helping our brother in need in his time of need.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 15:11

“For the poor will never cease out of the land; therefore I command you, saying, ‘You shall surely open your hand to your brother, to your needy, and to your poor, in your land.’”

Why is it that back in verse four YHWH tells us that there shall be no poor among us (if we obey Him), but now in verse eleven He tells us that the poor shall never cease to be a part of the land? Please note that this is perfectly in line with what Yeshua stated as recorded in Matthew 26:11. Could it be, YHWH knew that Israel would have difficulty keeping and obeying His commandments—the condition of not having any poor among our brothers? Historically, Israel has never truly been successful in hearing and obeying His Voice.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 15:12

“If your brother, a Hebrew man, or a Hebrew woman, be sold to you, and serve you six years; then in the seventh year you shall let him go free from you.”

In the context of this chapter, one could and even perhaps should take this to be a command from YHWH. That is, if we see a brother who is for sale, then we are commanded to buy him that he may be set free in the year of release. After all, in verse seven we are commanded not to harden our heart towards a brother who has fallen upon hard times, but we are to open our hand to him and give him what he needs. If a Hebrew man or Hebrew woman has fallen upon hard times to the point that he or she has come into bondage to a foreigner, then surely we should buy them and let them work for us until the year of release.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 15:13

“And when you let him go free from you, you shall not let him go empty;”

Here is what one is supposed to do when one is released out of service to you. He is not to go away empty handed.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 15:14

“you shall furnish him liberally out of your flock, and out of your threshing-floor, and out of your winepress; as YHWH your Elohim hath blessed you, you shall give to him.”

When released in the shmittah, the one going out is to be given from his former master, sheep, goats, grain, and wine in abundance. Now remember, this is the year of release, thus the land that was formerly his or belonged to his family as an eternal inheritance is his once again. Therefore, he has a place to go and this gift from his former master shall give him a fresh start.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 15:15

“And you shall remember that you were a bondman in the land of Egypt, and YHWH your Elohim redeemed you; therefore I command you this thing today.”

Are you beginning to see that Torah does not call for a “government” to have certain programs in place to take care of the needy? Rather, YHWH charges each and every person to watch over and care for those in need. Not to do so is sin in the eyes of YHWH. (We will deal with this in more detail in the study on being our Brother’s Keeper.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 15:16-17

16 “And it shall be, if he says to you, ‘I will not go out from you;’ because he loves you and your house, because he is well with you;

17 then you shall take an awl, and thrust it through his ear unto the door, and he shall be your servant forever. And also to your maid-servant you shall do likewise.”

When a master treats those in his service right and fair, actually like a son or daughter, then the one in service may decide in the year of release to not go away from his master. If such is the case, then his servitude becomes permanent and may never be revoked. I would think that it would be in the best interest of all concerned that the master would do everything he could to talk his servant out of having his ear pierced.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 15:18

“It shall not seem hard to you, when you let him go free from you; for to double of the hire of a hireling has he served you six years; and YHWH your Elohim will bless you in all that you do.”

YHWH specifies how much the master is to give to his servant who goes out from him. If he was to hire a person to do what he did for six years of salary, then the master is to give him double that as he goes out. He is to go out with twelve years of salary, paid to him in animals and grain and wine.

There seems to be at least two classes of poor. One class which we dealt with above, are those who have sold themselves or the crops of their land to pay their debt. The other class are those who are in hard times but who have not sold themselves to pay their debt. They may have sold their crops, if they had crops to sell, but not themselves. We see this because of several passages which speak of poor going into the fields which do not belong to them to glean after the harvesters. If a person has sold himself, then he would have no

need to do this because the person to whom he sold himself is responsible for feeding him and taking care of all his needs.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 19:10

“And you shall not glean your vineyard, neither shall you gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner; I am YHWH your Elohim.”

During harvest time, YHWH commands us that we are to leave some for the poor. We are not to take every bit of fruit or grain from the vineyard or field. Some may object to this, asking, “What if the poor don’t show up to harvest the corners of the field?” It does not really matter whether any poor show up to harvest the corners of the field or to glean the vines or trees, those things do not belong to the owner, but to the poor. To take it is to be guilty of stealing and breaking His commandments.

Shemot (Exodus) 23:11

“but the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow; that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave the beast of the field shall eat. In like manner you shall deal with your vineyard, and with your olive yard.

In the shmittah year, we are not to work the ground and plant seed. The land is to remain fallow. Naturally, some seed during harvest time from the previous year will fall to the ground and grow. This volunteer crop is for the poor so they may eat. Likewise, the vineyard and the olive yard are not to be harvested either, but the poor may come and eat from the vineyard and the olive yard.

Mishle (Proverbs) 29:7

***The righteous take knowledge of the cause of the poor;
The wicked has no understanding to know it.***

Do you see? The way of YHWH takes care of the poor, but not by a government. Rather, by the people of Israel through their obedience to His commandments.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 23:22

“And when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field, neither shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest; you shall leave them for the poor, and for the sojourner [ger]; I am YHWH your Elohim.”

Even when we go out to harvest the crops of the field, we are to take care not to harvest the whole field, but rather we are commanded to leave some so that the poor can come and harvest for their own needs. YHWH does not want lazy people in His land. He wants people who work the land. Even the poor of the land are to come out and work for their needs. If a person is simply poor, they are not to simply receive a handout, but are to work at helping themselves. Obviously, if a person is severely handicapped where he could not

do such a thing as go out into the fields to glean the corners, then he would need the generosity of his brothers. But that would not be the norm, rather the exception.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 25:25

“If your brother be waxed poor, and sell some of his possession, then shall his kinsman that is next unto him come, and shall redeem that which his brother hath sold.”

Here, YHWH commands each and every member of Israel: if we see a brother who has fallen upon hard times, then, we are to go and buy that which he has had to sell and give it back to him. That is the nature of redemption.

Mishle (Proverbs) 14:21

***He that despise his neighbor sins;
But he that hath pity on the poor, happy is he.***

My grandfather was a successful farmer during the depression. Many farmers around him were losing their farms. The bank would foreclose and then the sheriff would come and auction the farm off. Now my grandfather was a very large man. The banker would show up to the auction and they would always be able to run the bid up where only they could afford to buy the land. The going rate of land at a sheriff’s auction in that area was seven to ten cents per acre. The bankers would often run it up to eleven or twelve cents per acre. Often, my grandfather would go to the auction and find the banker and make him understand that he was going to buy the land that was being auctioned that day, but that he was only going to pay nine cents an acre. After he bought the land, he would then deed it back to his neighbor who had lost it. This is exactly what this passage is teaching us to do to redeem our brother.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 25:39

“And if your brother be waxed poor with you, and sell himself unto you; you shall not make him to serve as a bond-servant.”

When a person redeems a brother and he becomes his servant until the next Shmittah year, he is not to make him serve harshly. Rather, he is to be treated in the same way that the master would want to be treated if the roles were reversed.

Matithyah (Matthew) 7:12

“However you would want men to do unto you, even so you do also unto them; for this is the Torah and the prophets.”

This is what Mashiach Yeshua taught us, Torah teaches us to treat each other with kindness and dignity, especially those who are poor and in need.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 24:14-15

14 "You shall not oppress a hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of your brethren, or of your sojourners that are in your land within your gates:

15 in his day you shall give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he is poor, and set his heart upon it; lest he cry against you unto YHWH, and it be sin unto you."

This passage is dealing with the poor who have not had to sell themselves into servitude. However, they are still very poor. The poor are to be paid on a daily basis. This is an indication of just how poor such a person is. In paying him at the end of each day, he has the means to feed himself and his family.

Mishle (Proverbs) 14:31

He that oppresses the poor reproaches his Maker;

But he that has mercy on the needy honors Him.

It seems that the poor have been given to us to test us to see if we will hear and obey the Voice of YHWH our Elohim. Will we honor our Creator by taking care of those who need our help? This is what He has commanded each and every one of us to do. To depend upon someone else to do it, whether that is looking to a government, some group, or another individual, is not facing up to one's responsibility as given by YHWH our Elohim.

Mishle (Proverbs) 28:27

He that gives to the poor shall not lack;

But he that hides his eyes shall have many a curse.

The bottom line of taking care of the poor is succinctly stated in the above proverb. If we do not want to have lack, then we need to give to the poor and take care of our brothers and neighbors in need. If a person does not, then such a person shall be cursed! Giving to a government or to some organization does not fulfill any of these commandments. Only when a person gives directly to a poor person are these commandments fulfilled.

Understanding Torah Society

Chapter 8 – Public Goods – Summary

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 8:3

“And He humbled you, and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna, which you did not know not, neither did your fathers know; that He might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of YHWH does man live.”

YHWH has given order and structure to His people, the people of Israel. He did not want them to be self-ruled, but rather, ruled by Him in all aspects of their lives. He did not want them to take advantage of one another, but rather, He wanted them to watch over each other and to take care of one another. It would mean that each person would have to overcome certain human characteristics, which asserted dominance in mankind when he stepped into rebellion against YHWH our Creator, namely, self.

The whole appeal to people with the concept of “public goods” consists of appealing to man’s base nature, in that, he deserves certain things and that someone must give those things to him. Furthermore, when certain items are labeled as being “public,” then it seems to soften the impact in a person’s mind when those items are forcibly taken away from him and given to another. Call it what you want, but it is stealing, and it does not matter who does it, and regardless of how “altruistic” the motives seem on the surface, it is against Torah.

The whole idea of public goods, 1) order, 2) defense, 3) public health, 4) infrastructure, 5) education, and 6) social welfare, being doled out by some governmental benefactor is man’s invention to control the masses. Its sole purpose is to enable the few to govern the many. This is the unseen truth about public goods—they are not for the good of the people, but for the control of the people and for the good of those who ration out that which they have taken from the people.

The society which YHWH wants His people to live in is not based upon such principles. His society is based upon [justice, mercy, and faith](#)³, all of which are placed upon a foundation of His love and mutual respect for one another. The society which YHWH has given to His

³ [http://www.onetorahforall.com/Studies 2011/The Weightier Matters of Torah.html](http://www.onetorahforall.com/Studies%2011/The%20Weightier%20Matters%20of%20Torah.html)

people operates upon a completely different foundation. That foundation is Mashiach Yeshua. It has always been so.

Yochanan (John) 14:15

“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”

This same love then helps to identify His people to others.

Yochanan (John) 13:35

“By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love one to another.”

This love, along with the [Law of Liberty](#)⁴ is what is to govern the society of Israel. Men are not to govern other men.

Matithyah (Matthew) 20:25-26

25 But Yeshua called them to himself, and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them.”

26 “It shall not be so among you; but whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister.”

These are the foundation stones of a society built upon Torah. The societies in which we all presently live are not based upon these principles, but upon the principles of Babel. It is time to begin shifting our thinking and mind set so that it is not upon the things of this world, but upon the commandments of our Creator.

Only in this way may true order be accomplished among His people. True order is not something that is forced upon others, but rather, is something which flows out of a man’s heart as he serves his Creator. This is possible because the Creator has filled such a man with His Spirit.

When any member of this society is threatened in any way, the society as a whole responds to defend itself and each of its individual members. Again, it is not something which is forced, but rather, it is the spiritual outflow of the infilling of His Spirit in His people.

When each and every person is living for YHWH and letting his neighbor live for YHWH in the same manner, that is, in the manner in which YHWH wants him to live for Him, then all is well and good. When all is well and good, then each and every person is healthy. He is healthy because he is eating according to what YHWH has commanded as well as avoiding what He has commanded not to be eaten. Thus, there is no sickness and no plagues because there is no sin in the camp. This is one of the foremost causes of sickness amongst His people, a cause which is largely ignored today. No person can break His commandments with impunity, for YHWH promises us that He will discipline His people

⁴ <http://www.onetorahforall.com/Studies 2011/The Law of Liberty.html>

with all the sickness and plagues of Egypt and more, if they do not keep and do each and every one of His commandments. Obey and be healthy. Disobey and be sick. It is the choice He has given to His people. This is true not only for individuals, but it is even truer for a nation.

YHWH has given a portion of His land to Israel. He has commanded her to divide it up by lot amongst the tribes and then further divide it up by lot amongst the individual tribes for the families. What each family is awarded by lot is to be in their possession forever. No one has the right or authority to take that land or any portion of that land or what it produces away from that family for any reason whatsoever. So YHWH has commanded! If a road goes across that land, the portion of that road on an individual's land belongs to the owner of the land. YHWH made no provision for a man-made government to own any land, only tribes and the families therein. The Levites are a special case, with which we will deal more fully in a later study.

YHWH has charged each set of parents with training their children in living Torah. Once that training is complete, the child may get more education to fulfill that place in the Torah society which YHWH has called him to do. However, that education must be Torah based in which equal weights and measures are always being applied to all things, great and small.

There shall be poor among the people of YHWH. YHWH has given us great detail in how we are to take care of these individuals. Each and every person is responsible for his neighbors and brothers. This responsibility cannot be passed off onto some government entity. If a person sees a need in another person, then he is obligated to do what he can with the means in his own hand.

In the common rhetoric of today, public goods are supposedly something that an individual cannot provide for himself. However, as we have examined each area of the common public goods as seen by governments today, each and every one of these public goods not only can be provided by an individual, but is actually commanded by YHWH to be done by the individual. YHWH makes no provision for a government to give handouts to anyone for any reason.

Therefore, there is absolutely no reason for a government to take what you have earned through hard work and give it to another person. In fact, a society living according to Torah does not even need a government to function properly. Yea, as we have seen as recorded in Scripture, a government actually hinders a society from keeping Torah.

Understanding Torah Society

Chapter 9 – Brother’s Keeper

B’reshit (Genesis) 4:9

And YHWH said to Qayin, “Where is Abel thy brother?” And he said, “I do not know; am I my brother’s keeper?”

Context is always important in gaining a true understanding of any passage of Scripture. It seems particularly true when looking into the passage just above. Qayin (Cain) had become jealous and angry with his brother Abel. As a result, Qayin killed his brother. Both Qayin as well as YHWH knew what Qayin had done. The question which YHWH asks Qayin is based upon that knowledge. Not only is the question based upon that knowledge, but Qayin’s answer is as well.

What YHWH was confronting Qayin with was the safety and well-being of Abel. When YHWH asks where Abel was, YHWH already knew he was dead. What YHWH is actually asking Qayin, Is your brother safe and well? Of course, he was not. But what is even more telling is Qayin’s answer, that he was not responsible for the safety and well-being of his brother. However, this is not what Scripture teaches. What Scripture teaches is that a person is indeed his brother’s keeper, i.e., that each person is charged with the safety and well-being of every other person.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 19:18

“You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people; but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am YHWH.

Yeshua taught us that this commandment and principle was the second greatest commandment, second only to loving YHWH our Elohim with all one’s being. We are commanded to be our brother’s keeper. In fact, it is the doing of the second greatest commandment which proves that one is keeping the first greatest commandment to love YHWH our Elohim with all our being. The problems seem to arise when one does not properly understand exactly what it means to be one’s “keeper.”

When one understands that he is to look out for the safety and well-being of others, then he is doing well. What the above commandment does not mean is perhaps just as

important as what it means. Therefore, for the sake of walking in His Spirit, let us examine what it does not mean for a moment.

One of the challenges followers of Yeshua face today are self-appointed Torah-police. Certain individuals have taken it upon themselves to go about enforcing their interpretations of Scripture as being the only viable and true interpretation and all other understandings of Scripture except their own are evil and walking in sin. This is not being kind-hearted nor loving towards one's brother; it is not being a brother's keeper; it is an attempt to be his master. It is not even reasonable to think such a thing.

YHWH through His Spirit is fully capable of revealing to each and every person exactly what it is that He wants each individual person to do and how He wants that person to live. Living in unity does not mean that every single person is doing exactly the same thing at the very same time. It seems this is exactly what some of these Torah-police think—unity means uniformity. Rather, unity simply means that each and every person is hearing and obeying the Voice of YHWH moment-by-moment. Scripture teaches us in a variety of ways that every person fits into the body of Mashiach in his own unique way, each one doing his own unique task. Therefore, it is completely unreasonable that one should expect that all dress alike, or that all behave alike, or that there is any other similarity in the actions of the individual members except that all are obeying His Voice, i.e., uniformity among the individual members. The individual members of Israel are not made with a cookie cutter. When one or more individuals obey the voice of another member rather than the Voice of YHWH, then those doing so cannot be walking in unity, even though looking at the outward appearance there seems to be uniformity among that small faction. Following, that is, obeying the voice of a person to the exclusion of hearing and obeying the Voice of YHWH is idolatry, plain and simple!

To have proper order in a Torah based society, unity must prevail, i.e., each member must hear and [obey the Voice of YHWH](http://www.onetorahforall.com/teachings/Hearing_His_Voice.html)⁵. Only in this way can a person be his brother's keeper.

Because the individual members of the body of Mashiach are flawed humans, mistakes and errors in judgment are expected to happen. YHWH through His Torah has made provisions for the Torah based society to be self-correcting. However, for it to be self-correcting, the provisions must be followed and obeyed.

When one member witnesses something that appears to him as being wrong or misguided in some fashion, then he is commanded to follow a certain procedure. The first step in that procedure is as follows.

Mattithyah (Matthew) 7:3-5

3 "And why do you look at the mote that is in your brother's eye, but do not consider the beam that is in your own eye?"

⁵ http://www.onetorahforall.com/teachings/Hearing_His_Voice.html

4 Or how will you say to your brother, 'Let me cast the mote out of your eye; and behold, the beam is still in your own eye?'

5 You hypocrite, first cast the beam out of your own eye; and then you shall see clearly to cast the mote out of your brother's eye."

The first step in helping a brother is to get one's own house in order first. If one does not do this, then he is walking out of order and will damage the harmony present within the body of Mashiach. It does not matter how long it takes for one to get the beam out of his own eye; he must work at it until the beam has been completely removed from his own eye before he has the proper right and authority to approach his brother about the speck in his brother's eye. It is highly likely that once the beam has been removed from one's own eye and his own vision has been cleared up, one will see that there is not really a speck in his brother's eye at all, but rather he was only seeing a reflection of his own beam in his brother's eye.

The whole idea within Torah of being the keeper of one's brother is upon the foundation of love and humility. All actions done which have an effect upon one's neighbor is to be done with the greatest of love for him as an individual whom YHWH loves as well as respecting that person's right to obey the Voice of YHWH and make his own mistakes and misjudgments and be lovingly corrected.

Mattithyah (Matthew) 18:14-17

14 "Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

15 And if your brother sin against you, go, show him his fault between you and him alone; if he listens to you, you have gained your brother.

16 But if he does not listen to you, take with you one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established.

17 And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the assembly; and if he refuses to listen to the assembly also, let him be to you as the Gentile and the publican."

This process is not about forcing another person to do what you want them to do. It is about restoring that person back to YHWH. In this process then, order is maintained. Please take careful note of verse fourteen. Yeshua states that the whole idea behind this process is that no one should be lost. If one cannot go to his neighbor with the idea of lovingly restoring him back from where he has fallen, then he has no business going to his brother yet. He needs to go back to step one and finish getting the log out of his own eye first. Going to one's brother or neighbor for any other reason will result in utter catastrophe for all involved.

This is what it means to be my brother's keeper. It means that I am interested in keeping him in a right relationship with YHWH first, and second in a right relationship with me. Being in a right relationship simply means that he is hearing and obeying the Voice of YHWH. If he is doing that then all is well. Being my brother's keeper is not so much, what is

my brother doing (or not doing) according to what YHWH has commanded me to do, but what has YHWH commanded him to do.

May YHWH teach us to be our brother's keeper in a manner that is pleasing to Him.

Understanding Torah Society

Chapter 10 – Loving My Neighbor

Matithyah [Matthew] 22:39

***39 “And a second like it is this,
You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”***

There is this false idea today, in which these words of Yeshua have been twisted to mean, that one is commanded to love himself. This is not anywhere near the truth. Yeshua did not say that, nor did He mean that one is to love himself before he can love his neighbor. Nor does it mean that one has to love himself or else he cannot love his neighbor. This false idea has spawned a whole generation which has grown up with this false teaching of having one focused upon loving oneself. This is not Scriptural in the least! So what did it mean to love your neighbor as yourself?

Let us briefly consider what has become known to us today as the Parable of the Good Samaritan. Here are the last two verses of that parable.

Luqa 10:36-37

36 “Which of these three, do you think proved to be a neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers?”

37 And he said, “He that showed mercy on him.” And Yeshua said unto him, “Go, and you do likewise.”

Yeshua fairly well answered that question when He was asked, “Who is my neighbor?” The answer Yeshua gave to answer that question was the story about the man who fell among thieves and was beaten and robbed and left for dead. Then a priest passed by and did nothing to help this man. After that a Levite passed by and did nothing to help this man. Both of these men took notice of the wounded man because they both went to the opposite side of the road. Then, finally, a Samaritan man passed by and he stopped and helped the man. Then he loaded him up and took him to the nearest inn. There he arranged for care of this man until he was well enough to leave.

So who was the neighbor, Yeshua asks? The answer, of course: the man who helped him. So let us put the question in a slightly different form; the answer still will be the same, but

with greater instructional value for us. “Which of these men loved his neighbor as himself?” The answer is, once again, that the Samaritan man showed true self-sacrificing love towards the man in need. The Samaritan man loved the man in need as he would himself if he was in that same need. This is what it means to love one’s neighbor as oneself.

Simply put, to love one’s neighbor as oneself means to meet the needs of my neighbor as they become known. For instance, if you are hungry, what do you do? You get something to eat. So if your neighbor is hungry, what are you going to do to show your love for him? Feed him! If you are cold, what are you going to do? You are going to put on a coat. If your neighbor is cold, but has no coat, what are you going to do to show your love for your neighbor? You will get a coat for him and put it on him so he will not be cold. Whatever the need that we have in ourselves, we will meet that need in our neighbor. Likewise, if we see a need in our neighbor, then in order to show our love for him, we must meet his need.

Years ago, a friend of my wife was in need during the winter. She was without heat in her house. She had the means to burn wood, but no wood to burn to heat her house. My sons and I cut a load of firewood and took it to her house, unloaded it, and stacked it for her. If we would have needed wood for our own house, this is what we would have done. To love my neighbor then, simply means that I needed to cut some wood for her because she was in a position in which she could not do this herself.

Ya’aqov [James] 2:15-16

***15 If a brother or sister be naked and in lack of daily food,
16 and one of you say to them, ‘Go in peace, be warmed and be filled’; and yet you give them not the things needful to the body; what good does that do?***

Notice that Ya’aqov teaches this exact thing in his epistle; i.e., that we are to meet the needs of those around us. Otherwise, what good is our faith? It is good for nothing, unless we love our neighbor enough to meet his needs. Please understand that loving one’s neighbor as oneself is about meeting his needs, not his wants. It is about helping him when he is unable to help himself to meet the needs of his life.

Loving our neighbor as ourselves is about how we are treating others! It is not about loving oneself as some teach. When one examines the Torah Moshe, he will find such commandments as pulling a neighbor’s ox out of the ditch, even on Shabbat. The ox’s life is in jeopardy and needs help to live. See, here is the thing: if we have an ox and it falls into a ditch, we will pull it out. We will do that even on Shabbat. As well we should! Likewise, if our neighbor’s ox falls into a ditch, then we are to get that animal out of the ditch as if it were our own animal. That is the commandment of Torah! The saving of a life, even on Shabbat, is the highest and foremost commandment.

Another Torah commandment is that if we see an animal that has fallen under its burden, we are commanded to relieve it of its burden so it can get back upon its feet. We would certainly do this for our own beast of burden. And to show our love for our neighbor, we

are to do the same for his beast of burden. Loving our neighbors as ourselves is about taking care of our neighbors. It is about watching over those around us as if they were our own family, because they are our family! This is what it means to live in a Torah society: knowing that each and every person around me, my neighbors, is all family. And because they are all family, I have a responsibility to watch over them and to care for them and to help them whenever possible.

It does not necessarily mean that I have to agree with everything in that person's life, that is, the way that he does things. YHWH leads that person in the way He wants them to live. He does the same for me. Loving my neighbor is allowing my neighbor to serve YHWH in the manner that YHWH directs him to serve Him. In fact, it means that, if necessary, I will actually help my neighbor accomplish what YHWH has led him to do, if he needs my help to get it done.

B'reshit [Genesis] 4:9

YHWH said to Qa'yin, "Where is Hevel your brother?" And he replied, "I don't know; am I my brother's keeper?"

In the previous part of this series we looked at being our [brother's keeper](#)⁶ in detail. This is what it means to love our neighbors as ourselves. When we are living and keeping Torah, then we will always be watching over one another in love, care, and respect. The thing that we need to see here is that the matter of obeying the second greatest commandment is about what we are doing to our neighbor. It is not about what we believe (doctrine). There are many who wrongly teach that these types of commandments only apply between believers. And, some go so far as to teach that these commandments can only rightly be applied to those of the same doctrine. Furthermore, if one is not a part of the same group, then these commandments do not apply to others outside their group. These types of teachings are clearly against Torah and all of Scripture.

Commonly, in the days of Yeshua, there was animosity between the Jew and the Samaritan. When the Samaritan man helped the man who had been robbed and beaten, he crossed that divide to be a neighbor. They did not believe the same way. They did not live the same way. To them, they were not neighbors. The Jewish man who had been robbed and beaten was passed by and not helped by fellow Jews, a priest and a Levite. Yeshua points out that it was the man who helped the wounded man, who was the neighbor. Helping our neighbor, loving our neighbor, is about what we do for him, not about having the right "beliefs" or needing to be in agreement with another person before I can extend a helping hand.

Let us consider this passage.

⁶ <http://www.onetorahforall.com/Torah Society/Understanding Torah Society part 9.html>

Shemot [Exodus] 12:49

One law shall be to him that is home-born, and unto the stranger that sojourns among you.

Unless the Torah specifically states otherwise, all Torah commandments are for the entire nation of Israel and those who live among them, regardless of what they believe.

Don't you think that it is about time that we started acting like His people and behaving in a way that is pleasing to Him? Should we not begin by loving our neighbor whom we can see?

Yochanan Aleph [1st John] 4:20

If a man says, "I love Elohim", and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he that loves not his brother whom he has seen, cannot love Elohim whom he has not seen.

Yeshua tied the two greatest commandments together for a very good reason. We cannot truly keep one without keeping the other. If we are to have any hope of keeping and obeying the greatest commandment to love Elohim, then we must, of necessity, keep and obey the second greatest commandment. This is how we prove to those around us, and to Elohim Himself, that we love Him, by loving our neighbor.

The doctrine of loving self is focused upon self and who my neighbor is. This is what the Pharisees wanted to know that day. Who is my neighbor? Yeshua did not answer that question, but in typical fashion, replaced that question with a better question, a question more to the point. It is not, "Who is my neighbor?" Rather it is, "To whom are you being a neighbor?"

If a person sees a need in another person and passes by, then he has failed to be a neighbor to that person. In a Torah society, this should never happen. In a Torah society, each and every person is looking out for the interests of others.

Philippians 2:4

not looking each of you to his own interests, but each of you also to the interests of others.

I grew up in rural America. I still live in the country on a farm. The people around us, our neighbors, are not of the same beliefs as we are. However, if I have a need, if I need help in some way, all I need to do is ask and they are there for us. On occasion we would go for a walk along country roads. People whom we did not even know would stop and ask if we needed a ride or needed some type of assistance. These people did not claim to keep Torah as some do. Yet, they are much closer to the Kingdom than some who do claim to keep Torah and do not understand what it means to be a neighbor.

Romans 2:14-15

14 (for when Gentiles that have not the Torah do by nature the things of the Torah, these, not having the Torah, are the Torah unto themselves;

15 in that they show the work of the Torah written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them);

I have experienced more abuse and mistreatment at the hands of so-called “believers,” than I have ever experienced at the hands of those who make no such claim. Brethren, this ought not to be so! Let us all, with one heart, determine, as far as is possible for each of us, to treat all men with the kindness and compassion which He has bestowed upon us, for He has commanded us to do so.

The way a person lives every day of his life reveals what is in his heart. If the Torah is written upon a man’s heart, then the Torah will be manifested towards those around him, that is, he will be a neighbor towards those around him. If the Torah is not written upon his heart, then it will not be possible for the Torah to be manifested towards others; he will not be a neighbor to those around him. He will not show love, kindness, and respect towards others, but will wrongly expect love, kindness, and respect to be given to him, without his giving it to others.

A Torah society consists of individuals who know and understand what it means to be a neighbor. As such, regardless of what need is presented to him during the course of a day, he does what is within his own power to help meet that need. Then, those who may be waiting upon his arrival shall fully understand and support his being tardy, because they, too, understand what it means to be a neighbor and live by that same standard. In short, they are his neighbor as well.

Are you being a neighbor to those around you?

1st Timothy 3:7

Moreover he must have good testimony from them that are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

Do those around you consider you a good neighbor?

Understanding Torah Society

Chapter 11 – Personal Responsibility

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 4:30

When you are in tribulation, and all these things have come upon you, in the latter days you shall return to YHWH your Elohim, and hearken unto His Voice;

The society of Israel is built upon Torah. Each and every single person has a responsibility to keep and to do His commandments. Furthermore, each person within Israel is to help his neighbor and his brother to do the same—help him obey the Torah. This does not mean that one man forces another man to obey His commandments. It is not even possible to force another person to walk in obedience to the Voice of YHWH. One should not even attempt such a thing. It is not pleasing to YHWH our Elohim to attempt to force another to walk in obedience to Him. When one man forces compliance upon another man, what actually happens is obedience to that man, not to YHWH. This is idolatry. This idolatry is not being committed so much by the one being forced, but rather, by the one who is doing the forcing.

Each person's responsibility consists of returning to YHWH through shema. In the above verse the English word "hearken" comes from the Hebrew word שמע "shema," which means to *hear and obey*. No one can do this for another person. Each person must do it himself if he desires to return to YHWH. A person cannot be in a right relationship with YHWH without shema. It is a person's responsibility to learn to recognize, hear (heed), and obey His Voice.

Yirmeyah (Jeremiah) 31:34

"And they shall no longer teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know YHWH;' for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them," says YHWH; "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more."

Within a Torah society, personal responsibility is essential for the society to be healthy. The aspects of that responsibility are well defined in Torah, including what to do, as well as what not to do regarding one's interactions with neighbors and brothers. More than anything

else, personal responsibility consists of taking charge of one's own actions so that he is hearing and obeying the Voice of YHWH. Sadly, this is not what typically happens today.

Tehillim (Psalm) 14:3

They are all gone aside; they are together become filthy;

There is none that does good, no, not one.

One of an individual's first responsibilities is to realize that there is no one who is righteous, particularly he himself. Each and every person is a flawed person. Each person has his own shortcomings, idiosyncrasies, and character traits which can cause irritations in others. In short, what this means is that, when His Spirit places it upon an individual to go and speak to another individual about something personal, the one who is sent must have his house in order before going. We dealt with this in the previous studies on being a brother's keeper (chapter 9), as well as being a neighbor (chapter 10). Under no circumstances can one afford to shirk this personal responsibility.

Upon going to the other person, one's personal responsibility ends upon delivery of the message to the person. That is, while he can help the other person if needed, he cannot, in any way, force the other person to obey YHWH. Obedience is a matter of the heart. If it is not in a person's heart to obey the Voice of YHWH, then there is no external force capable of getting the other person to obey His Voice. Simply put, the first prerequisite of obeying His Voice is to be able to hear His Voice. If one cannot hear His Voice, then how can a person obey His Voice? He cannot!

Ivrim (Hebrews) 1:1-2

1 Elohim, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by different ways and in various manners,

2 has at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;

Make no mistake about it: the Voice of YHWH is not limited in how He can speak to a man, or through what agency He may choose to convey His message. He can even choose to speak through the agency of an ass, either the four-legged or the two legged variety. It is then incumbent upon each person to [test every word](http://www.onetorahforall.com/Studies2010/Testing%20the%20Spirits.html)⁷, every spirit, to see if those words have come from YHWH. Until a person tests those words, he cannot know with certainty if those words are from Him. The words must be measured against His written word, the Torah, as well as His Spirit within a man. If they line up, then one is obligated to heed the message, regardless of through what agency the message came. Sadly, when the message is not liked, the messenger often becomes a target of the hearer. When this happens, the message falls by the wayside. Part of one's personal responsibility then, is to make sure the message is properly measured by His Spirit in one's heart and mind, ignoring the qualifications of the messenger, or lack thereof.

⁷ [http://www.onetorahforall.com/Studies2010/Testing the Spirits.html](http://www.onetorahforall.com/Studies2010/Testing%20the%20Spirits.html)

Yechezqel (Ezekiel) 33:4

then whosoever hears the sound of the trumpet, and takes not warning, if the sword comes, and takes him away, his blood shall be upon his own head.

I would think that in a true Torah society, once a person was confronted with the truth of a matter or situation, all would be done to correct it. This certainly would include the possibility of correcting the sent person's perception of the situation that may be in error, as well as the person receiving the message, who may also be in error.

Part of accepting personal responsibility in a Torah society is realizing that one is a flawed being. As such, one must realize that all he sees and hears may not be properly interpreted by him. For example, think of many witnesses to an accident. Each witness has a very unique perspective. As such, each witness is going to tell a slightly different account of the event in question. Do these differences make one account wrong and another right? No! It simply means that each witness only has a partial view of what happened. One might also consider the story of the six blind men and the elephant. Each man had a very unique perspective on what an elephant was like. Each man was correct, but could not see what the others could see. This resulted in arguing amongst them. For a more complete treatment of this parable please see [*The Blind Men and the Elephant*](#)⁸.

Likewise, when a person sees something which is judged as being against Torah, his perspective is incomplete. What he thinks he saw may be in error. One must be open to this possibility. If he is not, then he is not accepting personal responsibility in the matter in question. Nor has he gotten the log out of his own eye yet!

Ya'aqov (James) 2:10

For whosoever shall keep the whole Torah, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all.

In the eyes of the one true Judge, you and I are lawbreakers. We are guilty of breaking the Torah. According to the above passage, each and every one of us is guilty of breaking each and every commandment. And because we are guilty of such, there is not a single one of us who has the authority to condemn our neighbor or brother.

Furthermore, one must realize that whatever the error is that he feels the need to go and correct, he is also guilty of that same error. If one cannot accept this truth, then once again, he has no authority to go and make an attempt to correct it in another, for he has not accepted his own personal responsibility before His Creator for his own guilt in the matter.

⁸ [http://www.onetorahforall.com/Essays 2012/TheBlindMenAndTheElephant.html](http://www.onetorahforall.com/Essays%2012/TheBlindMenAndTheElephant.html)

Romans 2:1

Therefore you are without excuse, man, whosoever you are that judges, for wherein you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you that judge do practice the same things.

The truth is that when a person sees something in another which he feels is error, there likely is something akin to that in his own heart and life that he detests. It is the very reason it is so easily seen in another. It is the very reason why it is so irritating in a person's mind when seen in another person—it reminds him of what is in his own life. Personal responsibility accepts this and looks squarely in the mirror before going to another.

Taking personal responsibility for one's own life, then, is accepting this truth. Personal responsibility understands that what one sees in another is also a reflection from his own life. Furthermore, this same personal responsibility knows that he must work at getting the log out of his own eye first, in order to help his brother with his speck. One is obligated to go to his brother, to his neighbor, to help him walk closer to YHWH. But in going to one's brother, by the very nature of the Torah society, one must move towards perfection (YHWH) himself first.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 30:8

“And you shall return and obey the Voice of YHWH, and do all His commandments which I command you this day.”

In these days of returning to YHWH, one of the primary things which must happen in each and every individual's life is for him to learn to hear and obey His Voice. One cannot truly return to YHWH and to His Torah without learning how to shema, that is, to hear and obey His Voice. This personal responsibility cannot be given or taken, only accepted by each individual. I cannot do it for you and you cannot do it for me.

Furthermore, it is time that each one of us accepts that YHWH will deal with each person as He sees fit. YHWH gives to each person the light in the order and amount which is according to His will for that individual. Regardless of what I say or how I say it, I cannot give any other person light on any subject. Only YHWH through His Spirit can do that in a person's life. My responsibility in the matter is to speak His message in as clear and concise a manner as possible, without attempting to manipulate or browbeat the listener into submission to His word.

B'midbar (Numbers) 14:18

“YHWH is slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness, forgiving iniquity and transgression; and that will by no means do away with visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation.”

Part of one's personal responsibility is realizing that he has inherited certain tendencies from his parents and grandparents at least back four generations. Basically, what this means is that if one of your forefathers was an alcoholic, you may very well have that

tendency to be an alcoholic as well. It does not mean that you are, or even will be, an alcoholic, but that you will have to overcome this inclination. This applies to every possible wrongdoing imaginable. Whatever sin and transgression any and all of one's forefathers (back four generations) were involved in doing can be inherited. This does not mean that a person is guilty of those same sins, but rather he will have to overcome that particular temptation.

Please note in the above passage the use of the word "iniquity". The use of this word, rather than the use of "sin" or "transgression," teaches us that this is a matter of the heart, rather than a matter of action, which is being passed on from one generation to the next. Sadly, the difference between sin, transgression, and iniquity has not always been understood or taught properly. For a more complete treatment of these differences please see the study: [Sin in Thought, Word, and Deed Every Day?](#)⁹

Yehoshua (Joshua) 24:15

"And if it seems evil unto you to serve YHWH, choose you this day whom you will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve YHWH."

Each person must choose for himself whom he shall serve. Whether a person accepts his responsibility to choose or not, he still makes a choice. By not making a choice to serve YHWH, a person makes a choice by acquiescence to not serve Him. The default choice is serving someone or something other than YHWH. A person cannot serve YHWH by accident. Service to YHWH happens only when a person willingly chooses to love Him, and through that love, learns to hear and obey His Voice.

Melakim Aleph (1st Kings) 18:21

And Elijah came near unto all the people, and said, "How long will you go limping between the two sides? If YHWH be Elohim, follow Him; but if Ba'al, then follow him." And the people answered him not a word.

As Yeshua taught, it is not possible to serve two masters. In the confrontation between all the prophets of Ba'al and Elijah on Mount Carmel, the people were confronted with a choice. Apparently they had fallen so far from following YHWH that they could not make an intelligent choice and did not know who the Creator of all things was. They had followed YHWH with their lips, but served Ba'al with their lives. The result was that they had lost connection with YHWH and did not know Him or the sound of His Voice.

YHWH will not force any person to follow Him. He will not force any person to know Him. He is there, waiting—waiting for His people to come to Him and to have a relationship with Him. YHWH is waiting for His people to shema.

⁹ <http://www.onetorahforall.com/Studies 2012/Sin.html>

It is a person's responsibility to shema. It is a person's responsibility to live by faith, not by works. A person who attempts to live by works cannot shema the sound of His Voice. When a person obeys His commandments, that is, he does Torah, it needs to be because he is hearing and obeying His Voice. There is no other way to live Torah. Any person who attempts to obey His commandments without hearing His Voice is doing so in a legalistic manner and will eventually stumble in his attempts.

As a person hears and obeys His Voice (shema), such a person shall be filled with His Spirit. A person filled with His Spirit watches over his brother and is a neighbor to those around him. A person demonstrates his love of YHWH by the way he is treating his brother and by how he is a neighbor.

A person who accepts his own responsibility understands that his responsibility rests upon a right relationship with YHWH. As a result, he knows that he can never add to or take away from the written record of His Voice.

In a Torah society, when each person walks in the fullness of his own responsibility, there is shalom. There is shalom between each person and His Creator, bringing shalom between each and every person. Every man is under his own tree and eating the fruit of his own vine.

Understanding Torah Society

Chapter 12 – Justice and the Legal System

Matithyah (Matthew) 23:23

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you tithe mint and anise and cumin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the Torah, justice, and mercy, and faith: but these you ought to have done, and not to have left the other undone.”

In this study we are going to focus upon justice. However, underlying the concept of justice must always and ever be mercy and faith. Without mercy guiding one’s actions, there can be no true justice. If one’s own actions are not done in faith, there can be no justice.

Ya’aqov (James) 2:13

For judgment is without mercy to him who has showed no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.

Mercy always outweighs justice. Whenever possible, justice should be replaced with mercy. This is not only appropriate, but it is demanded by Torah. We see this example repeated from YHWH towards Israel as she continually sinned in the face of the Almighty. Rather than giving her the judgment she deserved, He would extend mercy to Israel once again, and this repeatedly.

For a more complete treatment of justice, mercy, and faith as [The Weightier Matters of Torah](http://www.onetorahforall.com/Studies%202011/The%20Weightier%20Matters%20of%20Torah.html)¹⁰, please see that study.

Romans 14:23b

... whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

Everything a person says, everything a person does, must be done in faith. This certainly must include seeking after justice. Justice is not simply a matter of determining facts and rendering a ruling. Justice is about seeking YHWH. Justice is about doing His will, not one’s own will. Justice is not about restitution nearly as much as it is about restoration. Even though there is plenty in Torah about restitution, restitution is not the primary goal. Rather, it is about restoring the relationship between the parties involved. If a person does not

¹⁰ <http://www.onetorahforall.com/Studies%202011/The%20Weightier%20Matters%20of%20Torah.html>

understand this elementary principle, then such a person is not capable of rendering justice within a Torah society.

Ivrim (Hebrews) 11:6

and without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto Him; for he that comes to Elohim must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that seek after Him.

We are commanded to keep Torah whole. To attempt to render one of the weightier matters of the Torah to the exclusion of the others is to violate the commandment not to take away from the commandments. True justice cannot be given without mercy or faith. Likewise, true justice also cannot be received without mercy or faith, either.

Yeshua gave a parable about a ruler who began settling accounts with those in his service. One servant could not pay what he owed his master because the debt was so large. The servant begged for mercy and received it from his master. However, the servant was not willing to extend the mercy he had received to his fellow servant.

Matithyah (Matthew) 18:27-28

27 And the master of that servant, being moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.

28 But that servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, who owed him a hundred shillings: and he laid hold on him, and took him by the throat, saying, "Pay what you owe me."

In this parable Mashiach illustrates the importance of giving to others mercy over justice. Each one of us hopes to receive mercy, yea, has already received mercy; therefore, it is wise for one to give that which he has already received, for if one fails to give mercy, he shall receive no mercy, that is, the mercy that he has already received shall be rescinded.

Matithyah (Matthew) 7:12

Therefore whatsoever you would that men should do unto you, even so you do also unto them; for this is the Torah and the prophets.

Another point one needs to keep before himself when dealing with justice is how to treat one's brothers and neighbors. One must always keep in mind the passage just above in making all decisions concerning the actions of another. If there is ever any doubt, the doubt must fall on the side of the accused. If there is any room for giving mercy, it must be extended towards the accused.

Before we look into the legal system, one last principle needs to be understood in the context of seeking justice—forgiveness.

Matithyah (Matthew) 6:14-15

14 "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

15 But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

If a man is accused of breaking Torah in a Torah society and that man is brought before the court, and that man states that he knows he did wrong and he has sought for and received forgiveness from our Creator and heavenly Father, it would seem prudent to me that the court would be wise not to proceed any further. And if they did proceed to examine the situation in question, they should do so with the utmost caution. Who is man that he can undo or countermand the words of YHWH? If YHWH has forgiven a man, who is man to say he has not been forgiven? One would be wise to remember the passage examined above in which a man received forgiveness but refused to forgive his fellow man. Does this not apply to courts as well? To be sure! Particularly, if the accused man has done what he could to make it right already. In such a case, such a man should not even be before the court! The Torah society which YHWH has set up is of such a nature that making things right between parties is the normal course of life. Bringing one to court is more of a last resort, not the first option! If it has already been fixed outside of court, then it needs go no further.

Keeping mercy in mind at all times, let us proceed now and examine how justice is sought and obtained in a Torah society.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 19:17

“You shall not hate your brother in your heart; you shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him.”

There is a well-defined order of how things are to proceed when a man is observed breaking Torah or injures another person in some way. The verse above occurs immediately before the verse which states that one is to love his neighbor as himself. In part, what is involved in loving one’s neighbor, is that if he needs rebuke, then one must go to him personally and rebuke him. Now mind you, this rebuke must be done in love for him as well as in the fear of YHWH. It must be done in a spirit of humility, for what one has seen or thinks he has seen may be in error.

No man has any business dragging a man before the court without going to the other man first. In part, this is what is meant by rebuking one’s neighbor in the above passage. Please see the study on [Loving My Neighbor](#)¹¹ for more detailed information.

Yeshua taught this same principle of going to one in private first as well.

Matithyah (Matthew) 18:14-17

14 “Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

¹¹ <http://www.onetorahforall.com/Torah Society/Understanding Torah Society part 10.html>

15 And if your brother sins against you, go, show him his fault between you and him alone; if he listens to you, you have gained your brother.

16 But if he does not listen to you, you take one or two more, that at the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

17 And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the assembly; and if he refuses to listen to the assembly also, let him be to you as the Gentile and the publican.”

For a complete treatment of the process described in the above passage in Matthew 18, please see the study [Repairing Broken Relationships: The True Purpose of Matthew 18](#)¹².

B’midbar (Numbers) 11:16-17

16 And YHWH said to Moshe, “Gather unto Me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people, as well as officers over the people; and bring them unto the tent of meeting, that they may stand there with you.

17 And I will come down and talk with you there; and I will take of the Spirit which is upon you, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, that you bear it not yourself alone.”

One of the first things one comes to see in seeking to understand justice in a Torah society, is that it can never be a one man show. If the final ruling falls upon a single man, then it cannot be according to Torah. This is one of the reasons why cults always go awry, because the people are depending upon a single man for rulings concerning that man’s interpretation of the Law. This is not YHWH’s way.

In the beginning, Moshe did all the rulings concerning disputes between brothers. But it was too much for him. He discovered that it was too heavy a burden for him to carry. Even his father-in-law Yitro, counseled him on this same matter (see Shemot 18).

There are within the Torah justice system checks and balances. There is the ability to appeal to a higher authority. The ability to appeal goes all the way to the high priest who happens to be ruling at that time. To appeal for a ruling from the high priest is to appeal for a ruling directly from YHWH. As we proceed we shall cover this, as well.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 1:15

“So I took the heads of your tribes, wise men, and known, and made them heads over you, captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds, and captains of fifties, and captains of tens, and officers, according to your tribes.”

Please note what happened in the above passage. Moshe took men who were already heads (Hebrew ראש – rosh-head) among the people of their respective tribes, men who were recognized leaders by the people. These were then appointed as captains (Hebrew שר – sar-prince) of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. YHWH also had Moshe make officers

¹² <http://www.onetorahforall.com/Studies%202012/Repairing%20Broken%20Relationships.html>

(Hebrew שטר – shoter-scribe) to help the princes carry out their duties as leaders among the people. The word שטר – “shoter” suggests to us the nature of their duties as being to keep records of the rulings by the various princes - שרים – “sarim.”

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 1:16-17

16 “And I charged your judges at that time, saying, ‘Hear the causes between your brethren, and judge righteously between a man and his brother, and the sojourner that is with him.

17 You shall not respect persons in judgment; you shall hear the small and the great alike; you shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is Elohim's; and the cause that is too hard for you, you shall bring unto me, and I will hear it.”

A person's status is to have no bearing upon rendering a righteous judgment. The judges cannot give preferential treatment to a poor man simply because he is poor. Nor can the judges give preferential treatment to a rich man simply because he is rich and powerful. The judgment rendered must be based solely upon what is right according to YHWH.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 16:18-19

18 “Judges and officers you shall make in all your gates, which YHWH your Elohim gives you, according to your tribes; and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment.

19 You shall not wrest justice; you shall not respect persons; neither shall you take a bribe; for a bribe does blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous.”

Now, these words may seem rather obvious in verse nineteen, that Israel is not to do violence to justice through giving preferential treatment in decisions, nor are the judges to take bribes. When money changes hands to bring about a judgment, righteousness flees far away. Even though this seems like common sense, YHWH in His great wisdom knew He still needed to tell us this simple, yet profound truth.

Here is one aspect that seems to be lost in considering this principle-the judge's pay. If the judge is paid for his duty as a judge by a particular person, and that person comes before that judge for a judgment, then it may not be possible for the judge to give a righteous judgment. Therefore, the judges must be cared for in such a way as to remove this possibility from ever happening. Perhaps this position may not be a position which is a paid position, but rather a position of honor, duty, and responsibility. Did Moshe get paid money for doing what he did? Yet he was the leader of Israel as well as her judge. We must seriously consider that, in a Torah society, her judges are not paid to be judges, but are judges because of their reputation and the high respect they have earned in their own communities.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 19:15-18

15 “You shall do no unrighteousness in judgment; you shall not respect the person of the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty; but in righteousness you shall judge your neighbor.

16 You shall not go up and down as a talebearer among your people; neither shall you stand against the blood of your neighbor; I am YHWH.

17 You shall not hate your brother in your heart; you shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him.

18 You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people; but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am YHWH.

We have already referenced verse seventeen earlier in this study. When one examines that verse in its larger context, he can readily see it is dealing with righteous judgment. These words were spoken by YHWH and recorded by Moshe. These few verses go a long way towards bringing righteous judgment to His people, that is, if these words are heeded and followed.

Ya'aqov (James) 1:20

for the wrath of man does not work the righteousness of Elohim.

It is important to note that in obtaining a righteous judgment, one cannot have in his heart the purpose of vengeance. Vengeance in any degree cannot bring forth the righteousness of YHWH.

Another factor of great importance when seeking justice is witnesses. A witness is an individual who has first-hand knowledge about whatever is in question. If a person does not have first-hand knowledge, then he is not a witness. Hearsay evidence is of no value in seeking justice.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 19:15

“One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sins; at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall a matter be established.”

If there are not at least two witnesses, then no individual can be convicted. This brings us to what is called forensic evidence. This is evidence that places a person at the scene of the crime through fingerprints or DNA evidence or some other type of evidence. However, it is important to note that all forensic evidence is highly subjective in nature, that is, it must be interpreted by a person.

When a fingerprint is found at the scene of a crime, no one knows when that fingerprint was placed there. It could have been at the time of the crime or it could have been after or even before the crime was committed. The only way to establish when it was placed there is with at least two witnesses. If there are not at least two witnesses, then such evidence is completely meaningless. The same goes for DNA evidence or any other type of evidence. Without actual witnesses who saw the commission of the crime in question, a person cannot be judged as guilty according to the standard of Torah.

The truth is, forensic evidence can be manufactured or planted. Forensic evidence can be misinterpreted. Just because there is a lot of circumstantial evidence does not mean a person can be convicted according to the standard set forth in Torah. In order for a person to be found guilty according to Torah, according to YHWH, there must be at least two witnesses.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 19:16-17

16 "If an unrighteous witness rise up against any man to testify against him of wrongdoing,

17 then both the men, between whom the controversy is, shall stand before YHWH, before the priests and the judges that shall be in those days;"

Please note that if there is a dispute between two men, that is, there is one man who is accusing another man, then both men are to stand before YHWH, that is, before the high priest that is serving in those days. One of the things this teaches us is forensic evidence alone can never convict a person. Forensic evidence is not a man who can stand before YHWH, before the high priest of that day. Each piece of forensic evidence must have at least two eye-witnesses in order to be considered in any particular case. A forensic expert is not an eye-witness, but only a witness who brings hearsay testimony against a man. Forensic evidence is used to accuse a man, but the forensic evidence itself cannot be cross-examined, only the person interpreting the evidence can be examined. This shows us its rightful place in a Torah society.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 19:18

"and the judges shall make diligent inquisition: and, behold, if the witness be a false witness, and have testified falsely against his brother;"

A witness must be thoroughly examined by the judges. That is, the witness must be allowed to speak all that he knows. There can be none of this nonsense of only answering the question put before him. If he knows information pertinent to the crime in question, then he must be allowed to speak his piece without hindrance. This is part of the process of "diligent inquiry" done by the judges.

When the judges come to a judgment, if a witness be found to be a false witness, that is, he claims to have knowledge of wrong doing when in fact there was no wrong doing, then, what he attempted to have done to the accused must be done to him.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 19:19-20

19 "then you shall do to him, as he had thought to do to his brother; so you shall put away the evil from out of your midst.

20 And those that remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil in your midst."

YHWH takes very seriously a false witness and so should those who would live in a Torah society. There must be zero tolerance of a brother or a neighbor rising up unjustly against his brother.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 19:21

“And your eyes shall not pity; life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.”

The context of this particular passage is how to deal with a false witness. If a false witness desired to have a man put to death, then he shall be put to death, and on through the verse. We will deal more with this particular passage in the next study on restitution.

Earlier in this study we looked at the place of mercy in dealing with the accused. In the above passage we are told that we are not to have any pity. This is not the same word as mercy. Even so, this is not commanding us not to have mercy upon the accused, but not to have pity upon the accuser if he turns out to be false, that is, he is intentionally falsely accusing his brother. In such cases, there can be no pity upon the accuser who is doing so falsely. This in turn will root out any evil inclination within those who live in the Torah society for they will hear and properly fear and do right and good rather than doing evil in the eyes of YHWH.

We shall pick up the commandment of restitution in the next study.

For further study on [Righteous Judgment](#)¹³ please see that study. This study is more of an overview of this subject. There is much more which can be said, and YHWH willing, at a later date we shall revisit this subject and go into further detail. We shall, YHWH willing, examine it somewhat further in the study dealing with the Levites scheduled to be done in part 16.

Earlier in the study we mentioned that a person can appeal to YHWH through the high priest for a ruling after having gone through all the lower judges.

Devarim 17:8-13

8 “If there arise a matter too hard for you in judgment, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and between stroke and stroke, being matters of controversy within your gates; then you shall arise, and you shall go up to the place which YHWH your Elohim shall choose;

9 and you shall come unto the priests the Levites, and to the judge that shall be in those days; and you shall inquire; and they shall show you the sentence of judgment.

10 And you shall do according to the tenor of the sentence which they shall show you from that place which YHWH shall choose; and you shall observe to do according to all that they shall teach you;

¹³ <http://www.onetorahforall.com/Studies2010/Righteous Judgment.html>

11 according to the tenor of the Torah which they shall teach you, and according to the judgment which they shall tell you, you shall do; you shall not turn aside from the sentence which they shall show you, to the right hand, nor to the left.

12 And the man that does presumptuously, in not hearkening unto the priest that stands to minister there before YHWH your Elohim, or to the judge, even that man shall die; and you shall put away the evil from Israel.

13 And all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously.”

If a judgment given in the gates locally is not satisfactory to both parties, then they may appeal in that place where YHWH shall choose. Perhaps, most likely, this is the place where He chooses for His name to dwell. First that place was Shiloh, then it was Jerusalem. Then, as Scripture teaches us, He shall choose Jerusalem once again sometime in the future where His name shall dwell.

There is one point that needs to be made clear here concerning coming before YHWH for a ruling. One is required to heed the ruling exactly. If he does not, he acts presumptuously; he must die. One should weigh this option very carefully before he decides to appeal this far.

YHWH wants His people, those living in His Torah society, to settle their differences as much as possible on a personal level. This should not be too difficult if all parties concerned are living according to Torah, that is, each person is looking out for the interests of his neighbor and brother instead of just his own selfish interests.

Justice in such a society should be easily obtained as well as quickly dispensed. Since it is always with mercy and faith, it should be acceptable to all involved.

Can you imagine for just a moment, if both parties are interested in making sure the other one is fairly treated? Wouldn't that be refreshing! The truth is, we can begin living in such a way right now, we do not have to wait for it to materialize sometime in the distant future.

Understanding Torah Society

Chapter 13 – The Place of Restitution

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 19:21

“And your eyes shall not pity; life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.”

There are many passages concerning restitution within Scripture; we shall examine a few of them here in this study. The idea of restitution is a very ancient one. Nearly all societies have had some form of it within their own laws. This is no less true for the society which YHWH desires for His own people.

There are several elements in the above passage which are important to our discussion in this study concerning restitution. One of those principles contained in the above passage is the idea that, whatever the loss to the victim, this is what it should cost the perpetrator of the crime in question. It needs to be of like value. However, this may not be a literal loss/return cost. Why do we suggest this?

As we will see below, the cost of restitution may be double, four times, or even five times, the value of that which was taken or damaged depending upon what it was. This restitution also includes a fine to the convicted man which goes to the priests and Levites in the form of sacrifices and offerings. Yet, nowhere in Torah is the written punishment for any specific crime to be the putting out of an eye, the removal of a tooth, or the chopping off of a hand or foot. There are crimes for which one can lose his life, however. Since the loss of life in the above passage is listed first followed by these other “punishments,” it, too, may be more figurative than literal in this particular case.

When one examines the context of the above passage, one discovers that it is discussing a false witness, in particular. When a person comes forward and falsely testifies in an effort to have evil befall the person being testified against, whatever he was hoping to see done to his neighbor is to be done to him. Once again, it is important to note that whatever that verdict may have been against his neighbor, it could not have included the loss of an eye, tooth, foot, or hand. Torah simply does not call for any of these as punishments or judgments. Therefore, one can begin to see that this is more figurative than literal. We would suggest that this phrase is idiomatic in nature. The point then is as follows, whatever

the cost to the person who was being falsely testified against, this same cost must be assessed against the one falsely accusing.

The use of “eye” may be seen as including those things which he sees as being very dear to him. The use of “tooth” may be understood as including those things which he needs to provide food for himself and his family. The use of “hand” may be understood as symbolically representing his ability to work. The use of “foot” may be understood as symbolically representing his means of travel. Therefore, even if it means losing one of these important things in his life, pity is not to be shown to him in order to render a righteous judgment, because this is what he attempted to have happen to his neighbor or brother.

Furthermore, this brings us to another principle—pity. As we discussed in the previous study, pity is not the same as mercy. We are to show no pity towards a false witness, for he has intentionally set out with malice to harm his brother or neighbor. However he had hoped to injure his fellow man is to be done to him without any pity towards him. This in turn will cause the people to fear YHWH, and they shall not set out to intentionally harm through false testimony, their brothers and neighbors.

This next section of Scripture, Shemot 22:1-14, has many items dealing with restitution. While it is important that one person wronged receive just recompense for the wrong done to him, this is not the primary purpose of restitution. Its primary purpose is restoration of broken relationships. YHWH desires for his people to live peaceably with one another. But if one intentionally or unintentionally harms another, then that causes a fracture in the relationship. That fracture needs to be healed. The best way for that to be forthcoming is for the injured party to receive remittance for his loss from the party who caused that loss. It also causes all those living in such a society to be more careful in their dealings with one another.

Shemot (Exodus) 22:1

“If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall pay five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep.”

Stealing is an expensive venture. The restitution for stealing an ox is to repay five oxen; for a sheep it is four sheep. The basic principle is, the more expensive the item stolen, the higher the cost of restitution that is to be assessed towards he who stole it. Wouldn't it be a lot cheaper just to buy the one instead of having to pay for four or five of the same thing, and then not even having the one which was wrongfully taken? To be sure! This is the whole point, for this is to be a deterrent against wrongdoing.

Shemot (Exodus) 22:2

“If the thief be found breaking in, and be smitten so that he dies, there shall be no bloodguilt for him.”

In a Torah society, every person has a right to protect his property against theft without any repercussions from the law, even to the point of lethal force being used against said thief.

Shemot (Exodus) 22:3

“If the sun has shone upon him, there shall be bloodguilt for him. He shall make restitution, if he has nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft.”

There is a condition in protecting one’s property: the thief must be breaking in at night. If it is during the day, the thief must be apprehended and made to pay restitution. This restitution may include being sold as a slave to pay for his crime. This would be equivalent to a “life for a life” from the opening passage of Scripture.

Shemot (Exodus) 22:4

“If the theft be found in his hand alive, whether it be ox, or ass, or sheep, he shall pay double.”

This verse is basically dealing with a person who is actually caught in the act of thievery. Such a person shall pay double the value of that which he took. He shall return that which he took plus another in like kind of equal value.

Shemot (Exodus) 22:5

“If a man shall cause a field or vineyard to be eaten, and shall let his beast loose, and it feed in another man's field; of the best of his own field, and of the best of his own vineyard, shall he make restitution.”

This passage teaches us a man is to have good fences around his property. Or, at the very least, to have a good under-shepherd to make sure his livestock stays upon his own property.

Shemot (Exodus) 22:6

“If fire break out, and catch in thorns, so that the shocks of grain, or the standing grain, or the field are consumed; he that kindled the fire shall surely make restitution.”

As a farmer, there are times when a person needs to use fire to cleanse his land of unwanted vegetation. However, he must do so with great care. He would not want to burn his field during a drought. He also would want to be mindful of the wind. Furthermore, he would want to have sufficient men on hand to control the fire as it burned. All precautions should be taken that none of his neighbor’s fields catch on fire.

I remember as a young teenager one time when I was shooting some bottle rockets over our neighbor’s pasture. When I stopped, all seemed well. But about thirty minutes later, another neighbor stopped in and said the field was on fire. We got it out, but only after about five acres or so had burned. Since I was a teenager, my dad was the one responsible. So it is in a Torah society, the man of the house is responsible for the actions of those within

his household. In such a case, it is as if the man himself has set the fire; he shall make appropriate restitution.

Shemot (Exodus) 22:7-8

7 "If a man shall deliver unto his neighbor money or stuff to keep, and it be stolen out of the man's house; if the thief be found, he shall pay double."

8 "If the thief be not found, then the master of the house shall come near unto Elohim, to see whether he have not put his hand unto his neighbor's goods."

YHWH knows! If a man agrees to watch over his neighbor's property for a time, then covets it and takes it and attempts to blame it upon some unknown thief, he shall be discovered! YHWH knows!

If a thief actually did take it and he is caught, then that thief shall pay double. The man who was watching the goods shall be blameless.

Shemot (Exodus) 22:9

"For every matter of trespass, whether it be for ox, for ass, for sheep, for raiment, or for any manner of lost thing, whereof one says, 'This is it,' the cause of both parties shall come before Elohim; he whom Elohim shall condemn shall pay double unto his neighbor."

If there is a dispute between neighbors concerning any property at all, if they cannot settle it between themselves, then it comes before YHWH and He shall decide. The man to whom the property YHWH says it belongs keeps it and the other man pays double. This is meant to be a deterrent against falsely claiming something belongs to oneself, when in fact it does not. Make no mistake about it, one will not get away with such nonsense – YHWH knows! No man will mock YHWH.

Shemot (Exodus) 22:10-11

10 "If a man deliver unto his neighbor an ass, or an ox, or a sheep, or any beast, to keep; and it die, or be hurt, or driven away, no man seeing it;

11 the oath of YHWH shall be between them both, whether he has not put his hand unto his neighbor's goods; and the owner thereof shall accept it, and he shall not make restitution."

Being a farmer who keeps animals, sheep, goats, and chickens, it is difficult for our family to travel. Whenever we do, we have to find someone to take care of our animals while we are away. The above passage is speaking about just such an occurrence. While the animals are in the care of another, they are the responsibility of that person. If one is taken, then it must be determined who took the animal; was it the man who was placed in charge of the animals or some thief? To do this the man charged with the responsibility of caring for the animals makes an oath before YHWH that it was not he who took the animals. This is no small matter. Attempting to deceive the owner of the animals and lying before YHWH will only bring great grief to the person attempting such a lie.

Shemot (Exodus) 22:12

“But if it be stolen from him, he shall make restitution unto the owner thereof.”

However, if the man placed in charge of caring for the animals is guilty of stealing the animals, then he must make restitution as laid out in the above verses.

Shemot (Exodus) 22:13

“If it be torn in pieces, let him bring it for witness; he shall not make good that which was torn.”

If a wild beast comes and kills one of the animals in his care, then he is to bring the carcass before the owner to show him what happened. The man caring for the animals makes no restitution.

Shemot (Exodus) 22:14

“And if a man borrow anything of his neighbor’s, and it be hurt, or die, the owner thereof not being with it, he shall surely make restitution.”

For example, one man borrows his neighbor’s ox to plow his field. While the ox is in his care, it dies; the one who borrowed the ox must make restitution. However, if the owner is helping the man plow his field and he is with the ox when it dies, there shall be no restitution made.

These commandments also apply to non-living items as well, like tools and such. If a man borrows a plow and breaks it, he must either fix it or replace it. However, if the owner is present when it is broken, then no restitution needs to be done.

It is acceptable to borrow from one’s neighbor. However, it may not be the wisest thing to do.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 5:15-16

15 “If any one commit a trespass, and sin unwittingly, in the holy things of YHWH; then he shall bring his trespass-offering unto YHWH, a ram without blemish out of the flock, according to your estimation in silver by shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for a trespass-offering;

16 and he shall make restitution for that which he has done amiss in the holy thing, and shall add the fifth part thereto, and give it unto the priest; and the priest shall make atonement for him with the ram of the trespass-offering, and he shall be forgiven.”

Not only does one make restitution to the injured party, but one must also make restitution to YHWH; after all, it was His commandment which was broken. The restitution made to YHWH is separate from the restitution made to the owner of the property. In the above

case, the sin being discussed is a breaking of a commandment unintentionally. The restitution due to YHWH is in the form of a sin offering.

B'midbar (Numbers) 5:6-8

6 "Speak to the children of Israel, 'When a man or woman shall commit any sin that men commit, so as to trespass against YHWH, and that soul shall be guilty;

7 then he shall confess his sin which he has done; and he shall make restitution for his guilt in full, and add unto it the fifth part thereof, and give it unto him in respect of whom he has been guilty.

8 But if the man have no kinsman to whom restitution may be made for the guilt, the restitution for guilt which is made unto YHWH shall be the priest's; besides the ram of the atonement, whereby atonement shall be made for him."

This passage makes it much clearer about who gets the restitution. First, it must go to the owner. If the owner is no longer alive, then the restitution goes to the nearest relative. However, if neither the owner nor any relative is alive, then the restitution goes to the priest.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 6:2-6

2 "If any one sin, and commit a trespass against YHWH, and deal falsely with his neighbor in a matter of deposit, or of bargain, or of robbery, or have oppressed his neighbor,

3 or have found that which was lost, and deal falsely therein, and swear to a lie; in any of all these things that a man does, sinning therein;

4 then it shall be, if he has sinned, and is guilty, that he shall restore that which he took by robbery, or the thing which he has gotten by oppression, or the deposit which was committed to him, or the lost thing which he found,

5 or anything about which he has sworn falsely; he shall even restore it in full, and shall add the fifth part more thereto; unto him to whom it pertains shall he give it, in the day of his being found guilty.

6 And he shall bring his trespass-offering unto YHWH, a ram without blemish out of the flock, according to your estimation, for a trespass-offering, unto the priest."

This passage covers everything possible that men do and their dealings with one another. The basic principle is this: be honest in all things. If one gains because of any dishonesty at all, he has done wrong and must make restitution. Here are a couple of examples.

Example one: One man is selling a car. The car has a bad transmission, but only acts up some of the time. He sells it to a man, but does not tell the buyer about the transmission problems. The seller has done wrong in the eyes of YHWH and must make restitution to the buyer.

Example two: A man has a business selling household products, but the company he represents has a poor reputation. So the man lies to potential customers to get them to consider buying his products or even to become a representative of the company. This is

sin in the eyes of YHWH, and it is defrauding through lack of honesty and deceit, and restitution is due any person who has been deceived into buying what the man is selling.

Example three: A man goes to the store and while there finds a bank envelop with more than a hundred dollars in it. He is a poor man and considers it a blessing from YHWH to have found the money. However, because this money was not simply loose, but in order, and it is obvious that someone had recently lost the envelop having just come from the bank, the man must make an honest effort to find the owner. If he does not, then he will owe restitution to the one who lost it. Since the finder of the money is poor, he cannot afford restitution. If he is able to find the owner, then the owner may be grateful enough to give him a reward, which he may choose to accept or not. If he does what he can to find the owner and cannot find him, then the money will be his to keep and no restitution will be due.

YHWH wants His people to live in shalom with one another. This is only possible if there is a high degree of honesty and uprightness between neighbors and brothers. The only reason for dishonesty arises when selfish motivations are present. When selfish motivations are present, then harmony between men flees away. We are commanded to watch over and take care of not only our own interests, but of the interests of our brothers and neighbors as well in a Torah society.

Luqa (Luke) 19:8-9

8 And Zacchaeus stood, and said to the Master, "Behold, Master, half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have wrongfully exacted anything of any man, I restore fourfold."

9 And Yeshua said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham."

Please understand that restitution is every bit as much a part of salvation as confessing one's sins. If one confesses one's sins, but then does nothing to make those sins right in which he has wronged his neighbor, then what use is that? Such a salvation is of no use at all.

Understanding Torah Society

Chapter 14 – Land ownership and stewardship – a closer look at the shemittah and jubilee

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 25:23

“And the land shall not be sold in perpetuity; for the land is mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with Me.”

As the Creator, YHWH is the owner of the land—all land. He assigns the stewardship of His land to whomever He chooses. Once He assigns the stewardship of His land to a group of people, He expects certain things on how His land is to be treated. If His land is not treated according to what He expects, then the people to whom He has assigned stewardship lose that stewardship, at least in the very minimum, for a season, and in some cases, permanently.

B’midbar (Numbers) 26:53-55

53 “Unto these the land shall be divided for an inheritance according to the number of names.

54 To the more you shall give more inheritance, and to the fewer you shall give less inheritance; to every one according to those that were numbered of him shall his inheritance be given.

55 Notwithstanding, the land shall be divided by lot; according to the names of the tribes of their fathers they shall inherit.”

The words “inheritance” and “inherit” have a slightly different connotation in Torah than one understands these words in the West. In the West, one would understand that when a person inherits some property, then the ownership of that property passes on to the person who inherits it. However, that is not the case in Scripture when dealing with land. As we showed above, and there are many more passages of Scripture, YHWH is the owner of the land. Therefore, when the Torah speaks of inheritance, it is not the ownership which is being passed down to the next generation. Rather, it is the stewardship which is being passed down to the next generation. The English word “inherit” is translated from the Hebrew word נָחַל *nachal* – *to move downward*.

YHWH commands that the stewardship of His land be divided by lot, and that the stewardship of that land be perpetual throughout the generations of Israel. However,

because she did not keep His stewardship as assigned by Him in a way that was pleasing to Him, He removed them from His land.

Dibre Hayamim Beit (2nd Chronicles) 36:20-21

20 And them that had escaped from the sword He carried away to Babylon; and they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia;

21 to fulfill the word of YHWH by the mouth of Yirmeyah, until the land had enjoyed its shabbatot; for as long as it lay desolate it kept shabbat, to fulfill seventy years.

YHWH is serious about His people keeping and obeying each and every one of His Torah commandments. Each commandment carries with it its own particular discipline if not obeyed. Disobedience to the Shemittah is expulsion from His land in order for the land to have the rest which it has missed.

In [Chapter 7¹⁴](#) of this series, we examined the Shemittah as it relates to a person; specifically, that all debts are released every seven years. However, we did not really examine the Shemittah as it relates to the land, which is what we shall do in this study.

Shemot (Exodus) 23:10-11

10 “And six years you shall sow your land, and shall gather in the increase thereof:

11 but the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow; that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave the beast of the field shall eat. In like manner you shall deal with your vineyard, and with your olive grove.”

YHWH commands that the land is to be worked for six years, and then in the seventh year the land is to lie fallow. To lie fallow means that it is not to be worked, such as plowing. Likewise, the vineyard and the olive grove are not to be worked, either. In this case, this means that the vines and the trees are not to be pruned.

Furthermore, what grows of its own in the field and the fruit that the trees and vines produce during the seventh year is food for the poor and the beasts of the field.

Vayyiqra chapter twenty-five gives us many more details about the shemittah and the jubilee. Let us examine this chapter carefully.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 25:1-5

1 And YHWH spoke unto Moshe in Mount Sinai, saying,

2 “Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, ‘When you come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a Shabbat unto YHWH.

3 Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather in the fruits thereof;

¹⁴ <http://www.onetorahforall.com/Torah Society/Understanding Torah Society part 7.html>

4 but in the seventh year shall be a Shabbat of solemn rest for the land, a Shabbat unto YHWH; you shall neither sow your field, nor prune your vineyard.

5 That which grows of itself of your harvest you shall not reap, and the grapes of your undressed vine you shall not gather; it shall be a year of solemn rest for the land.”

The shemittah is to be a Shabbat shabbaton. This means that the land is to experience a complete rest. The land is not to be worked in any way and the vines and trees are not to be pruned during the seventh year. And this happens every seven years.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 25:6-7

6 “And the Shabbat of the land shall be for food for you; for you, and for your servant and for your maid, and for your hired servant and for your stranger, who sojourns with you.

7 And for your cattle, and for the beasts that are in your land, shall all the increase thereof be for food.”

That which grows of itself in the field and upon the vine and upon the tree can be eaten. In verse five above, YHWH tells us we are not to gather these items. If one cannot gather them, then how can one eat them? The idea of gathering is for the purpose of stockpiling and preserving, or for trading and selling. The idea of gathering is in quantity. When YHWH tells us that we may eat of that which grows of itself, He simply means we may go out and collect enough for that day's meals. We may not go out and gather in order to preserve it or barter it.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 25:8-13

8 “And you shall number seven Shabbats of years unto you, seven times seven years; and there shall be unto you the days of seven Shabbats of years, even forty-nine years.

9 Then shall you send abroad the loud shofar on the tenth day of the seventh month; in the Day of Atonements shall you send abroad the shofar throughout all your land.

10 And you shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout the land unto all the inhabitants thereof; it shall be a jubilee unto you; and you shall return every man unto his possession, and you shall return every man unto his family.

11 A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be unto you; you shall not sow, neither reap that which grows of itself in it, nor gather the grapes in it of the undressed vines.

12 For it is a jubilee; it shall be holy unto you; you shall eat the increase thereof out of the field.

13 In this year of jubilee you shall return every man unto his possession.”

Now YHWH switches from teaching about the shemittah to teaching about the jubilee. The remainder of the verses, that is, from verse 8 through verse 34, is dealing with the jubilee. It is very important to understand this context, for YHWH teaches us a couple of things, and if one does not fully grasp its context within the jubilee, he will miss something very important.

YHWH commands that we are to do a count of the shemittah years. This count is the same type of count one does in counting the omer: seven weeks of days, plus one day, equaling fifty days. However, in this case, it is seven cycles of seven years, plus one year, or fifty years. Then the count begins again.

Please note verse ten above in which YHWH states that it is a whole year which is to be hallowed and set-apart as the jubilee. Just as a shemittah is a whole year, so too, is the jubilee a whole year in length!

There can be a little bit of confusion as to how one counts years. This confusion can enter into one's mind if he is not a farmer, or if he does not understand agriculture in a rudimentary sense. Let us explain.

Shemot (Exodus) 12:2

“This month shall be unto you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you.”

Of course, YHWH is speaking of the month of Aviv, when the barley is in the green ear. This is in the spring. This is the time of the barley harvest.

On the surface, one would think that one should count the years as beginning in the spring. However, it is not quite that simple. This new year begins how one determines all the festivals throughout the year. However, this new year is not the only new year in Scripture. There is another new year which is also important to understand.

Please prayerfully consider the harvest of the barley in the spring during the month of Aviv. This harvest, of necessity, had to be planted months earlier. In fact, it was planted in the previous fall around the time of the fall feasts. You see, the seventh month is also the beginning of a year; it is the beginning of the agricultural year. It is upon this cycle which the shemittah and the jubilee are counted. The shemittah and the jubilee are not counted from Aviv.

How do we know this? Please note Vayyiqra 25:9 above once again. YHWH states that it is upon the Day of Atonements – Yom HaKippurim, that Israel is to declare the jubilee. Therefore, it is also upon this day that we are to count the Shemittah—seven times seven plus one.

If a farmer does not plant his seed at this time, he will have nothing to harvest in the spring in the month of Aviv. The planting of seed is a new beginning. The planting of seed is the beginning of a new year. This is the agricultural year. The month of Aviv is the new year for determining the mo'edim. We need to be prudent in being able to see this difference and keeping these two separate as YHWH commands us to do.

If one attempts to count the shemittah from the month of Aviv, he cannot come out right in his count. Thus, when he counts the jubilee, he will be off as well. There is a verse below, which is extremely important, in that, it shows us something that many do not see in the counting of the jubilee (verse 21). Before we examine that, let us examine these other verses first.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 25:14-18

14 "And if you sell anything unto your neighbor, or buy of your neighbor's hand, you shall not wrong one another.

15 According to the number of years after the jubilee you shall buy of your neighbor, and according unto the number of years of the crops he shall sell unto you.

16 According to the multitude of the years you shall increase the price thereof, and according to the fewness of the years you shall diminish the price of it; for the number of the crops does he sell unto you.

17 And you shall not wrong one another; but you shall fear your Elohim; for I am YHWH your Elohim.

18 Wherefore you shall do My statutes, and keep My ordinances and do them; and you shall dwell in the land in safety."

Crops can be bought and sold according the jubilee cycle. This means that however many years there are left in the jubilee cycle, one can buy or sell. For example, let's say that there are fifteen years left before the next jubilee. This means that if one wanted to or needed to sell his crops off of his land, he would do so for fifteen years. He could do so for no more than this, for in the year of jubilee, all debts are to be released. No contracts of such a nature can extend past the year of jubilee.

Please also note that YHWH states that if His people want to dwell in His land safely, then they must do so according to His statutes and His ordinances.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 25:19-22

19 "And the land shall yield its fruit, and you shall eat your fill, and dwell therein in safety.

20 And if you shall say, 'What shall we eat the seventh year? Behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase;

21 then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for the three years.

22 And you shall sow the eighth year, and eat of the fruits, the old store; until the ninth year, until its fruits come in, you shall eat the old store."

Once again, it is important to note that the context of these verses is dealing with the jubilee. You will see in just a moment why this context is important to realize.

Please let us prayerfully and carefully consider verse 21. In verse eleven above, YHWH commands us that the jubilee year is to be like a shemittah year, that is, there is to be no sowing of the fields and no pruning of the trees or vines. In reality, this is what is supposed

to happen. The seventh cycle of shemittah arrives and the seventh shemittah is observed. This is the 49th year. The next year is the jubilee which is also to be observed in the same fashion as a shemittah. There is to be no sowing or reaping of the fields, except that which was described above.

Again, let us remind ourselves of the count of the omer. In the count of the omer, we count seven complete weeks. A complete week consists of first day (Sunday) through Shabbat (Saturday); this is a complete week. After counting seven complete weeks, the next day is Shavuot and a high day, a Shabbat. This makes two Shabbatot together, the weekly Shabbat followed immediately by the high Shabbat.

Likewise, if the shemittah is counted and observed properly, then after the seventh yearly Shabbat, it is followed immediately by the jubilee, also a Shabbat of land rest, making two land Shabbatot in a row. Now, reexamine verse 21 once again.

21 then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for the three years.

On a normal shemittah year we do not really need to have three years' worth of food, only two. However, because this context is about the jubilee, then this passage makes a lot more sense. In the sixth year of the seventh cycle, YHWH blesses us with enough food in that harvest to go through two years of the land lying fallow, the seventh shemittah and the jubilee, back to back.

These passages together illustrate to us the need to keep everything in context and to understand the cycles of the agricultural year.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 25:23-24

23 "And the land shall not be sold in perpetuity; for the land is Mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with Me.

24 And in all the land of your possession you shall grant a redemption for the land."

Once again he reminds us that this is His land. As we showed in the beginning of this study, if Israel does not properly follow this cycle, she shall be expelled from YHWH's land. He expects us to keep and observe her shemittah as well as the jubilee.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 25:25

"If your brother be waxed poor, and sell some of his possession, then shall his kinsman that is next unto him come, and shall redeem that which his brother has sold."

In [Chapter 7](#)¹⁵ of this series, in which we dealt with social welfare, we discussed this passage showing that it is important that we watch over one another. If a brother gets into a bind, we are commanded to help him out of that bind.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 25:26-28

26 “And if a man has no one to redeem it, and he be waxed rich and find sufficient to redeem it;

27 then let him reckon the years of the sale thereof, and restore the surplus unto the man to whom he sold it; and he shall return unto his possession.

28 But if he be not able to get it back for himself, then that which he has sold shall remain in the hand of him that has bought it until the year of jubilee; and in the jubilee it shall go out, and he shall return unto his possession.”

If a man’s circumstances change so that he becomes able to redeem that which he lost, then he is to redeem it. Now this supposes one thing that may not be readily apparent, and that is, the one who is holding the property must allow it to be redeemed. He cannot withhold the property from redemption if it is able to be redeemed. Once again, this is according to the year of jubilee, the fifty year cycle.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 25:29-34

29 “And if a man sells a dwelling-house in a walled city, then he may redeem it within a whole year after it is sold; for a full year shall he have the right of redemption.

30 And if it be not redeemed within the space of a full year, then the house that is in the walled city shall be made sure in perpetuity to him that bought it, throughout his generations; it shall not go out in the jubilee.

31 But the houses of the villages which have no wall round about them shall be reckoned with the fields of the country; they may be redeemed, and they shall go out in the jubilee.

32 Nevertheless the cities of the Levites, the houses of the cities of their possession, may the Levites redeem at any time.

33 And if one of the Levites redeem, then the house that was sold, and the city of his possession, shall go out in the jubilee; for the houses of the cities of the Levites are their possession among the children of Israel.

34 But the field of the suburbs of their cities may not be sold; for it is their perpetual possession.”

There are some special commands concerning houses in cities. If a house is in a walled city, it may only be redeemed for the space of one year. However, if the house is in an unwalled city, then it is treated in the same way as the fields and must return to its owner in the jubilee year. The Levites may redeem their houses at any time.

The land belongs to YHWH. He has commanded us to let the land sit idle every seventh year. We are to count this cycle in groups of seven. Then in the seventh year, we add one

¹⁵ <http://www.onetorahforall.com/Torah Society/Understanding Torah Society part 7.html>

more year for the jubilee, to make a fifty year cycle. Then the count begins again after the jubilee year is over. The count of these cycles of years begins and ends on Yom HaKippurim, the Day of Atonements.

Understanding Torah Society

Chapter 15 – Tithes and offerings

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 27:30-34

30 And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is YHWH's; it is set-apart to YHWH.

31 And if a man will redeem any of his tithe, he shall add to it the fifth part thereof.

32 And all the tithe of the herd or the flock, whatsoever passes under the rod, the tenth shall be set-apart to YHWH.

33 He shall not search whether it be good or bad, neither shall he change it; and if he change it at all, then both it and that for which it is changed shall be set-apart; it shall not be redeemed.

34 These are the commandments, which YHWH commanded Moshe for the children of Israel in Mount Sinai.

There are three types of tithe spoken of in Torah. There are some who teach that there are three different tithes: a first tithe, a second tithe, and a third tithe. This means a person would be giving between 27% and 30%, depending upon how it would be figured. As we progress through this study, one will see that such a teaching is in error. While there are not three tithes, there are three types of tithe. Two of them are mentioned in the verses above. There is the tithe of the land. The tithe of the land includes the seed of the land and the fruit of the tree. By inference, this would also include the tithe of the vine. Then there is also the tithe of the flock. This includes all the animals one owns. Later in this study we will discover in another passage just exactly how this is done.

Before we get into the mechanics of what is commanded to be tithed and how to do it, let us consider the words of Mashiach Yeshua.

Matithyah (Matthew) 23:23

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you tithe mint and anise and cummin and have left undone the weightier matters of the Torah, justice, and mercy, and faith; but these you ought to have done, and not to have left the other undone.”

There are those who wrongly teach that tithing is not commanded in the Brit Chadasha (New Testament). However, as one can see in the above passage, Yeshua does, indeed, command us to tithe. He states that we need to do the weightier matters of Torah, that is,

justice, mercy, and faith; but while doing these, we are not to leave undone the other things like giving of the tithe, which is the subject and context of this passage. He effectively commands us to tithe with these words.

B'reshit (Genesis) 14:19-20

19 And he blessed him, and said, "Blessed be Avram of Elohim Most High, possessor of heaven and earth;

20 and blessed is Elohim Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tenth of all.

The first person recorded to tithe was Avram. He did so as a means of thanking YHWH for the victory he was given over the kings who had taken his nephew Lot captive. In rescuing Lot, there was much plunder taken. He gave a tithe to YHWH via the priest of YHWH. Thus, Avram gave a tenth of his increase which resulted from the taking of the plunder. We shall discuss in greater detail below the concept of giving the tithe according to one's increase.

B'reshit (Genesis) 28:20-22

20 And Ya'aqov vowed a vow, saying, "If Elohim will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on,

21 so that I come again to my father's house in peace, and YHWH will be my Elohim,

22 then this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be Elohim's house. And of all that You shall give me I will surely give the tenth unto You."

Ya'aqov also vows to give a tithe of all with which YHWH blesses him. When Ya'aqov speaks of giving a tithe to YHWH, he does so in the context of all that YHWH gives to him, that is, the increase.

Divrei Hayamim (2nd Chronicles) 31:5

And as soon as the commandment came abroad, the children of Israel gave in abundance the first-fruits of grain, new wine, and oil, and honey, and of all the increase of the field; and the tithe of all things they brought in abundantly.

In the book of Divrei Hayamim, it is recorded that Israel brought the tithe unto YHWH in abundance. It seems that they did not always do this as commanded in the matter of the tithe. However, here they did, which caused it to be recorded for us to see in later generations. Again, please note that the tithe was of the increase.

Let us now turn to the Torah Moshe to discover exactly what the tithe is and how to give it unto YHWH. There are four main passages of Scripture which teach us about the tithe. We shall examine each one in turn as each one teaches us various details on this important, yet commonly misunderstood, subject.

B'midbar (Numbers) 18:21

“And to the children of Levi, behold, I have given all the tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service which they serve, even the service of the tent of meeting.”

YHWH has given the entire tithe to the tribe of Levi. As we shall see below, this does not mean the tribe of Levi can do with the tithe whatever they want, for YHWH commands some very specific things to be done with the tithe. The things YHWH commands to be done with the tithe are not all done by Levi, even though the tithe belongs to them as an inheritance. YHWH has given them the tithe in place of an inheritance of land stewardship. The giving of the tithe is for their service in the tent of meeting. The service of the tent of meeting does not only include that which is done inside the tent of meeting, but other duties as well. We shall examine the duties and responsibilities of the tribe of Levi in the next part of this series.

B'midbar (Numbers) 18:22-23

22 “And henceforth the children of Israel shall not come near the tent of meeting, lest they bear sin, and die.

23 But the Levites shall do the service of the tent of meeting, and they shall bear their iniquity; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations; and among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance.”

On a side note, please note that the tribe of Levi is a type and foreshadow of Mashiach as they bear the sin of the rest of the nation. This is part of their service of the tent of meeting, to bear the sin of Israel.

B'midbar (Numbers) 18:24

“For the tithe of the children of Israel, which they offer as a heave-offering to YHWH, I have given to the Levites for an inheritance; therefore I have said to them, ‘Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance.’”

The term “heave-offering” in the above passage is the Hebrew word תְּרוּמָה – “t'rumah.” This means *to offer up*. The root word רָמָה – “ramah” means *to hurl up in a targeted fashion*. We are to offer up the t'rumah to YHWH, who is high and lifted up. This is the essence of the t'rumah offering. As we see in the passage below, a certain portion of the t'rumah offering belongs to the tribe of Levi.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 10:14

“And the wave-breast and the heave-thigh shall you eat in a clean place, you, and thy sons, and your daughters with you; for they are given as your portion, and your sons' portion, out of the sacrifices of the peace-offerings of the children of Israel.”

It is not within the scope of this study to dwell upon the t'rumah. We mention this simply to show that the tithe includes both produce from the land and meat from the flocks and herds, as well as whole animals. We are not suggesting here that the t'rumah is a tithe

offering, but rather, a tithe of the t'rumah offering belongs to the Levites as a part of their inheritance. Thus a tithe of the t'rumah is to be given by the Levites to the kohanim (priests). This is true of many of the offerings brought unto YHWH by Israel.

B'midbar (Numbers) 18:25-28

25 And YHWH spoke to Moshe, saying,

26 "Moreover you shall speak to the Levites, and say to them, 'When you take of the children of Israel the tithe which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then you shall offer up a heave-offering of it for YHWH, a tithe of the tithe.

27 "And your heave-offering shall be reckoned to you, as though it were the grain of the threshing-floor, and as the fullness of the winepress.

28 Thus you also shall offer a heave-offering to YHWH of all your tithes, which you receive of the children of Israel; and thereof you shall give YHWH's heave-offering to Aharon the priest."

Here we see the third type of tithe, the tithe of the tithe. So we have the tithe of the land, the tithe of the flocks, and the tithe of the tithe. The tithe of the tithe is commanded of the tribe of Levi only. YHWH commands them to give a tenth of the tithe they receive back to YHWH. This tithe of the tithe belongs to the kohanim (priests), who are a sub-group within the tribe of Levi, as specified in the above passage by the phrase *Aharon the priest*.

We also see mentioned in this passage, a tithe of the fruit of the vine being given to the Levites as well.

B'midbar (Numbers) 18:29-32

29 Out of all your gifts you shall offer every heave-offering of YHWH, of all the best thereof, even the hallowed part thereof out of it.

30 Therefore you shall say to them, 'When you heave the best thereof from it, then it shall be reckoned to the Levites as the increase of the threshing-floor, and as the increase of the wine-press.

31 And you shall eat it in every place, you and your households; for it is your reward in return for your service in the tent of meeting.

32 And you shall bear no sin by reason of it, when you have heaved from it the best thereof; and you shall not profane the set-apart things of the children of Israel, that you die not."

Out of the tithe which Israel gives to the tribe of Levi, they are to give a tithe. That tithe of the tithe is to be the best of all that which has been given by Israel. The kohanim in turn are to eat it before YHWH as a reward for their service to Him in the tent of meeting. As we progress in this study, we find that it is a common command by YHWH to eat of the tithe before Him.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 12:17-19

17 "You may not eat within your gates the tithe of your grain, or of your new wine, or of your oil, or the firstlings of your herd or of your flock, nor any of your vows which you vow, nor your freewill-offerings, nor the heave-offering of your hand;

18 but you shall eat them before YHWH your Elohim in the place which YHWH your Elohim shall choose, you, and your son, and your daughter, and your man-servant, and your maid-servant, and the Levite that is within your gates; and you shall rejoice before YHWH your Elohim in all that you put your hand to.

19 Take heed to yourself that you forsake not the Levite as long as you live in your land."

In this passage, we are commanded not to eat of the tithe within our gates, but rather, to eat the tithe before YHWH in the place where His name shall dwell upon earth. After Israel entered the land, that place was initially in Shiloh. Then YHWH moved the dwelling place of His name to Jerusalem for a season, later to be lifted up for a season, until the latter days when He shall cause His name to dwell in Jerusalem once again. It is important to understand this, as it has a direct bearing on how one gives his tithe to YHWH. Please prayerfully consider this matter.

Yehoshua (Joshua) 18:1

And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled themselves together at Shiloh, and set up the tent of meeting there; and the land was subdued before them.

When YHWH first brought Israel into the land under the leadership of Yehoshua son of Nun (pronounced "noon"), He had them set up the tent of meeting at Shiloh. He caused His name to dwell there. It is important for us to understand that when YHWH speaks of His name dwelling in a place, He is speaking of the mishkan, or the temple, being there. One or the other has to be present and being used for His name to dwell somewhere on earth.

This is what YHWH clearly states in this next passage.

Yirmeyah (Jeremiah) 7:12-14

12 "But you go now to My place which was in Shiloh, where I caused My name to dwell at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of My people Israel.

13 And now, because you have done all these works," says YHWH, "and I spoke to you, rising up early and speaking, but you heard not; and I called you, but you answered not;

14 therefore will I do to the house which is called by My name, wherein you trust, and to the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I did to Shiloh."

Not only did YHWH cause His name to stop dwelling in Shiloh by removing the mishkan, but He also laid it in ruins. He states that He will do likewise to Jerusalem. Did He not do this in 70 A.D.?

Yirmeyah (Jeremiah) 26:6

“then will I make this house like Shiloh, and will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth.”

While Jerusalem has been rebuilt, neither the mishkan nor the temple has been set up again. Does His name dwell there as before? No. Will it dwell there again one day in the future? Yes, to be sure, it will. But that day is not yet.

Zekaryah (Zechariah) 2:12

And YHWH shall inherit Judah as His portion in the holy land, and shall choose again Jerusalem.

We will discuss this more below as to how this impacts the giving of one’s tithe today.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 14:22

You shall surely tithe all the increase of your seed, that which comes forth from the field year by year.

One of the most important concepts to grasp concerning the tithe is the concept of an increase. If there is no increase, there is no tithe. There must be an increase in order for there to be tithe. Let us consider a simple example to illustrate an increase.

If you grow wheat and your neighbor grows apples, and you desire to trade some wheat for apples, is there any tithe due on the apples for which you traded? No, there is no tithe due, because there was no increase. It was a simple trade, a contract if you will. Trading one item for another does not give one an increase. Only when there is an increase is there tithe due. This would be the same concept as a person going to the store and purchasing an item. Does the person pay tithe on that which he purchased? No, of course not; he only traded one item for another, in this case, money for goods.

Now let us consider working for an hourly wage. Is getting paid an increase? Surprisingly, it is not an increase at all. One simply is trading his time for money. It is not an increase. It is a contractual agreement between two parties. Because there is no increase, there is no tithe. So what constitutes an increase? An increase consists of getting more than what one puts out. If I have a field and I plant 100 bushels of wheat, I would well expect to get at least ten times that amount, more likely a 100 times that amount, or 10,000 bushels of wheat. This is an increase.

Luqa (Luke) 8:8

“And other [seed] fell into the good ground, and grew, and brought forth fruit a hundredfold.” As He said these things, He cried, “He that has ears to hear, let him hear.”

The tithe is given on the increase. Thus, the tithe would be figured on the 10,000 bushels minus the original 100 bushels. Now this may sound a little picky, but please bear with me as this is an important part of understanding the tithe being upon the increase.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 14:23

And you shall eat before YHWH your Elohim, in the place which he shall choose, to cause his name to dwell there, the tithe of your grain, of your new wine, and of your oil, and the firstlings of your herd and of your flock; that you may learn to fear YHWH your Elohim always.

The concept of tithe upon the increase becomes even more important to understand when dealing with the flocks and herds as mentioned in the above passage. Please note that the tithe is upon the firstlings. This means that the tithe is based upon that which has been born during the previous year. If a man has a thousand animals in his herds and flocks, to figure the tithe upon all of his animals, would mean that, in just a few years he would have none left. Furthermore, a man would be giving tithe based upon the same animals year by year. But to figure the tithe upon the increase, that is, upon the newborn animals only, then one begins to see the concept of the tithe upon the increase, and how important it is to understand this.

Let us go back to money for just a moment. There is one case in which the tithe should be figured concerning money.

Matithyah (Matthew) 25:27

“You ought therefore to have put my money to the bankers, and at my coming I should have received back mine own with interest.”

If one places his money in an interest bearing document, then one would give a tithe on the interest only, not upon the principle.

Please also note that YHWH commands us to eat the tithe before Him. This is part of giving the tithe to YHWH. In this case, He commands that we eat it before Him where He causes His name to dwell upon earth. As we have shown above in this study, His name does not currently dwell on earth, that is, there is no mishkan or temple. This places those of us who desire to keep and do all of His commandments in a dilemma. How is it then possible to keep this commandment if there is no earthly dwelling place for His name upon earth?

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 14:24-26

24 And if the way be too long for you, so that you are not able to carry it, because the place is too far from you, which YHWH your Elohim shall choose, to set his name there, when YHWH your Elohim shall bless you;

25 then shall you turn it into money, and bind up the money in your hand, and shall go to the place which YHWH your Elohim shall choose;

26 and you shall bestow the money for whatsoever your soul desires, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever your soul asks of you; and you shall eat there before YHWH your Elohim, and you shall rejoice, you and your household.

Please note that YHWH made provisions for us, that if it be too far for us to go, then there is a commanded alternative, namely, to eat the tithe within our gates. Is it too far for us to go? Obviously, it is too far for us to go, since there is no destination to which to go, since His name does not currently dwell upon earth. Therefore, it is commanded by YHWH that one eats his tithe (increase) within his own gates. This may also include traveling to a local area in which one of the pilgrimage feasts is being held. This would certainly qualify and be within the realm of keeping His commandment concerning giving His tithe.

In the study [The Dwelling Place of YHWH¹⁶](#), we examine YHWH's current dwelling place on earth, which is within the heart of His people. Therefore, when His people are gathered together, as Mashiach Yeshua says, "Wherever two or three are gathered, there I am in their midst." Therefore, to this writer it would seem that any gathering of any size would qualify as a place to eat the tithe before Him, particularly when such a gathering is for the express purpose of one of the pilgrimage feasts.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 14:27

And the Levite that is within your gates, you shall not forsake him; for he has no portion nor inheritance with you.

In eating His tithe before Him, one must not forget the Levite. While many people would not forget to feed the Levite, they may not realize that not only is feeding the Levite included, but also his travel. One may use part of his tithe to get to that place where he is going to eat it before YHWH. However, the Levite has no inheritance, so we are to take the Levite with us to that place where we are going to eat His tithe before YHWH, and feed the Levite as well. Both are important to do, getting the Levite there, as well as feeding him there before YHWH. In this way, one does not forsake the Levite. If one expects the Levite to get to that place on his own, then he has forsaken the Levite.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 14:28-29

28 At the end of every three years you shall bring forth all the tithe of your increase in the same year, and shall lay it up within your gates;

29 and the Levite, because he has no portion nor inheritance with you, and the sojourner, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within your gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that YHWH your Elohim may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do.

It is important to realize the agricultural cycle in Israel. The agricultural year begins and ends in the fall, specifically on Yom Hakippurim (The Day of Atonements). This is how the

¹⁶ <http://www.onetorahforall.com/Studies 2012/The Dwelling Place of YHWH.html>

shemittah year, as well as the year of jubilee, is reckoned. It is also how the tithe is figured. Some may rightly point out that Yom Hakippurim is not the beginning of the month. It may be that the beginning of the month is actually the end/beginning of the agricultural year, and that Yom Hakippurim is the day of reckoning of the previous year. The books are closed on the first of the month and that which needs to be settled up is done on the tenth of the month. This makes sense to us.

Typically, by the time Yom Hakippurim comes each year, all or most of the harvesting is completed. It is during the time of the fall feasts in which the crops for the spring harvest are planted, namely, the barley (as well as the wheat). We are primarily interested in the planting of the barley, because without the planting of barley at the beginning of the agricultural year, there will be no harvest of barley ready for the month of Aviv.

This seven year cycle is further broken down into two groups of threes. On the third year and the sixth year of the shemittah cycle something a little different is done with the tithe. Please note that this is not an additional tithe as some have supposed, but rather just different or additional instructions concerning the tithe. In the next portion of Scripture in Devarim 26 we shall see some even more specific instructions concerning the third year cycle, as to what to do with the tithe.

Please note that, instead of just simply going to the pilgrimage feasts as commanded to take the tithe and eat it before YHWH (including the Levite among us), the third year (and the sixth year, which is another three years) of the shemittah cycle also includes the sojourner (גר – “ger”), the orphan, and the widow. We are to bring them with us and eat the tithe before YHWH. Therefore, at least two times within the shemittah cycle everyone comes before YHWH.

In this next portion of Scripture, YHWH outlines some very specific instructions on not only how to give the tithe, but even what to say in the giving of the tithe.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 26:1-11

1 “And it shall be, when you are come in to the land which YHWH your Elohim gives you for an inheritance, and possess it, and dwell therein,

2 that you shall take of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you shall bring in from your land that YHWH your Elohim gives you; and you shall put it in a basket, and shall go to the place which YHWH your Elohim shall choose, to cause his name to dwell there.

3 And you shall come to the priest that shall be in those days, and say to him, ‘I profess this day to YHWH your Elohim, that I am come to the land which YHWH swore to our fathers to give us.’

4 And the priest shall take the basket out of your hand, and set it down before the altar of YHWH your Elohim.

5 And you shall answer and say before YHWH your Elohim, ‘A Syrian ready to perish was my father; and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there, few in number; and he became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous.

**6 And the Egyptians dealt ill with us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage;
7 and we cried to YHWH, the Elohim of our fathers, and YHWH heard our voice, and saw our affliction, and our toil, and our oppression;
8 and YHWH brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders;
9 and he has brought us into this place, and has given us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey.
10 And now, behold, I have brought the first of the fruit of the ground, which you, YHWH, have given me.’ And you shall set it down before YHWH your Elohim, and worship before YHWH your Elohim;
11 and you shall rejoice in all the good which YHWH your Elohim has given to you, and to your house, you, and the Levite, and the sojourner that is in the midst of you.”**

In giving the tithe, one is to take a portion of that tithe and place it in a basket. He is then to bring this basket before the kohen gadol (high priest) of those days and set it before him and do the above outlined ritual. This is impossible to do at present, simply because there is no mishkan or temple, thus no one serving in the office of kohen gadol here on earth. Furthermore, as we have examined above in this study, His name does not currently dwell upon earth in the mishkan or temple. One could conceivably set it before Mashiach Yeshua by faith as He is *the* Kohen Gadol. However, He cannot receive it from our hand in the physical world.

Here we see that, not only is the Levite included in rejoicing before YHWH, but the sojourner is, as well.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 26:12-19

12 “When you have made an end of tithing all the tithe of your increase in the third year, which is the year of tithing, then you shall give it to the Levite, to the sojourner, to the fatherless, and to the widow, that they may eat within your gates, and be filled.

13 And you shall say before YHWH your Elohim, ‘I have put away the hallowed things out of my house, and also have given them to the Levite, and to the sojourner, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all your commandment which you have commanded me; I have not transgressed any of your commandments, neither have I forgotten them;

14 I have not eaten thereof in my mourning, neither have I put away thereof, being unclean, nor given thereof for the dead; I have hearkened to the voice of YHWH my Elohim; I have done according to all that you hast commanded me.

15 Look down from your set-apart habitation, from heaven, and bless your people Israel, and the ground which you hast given us, as you swore to our fathers, a land flowing with milk and honey.’

16 This day YHWH your Elohim commands you to do these statutes and ordinances; you shall therefore keep and do them with all your heart, and with all your soul.

17 You have avouched YHWH this day to be your Elohim, and that you would walk in His ways, and keep His statutes, and His commandments, and His ordinances, and hearken to His voice;

18 and YHWH has avouched you this day to be a people for His own possession, as He has promised you, and that you should keep all His commandments;

19 and to make you high above all nations that He has made, in praise, and in name, and in honor; and that you may be a set-apart people to YHWH your Elohim, as He has spoken.”

There is an interesting phrase used in verse 12 that we need to examine more closely. The phrase “made an end of tithing all the tithe,” happens every three years in the shemittah cycle. But what does it mean to *make an end of tithing*?

We would suggest the following concept. In the first and second year of the three year cycle, one goes up to eat the tithe before YHWH. During these particular years, the whole tithe most likely shall not be consumed, that is, there shall be some left over. So what happens to the tithe which is left over?

Furthermore, in Vayyiqra 27:31-33 (this passage of Scripture was our opening passage in this study), YHWH talks about redeeming the tithe or a portion of it. However, there is a cost of doing so, namely, one fifth of that which is redeemed must be added to it, and both become set apart to YHWH. But why would anyone even want to consider simply adding more tithe to what he is already giving, which is what redeeming a portion of the tithe amounts to doing?

Please consider the following. Let’s say a man has flocks and herds. The increase of the flocks and herds are passed under a rod (Vayyiqra 27:32) and every tenth newborn animal belongs to YHWH. When this happens, let’s say that a particularly exceptional animal is numbered among the tenth. The man wanted to use this animal for breeding. YHWH allows for that man to still use the animal for breeding, but then he must pay a price for doing so, since the animal was set apart to YHWH. In this way, the man still preserves the seed line of that animal, as well as takes care of this obligation to give YHWH His due tithe.

Now, there is one restriction upon this concept, that being, every third year an end of all tithing must be done. Please note the following passage from above.

13 “And you shall say before YHWH your Elohim, ‘I have put away the hallowed things out of my house ...”

It is not required for a man to say this phrase in the first year or the second year of the three year cycle. It is only required in the third year of the cycle. Thus, one may rightly surmise that, on the first and second years of the cycle, one has not completely disposed of the entire tithe. However, in the third year of this cycle, YHWH commands that the entire tithe be disposed of according to the commandment.

Please note to whom the tithe is given in order to make an end of tithing, ***“and also have given them to the Levite, and to the sojourner, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all your commandment which you have commanded me.”*** It is important to realize that, while the whole tithe belongs to YHWH, He has specified what one is to do with it, in order to obey giving Him the tithe. Part of the tithe he is to eat before YHWH. Part of the tithe goes to the tribe of Levi. Part of the tithe belongs to the sojourner (ger). Part of the tithe belongs to the orphans. Part of the tithe belongs to the widows.

Some argue that there are no ministering Levites today because there is no mishkan or temple. This may be technically true, but not absolutely true. We shall examine this more closely in the next part of this series. There are those who minister in the word. Those who truly minister in His word can receive a portion of the tithe which belongs to YHWH. However, those ministering in the word should never receive the whole tithe, as YHWH specifies that the tithe also belongs to the ger, the orphans, and the widows.

We might add that we do not find within the instructions of the tithe any idea or concept which could be rightly applied to giving one's tithe to an organization, such as a church or religious group. The tithe is to be given to people, namely, Levites (ministers of His word), orphans and widows, and those who desire to attach themselves to Israel and become a part of her (sojourners – gerim). Some may think this is splitting hairs, but we do not think it is. We are simply doing our best to be as honest as is humanly possible with His written word.

One final thought concerning the tithe and the shemittah. During the shemittah, as we examined in a previous study, there is no planting or harvesting of the fields, vineyards, or orchards. Thus, there would be no tithe during the shemittah concerning the tithe of the land. However, there still would be tithe of the flocks and herds during the shemittah, as the flocks and herds would still be producing newborn livestock. Therefore, there would also be a tithe of the tithe, which would consist of those animals, as well as offerings.

May YHWH increase our increase that we may bless those He has commanded us to bless!

Understanding Torah Society

Chapter 16 – Levites: their place and function in Torah society

B'midbar (Numbers) 8:14-15

14 "Thus you shall separate the Levites from among the children of Israel; and the Levites shall be mine.

15 And after that shall the Levites go in to do the service of the tent of meeting; and you shall cleanse them, and offer them for a wave-offering."

Part of understanding the duties of the Levites is also understanding who they are. As a result of the incident with the golden calf, YHWH set apart the tribe of Levi to minister to Him in the tent of meeting. Before this, it seems clear, at least to this writer, that those who ministered to YHWH as priests were all the first-born of Israel.

Shemot (Exodus) 30:30

"And you shall anoint Aharon and his sons, and sanctify them, that they may minister unto Me in the priest's office."

Please note the similarity between the passage directly above with the passage directly below. Notice that both are "sanctified" unto YHWH. The main difference is that, in the passage above Aharon and his sons are specified ministering in the office of priests. This is because they are replacing the rightful priest within each home, the head of the home, and in particular, the first-born. This replacement was the direct result of the first-born priests taking part in the golden calf incident.¹⁷

Shemot (Exodus) 13:2

"Sanctify unto Me all the first-born, whatsoever opens the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast; it is Mine."

The first-born were rejected as priests before YHWH as a result of their part in the golden calf incident. Instead, YHWH commanded that the tribe of Levi be set-apart unto Him to do

¹⁷ Some may point to Aharon and wonder why he maintained the office of high priest when his part in the incident of the golden calf was so great. Please consider that Aharon from that day forward carried the sins of the whole nation. As the high priest of Israel, all the sins of the people, including his own, were placed upon him. He carried this sin, it was not simply dismissed. (See B'midbar 18:23)

certain duties in Israel. However, because of the Diaspora and its length, as well as many other things, the individual members of Israel have lost their identities as to which tribe they belong, and in many cases, that they even belong to Israel at all. Even those who know they are a part of the southern house, the house of Yehudah (Judah), do not really know to which tribe they belong. Certainly, YHWH knows, but man at this point does not. Please note what YHWH says concerning the matter of Levites in the latter days.

Yeshayah (Isaiah) 66:21

20 “And they shall bring all your brethren out of all the nations for an oblation unto YHWH, upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon dromedaries, to My holy mountain Jerusalem,” says YHWH, “as the children of Israel bring their oblation in a clean vessel into the house of YHWH.”

21 “And of them also will I take for priests and for Levites,” says YHWH.

In the returning process, YHWH will select for Himself priests and Levites. But how will He do this? By what process will He select the priests and Levites in the future restored kingdom of Israel?

Yechezqel (Ezekiel) 20:37

“And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant;”

This seems to be more of a figure of speech than an actual description of an event, but it could be literal; we just don't know at this point. Whichever way it is, YHWH shall cause His people to pass under His rod. We noted the following passage in the previous study, in chapter 15.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 27:32

“And all the tithe of the herd or the flock, whatsoever passes under the rod, the tenth shall be set-apart to YHWH.”

YHWH commands us to pass our newborn flocks and herds under the rod, and every tenth animal is to be set apart unto Him. Likewise, it seems that when He restores Israel, He is going to do the very same thing; that is, He shall pass His people under His rod and every tenth person shall be set apart as a priest or Levite. He is certainly capable of doing this without our knowledge. However He does it, He shall do it. Please note in the passage above from Yeshayah, that these people are coming out from every nation in the world. Truly, Israel is a mixed multitude and the new Levites shall reflect this reality!

Not only are the people of Israel a mixed multitude, but the tribe of Levi, including the kohenim, also reflect this reality. There is no such thing as “pure” Israelite blood. There have always been people from other nations coming into Israel. This is good and right as well as how YHWH intends for it to be.

B'midbar (Numbers) 18:21

“And to the children of Levi, behold, I have given all the tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service which they serve, even the service of the tent of meeting.”

As we examined in the previous study, YHWH has given the tithe of Israel to the tribe of Levi for their service in the tent of meeting. The question then becomes: what does their service in the tent of meeting entail?

Most people would certainly understand that the service of the tribe of Levi (including the kohanim) would consist of their part in the sacrifices and offerings brought to YHWH by the people of Israel. This reality will not be dealt with here, as most would already have a cursory understanding of this important duty. What this study will examine, then, is the other duties YHWH has given them, of which many may not be completely aware. However, let us consider one aspect of sacrifices that may have escaped our attention.

Divre Hayamim (2nd Chronicles) 30:17

For there were many in the assembly that had not sanctified themselves; therefore the Levites had the charge of killing the Passover for every one that was not clean, to sanctify them unto YHWH.

It is commanded by YHWH that each man kill his own Pesach (Shemot 12:6). However, it seems that if a man was not clean, then the Levites did it for that man, so that he and his family could partake of this important feast as well. Let us consider one aspect of the sacrifices and offerings that is not commonly understood.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 1:5

“And he shall kill the bullock before YHWH; and Aharon's sons, the priests, shall present the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar that is at the door of the tent of meeting.”

In many cases, the person who brings the sacrifice or offering is the one who is to kill the animal, not the priests or Levites. They, in turn, are to bring the blood inside and sprinkle it around the altar. Please read the above passage in its context to see this even more clearly. Furthermore, many of the sacrifices commanded in the opening chapters of Vayyiqra also specify this, as well.

Now let us consider some of the other duties of the Levites and kohanim.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 13:2

“When a man shall have in the skin of his flesh a rising, or a scab, or a bright spot, and it becomes in the skin of his flesh the plague of leprosy, then he shall be brought unto Aharon the priest, or unto one of his sons the priests.”

One of the things that the tribe of Levi and kohenim are to provide Israel is free medical services. There are many detailed instructions concerning how the צרעת - tzara'at (leprosy) is to be dealt with in a person, article, or even a house. The priests and Levites are not to charge for these services, but they are provided to the people of Israel as part of their service in the tent of meeting.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 10:11

“and that you may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which YHWH has spoken unto them by Moshe.”

The “you” in this passage is the kohenim. YHWH commands that the kohenim (priests) teach Israel all of the statutes which YHWH has commanded Moshe. Like the medical services, the priests are not to charge Israel as they teach them.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 6:7

“and you shall teach them diligently unto your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up.”

The responsibility for the education of the children of Israel is shared between the parents and the tribe of Levi. The tribe of Levi provides the educational material, free of charge to the people of Israel as overseers of YHWH’s statutes, ordinances, and commandments. The Levites and the kohenim are servants to Israel, not her masters!

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 16:18

“Judges and officers shall you make in all your gates, which YHWH your Elohim gives you, according to your tribes; and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment.”

These judges and officers are from their respective tribes. Along with these judges and officers, there are also the Levites and kohenim.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 17:9

“And you shall come unto the priests the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days; and you shall inquire; and they shall show you the sentence of judgment.”

Both work together to render the decisions between brethren who cannot settle their own differences. This should be the exception rather than the rule. These men who sit as judges within their respective tribes are just regular men who have shown that they have the wisdom of YHWH and are impartial in rendering a righteous ruling. They are regular people with land and cattle like everyone else. They are not paid to be judges.

When questions of a legal (Torah) nature come up, the teachers of the Torah are consulted. The Levites are to give assistance to all who need counsel in such matters, but it is without cost to those who need their counsel in such matters.

The Levites provide three services in Israel: 1) medical, 2) legal, and 3) educational. These services which YHWH has commanded for them to provide as part of the service of the tent of meeting are done without cost to those who need these services. In this manner, each and every person has equal access to whatever he needs in regards to medical care, legal counsel, and education of themselves and their children. It is important to understand the place of the tribe of Levi in Torah society in order to see that each and every person is cared for regardless of how rich or how poor he may be.

Understanding Torah Society

Chapter 17 – Obedience and the Sacrifices of Torah

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 4:2-3

2 “Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, ‘If any one shall sin unwittingly, in any of the things which YHWH has commanded not to be done, and shall do any one of them;

3 if the anointed priest shall sin so as to bring guilt on the people, then let him offer for his sin, which he has sinned, a young bullock without blemish unto YHWH for a sin-offering.”

Even though a person truly loves YHWH, because he is a flawed human, he is bound from time to time to fall into sin. This should be the exception rather than the rule. In order to facilitate repairing the damage caused by such a sin, YHWH commanded a schedule of sacrifices and offerings a person must offer in exchange for his sin according to his transgression. In essence, these offerings and sacrifices are fines levied upon the one who has misbehaved. There are also offerings which a man may voluntarily give in addition to those so commanded as a means to say thank you to YHWH for the blessings He has given.

To live in a Torah society, the ability to repair the damages done by sin is paramount for the society to function properly. It is also necessary for these damages to be repaired in order for brothers to live together in harmony. Let us carefully examine the place of sacrifices in Torah society, as well as one’s commanded obedience to all of Torah, including the sacrificial offerings.

One of the common arguments today concerning the death of Mashiach is that His death did away with the need to offer up the sacrifices and offerings commanded by YHWH in the Torah Moshe. But is this a valid or warranted conclusion? We shall see in the rest of this study that it is not a valid conclusion.

B’midbar (Numbers) 15:30

“But the soul that does aught with a high hand, whether he be home-born or a sojourner, the same blasphemeth YHWH; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people.”

One critical element about the sacrificial system is that there never was any sacrifice available for those who willfully transgressed the Torah. The sacrifices and offerings were only for those who unwittingly sinned and broke the commandments. Please note this wording in the opening passage. However, if one acts presumptuously, that is, a person

intentionally sins, such a person has no sacrifice available to make things right according to Torah. Please note what happens to the person who acts with such willfulness—he is cut off from Israel. This writer is not convinced that this is a human judgment or action, but rather may be a statement of the action which YHWH takes against such a person as outlined in the following passage.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 26:14-15

***14 “But if you will not hear and obey Me, and will not do all these commandments;
15 and if you shall reject My statutes, and if your soul abhor My ordinances, so that you will not do all my commandments, but break My covenant;
16 I also will do this unto you; I will appoint terror over you, even consumption and fever, that shall consume the eyes, and make the soul to pine away; and you shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it.”***

YHWH kindly gives each person the option to obey or not to obey His Voice, His statutes, His commandments, and His ordinances. If a person unwisely chooses not to obey His Voice, His statutes, His commandments, and His ordinances, then YHWH will come against that person and bring terror and plagues and all that He brought upon Egypt until that person either repents and obeys or is destroyed.

I have had many conversations in which the person with whom I was having a discussion was of such a mindset that the Law had been fulfilled and was no longer valid and therefore should not be obeyed today. Invariably this person will bring up the sacrifices as commanded by YHWH as a means to entrap me. Perhaps you have had such conversations as well. That part of the conversation might go something like this.

“So you believe that one should keep every single commandment of Torah?”

“Yes.”

“And it is a sin if you do not keep every single commandment of Torah?”

“Yes.”

“So do you offer sacrifices as Torah commands you to do? Because if you don’t, then aren’t you in sin?”

At this point they believe that they have me boxed in and completely trapped with no escape except to agree with them that Mashiach fulfilled the Torah and it is no longer to be obeyed by us. But this is where he and all like him are completely mistaken. Let us examine this closely to see the fallacy of this mindset as well as what the proper attitude one should have regarding the commandments of YHWH, including the sacrifices.

B’midbar (Numbers) 23:19

Elohim is not a man, that He should lie, neither the son of man, that He should repent; has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will he not make it good?

YHWH is the same yesterday, today, and forever! He has not changed because of the advent of Mashiach. Mashiach did not change our Creator; He is our Creator! Mashiach is also the Giver of the Torah. Do not let this one fact escape you!

Malachi 3:6

“For I, YHWH, change not; therefore you, sons of Ya’aqov, are not consumed.”

We can be very thankful for the unchangeableness of YHWH our Elohim! We can count on Him because He never changes. And since we are to be like Him, then we are to have the same attributes as Him by having His Spirit fill and empower us for life and service.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 17:19

“and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life; that he may learn to fear YHWH his Elohim, to keep all the words of this Torah and these statutes, to do them;”

While this passage specifically deals with the future king of Israel, it still applies to each and every person; we are to hear and obey His Voice. We all are to keep and to do all the words of His Torah and statutes. No person has the right or authority to pick and choose what to obey and what to disregard. Did not Mashiach Yeshua strongly chastise the Pharisees for making even the smallest commandment null and void through their manmade traditions? To be sure!

Tehillim (Psalm) 119:34

***Give me understanding, and I shall keep Your Torah;
Yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.***

Man has wrongly classified the commandments of YHWH into moral and ceremonial laws. Please understand that this is man’s doing and not YHWH’s doing. YHWH never makes a distinction between one commandment and another, that is, He expects us to keep them all.

Ya’aqov (James) 2:10

For whosoever shall keep the whole Torah, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all.

Man has a tendency to put an order of severity in YHWH’s commandments saying that the breaking of one commandment is worse than another. For example, man often states that murder is worse than lying. But in the eyes of the one true Judge, this is not true. In fact, to lie is to be guilty of murder as well as to be guilty of breaking every single commandment. In the eyes of YHWH our Judge, to break a commandment is to disobey His Voice and He has only one Voice.

What we need to see and understand so very clearly is that obedience to His Voice and to His commandments is a matter of the heart.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 6:6

“And these words, which I command you this day, shall be upon your heart;”

Not only was this true way back then, but it is still true today! Please consider this passage as well.

Yirmeyah (Jeremiah) 31:31-33

31 “Behold, the days come,” says YHWH, “that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah;

32 not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My covenant they broke, although I was a husband to them,” says YHWH.

33 “But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” says YHWH; “I will put My Torah in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their Elohim, and they shall be My people.”

Please note that this coming new covenant, which is better understood as a “renewed covenant,” is dealing with the same exact Torah as before. The major difference is that the first covenant was written upon tablets of stone and upon scrolls. In the renewed one, those same commandments shall be written upon the hearts and upon the inward parts of His people. If it is not written upon one’s inward parts, then such a person is not a part of His people.

Ivrim (Hebrews) 8:10

“For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” says YHWH; “I will put My Torah into their mind, and on their heart also will I write them; and I will be to them Elohim, and they shall be to Me a people.”

The writer to the Hebrew talmidim of Mashiach Yeshua quotes the prophecy from Yirmeyah indicating that this renewed covenant has now been implemented through Mashiach Yeshua. This means that we are now in the process of His Torah being written upon the minds and hearts of His people. A person will have to want His Torah written there before He will write it there. If a person rejects His Torah, then he is rejecting being a part of His people, for YHWH will have nothing to write upon such a person’s heart.

Matithyah (Matthew) 5:17-18

17 “Do not think that I came to destroy the Torah or the prophets; I did not come to destroy, but to verify.

18 For amein I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not one jot or one tittle shall pass away from the Torah, till all things be accomplished.”

It is important to note that Yeshua Mashiach did not say that He came to do away with the Torah except for ... (fill in the blank). There are many today who actually teach something along these lines: that the Torah is valid except for certain aspects of it like the sin sacrifice, or sacrifices in general, or some other commandment that they personally have no desire to keep and do and obey. Mashiach Yeshua made no exceptions. Those who say that even one jot or tittle or even one commandment has been removed are anti-Mashiach and are teaching that the above passage is false and are calling Mashiach Yeshua a liar. Mashiach Yeshua is not a liar!

Those who teach such error do not understand Scripture or history. They wrongly suppose and teach that because the temple was destroyed in 70 AD, YHWH has removed sacrifices because of the coming of Mashiach. Wrong! If this were so, then YHWH would have destroyed the temple in 30 AD right after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Mashiach Yeshua.

So why was the temple destroyed in 70 AD? This is a full generation after the coming of Mashiach. To answer that question we must understand what is recorded in the book of Acts. In the book of Acts we see that the talmidim of Yeshua continued to keep Shabbat, to observe the mo'edim (feasts) of YHWH, and to offer sacrifices in the temple in Jerusalem.

Ma'aseh (Acts) 21:26

Then Shaul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them went into the temple, declaring the fulfillment of the days of purification, and the offering was offered for every one of them.

Since this seems to be a Nazirite vow, this would include a sin sacrifice as we see in the following passage of Scripture.

B'midbar 6:10-11

10 And on the eighth day he shall bring two turtle-doves, or two young pigeons, to the priest, to the door of the tent of meeting:

11 and the priest shall offer one for a sin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering, and make atonement for him, for that he sinned by reason of the dead, and shall hallow his head that same day.

It is all recorded there for our instruction if we are willing to be honest and to learn from Him as He has recorded in His written word. Life in the temple continued on as it always had with the talmidim of Mashiach Yeshua participating in it fully and completely for 40 years after the coming of Mashiach Yeshua. But here is what did not happen. The religious leaders, those who controlled the system, did not accept Yeshua as Mashiach. Many did, but not those in control. Those who loved their places of power continued to "lord" it over the people. In fact, they actually set out to persecute and to kill the followers of Mashiach.

It is for this reason that the temple was taken away from them: because they refused to accept Yeshua as Mashiach. Had these leaders accepted Yeshua as Mashiach and acted accordingly, then the temple would not have been taken away from them and it is likely that it would still be standing today.

In part we know this, because in the coming days when Mashiach rules upon earth from Jerusalem, there will be a new temple and all the sacrifices will be offered according to Torah. YHWH tells us so through His prophets. It even specifies that there will be sin sacrifices.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 8:3

“And He humbled you, and caused you to hunger, and fed you with manna, which you did not know, neither did your fathers know; that He might make you know that man does not live by bread only, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of YHWH does man live.”

Notice, it is every word that proceeds out of the mouth of YHWH by which a man lives – every word! Man does not have the option of picking and choosing what to obey and what not to obey. This is not some fast food joint where you can have Torah your way! It is either all or none! Please reference again Ya’aqov 2:10 above.

It is time that those returning to our heavenly Father’s house (Torah) accept all of His commandments, statutes, and ordinances and are willing to obey every word of His Voice. It is time to accept it. It is time to get over yourself! YHWH is the same today as He has always been. If Torah society is going to function properly, then all of Torah, every single jot and every single tittle, must be in effect with no adding to or taking away from His word.

Remember, according to Scripture, obedience is a matter of the heart.

Tehillim (Psalm) 119:11

***Your word have I laid up in my heart,
That I might not sin against You.***

Sin is the breaking of His word, the breaking of His commandment. In order not to sin against YHWH, we must allow YHWH to write every single commandment of His upon our heart.

Now, let us go back to the conversation with the person questioning the commandments of sacrifices and not doing them today. Here is the truth of this matter. If a person is where he should be in his relationship with YHWH, then no matter what YHWH tells him to do, he will do it. Amein? Amein! So, if YHWH provides the means and teaches us how to offer the sacrifices, then we will do that. Until that time, we remain open to His Voice in this matter.

Oh, by the way, according to prophetic Scripture, YHWH will provide the means and the way to offer sacrifices again in a new temple. Will you obey YHWH in this matter? If His Spirit tells you to go, will you obey, or will you offer up some readymade excuse? It is your choice.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 28:15

“But it shall come to pass, if you will not hear and obey the Voice of YHWH your Elohim, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes which I command you this day, that all these curses shall come upon you, and overtake you.”

For a person to select one or more of the commandments and statutes of YHWH and decide that he will not obey that particular one is to bring curses down upon himself and upon his household. Is this truly the decision you want to make for yourself and your family?

YHWH is very serious about His people obeying every single word that comes forth from His mouth. Are you as serious about obeying Him as He is in wanting you to obey Him?

Tehillim (Psalm) 40:8

***I delight to do Your will, my Elohim;
Yea, Your Torah is within my heart.***

It is plain from the testimony of Scripture that this is an all or nothing proposition. Each one of us needs to make sure that we have not raised up some manmade barriers or exceptions to His Torah saying within our hearts that we will go so far, but not all the way. One of the most common places this is found today is in the area of sin sacrifices—particularly the sin offering.

The common argument is that since Yeshua is our sin sacrifice this somehow did away with the Torah commandments concerning sin sacrifices. Well, nowhere in Scripture does it state this. Just because Mashiach Yeshua is our sin sacrifice does not somehow nullify a previous commandment from YHWH. In fact, did not Mashiach Yeshua teach us that He did not come to do away with the Torah? Yet, there are so many who teach that this particular commandment has been done away because of His death and is no longer applicable to us today. This is error.

Please check your own thinking and what is hidden in your heart today. Look for anything that is raised up against the knowledge of Mashiach!

Qorintyah Bet (2nd Corinthians) 10:5

Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of Elohim, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Mashiach;

Remember there is but one Torah and it is for everyone who is a part of shema Yisrael.

Shemot (Exodus) 12:49

One law shall be to him that is home-born, and unto the stranger that sojourns among you.”

Is the Torah whole in your mind and thinking today? If not, this is a good time to make it whole!

If the Torah is not whole, then a Torah society cannot function properly. The Torah, every jot and every tittle, must be in place and being obeyed if the Torah society is to function smoothly and in the manner in which YHWH has intended it to function.

ABBA YHWH, make Your Torah one in our minds and hearts; in the name of Mashiach Yeshua. Amein.

Understanding Torah Society

Chapter 18 – Torah: Who is it for? How Many Standards?

Shemot (Exodus) 12:49

“One Torah shall be to him that is home-born, and unto the stranger that sojourns among you.”

There is one Torah. However, within that one Torah is many aspects. Certain parts of the Torah apply to particular individuals, while other portions apply to other various groups or individuals. Some commandments are to be obeyed by some people, and other commandments of that same Torah are to be obeyed by other people. Furthermore, not everyone is held to the same standard of measure. As we examine this from the Torah, hopefully, it will become clear there is a parallel between Israel and the human body, just as Shaul suggests in 1st Corinthians. In part, this entails understanding that each part of the body functions in a different manner in order for the body to be in harmony with itself and to function properly. The ear hears; the eye sees; the mouth speaks; and so forth. Likewise, in order for Israel to function properly, each one of its respective parts must do its own task, rather than attempting to do the task of a part of the body which it is not. Hence, upon close examination of the Torah Moshe, one finds various standards within Torah for different parts of Israel. Perhaps this is why the Torah itself refers to “Torahs” in the plural at least five times in the Torah Moshe.

Shemot (Exodus) 18:20

“And you shall teach them the statutes and the Torahs, and shall show them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do.”

We shall examine seven sub-groups within Israel who each have a different standard to live by as commanded by YHWH. There could be more, but these seven will suffice to illustrate this important truth concerning Torah society. The sub-groups and the order in which we shall examine them are as follows: 1) men and women, 2) those over 20 years of age, 3) gerim, 4) goyim, 5) Nazirites, 6) Levites, and 7) priests.

As we study and dissect the following passages of Scripture, one must always remember to put it all back together in the end. This is true of any study of this nature. It is only a part of the whole. As the opening passage points out, there is one Torah. All who would be a part

of Israel must submit to the Voice of YHWH as recorded in Scripture. It is His Voice we are to obey.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 12:2

“Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, ‘If a woman conceives seed, and bears a male child, then she shall be unclean seven days; as in the days of the impurity of her sickness shall she be unclean.’”

Not surprisingly, men do not give birth to children. Vayyiqra chapter 12 consists of commandments for a woman who gives birth and what she is to do after giving birth. Whether a woman gives birth to a boy or a girl dictates her actions according to these commandments. These commandments do not directly apply to a man. These commandments are for the woman. However, it should be pointed out, that in giving birth, both a female and a male are involved. It is a given that these two people are married to each other. Therefore, since they have become “one flesh,”¹⁸ it can easily be argued that, through the man’s wife, a man keeps these commandments as well, even though the commandments are directed towards the woman. There is one Torah.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 15:32-33

32 “This is the Torah of him that has an issue and of him whose seed of copulation goes from him, so that he is unclean thereby;

33 and of her that is menstruating with her impurity, and of him that has an issue, of the man, and of the woman, and of him that lies with her that is unclean.”

Depending upon whether the person is male or female, and what the type of uncleanness, determines how that uncleanness is to be cleansed. Different commandments apply for the male and female. Vayyiqra chapter fifteen deals with specifics of how a man is to become clean as well as how a woman is to become clean. Each gender has its own set of commandments to keep and obey. There are two aspects of Torah—two standards, one standard which applies to men, and one standard which applies to women, yet both are to live in obedience to YHWH through their respective standards. There is one Torah.

B’midbar (Numbers) 27:8

“And you shall speak unto the children of Israel, saying, ‘If a man dies, and has no son, then you shall cause his inheritance to pass unto his daughter.’”

Generally speaking, the inheritance of land stewardship is passed from the father to the son. If a man has daughters, the daughters receive no inheritance from their father. The exception to this is if the father has no sons. Then, and only then, does the inheritance pass to the daughters. Even in this there is a condition, which if not met, voids the possibility of the daughters inheriting from their father.

¹⁸ Idiomatic language for a man and a woman to have a child together, his flesh (seed) has joined with her flesh (egg) to become a new and separate flesh—a child. Thus, the two become “one flesh.”

It is not difficult to see in Torah that men and women are held to different standards. A man does not live by the commandments which apply to a woman, nor does a woman live by the commandments which apply to a man. We must point out that there are many commandments which are non-gender specific, which apply neither to male nor female exclusively, but rather, apply to both genders equally. There is one Torah.

Not only are certain aspects of Torah gender specific, but there are commandments which are age specific, as well. Please consider the following passage, which is not only age specific, but gender specific, also.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 27:3-4

3 "And your estimated value shall be of the male from twenty years old even unto sixty years old, even your estimated value shall be fifty shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary.

4 And if it be a female, then your estimated value shall be thirty shekels."

Each age group has a different estimated value, and each gender within each age group has its own valuation. We are particularly interested in the twenty year old and older age group at present, because this male age group makes up the men of war within Israel.

Shemot (Exodus) 30:11-14

11 And YHWH spoke unto Moshe, saying,

12 "When you take the sum of the children of Israel, according to those that are numbered of them, then they shall give every man a ransom for his soul unto YHWH, when you number them; that there be no plague among them, when you number them.

13 This they shall give, every one that passes over unto them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary (the shekel is twenty gerahs), half a shekel for an offering to YHWH.

14 Every one that passes over unto them that are numbered, from twenty years old and upward, shall give the offering of YHWH."

According to this commandment, the males twenty years old and up are to be counted in the census. Each one of these men who is counted must pay a redemption fee of a half-shekel. This applies to all males twenty years old and up, but it does not apply to those who are less than twenty years of age, nor does it apply to women, regardless of their age.

B'midbar (Numbers) 1:45

So all they that were numbered of the children of Israel by their fathers' houses, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war in Israel.

This verse concludes a similar passage in which each and every tribe had the number of its men of war, twenty years old and up, counted and recorded. Those who were not yet

twenty were not counted, nor were the women counted. Not everyone within Israel lives by the same standard of measure. There is one Torah.

In the opening passage of this study, we quoted Shemot 12:49, in which it uses the term “stranger among you.” “Stranger” comes from the Hebrew word גֵר – ger, which comes from the root word גָּרַר – gur, which means “to live fearfully.” We see this with Cornelius in the book of Acts, a man who lived fearfully.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 19:34

“The stranger that sojourns with you shall be unto you as the home-born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt: I am YHWH your Elohim.”

The group known as גֵרִים – gerim, are to be treated by those same commandments as if they were born into Israel, that is, just as if they are a native-born. There are many passages throughout the Torah which specify how the ger is to be treated in the same manner as the native-born. The following passage is one such passage.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 17:8

“And you shall say unto them, ‘Whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among them, that offers a burnt-offering or sacrifice,’”

The incorporation of a ger (pronounced - *gair*) into the life of Israel is to be so complete that the ger is to offer sacrifices in the same manner as the native-born.

However, in the treatment of the ger, there is one exception in Torah, that is, one difference in the commandments which they are to obey. Please consider the following passage.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 14:21

“You shall not eat of anything that dies of itself; you may give it unto the sojourner that is within your gates, that he may eat it; or you may sell it unto a foreigner; for you are a holy people unto YHWH your Elohim. You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk.”

It seems apparent from this passage, that while all the commandments which would apply to a native-born apply also to a גֵר – ger, this one does not. However, it may be this one commandment is a test upon the גֵר – ger to see if he is yet ready and willing to take upon himself the full yoke of Torah. Just because one may give it to the גֵר – ger, does not mean the גֵר – ger must take it, or even eat that which has died of itself, which YHWH commands not to be eaten. There is one Torah.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 20:23

“And you shall not walk in the customs of the nation, which I cast out before you; for they did all these things, and therefore I abhorred them.”

The גר – ger is a person who has come out of the nations and has attached himself to Israel. A גוי – goy (the plural being גוים – goyim, which means “nations,” while the singular גוי – goy means a “person of the nations”), commonly called a “gentile,” may live among Israel, but has not attached himself to Israel. The Torah does not apply to the גוים – goyim. It applies to Israel and to those who come in and attach themselves to her. YHWH gave the Torah to Israel through the prophet Moshe. YHWH did not give the Torah to the nations. Therefore, generally speaking, the Torah Moshe does not apply to the גוים – goyim, even though there are portions within Torah which teach Israel how to treat the גוים – goyim.

For example, when YHWH commands Israel not to have certain sexual relations with close familial relationships, this commandment does not apply to those outside of Israel. That is, it is not against Torah for a goy to do such a thing. This is true of all such commandments given to Israel. There is one Torah.

B’midbar (Numbers) 6:2

“Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, ‘When either man or woman shall make a special vow, the vow of a Nazirite, to separate himself unto YHWH,’”

One group which is completely voluntary is the Nazirite. A Nazirite can be either male or female. This chapter in the book of B’midbar gives the specifics on how a Nazirite is to conduct himself while under this special vow. The vow can be as long as a person chooses, either a short amount of time or lifelong. Shimshon (Samson) was to be a Nazirite from birth for his entire life. In this case, YHWH placed this vow upon him in his mother’s womb; it was not voluntary. He is not really a good example of a Nazirite because of his many failings. However, he is a pretty good example of what not to do in this regard. This is most likely why it was recorded for our instruction; see 1st Corinthians 10:6.

There is one Torah.

B’midbar (Numbers) 8:14-15

14 “Thus you shall separate the Levites from among the children of Israel; and the Levites shall be mine.

15 And after that shall the Levites go in to do the service of the tent of meeting; and you shall cleanse them, and offer them for a wave-offering.”

We will not spend too much time here on the Levites or the kohenim (priests) since we presented a study on the Levites and the kohenim just two parts before this present one. We mention them here to point out that the Levites as a tribe have a different standard of measure given directly from YHWH by which they live. YHWH has charged them with keeping the tent of meeting and all that entails. Please note what the writer to the Hebrew followers of Mashiach wrote.

Ivrim (Hebrews) 7:13

For He of whom these things are said belongs to another tribe, from which no man has given attendance at the altar.

The other tribes of Israel are not commanded to attend to the services of the tent of meeting in the way YHWH commanded the tribe of Levi. There is one Torah.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 1:5

“And he shall kill the bullock before YHWH; and Aharon's sons, the priests, shall present the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar that is at the door of the tent of meeting.”

Likewise, the kohanim, which are a part of the tribe of Levi, are even more set-apart, and they are charged with keeping the services of the mishkan. No other tribe is commanded to do so. Their calling is different than the other tribes. There is one Torah.

There is one Torah. Yes, there are many aspects, standards, and sub-groups within Israel, and not every man lives by the same commandments from YHWH. Yet, all these commandments are from YHWH. Each person must learn to hear and obey His Voice according to the task YHWH has set him apart to do. Regardless of the task, YHWH has only one Voice. It is His Voice by which a man shall live or die. Are there many standards? Yes! However, YHWH is echad (one), and if Israel is to follow her Maker properly, then she must adhere to His one Torah in the appropriate manner.

“Shema Yisrael, YHWH our Elohim YHWH echad.”

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 6:4

When each member of Israel hears and obeys the Voice of YHWH in the way which is pleasing to YHWH, then Israel is keeping all of Torah. Israel is echad.

Yochanan (John) 17:21

“that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that You did send Me.”

Understanding Torah Society

Chapter 19 – The Coming King? – Examination of Hoshea 1:11

Hoshea 1:11

And the children of Yehudah and the children of Yisrael shall be gathered together, and they shall appoint themselves one head, and shall go up from the land; for great shall be the day of Yizrael.

Is this passage speaking of Mashiach or some other type of leader? Where should one place this passage in the prophetic timeline? What is happening in this passage? The answers to these questions and other questions will depend largely upon how one understands this passage. Let's dig into the nuts and bolts of this passage a little to see if we can increase our understanding of it, thus, increasing our understanding of what is coming in the future.

The first question we would like to examine concerns of whom this passage is speaking. The "head" which the children of Yehudah and the children of Yisrael appoint for themselves comes from the Hebrew word ראש – "rosh," which means *begin* or *head*. This does not seem to be a king, but rather some other type of head of state such as a prime minister or president. Typically, a king is not appointed, but rather inherits his position from his father before him. In our modern world, a president or prime minister would normally be thought of as being elected by the people of the nation in which he serves.

Therefore, one might conclude this word does not seem to be pointing to the coming Mashiach. Next, let us examine how this leader is selected to see if this confirms this conclusion.

The word "appoint" from the above passage comes from the Hebrew word שום – "sum" (pronounced as soom), which means *to place*, as in "appoint." We see this very thing happening in the following passage.

Shemot (Exodus) 18:21

"Moreover you shall provide out of all the people able men, such as fear Elohim, men of truth, hating unjust gain; and place such over them, to be princes of thousands, princes of hundreds, princes of fifties, and princes of tens.

The word “place” in this passage is the same word שום “sum.” Some have suggested the word שום “sum” in Hoshea 1:11 means this leader is elected. However, there is nothing in the context of Scripture to suggest such a process. While this could be true, it is not necessarily true, as we are not told how this “head” is selected, only that he is placed over both nations, making them one nation. This seems to be the point of the passage, the two nations becoming one nation.

Since we are not told in this passage how this “head” is selected, this does not help us much in determining whether this person is Mashiach or not. Next, we will look at the activity of this leader to see if this can help us determine if this may or may not be Mashiach.

The phrase describing their joined activity under the leadership of this “head” is **and shall go up from the land**, which consists of two words in Hebrew. וַעֲלוּ מִן-הָאָרֶץ v’alu min-ha’aretz. As a point of clarification, when two Hebrew words are joined with a maqeph, these words are pronounced and treated as one word. Thus, מִן-הָאָרֶץ is seen as one word, rather than two words. The phrase וַעֲלוּ מִן is quite common in Scripture. It means to leave where one is and go somewhere else. For example, please consider the following passage.

B’reshit (Genesis) 13:1

And Avram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the Negev.

The only difference here is Avram left Egypt, whereas Yisrael and Yehudah are leaving the land. However, for whatever reason, under the leadership of this newly placed “head,” Yehudah and Yisrael have chosen him for the express purpose of leaving the land. This seems to indicate to this writer this is not Mashiach. Mashiach returns to lead us back into the land, not out of the land. Therefore, this would place this passage sometime before the return of Mashiach.

Please note that Yehudah and Yisrael have chosen to join back together from two separate nations into one in order to leave the land. This strongly suggests to us the reunification of Yehudah and Yisrael shall transpire before the return of Mashiach.

There is one final item which we need to examine in this study: the play on words between Yisrael and Yizrael.

יִשְׂרָאֵל - Yisrael = princess of El (pronounced – yis-ra-ale)

יִזְרְעֵאל - Yizrael = seed of El (pronounced – yiz-r’-el)

These two words are phonetically similar. However, it is not just the changing of the ש (shin) to a ז (zayin), but is also the addition of an ע (ayin). First, let us examine the meaning of the words themselves. Let’s remember, when Hoshea was the prophet sent to the northern kingdom of Yisrael, the nation had already been split into two separate houses. Since that time, these two nations have never yet rejoined as two nations becoming one

nation. Therefore, while this prophetic word could have come true in the days of Hoshea, it did not.

ישראל – “Yisrael” consists of the joining of two words, ישר – “yasar” which means *to straighten*, and אל – “el” the shortened form of אלה – “alah,” which means *master*. Thus, we have in the name of Yisrael, those who have been straightened by the Master.

This word is then played upon with יזרעאל – “Yizrael.” The last two characters are the same with the same meaning. זרע – “zara” means *to cast from a distance* as one casts seed. With the beginning י – “yod” standing for the name of YHWH, one would then have the meaning “Yah casting the seed of El.” In this case, He seems to be casting them out of the land once again. Both Yehudah and Yisrael have come back into the land, have joined forces under one leader, and then leave the land. Since this has never happened, we can rightly surmise this is still sometime in the future.

Is it possible this is a reference to all of Israel fleeing to that place of safety in the wilderness? Why would she flee?

Matithyah (Matthew) 24:15-16

15 “When therefore you see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (let the reader understand),

16 “then let them that are in Judaea flee unto the mountains.”

If this is the reason for her leaving the land, then there does not seem to this writer enough time for any election. But rather this is done in haste.

All indications within this passage and its context seem to indicate this passage is not dealing with Mashiach in person. Rather, it is dealing with an event which transpires sometime before His return.

This passage therefore seems to indicate to the reader that the two nations of Yehudah and Yisrael have been formed in the land of Israel and become two separate nations. Then, events happen which cause these two nations to join together to form one nation, and a leader is placed at their head to lead them out of the land. This is suggested by the name of Yizrael as well as openly stated in the verse.

Thus, this passage suggests the Torah society of both nations is well established and functioning before Mashiach returns.

Understanding Torah Society

Chapter 20 – Every man under his own tree

Micah 4:4

But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree; and none shall make them afraid; for the mouth of YHWH Tzava'ot has spoken it.

The most obvious meaning of this passage from the context is there is no one to make Israel afraid any longer. He is dwelling in safety and security. Each man is dwelling under his own tree and under his own vine. However, while this is readily apparent from the context, it is far from being the end of what dwelling under one's one tree and vine means. This passage speaks on many levels as to how a Torah society is supposed to function.

Both the vine and the fig tree bear fruit which is good for food. Thus, one of the meanings here is that each man is producing his own food. This is one of the things that gives him reason to be secure; he does not need to depend upon others in order to be able to feed and clothe his family. We include the ability to clothe himself as well as feeding himself because of what man originally did in the garden.

Likewise, each man sitting under his own tree, specifically, his own fig tree, suggests the sin of Adam and Chavah in Gan Eden.

B'reshit (Genesis) 3:7

And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they bsewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

As a result of rebelling against the Voice of YHWH, man hid his nakedness by putting on fig leaves. We are not suggesting man is going to return to that state. However, what it does seem to suggest concerning man's future state by one sitting under his own fig tree, indicates each person will be fully aware of his own shortcomings and sin. He will not be looking at the other man's sin and pointing his finger at his neighbor any longer. He finally fully realizes he is not worthy of being in the presence of YHWH.

Yonah (Jonah) 4:6-7

6 And YHWH Elohim prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over Yonah, that it might be a shade over his head, to deliver him from his evil case. So Yonah was exceeding glad because of the gourd.

7 But Elohim prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd, that it withered.

Both the vine and tree suggest other passages of Scripture. Each man sitting under his own vine suggests the account of Yonah. The vine of Yonah suggests both repentance and mercy. Not only is each man to repent and return to YHWH, but each man is also to show his neighbor the mercy he received from YHWH. If he does not, then his vine shall wilt.

Furthermore, each person sitting under his own vine and tree also suggests each person is minding his own business. He is not being a busybody nor attempting to dictate to his neighbor how his neighbor should live his life. Rather, each person is sitting under his own tree at peace with himself as well as at peace with his neighbors and with his brothers. This is what a true Torah society should look like.

Each person is allowing every other person to live his own life in full obedience to the Voice of YHWH in the manner which is pleasing to YHWH. In this picture there is no idea present of "Torah police" forcing upon others the dictates of man, nor even the commandments of YHWH. Each man knows what he is supposed to do and he does it.

Yirmeyah (Jeremiah) 31:33-34

33 "But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days," says YHWH, "I will put my Torah in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their Elohim, and they shall be my people;

34 and they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know YHWH;' for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them," says YHWH, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more."

When each person truly understands the requirement of YHWH to hear and obey His Voice, then each and every man within Israel can, and will, dwell under his own tree and vine, living securely and safely without anyone to make him afraid.

Tzephanyah (Zephaniah) 3:13

The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth; for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid.

The making afraid is not only from those outside of Israel, but also one's own neighbors and brothers. Each man is no longer afraid of being wrongly or harshly judged by his neighbor. Each person can, and will, be open and honest how he is living without fear of reprisal or

condemnation from others who also shema the Voice of YHWH. Each man is walking his own path without being judged by others for not walking the exact same path in the exact same way.

One passage which is discussed a lot in these times is the following passage.

Yeshayah (Isaiah) 11:13

The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and they that vex Judah shall be cut off; Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim.

It is supposed by many who point to this passage, that the envy spoken of in this passage is the envy of Ephrayim as he envies Yehudah. Also, the vexation spoke of in this passage is the vexation of Ephrayim by Yehudah. While this is directly spoken of in the latter half of this passage, it is not the only aspect of envy and vexation being spoken of here. Such a view is woefully incomplete.

Please consider the first part of this passage again in which it states, "***The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and they that vex Judah shall be cut off;***" We can know for certain that those who vex Yehudah are not part of Israel for this passage teaches us they shall be cut off, that is, they shall no longer be a part of Yehudah even though at one time they would have been considered a part of Yehudah. Notice, this is not discussing Yehudah vexing Ephrayim as in the latter half of the verse, rather it is someone vexing Yehudah and from the wording of the passage that vexation is coming from within the house of Yehudah.

Likewise, the envy of Ephrayim is from within Ephrayim. In the latter half of this passage, it says Ephrayim will no longer envy Yehudah. However, in the first portion of this passage, the envy spoken of seems to be pointing at something different, namely, the envy of one man within Ephrayim towards another man of Ephrayim. Not only will Ephrayim no longer envy those of Yehudah, but he will also no longer envy others within Ephrayim, as well.

This is one of the things that our opening passage means in stating every man shall sit under his own tree and his own vine. He is no longer judging himself by comparing himself to others. Rather he understands his own sin and shortcomings because he rightly hears the Voice of YHWH and needs no man to teach him.

Yochanan (John) 6:45

"It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught of Elohim. Every one that has heard from the Father, and has learned, comes unto Me.'"

Additionally, every man sitting under his own fig tree and every man under his own vine also suggests this is his own property. Every man has his own piece of land given to him by YHWH for that man to properly steward His land according to the Voice of YHWH. No man is telling another man what he may or may not do on, or with, his own property, but rather, each man is obeying the Voice of YHWH.

Another aspect of every man sitting under his own vine and under his own tree concerns warfare. Please consider the following. When a nation invades another nation, one of the things at which they strike is the infrastructure of the nation which they are invading. However, if there was no infrastructure to sabotage, then it would make it much more difficult to conquer. Each family, each farm, would be self-contained producing its own food, power, water, whatever each family needed to live. Such a reality in Torah society would make it very difficult, even nigh unto impossible, for an invading army to conquer such a society.

Amos 9:14

“And I will bring back the captivity of My people Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them.”

Furthermore, each man sitting under his own vine and under his own fig tree strongly suggests the return of the captives. Those who have lived in captivity among the nations have now returned and have been given an inheritance in the land. We see in the above passage that the return of the captives causes them to plant vineyards and gardens – each man sitting under his own tree and vine producing his own food.

When a person reads Micah 4:4 in context, the verse following our verse of study may seem puzzling.

Micah 4:5

For all the peoples walk everyone in the name of his god; and we will walk in the name of YHWH our Elohim for ever and ever.”

This verse suggests at least two items as it relates to Torah society. First, YHWH never forces anyone to follow Him. Therefore, neither should we. If a person desires to go do his own thing, then we should let him. Of course, this is after loving correction has been given. If a person truly wants to live according to his own standard, rather than living according to the standard as set forth by YHWH in His Torah, then he must be allowed to do so.

Second, this passage also suggests this is before Mashiach returns, as each nation is following after its own gods; whereas, Yisrael is following YHWH Elohim and she shall do so forever.

Every man under his own tree and under his own vine is a beautiful prophetic picture of future Israel living in safety and security. He is no longer living in fear from the nations who live around him, nor is he living in such a way as to look over his shoulder at his neighbors, concerned his neighbor will condemn him for what YHWH has led him to do. This is a picture of Torah society in the here and now, but still some time in the future. However, we

might rightly conclude that it is also sometime before Mashiach returns, because of what it states in verse five above.

May YHWH make this a reality soon and in our day!

Remember, you can make this begin to happen now by allowing your neighbor to live under his own tree and under his own vine by the way in which you treat him. Let each man deal with his neighbor with loving compassion in the same measure he would like to receive.

Matithyah (Matthew) 7:12

“All things therefore whatsoever you would that men should do unto you, even so do you also unto them: for this is the Torah and the prophets.”

Understanding Torah Society

Chapter 21 – Is Torah society a democracy?

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 4:2

“You shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall you diminish from it, that you may keep the commandments of YHWH your Elohim which I command you.”

Before one can answer the question of whether the Torah society of Israel is to be a democracy or something else, one must define what a democracy is. We have chosen the following definition as it is fairly concise and is the common understanding of what a democracy is.

Democracy – government by the people; a form of government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised directly by them or by their elected agents under a free electoral system.¹⁹

In short, a democracy consists of people who are self-ruled. In one very small sense then, the Torah society is a democracy. That is, in the sense each individual has covenanted with all the others of said society to follow the rules of the society in which they all live. However, if this conclusion was where a person stopped, that Torah society is a democracy, then he would be wrong because such a conclusion would be incomplete.

While in this one small sense Torah society could be viewed as a democracy that is about as far as it goes. Beyond that, Torah society is not a democracy. Torah society is not a democracy because the members of the society do not make the rules, regulations, and statutes which govern their everyday living. YHWH has already done this by giving Israel the Torah. Furthermore, as the opening passage of Scripture states, the Torah society is forbidden to alter the Torah in any way. The society cannot add to the Torah, nor can the society ignore or delete any part of the Torah. Rather, the society in order to be a true Torah society must adhere to every bit of the Torah—every jot and every tittle.

Let us examine a couple of incidents in which the people of Israel attempted to make the Torah society a democracy so we can see the disastrous results which they brought upon themselves as a result of acting as a self-rule democracy.

¹⁹ <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/democracy>

B'midbar (Numbers) 16:1-3

1 Now Korach, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men:

2 and they rose up before Moshe, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, called to the assembly, men of renown;

3 and they assembled themselves together against Moshe and against Aharon, and said unto them, "You take too much upon you, seeing the whole the assembly is holy, every one of them, and YHWH is among them; why then do you lift up yourselves above the assembly of YHWH?"

Korach and all those who he was able to convince of this foolish action decided that they had as much right to rule as Moshe did. They wanted to be a democracy. They wanted to have a say in what they did as a society and where they went and who their leaders were. They made an attempt to force democracy upon the people of Israel.

B'midbar (Numbers) 16:31-32

31 And it came to pass, as he made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground split into that was under them;

32 and the earth opened its mouth, and swallowed them up, and their households, and all the men that appertained unto Korach, and all their goods.

The end result was that Korach, every member of his family and household perished by having the ground open up and they all went straight down into Sheol. The confusion that must have flooded into the mind of Korach at that moment must have been overwhelming. He had been sure of his position. He had been sure that he had been correct with two hundred fifty other leaders backing him up to confront Moshe and Aharon. He had failed to take into consideration that it was not Moshe or Aharon who was at the head of Israel, but it was YHWH. Moshe and Aharon were just the two men who were His temporary chosen leaders.

B'midbar (Numbers) 16:35

And fire came forth from YHWH, and devoured the two hundred and fifty men that offered the incense.

Immediately after the ground opened up and swallowed Korach and those with him, fire came forth and killed the other two hundred fifty leaders. YHWH put a stop to the whole idea of self-determined rule by the people. He did so in a dramatic way.

In this incident, only a small portion of Israel attempted to institute a democracy. They all paid for it with their lives. In this next incident it is the whole nation which acts upon self-rule and pays a huge penalty for such foolishness.

B'midbar (Numbers) 14:1-4

1 And all the assembly lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night.

2 And all the children of Israel murmured against Moshe and against Aharon: and the whole assembly said unto them, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would that we had died in this wilderness!

3 And therefore does YHWH bring us unto this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will be a prey; were it not better for us to return into Egypt?"

4 And they said one to another, "Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt."

Moshe had chosen one man from each tribe to go into the land and spy it out. When they returned ten of those men gave an evil report to the assembly of Israel. As a result of this evil report, the people refused to believe YHWH and turned away from Him as their leader. Notice, in verse four above, they decided to elect a different leader than Moshe and return to their captivity, to return back to Egypt.

This is truly where a democracy will lead a nation, into captivity. Only following the Torah will lead one into freedom. When we say "only the Torah" will do this, we mean at least three things. 1) It is the living Torah which we are to follow. Only He is the One who can properly lead us. 2) In following the written Torah, it must always and ever include following the Voice of YHWH! If one is not hearing and obeying the Voice of YHWH, then He is deceived and not following Torah at all. 3) Finally, following the Torah must also include the written Torah—every jot and every tittle.

B'midbar (Numbers) 14:34

After the number of the days in which you spied out the land, even forty days, for every day a year, shall you bear your iniquities, even forty years, and you shall know my alienation.

The price the nation paid for acting in self-rule is the number of days which the spies were in the land spying it out, they had to wander in the wilderness one year for each day. Since the spies were in the land forty days they had to spend forty years in the wilderness. Furthermore, the whole generation twenty years and older which voted to return back to Egypt had to die in the span of that forty years and would not be allowed to enter into the promised land.

B'midbar (Numbers) 14:37

even those men that did bring up an evil report of the land, died by the plague before YHWH.

The ten men who brought the evil report and caused the people to democratically choose rebellion against YHWH, all died immediately.

B'midbar (Numbers) 14:45

Then the Amalekite came down, and the Canaanite who dwelt in that mountain, and smote them and beat them down, even unto Hormah.

The people then saw the foolishness of their actions and attempted to make it right with more foolish actions. They attempted to go into the land and take it anyway. While we are not told the exact number who died in this battle, it must have been a great number, perhaps too great to count easily.

We could easily choose many more incidents in which something similar happened and many people died because they thought to make the Torah society a democracy, that is, a society whose people determined their own course to walk. In each case, it ended with those directly involved in the rebellious action of self-determination to die immediately. Then, those who were indirectly involved were disciplined in some other way.

Torah society is not a democracy. Torah society consists of two parties who have covenanted together to walk a certain path. If one party deviates from that path the covenant stipulates certain penalties for said actions. For a fuller treatment of being in covenant with YHWH please see the study [Covenantal Relationship](#).²⁰

The covenantal relationship between YHWH and Israel consists of a marriage. The Torah is the binding force between the two parties. This agreement, called a ketuvah in Scripture, cannot be breached without a high cost to the relationship between the parties. When one or more chooses to walk down the path of self-rule, then such a person or group has chosen to disregard the ketuvah²¹, the Torah, and the result will always be discipline, in some cases, severe discipline.

Torah society then is based upon the parties acting in love towards one another as well as watching out for the interests of all those within the covenant relationship. When this is done, then all benefit, including and especially the one who chooses to walk according to the ketuvah. Please understand that it is only those who [voluntarily](#)²² walk in this manner who are truly a part of the Torah society.

²⁰ http://www.onetorahforall.com/Studies2010/Covenantal_Relationship.html

²¹ Marriage contract

²² http://www.onetorahforall.com/Studies2010/Volunteers_Only.html

Understanding Torah Society

Chapter 22 – Serving YHWH: a Peek at the “Religious” System

Yirmeyah (Jeremiah) 7:22-23

22 “For I spoke not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices;

23 but this thing I commanded them, saying, ‘Shema My Voice, and I will be your Elohim, and you shall be My people; and you shall walk in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you.’”

There are many religions in the world, past and present. This list includes Judaism and Christianity. While what one finds recorded in Scripture is spiritual in nature, it is not really a religion, even though many mistakenly think it is. Surely, many religions and cults have used what is recorded in Scripture to further their own personal agendas, but such misuse does not establish Israel as a religion. While there are religious aspects to the Torah society, Torah society is much more than simply a religion. The Torah calls for many things which are viewed by man as being religious in nature. One aspect of Torah viewed in this manner is the sacrificial system. However, as YHWH points out in the above passage, the sacrifices are not the point or the goal of those particular commandments. The point is hearing and obeying His Voice, that is, to shema. The Hebrew word שמע – “shema” means both to *hear* and to *obey*. One cannot shema without both aspects of this meaning being present.

What were written down are simply His instructions given through the agency of His Voice. While this may sound rather simple-minded, this truth rarely seems to be grasped or understood. In essence then, these written words have been passed down to us and preserved²³ through the ages as a tool to teach us to be able to recognize His Voice. Then, upon recognizing His Voice, one may choose to hear and obey. This is the foundational essence of living in a Torah society. Without shema, there can be, and will be, no such society based upon His Torah.

²³ The Scriptures today are exactly what our heavenly Father needs them to be. They are not perfect, in that, man has surely altered them to suit his own selfish design. However, YHWH has allowed this to happen in order to further test those who claim to be His followers, to see if they will shema, that is, to see if they will hear and obey His Voice.

Hoshea 6:6

“For I desire goodness, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of Elohim more than burnt-offerings.”

Various people get hung up on particular commandments. The sacrifices and offerings are some of the most common. Circumcision is also quite common for people to get hung up on when it comes to obedience. However, it should not be so, if all commandments are seen in their proper light. That being, it is not so much the execution of a particular commandment which is paramount to living in a right relationship with one’s Creator, as it is in learning to hear and obey His Voice. If one simply views the Torah commandments as a list of dos and don’ts, such a person shall never attain the level of relationship which YHWH desires for each one of His people. If a person is going to have knowledge of Elohim, then he must learn to listen to His Voice.

Sh’muel Aleph (1st Samuel) 15:22

And Sh’muel said, “Has YHWH as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the Voice of YHWH? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to shema than the fat of rams.”

Living in a Torah society is not about every single person doing exactly the same thing in the exact same way while dressed in the exact same manner. Such a society would only be a cult and nothing more. The truth is, anyone can simply read through the Torah and pick out all the commandments and then do them. There are far more rules and regulations in modern society today than what one finds in the Torah. Yet, people are capable of, and, in fact, do obey all these rules and regulations in their own particular societies. However, the Torah is not a list of dos and don’ts to be followed blindly by His people. The Torah is a means to introduce a person to the Giver of said Torah. After the introduction, it is expected that one should proceed forward in the relationship with the Giver as the relationship grows and matures.

Shemot (Exodus) 19:5

“Now therefore, if you will obey My Voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession from among all peoples; for all the earth is mine.”

For some reason, the aspect of shema as it relates to His Voice is overlooked by most people. However, it is the most common thread throughout all Scripture. Even Mashiach spoke of this all-important truth.

Yochanan (John) 10:16

“And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear My Voice; and they shall become one flock with one Shepherd.”

The implication of this passage is that, if one does not hear (and obey) His Voice, then such a person cannot be a part of the one flock. Please make no mistake about it; many passages speak of this same idea as well. We find this principle also recorded in the Torah.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 11:26-28

26 "Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse:

27 the blessing, if you shall shema unto the commandments of YHWH your Elohim, which I command you this day;

28 and the curse, if you shall not shema unto the commandments of YHWH your Elohim, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which you have not known."

This is as plain as it gets. If a person will shema His Voice, then YHWH shall bless Him. If a person shall not shema His Voice, then YHWH shall curse him. This is where the rubber meets the road; this is the criteria of righteous judgment, hearing and obeying His Voice.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 30:15-18

15 "See, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil;

16 in that I command you this day to love YHWH your Elohim, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His ordinances, that you may live and multiply, and that YHWH your Elohim may bless you in the land where you go in to possess it.

17 But if your heart turn away, and you will not shema, but shall be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them;

18 I declare unto you this day, that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong your days in the land, where you pass over the Yarden to go in to possess it."

For a person to choose life means such a person is hearing and obeying His Voice. A person cannot choose life without hearing and obeying His Voice. It is foolhardy to believe a person can attain eternal life by simply obeying the Torah commandments, particularly when all of Scripture testifies against such a notion.

If a person is not hearing and obeying His Voice, then such a person is choosing death and evil. Why? Simply because YHWH specifically states that in order for Him to bless a person, said person must shema His Voice—he must hear and obey His Voice. Otherwise, YHWH shall curse him. Therefore, if a person is not hearing and obeying His Voice, then he is being cursed. This is true even if such a person is foolishly attempting to obey His commandments, statutes, and ordinances without hearing and obeying His Voice.

The question becomes, then, can you hear His Voice? If He spoke to you, would you recognize His Voice as being the Voice of the Creator?

If a person cannot shema, then such a person had better do whatever is necessary to gain the skill to be able to hear and recognize His Voice in order to have the option of obeying His Voice.

This is what it means to serve YHWH—shema! To serve YHWH is to hear and obey His Voice. His Voice tells me to wear tzitziot; it is so recorded. His Voice tells me to circumcise my son on the eighth day after his birth; it is so recorded. His Voice tells me to offer up certain sacrifices; it is so recorded. His Voice tells me to..., it is so recorded. This is what it means to serve YHWH.

Serving YHWH equals obedience to His Voice. Obedience to His Voice is better than sacrifices. Obedience to His Voice includes sacrifices as well as each and every other commandment. But it is not the commandment which is the focus, but rather the focus is hearing and obeying His Voice.

What it comes down to then is a mindset. Why are you doing what you are doing? YHWH knows! Do you know?

Living in a Torah society means one is doing his dead-level best to hear and obey His Voice. Thus, each person is serving YHWH. This is not a religion, per se. This is not even a way of life, per se. According to the very words of YHWH, hearing and obeying His Voice is life and the failure to do it is death.

Understanding Torah Society

Chapter 23 – Halakah: What it Means to Walk in Unity

Amos 3:3

“Shall two walk together, except they have agreed?”

The above question is best answered with another question: upon what have they agreed? Well, according to the verse and the context, they have agreed to walk together—nothing more. There are many today who wrongly suppose that in order for two to walk together those two must agree upon all points in their beliefs. However, this is patently false. Why?

First of all, no two people can agree one hundred percent upon everything. It just is not going to happen. A husband and a wife, married to each other, do not agree upon everything. Yet they have chosen to walk together in marriage. Likewise, no two followers of Mashiach Yeshua are going to agree upon everything. Yet, by virtue of both of them following Mashiach Yeshua, they have agreed to walk together towards a common goal. It is the common goal upon which they agree. That goal is Mashiach Yeshua.

Romans 10:4

For Mashiach is the goal of the Torah unto righteousness to everyone who trusts.

Even if the two parties spell and pronounce His name differently, no matter how divergent those spellings and pronunciations happen to be, they are both walking towards the same goal. Even if one party refuses to acknowledge the legitimacy of the other person’s spelling and pronunciation of Mashiach’s name, it does not negate in any way that person’s walk towards Mashiach.

Even with a vast divergence among individual beliefs, there can still be common ground in how they live. It is this truth, how one walks, which this study examines.

First, let us define the word “walk” as it is translated from the Hebrew word הלך – “halak”; it is from this word which the word הלכה – “halakah” is derived being the feminine form of the word. הלך – “halak” means to walk or to progress towards a goal. Therefore, when speaking of halakah, one is speaking of how one walks or lives his daily life. It is how one progresses towards his goal.

In our opening passage of Scripture, to agree to walk together simply means two men have agreed to travel together for a time to go to the same destination. There is mutual benefit in the two traveling together. It would be more difficult for robbers and thieves to come upon them and overcome them by their walking together as opposed to walking separately. It is this common goal and mutual benefit upon which they have agreed, nothing more.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 10:12-13

12 "And now, Israel, what does YHWH your Elohim require of you, but to fear YHWH your Elohim, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve YHWH your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul,

13 to keep the commandments of YHWH, and His statutes, which I command you this day for your good?"

There are those who wrongly suppose that uniformity equals unity. If a group of people will all do the same things in the same way, then there must be unity in such a group. However, this is simply not true. Uniformity only gives the appearance of unity, but does not necessarily bring unity.

Walking the way the Torah society is supposed to be walked will bring unity to all of its adherents. However, this unity does not mean that they will all look and act the same, far from it. For example, let us consider tzitziot (tassels or fringes). Israel is commanded to wear tzitziot. The tzitzit are to be made with a thread of techelet (a color of blue) with at least two knots (two knots because they are tied). Beyond those two perimeters, they can include other colors and be tied in a variety of ways. As long as there is a blue thread in them and they are tied with at least two knots, pretty much anything goes. What needs to be seen here is that there is latitude within the Torah commandment. The Torah commandment is neither explicit nor exact in its detail. YHWH has left the details to us. This is true in many instances with the Torah commandments. This is not adding to or taking away from the Torah as long as one gives grace to his neighbor in these matters. In particular, one must be careful not to make non-specific matters of Torah binding upon others.

If a person was to adopt a particular method of tying, a particular shade of blue, and how he wears the tzitziot, and then made it mandatory to do it his way while all other shades of blue, methods of tying, and how one wears tzitziot, was then considered by him to be sin, then such a position would be wrong. It is this type of thinking and action which elevates the doings of man up to the level of Torah, and, in effect, nullifies Torah. A person can tie his tzitziot in any fashion he desires as long as it has a thread of techelet²⁴, but he cannot make the way he does it binding upon another person. To do so is adding to Torah. It is the binding of a tradition which is wrong, not the tradition itself!

²⁴ Since it is not known with any degree of certainty what this exact color of blue was, any shade or color of blue must be acceptable in the eyes of all followers of Mashiach. Furthermore, even if the exact hue were known, time fades it, and therefore, not all threads of techelet would be the exact same shade at any given time among those wearing the tzitziot.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 26:17

“Today you have declared YHWH to be your Elohim, and that you would walk in His ways, and keep His statutes, and His commandments, and His ordinances, and shema His Voice.”

Israel has agreed to walk together with YHWH. This walk consists of agreeing to keep His statutes, His commandments, His ordinances, and to shema²⁵ His Voice. To leave any of this undone is to be guilty of breaking the agreement to walk together in this fashion. Relatively speaking, it is rather easy to read in His Torah what His commandments, statutes, and ordinances are and then do them compared to hearing and obeying His Voice. To shema His Voice takes a constant concerted effort to accomplish. Yet, this is exactly what it is going to take if one is going to live up to this agreement and be a part of Israel. He must consistently strive to hear and obey His Voice.

Shemot (Exodus) 16:4

Then YHWH said unto Moshe, “Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My Torah, or not.”

Once a person has agreed to walk together with YHWH keeping and obeying all of His statutes, commandments, and ordinances, and is striving to shema His Voice, then YHWH shall come to that person and test him to see if he is serious in keeping His Torah. This test is not a one-time test, but rather is a test that is repeated again and again throughout a person's life. For further information on testing, please see the study [“Testing of the Set-apart Ones”²⁶](#).

Shemot (Exodus) 18:20

“and you shall teach them the statutes and the Torahs, and shall show them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do.”

The task of Moshe, yea, the task of every teacher of Torah, is to teach his students how to walk with YHWH. This includes the commandments, statutes, and ordinances, but especially how to recognize, hear, and obey His Voice.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 20:23

“And you shall not walk in the customs of the nation, which I cast out before you, for they did all these things, and therefore I abhorred them.”

In agreeing to walk with YHWH, a person also agrees not to follow the customs of the nations outside of Israel. Many of the things the other nations do are loathsome in the

²⁵ ‘Shema’ is a Hebrew word שמע which means to hear with the intent to obey.

²⁶ [http://www.onetorahforall.com/teachings/Testing of the Set-apart Ones.html](http://www.onetorahforall.com/teachings/Testing%20of%20the%20Set-apart%20Ones.html)

sight of YHWH; and if a person continues to do the customs of the nations outside of Israel, then eventually, YHWH will no longer walk with such a person, but he shall be cast out.

In this next section of Scripture, the word הלך – “halak” is used four times. YHWH outlines what He will do to those who refuse to walk according to His ways.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 26:21-28

21 “And if you walk contrary unto Me, and will not shema unto Me, I will bring seven times more plagues upon you according to your sins.”

22 And I will send the beast of the field among you, which shall rob you of your children, and destroy your cattle, and make you few in number; and your ways shall become desolate.

23 And if by these things you will not be reformed unto Me, but will walk contrary unto Me;

24 then will I also walk contrary unto you; and I will smite you, even I, seven times for your sins.

25 And I will bring a sword upon you, that shall execute the vengeance of the covenant; and you shall be gathered together within your cities, and I will send the pestilence among you; and you shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy.

26 When I break your staff of bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall deliver your bread again by weight, and you shall eat, and not be satisfied.

27 And if you will not for all this shema unto Me, but walk contrary unto Me;

28 then I will walk contrary unto you in wrath; and I also will chastise you seven times for your sins.

Please note, in verse 21, the first aspect of walking contrary to YHWH is not to shema Him. If a person refuses to hear and obey His Voice, then YHWH shall bring upon such a person seven times more plagues upon him for his sins, which includes not hearing and obeying His Voice.

Then, if this does not change the way that person is walking (living), YHWH shall again visit him with seven times more plagues. If this does not change a person, then YHWH shall visit him again with seven times more plagues, and this time it shall include the wrath of YHWH. No one in his right mind would want to experience the wrath of YHWH.

By virtue of a person agreeing to walk with YHWH to keep and do all of His statutes, all of His commandments, all of His ordinances, and to shema His Voice, means that such a person is also agreeing to walk with all others who make the same [covenantal agreement](#)²⁷. In this relationship, there is one Master and Leader of this walk. All others are followers. However, there are many followers who attempt to be and act like a leader in which they try to dictate to others how they are to walk their walk with YHWH. While there are

²⁷ <http://www.onetorahforall.com/Studies2010/Covenantal Relationship.html>

teachers within Torah society, no man can choose for another how he is going to walk. Each person must hear and obey YHWH for himself.

Shemot (Exodus) 20:19

And they said unto Moshe, "You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not Elohim speak with us, lest we die."

When YHWH came down upon Mount Sinai and began speaking to them, the people got frightened out of their wits. So much so, that they with one voice declared unto Moshe that they did not want YHWH to speak to them any longer. They wanted YHWH Elohim to speak to Moshe and then Moshe to them. This is perhaps one of the greatest tragedies in all of Israel's history. This single event set in motion all the subsequent tragedies that followed. Such a mindset of not willing to hear His Voice can only lead one to tragedy, that is, plagues as seen in the passage in Vayyiqra.

This is not what YHWH desires for His people. His desire is for each and every person to be in a right relationship with Him, that is, each person is hearing and obeying His Voice.

Yirmeyah 31:33-34

33 "But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days," says YHWH; "I will put My Torah in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their Elohim, and they shall be My people;
34 and they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know YHWH;' for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them," says YHWH; "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more."

This is how a Torah society is to walk together; each person is hearing and obeying the Voice of YHWH for Himself. This is the only way that a Torah society will function properly!

Understanding Torah Society

Chapter 24 – Keeping the Mo’edim as a Nation

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 16:16

“Three times in a year shall all your males appear before YHWH your Elohim in the place which He shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles; and they shall not appear before YHWH empty.”

It has been wrongly assumed by the masses that the observation of the appointed times set forth in Scripture by the nation of Israel is equivalent to the observation of the same appointed times by an individual. We will demonstrate from Scripture that this is not true. National observation of YHWH’s appointed times does nothing to fulfill that which an individual is commanded to do and observe and vice versa. So we will examine what the observation of the nation is supposed to be like in a Torah society as well as individual observation of the appointed times.

The divergence between national and individual observation of the appointed times is greatest in the mo’ed²⁸ of Pesach. Therefore, it is here that we begin our examination.

Shemot (Exodus) 12:14

“And this day shall be unto you for a memorial, and you shall keep it a feast to YHWH; throughout your generations you shall keep it a feast by an ordinance forever.”

When YHWH gave Moshe instructions on how each person was to observe the first Pesach, three times²⁹ in Shemot chapter twelve, YHWH states that these instructions and the subsequent observation were to be kept forever throughout our generations; that is, from the first Pesach onward, this observation was to be done again and again every year at that time of the year per the instructions given through Moshe. Man has changed those instructions in favor of his own traditions, adding some of his own and taking away some of YHWH’s instructions.

It is important to understand that the instructions of the first Pesach were to be perpetually observed. Some have argued, since there is no evidence in Scripture that Israel ever

²⁸ Transliterated Hebrew word meaning “appointed time” often understood as a festival. Mo’edim is the plural form.

²⁹ see Shemot 12:14, 17, 24

observed Pesach in this same manner again, this somehow negates the ordinances YHWH gave for the first Pesach. That is equivalent to stating that my neighbor's disobedience to a particular commandment releases me from having to keep it. How silly is that!? No person's or even national disobedience negates the commandment of YHWH! No matter how long standing a tradition may be, if that tradition negates a commandment of YHWH, then it is wrong!

Shemot chapter twelve has instructions from YHWH for each individual household to keep and observe Pesach. These instructions often get confused and then replaced with national observance, when both are commanded and should be observed. One of the main differences is that there are certain criteria which have to be met in order for the national observance of Pesach to be observed, as well as different ordinances than one finds regulating individual observation of Pesach.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 16:5-6

5 "You may not sacrifice the Passover within any of your gates, which YHWH your Elohim gives you;

6 but at the place which YHWH your Elohim shall choose to cause His name to dwell in, there you shall sacrifice the Passover at even, at the going down of the sun, at the season that you came forth out of Egypt."

If one is not very careful, the days upon which certain sacrifices are commanded to be done can get mixed up, and even thought to be the same thing when they are not. While the above passage is commonly pointed to in these days to show the sacrifices of Pesach should not be done just anywhere, it is not commonly understood what this context entails.

Please note the time of this sacrifice is specifically noted in the passage. The Pesach sacrifice referenced in this passage happens in the evening at sunset on the day which Israel came forth out of Egypt. What day did Israel leave Egypt? It was on Aviv fifteen.

Shemot (Exodus) 12:29

And it came to pass at midnight, that YHWH smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the first-born of cattle."

To truly understand this timeline, one must keep in mind that the day begins and ends at sunset. The day of the month Israel set out from Egypt was on the fifteenth day of the month, specifically around midnight. This is prophetically significant as this is the time when Yeshua states He shall return for His bride in Matithyah 25:6. There is a direct correlation between these two times. It is not within the scope of this study to deal with this here, but it is important to note its significance to show that the time of "midnight" is not simply incidental.

Shemot (Exodus) 12:5-6

5 “Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old; you shall take it from the sheep, or from the goats;

6 and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month; and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at even.”

In giving the instructions on how each household was to keep and observe Pesach, YHWH states the lamb was to be slain upon the fourteenth of the month of Aviv. We point these things out to show the sacrifice mentioned in Devarim 16 is not the same sacrifice commanded in Shemot 12. If this is the case, and it is, then of what other sacrifices could the passage in Devarim 16 be speaking that are not to be done outside of the place where YHWH chooses for His name to dwell?

Please note and keep in mind as we proceed, that which is chosen from the flocks for the individual household is to be a lamb (sheep) or a kid (goat) as commanded in Shemot 12:5 quoted above.

B’midbar (Numbers) 28:17-24

17 And on the fifteenth day of this month shall be a feast; seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten.

18 In the first day shall be a holy convocation; you shall do no servile work;

19 but you shall offer an offering made by fire, a burnt-offering unto YHWH; two young bullocks, and one ram, and seven he-lambs a year old; they shall be unto you without blemish;

20 and their meal-offering, fine flour mingled with oil; three tenth parts shall you offer for a bullock, and two tenth parts for the ram;

21 a tenth part shall you offer for every lamb of the seven lambs;

22 and one he-goat for a sin-offering, to make atonement for you.

23 You shall offer these besides the burnt-offering of the morning, which is for a continual burnt-offering.

24 After this manner you shall offer daily, for seven days, the food of the offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto YHWH; it shall be offered besides the continual burnt-offering, and the drink-offering thereof.

This passage specifies that all the sacrifices commanded in this passage are to be done on the fifteenth of Aviv. There are different sacrifices to be done on the fourteenth of Aviv according to Shemot chapter 12. Those done on the fourteenth of Aviv are done by each household, each according to its size. However, those commanded in B’midbar 28 for Pesach are to be done for the whole nation on the fifteenth of Aviv. It is this list of sacrifices in B’midbar chapter 28 which we are specifically commanded not to do except in the place where His name dwells, Devarim is not forbidding the sacrifices done on the fourteenth of Aviv. We know this because of the specific time stated in Devarim 16 as being on the day which Israel came out of bondage, specifically, on Aviv 15.

YHWH has given two sets of instructions for keeping Pesach. One set, the first set of commandments given, was for each individual household. This set is commanded by YHWH to be done every year throughout our generations. The second set is commanded by YHWH to be done only in the place where His name dwells. No such prohibition exists for the first set of commandments. The second set of commandments is for the nation as a whole. Only the nation may properly observe these sacrifices, which includes two bulls. There is no such sacrifice (bulls) for Pesach upon Aviv fourteen.

In a Torah society, both sets of instructions need to be properly observed. The individual families need to kill a lamb on the fourteenth of Aviv and eat it after sunset on the fifteenth (see Shemot 12 for a complete set of instructions). Then, the next day, on the fifteenth of Aviv at sunset (see Devarim 16:6 above), 24 hours later, all the sacrifices commanded in B'midbar 28:17-24 need to be done at that time. Israel is not that big and all the males could easily do both commanded parts of this feast.

Please understand that the sacrifices commanded to be done on Aviv 14 were originally done outside of the land without a mishkan (tabernacle) or a temple. Even more importantly, the killing and subsequent eating of these animals on Pesach were done without an altar. They were not sacrifices in the traditional sense, but rather, each household was commanded to kill and eat on this particular day. Conversely, on Aviv 15, the sacrifices commanded to be done on this day did involve the mishkan and then later the temple as well as the altar. These offerings were traditional sacrifices in every sense of the word. Hence, YHWH commanded these sacrifices were not to be done in the land except where His name would dwell. It is where His name dwells that the mishkan or temple resides, and the Ark of the Covenant, which is necessary for His name to dwell upon earth.

In a Torah society, it is important to be able to distinguish between a commandment which is directed towards each and every individual and those commandments which are directed towards Israel as a nation. The individual cannot properly observe a commandment given to the nation, nor does national observation of a commandment fulfill any commandment given to an individual.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 16:16-17

***16 "Three times in a year shall all your males appear before YHWH your Elohim in the place which He shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles; and they shall not appear before YHWH empty;
17 every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of YHWH your Elohim which He has given you."***

Five³⁰ times in the Torah Moshe, all the males are commanded to appear before YHWH three times each year, the seven days of unleavened bread, Shavuot, and Sukkot. However,

³⁰ This command is found in five verses or three passages – Shemot 23:14, 17; 34:23, 24; Devarim 16:16.

these three feasts are not the only feasts which YHWH commands His people, Israel, to celebrate. Vayyiqra (Leviticus) chapter 23 gives a detailed list of all the commanded feasts. A similar list is also found in B'midbar (Numbers) chapters 28 and 29. The listing of the feasts in B'midbar has an additional feast which is not included in the list in Vayyiqra, Rosh Chodesh—the observation of the New Moon.

The difference between what YHWH expects all the males to do three times a year and what He expects all of Israel to do throughout the year is the difference between national observance of His commanded feasts and the commanded observance of individual families.

This is one of the main differences between the listing of the feasts between Vayyiqra and B'midbar. The listing in Vayyiqra is primarily a listing of feasts which each family is to observe and what to do in that observation to keep the feast to YHWH. Please note that all the specifics of how to keep the feast are not listed. The keeping of the feast may vary slightly from family to family as long as that which is commanded is observed.

The listing of the feasts in B'midbar is primarily a listing of national observance. In this listing all the sacrifices are detailed as to what offerings are to be offered on each day, including the daily sacrifice and the Shabbat sacrifice as well as each of the appointed days of YHWH. These sacrifices are to be given as a nation, not as individuals.

Another example is when first-fruits comes during the seven days of unleavened bread. It is individuals who go out and bring in the ripe barley for the wave offering. While there are individuals who do this, this wave offering is done as a national observation. This means that it is not expected by YHWH that each and every person in Israel go out and gather the barley.

Earlier in this study we examined the shemittah year, the year of release. This commandment, the whole nation is to observe. However, while there is a national observation of this event, the majority of commandments are directed towards individuals. It is one individual who releases the debt of another. If a person is a lien holder over another and he does not release the one who is indebted to him during the national observance of the year of release, then the national observance of the shemittah does nothing to fulfill the individual's responsibility to obey YHWH in this matter.

There are many such distinctions within the Torah Moshe. We must be careful to understand these distinctions in order to be able to properly obey the commandments. This, in turn, shall contribute to the people in the Torah society dwelling in harmony.

Understanding Torah Society

Chapter 25 – Work and Recreation

Shemot (Exodus) 20:9

Six days shall you labor, and do all your work.

This is one of the most needful subjects today and perhaps one of the most difficult to discuss. It is needful because few seem to have a good balance in this area between work and play. When one factors in service to YHWH, then this subject becomes even more difficult to understand in light of Scripture. This is perhaps true since there are no clear references to recreation in Scripture, at least not in English versions of Scripture.

Likewise, it is also difficult to discuss because many followers of Mashiach soundly condemn any form of recreation, particularly if that recreation comes in the form of entertainment. This subject can become fraught with emotions and go off topic rather quickly if one does not work to keep his emotions in check. We will endeavor to look into this subject from a rational point of view based upon Scripture.

In a society which is basically hedonistic, such an attribute will naturally be reflected in the believing community. Hedonism is the seeking after pleasure for the sake of pleasure. It basically boils down to: “Why are we doing what we are doing?” Sometimes, this question is not an easy question to answer. However, it is vital that one answer it if he is going to honestly face the question and place of recreation in his life according to YHWH.

One of the guiding principles across all aspects of our lives in Mashiach needs to be to let YHWH be the Elohim of my neighbors and brethren. I cannot attempt to dictate to another person for any reason in any matter how he must or should live his life. This is particularly true in the matter of recreation. Each person must always be extra careful not to condemn another for his recreation. If we see something which concerns us, then we must certainly go to the other person, in private, and calmly and rationally discuss the matter with him, being careful not to put our own personal convictions upon him as if they were equivalent to Torah. To do such a thing is breaking the commandment not to add to or take away from Torah. Furthermore, such an action is idolatrous.

Since there are not many passages which deal with this subject, that is, there are no passages in which we find, “Thus says YHWH...” on the subject of recreation, we must then

look for some guiding principles contained in Scripture which deal with this matter. YHWH has placed two types of passages for us to glean understanding. One type consists of passages where some type of play is being referenced as being good in the eyes of YHWH, and the other type of passage consists of some type of play being referenced as being evil in the eyes of YHWH. Hopefully, by examining these two types of passages with honesty, we will be able to draw some well-grounded principles to help guide us in our daily living concerning the matter of recreation.

Our opening passage contains a direct commandment to work for six days and rest upon the seventh day. This cycle is occasionally broken by YHWH's own calendar when one of His appointed times falls in the midst of the week, thus giving us extra days off from this six days of work followed by one day of rest cycle.

One thing we all desire to avoid is being guilty of adding to or taking away from His Torah. To rightfully guard against this, it seems reasonable that one must rightly understand what it means to add to or take away from His Torah. This may seem rather simplistic, or that such an idea is so simple, or that it is a given, and everyone should easily understand what this principle means. However, we submit to you that, while many see what the words mean, in a practical sense, few understand how those words should be rightly applied in our everyday living. Simply put, to add to Torah is to take something which is not Torah and elevate it to the same level of Torah, thus making it binding upon others, or to take something which is Torah and to make it void or null, thus doing away with it. If neither one of these is done, then the commandment to not add to or take away from Torah is not broken. Thus, when it comes to traditions, there are many traditions which do not violate this commandment. Those traditions which are elevated to the status and force of Torah are a violation of Torah. To determine this, each tradition must be examined on an individual basis. What this means in a practical sense then is this: a tradition to one person may be a violation of Torah and yet to another it may not be a violation. It depends upon how an individual sees and acts upon the tradition. Keeping these things in mind, let us proceed into examining a few passages of Scripture which deal with "play" (recreation).

Yirmeyah (Jeremiah) 30:19

"And out of them shall proceed thanksgiving and the voice of them that make merry; and I will multiply them, and they shall not be few; I will also glorify them, and they shall not be small."

The passages above as well as the passage directly below are both prophetic in nature. That is, YHWH is telling us how it is going to be sometime in the future among His people. Furthermore, this prophetic view includes an activity which seems to be pleasing to Him.

Both of these passages have a Hebrew word in common which is translated as "merry" in each passage. The Hebrew word is משחקים – "m'sachaqim" (m'sah-kah-keem), whose root word is שחק – "sachaq" (sah-KAHK), which means to *express satisfaction in overcoming difficulties*. This word is used to convey a wide range of meanings and is translated as

meaning “mocking, smiling, laughing, displaying irony, and competing successfully,” each one according to context. This single word has within it all the different levels and aspects of recreation.

In the passage above, YHWH tells us there shall be a day in which many will be playing in the streets along with thanksgiving. In other words, His people shall be happy. It is a wonderful picture of what the future holds for His people. May it be soon and in our day!

Yirmeyah (Jeremiah) 31:4

“Again will I build you, and you shall be built, virgin of Israel; again shall you be adorned with your tambourines, and shall go forth in the dances of them that make merry.”

This passage likewise is prophetically depicting that future time when His people will be happy and secure in the land. They will be so happy they will be dancing in the streets. Since it is YHWH who is saying this through His prophet, one can rightly surmise that He is pleased with this future action. We bring these two passages forward in this discussion to show that making merry is not wrong in and of itself, but rather, YHWH is pleased when we do so in Him. YHWH desires for His people to be happy and to show that happiness.

Lest one think that such a conclusion about our heavenly Father is unwarranted, please consider this next passage.

Zekaryah (Zechariah) 8:4-6

4 Thus says YHWH Tzava’ot, “There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, every man with his staff in his hand for very age.

5 And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof.”

6 Thus says YHWH Tzava’ot, “If it be marvelous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in those days, should it also be marvelous in My eyes?” says YHWH Tzava’ot.

Here YHWH clearly states that it will be marvelous in His eyes when His people are happy and “playing” in the streets of their cities. The word “playing” is the same Hebrew word as in the two previous passages from Yirmeyah.

Now that we have briefly examined “righteous play,” let us turn to “unrighteous play.”

Shemot (Exodus) 32:6

And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt-offerings, and brought peace-offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

The passage directly above comes from the midst of that incident of the golden calf. Some play is then idolatrous in nature. Play can be good or play can be bad. It is not up to the individual to decide which is which. For a person to decide good and evil is eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Only YHWH has the right and the authority to decide that which is good and that which is evil. This certainly includes play. Any play which

crosses the line into idolatry is evil and off-limits to His people. The question then becomes: how can one tell the difference between play which is acceptable and play which is not acceptable in His eyes?

This question, while simple to ask, is anything but simple to answer. As we continue in this discussion, hopefully, we can equip the reader with some sound solid principles to help him to be able to righteously determine which is which. Let us begin with the following passage.

Mishle (Proverbs) 26:18-19

18 As a madman who casts firebrands, arrows, and death,

19 So is the man that deceives his neighbor, and says, "Am not I in sport?"

This passage contains the same Hebrew word שקח – “sachaq.” In modern culture language, what this passage would sound like is, “Just kidding.” I know of no one who is not guilty of saying such a phrase. I certainly am. Scripture condemns the use of play to deceive another. Oftentimes, one will say things in jest as a means to throw barbs at another, using the cover of “humor” as a means to disguise the truth and intentions of his words. Verse eighteen reflects this reality. If one says something which hurts another, and upon being called to task for those words, if one responds with, “Oh, just kidding,” to hide, cover up, or smooth over the hurt inflicted, then he has sinned. Each one of us needs to do a reality check in this matter before YHWH and allow His Spirit to open our eyes to the truth in our own hearts and actions.

Playing with words is not wrong, in fact, it is a lot of fun. I do it constantly. However, to play with words at the expense of another is wrong. Such an action is crossing the line from righteous play to unrighteous play.

Before the reader gets too bent out of shape about this matter, we need to discuss sarcasm. There is a lot of sarcasm in Scripture. Even YHWH is sarcastic at times (which we will get to momentarily).

Mishle (Proverbs) 26:4-5

***4 Answer not a fool according to his folly,
Lest you also be like him.***

***5 Answer a fool according to his folly,
Lest he be wise in his own conceit.***

These two verses teach us to do two different, yet opposite things, namely, not to answer a fool according to his folly, as well as, to answer a fool according to his folly. At first, one may think that one has to choose one or the other. However, I submit to you that a person can actually do both at the same time through the use of sarcasm. Sarcasm is the use of truth hidden in plain sight wrapped in the folly of the fool.

When YHWH's people act foolishly, then He will respond to them in this manner. It will be a completely righteous response, because there is no unrighteousness in Him. There are times when sarcasm is not only called for, but is actually the only response available if one is going to answer in the righteousness of His Spirit.

Tehillim (Psalm) 2:4

***He that sits in the heavens will laugh;
YHWH scoffs at them.***

At whom does YHWH laugh and scoff? It is towards those who do not obey His Voice and forsake Him.

Shophetim (Judges) 10:13-14

***13 "Yet you have forsaken Me, and served other gods; wherefore I will save you no more.
14 Go and cry unto the gods which you have chosen; let them save you in the time of your distress."***

When His people go and follow other gods, YHWH will be sarcastic towards them at times. This is what we see in the above passage. These gods which they have chosen to follow, gods of their own creation, are no gods and cannot save them. Yet, YHWH tells them to seek their gods for deliverance. This is sarcasm at its best! This is both, not answering a fool according to his folly as well as answering a fool according to his folly.

One of the means by which we may have righteous play is through the use of sarcasm. Sarcasm done properly hurts no one, is playful, yet drives home a needed point. This is also an aspect of sarcasm which can be hurtful. This type of sarcasm the righteous should avoid.

Mishle (Proverbs) 8:30

***Then I was by Him, as a master workman;
And I was daily His delight,
Rejoicing always before Him,***

The above passage is translated in a variety of ways in English translations. The word in particular in which we are presently interested is the word rendered as "rejoicing." This is the same word we have examined above, the Hebrew word שָׂחַק – "sachaq," which means among other things, *to play*. This verse then is declaring that YHWH is delighted when we play before Him. The truth of the matter is this: when we recreate, we need to include YHWH as we should in all aspects of life.

As we discuss several aspects of recreation, let us keep in mind that YHWH desires that none perish, but all come to eternal life. This does not mean such a thing will come to pass. What it does mean is that this is what YHWH is working towards. He is not in the business of seeing who He can exclude from His eternal kingdom, but rather, He is in the business of seeing who He can include. Far too many people take the former position when they

should be taking the latter position. Honestly, the former position is how Satan works, seeing whom he can exclude from the kingdom of YHWH.

Let us also keep in mind that every part of the body of Mashiach is different and plays a unique role in His kingdom. Just because one part of the body does not understand the working of another part of the body does not make it any less a part of the body.

Outreach can be a grueling task. Sometimes it can even be dangerous; for example, those whom YHWH calls to go to foreign lands in which openly teaching in the name of our Mashiach is forbidden. However, outreach can also be fun. Sometimes YHWH calls a person to do something in the way of outreach that is not often seen in its true light.

John Bunyan wrote a wonderful book called Pilgrims Progress. It is a written work of fictional allegory depicting the life and times of a follower of Messiah and all the spiritual warfare through which a man goes in such a life. It could easily be categorized in the genre of fantasy.

Two other well-known writers also wrote fictional allegories depicting the same subject, the life of a follower of Messiah. These two authors are not as readily seen in this light, yet this is exactly what they did. C. S. Lewis is more readily recognized as writing an allegorical work with his Chronicles of Narnia, than is J. R. R. Tolkien who wrote The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings trilogy. These two men were good friends and without the personal encouragement of Lewis, Tolkien may never have written his works. Both are allegorical in nature. They were written to reach out to those who would never read the Bible.

However, because many followers today do not see these stories in the proper context of the purpose of their respective authors, the works are soundly condemned by some. Likewise, when these books are made into movies, the movies are also condemned as being "evil." This is true because of the presence of witches, sorcerers, magic, and other things which Scripture teaches us are not to be practiced. However, do we not realize that all those things which are condemned in these books and movies are also contained within the pages of Scripture? There are witches, rapes, murders, and every imaginable sin within Scripture. Therefore, in order not to be hypocritical, should not one also condemn Scripture? Do you see how such a position is untenable? Do you see how one can use sarcasm here?

Since these books were written as outreach tools to their respective audiences, is it not completely within the realm of possibility that the Spirit of YHWH led each of these men to write what they wrote? To be sure! If this is the case, then is not condemning such work equivalent to condemning the work of His Spirit? And if that is the case, then is that not bordering on blasphemy of His Spirit? We ask these questions to show the reader that what often gets condemned, should not be condemned at all.

Should one not support the outreach work of the Spirit of YHWH? In the very least, let us not be guilty of condemning that which we do not understand. Since YHWH is sovereign over His creation, nothing goes on except by His express approval! Absolutely nothing!

There are many things softened or outright hidden from the English reader of Scripture. The Hebrew text is often quite racy, making it quite humorous, at least to this student of Scripture. It is time that we stop being so self-righteous and prudish when YHWH is not these things, nor does He expect us to be something we are not. He has created each person to be who they are in Him. Walking in a righteous manner before YHWH is not equivalent to being prudish.

Scripture contains sex, illicit as well as marital, rapes, murders, mayhem, and war, both warranted and unwarranted. It contains idolatry, child sacrifice, animal sacrifice, both commanded as well as not commanded, witchcraft, sorcery, necromancy, and every other sin. It is all there, recorded in Scripture. Why did YHWH put all these things in Scripture?

1st Corinthians 10:6

Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.

Scripture is a reflection of our world. It is stained with sin. To ignore this is not being honest. These things are a part of the lives we live. Not every one of them touches each person directly, but every person has something which touches them. Part of dealing with these things in life is making sport of them. It helps us cope with all these things. This is one of the most important aspects of recreation-release.

Personally, I do not like movies in the drama genre. I already have too much drama in my life as it is. Therefore, I rarely watch a movie with a lot of drama in it. I like movies with action, movies where the good guy wins! If the good guy does not win, I am not interested in it. But that is my personal choice. Someone else may like drama in their movies; that is okay for them.

There is an aspect of recreation we have not yet discussed: professional sports. Competition is not wrong in and of itself. After all, Shaul refers to our walk as a race to be won or lost. Professional sports are a reflection of the society and it reveals cultural values are upside-down. Many in sports as well as acting are grossly overpaid. Many have become demigods who are worshipped and adored by their followers. This form of idolatry is rampant in our world today.

This idolatry does not necessarily make all sports evil or sinful. If kept in the right perspective, sports can teach a lot of skills to young and old alike. However, when a person becomes obsessed with something or someone, then it has crossed the line from good to evil.

Recreation is an important part of each person's life. Recreation needs to be balanced with a good work ethic.

Understanding Torah Society

Part 26 – Summary

Yirmeyah (Jeremiah) 31:33

“But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” says YHWH; “I will put My Torah in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their Elohim, and they shall be My people.”

A society based upon Torah is not going to be easy to accomplish. It is going to take a lot of work to bring the human element under control. Control of the human element is not meant to be done through an external agency as one finds in all past and present societies. In a Torah society, control of self is expected to be done by each individual. There are safeguards in place within the Torah society which shall kick into gear if a person fails to accomplish this self-control. We have examined some of those safeguards in this series.

There is an age-old debate taking place in society today as to whether morality can be legislated with both sides believing they are correct in their respective positions. Both sides have some valid points. If one looks at the definition found in a dictionary as to what “morality” consists of, then yes, it can be legislated. However, if one redefines morality to include the mores of the soul, then no, such a thing cannot be legislated.

This is where the successful action spoken of in the above passage comes into play. It is through this agency, that is, YHWH writing His Torah upon the hearts and minds of His people, by which a true Torah society is possible. No longer will His Torah only be written upon tablets of stone and scrolls of lamb skins as in ages past, but His Torah will be internalized within His people. In this way, each person will be a Torah unto himself in the sense that YHWH’s Torah is written upon each person’s mind and upon each person’s heart. No wonder Yeshua spoke of living water flowing out of a man.

Yochanan (John) 7:38

“He who trusts in Me, as the scripture has said, from within him shall flow rivers of living water.”

The source of that living water flowing out of a man is the Torah which YHWH has written inside of him. It is this source which will enable the people of YHWH to live together in

society based upon Torah. Scripture indicates to us that the process of YHWH writing His Torah upon the hearts of His people began with the first coming of Mashiach Yeshua.

Hebrews 8:10

“For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those days,” says YHWH; “I will put My Torah into their mind, and on their heart also will I write them, and I will be their Elohim, and they shall be My people.”

The writer to the Hebrew followers of Mashiach quotes the passage from Yirmeyah, indicating within this context of his letter, that this passage is now coming to pass. The Spirit of YHWH has been working on the lives and hearts of people since the coming of Mashiach, preparing their minds and hearts for the coming of His kingdom and the return of their King. It is the presence of the living Torah (Mashiach Yeshua) via the agency of His Spirit, which enables the written Torah (Torah Moshe) to be internalized and written upon a person’s mind and upon his heart.

Sadly, the last two thousand years is not a very good example of how to live together in a Torah based society. In fact, nearly anywhere one looks, what one finds are ample examples of what not to do. However, as Scripture points out, examples of what not to do are as equally important as examples of what to do. These examples of what not to do indicate, at least to this writer, that few people have understood the true nature of a Torah society.

1st Corinthians 10:6

Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.

Any group which seeks to put together a community based upon Torah is going to have a very difficult time of it. There are several reasons for this. The first reason is, that it is not likely that in a group of people of any size, every single person is ready in his heart and mind to live one hundred per cent according to the leadings of His Spirit. Not everyone is ready to shema His Voice all the time. Secondly, it is not possible to live one hundred per cent according to Torah because the laws of any given country prevent it. Also, since there is no mishkan or temple with a functioning priesthood, this also prevents it from coming to pass.

Now, we are not suggesting that people should not try to live in community according to Torah, but what we are trying to point out is that there are going to be some very great hurdles to overcome in order to accomplish such noble goals. If one is going to succeed, then he is going to have to understand these dynamics. Furthermore, each person is going to have to understand that the true nature of a Torah society is internal rather than external.

What we mean by this is simple. Torah society begins within the heart and mind of each person. If a person has given up exaltation of self, that is, the promotion of self, and looks

out for his brother and neighbor in the same fashion as he would himself, then such a person is ready to live in a Torah society. As we have spoken of this in other places in this study, it is a matter of, why are you doing what you are doing.

The Torah society is meant for a future time. That time is quickly approaching, a time when the northern kingdom is born back into existence. Will this new nation have in place such a society from the beginning? It is possible, but it is not very likely. Rather, it seems to this writer that the nation will have to grow into it. If it is to grow into it, then it will have to set such a goal from the beginning and work towards it. It will not just happen by accident.

We said above it is not very likely the new nation of northern Israel will have a Torah society in place. What we mean by such a statement is that not every aspect of the society and government will be strictly according to Torah. It will surely be based upon Torah, to be sure. However, there will be many aspects of said nation which will have remnants of human government, that is, remnants of the nations around her. Hopefully, those aspects can be kept to a bare minimum. This is where discussion of Torah society comes into play now. We must begin discussing and planning for this now, thinking what our new nation is to look and function like, before we get to that place. Some will refuse to enter into such a discussion, believing that it is solely the duty and task of Mashiach to do such a thing. Please let me remind the reader that Mashiach did not directly set up the southern kingdom which exists today. That is, He did not return and personally lead them back into the land as some claim He will do with the northern kingdom. He is no respecter of persons. How He treats one kingdom, He shall treat the other kingdom.

Romans 2:10-11

10 but glory and honor and peace to every man that works good, to the Yehudi³¹ first, and also to the Aramean³²,

11 for there is no respect of persons with Elohim.

There are two main schools of thought on this today. One is that Mashiach Yeshua returns and brings back the people of the northern kingdom and sets up His kingdom. It is at this time that the Torah society is put in place and begins to function. It is also at this time that Mashiach reunites the two houses and makes one kingdom. The other school of thought places the return of Mashiach after the reunification of the two houses.

The first scenario does not take into account many passages and leaves such passages unfulfilled. Whereas, having the northern kingdom reformed into a nation, and then later joined together with the currently formed southern kingdom, with Mashiach Yeshua returning at some point after the formation of the northern kingdom, does a much better task of taking into account the whole counsel of Scripture on this particular point.

³¹ Hebrew word for Jew.

³² From the Peshitta text. This passage is a strong indication that in passages like this one as well as others, Shaul was speaking of the southern house of Yehudah (Jews) and the northern house of Israel (Arameans). This passage then spells out that YHWH shall treat both houses in the same manner.

One of the greatest difficulties in putting together a Torah society is trusting in our fellow man. It is one thing to trust in YHWH, but it is entirely something else to trust my neighbor; particularly, when one's personal history with his neighbor is written in turmoil, hardship, tumult, and conflict. One is going to have to get to that place in his life where he realizes that the same bad experiences he has had with others, others have had as well. It is time to let the past be the past and allow YHWH to be the Elohim of my neighbor. It is time to stop attempting to be my neighbor's god!

More than anything else, this is what it means to live and be a part of a Torah society, to stop trying to dictate to others how they should live their lives. Please consider the words of Thomas Jefferson.

Sometimes it is said that man cannot be trusted with the government of himself. Can he, then, be trusted with the government of others?

Perhaps Thomas Jefferson understood what it means to live in a society based upon Torah more than many give him credit for. He certainly was a proponent for man to be self-governed as opposed to being governed by tyrants.

This series of studies on Torah society is not intended to be all-end-all when it comes to understanding the society which YHWH desires for His people. Rather, this series is intended to spark honest and rational discussion among His people. It is the hope of this writer in writing this series to spark honest discussion and that it will move His people towards that end, that is, towards a true Torah Society.

Neither is this series intended to be exhaustive in nature. We have covered many topics found within the context of a Torah society according to Scripture. However, in each topic which we have covered, we have only brushed the surface. There is much more to be said; hopefully these studies will give a platform for doing so.

Romans 10:4

For Mashiach is the goal of the Torah unto righteousness to everyone that trusts.

Let us never forget Mashiach is the goal of Torah society.

In closing this series of studies I would like to conclude with four more quotes from a truly great statesman, Thomas Jefferson.

1. The right of self-government does not comprehend the government of others.
2. To compel a man to furnish funds for the propagation of ideas he disbelieves and abhors is sinful and tyrannical.

3. The legitimate powers of government extend to such acts only as are injurious to others. But it does me no injury for my neighbor to say there are twenty gods, or no God. It neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg.
4. The majority, oppressing an individual, is guilty of a crime, abuses its strength, and by acting on the law of the strongest breaks up the foundations of society.

May YHWH open the eyes of His people to understand these things and much more as He teaches us to live together in harmony, allowing Him to be the Elohim of each one of us. Many blessings upon you, my brethren.

APPENDIX

Attempting to Build a Torah Community

My Personal Experience

The fact that I am not completely disillusioned is a miracle in itself. My experience at attempting to build a community based upon Torah has met with disaster and failure at every attempt, some attempts more disastrous than others. However, this school of hard-knocks has opened my eyes to Scripture in ways that would not have been possible any other way. Only in this, has all the pain, anguish, and heartache yielded fruit for His kingdom. For this I am quite thankful to our heavenly Father!

It is not my desire to point fingers at anyone for any reason. I simply desire to put in writing my own personal experience in this matter without casting insults or degrading another in any way. If you are an individual who has shared my experiences in some way in this matter, you may see yourself reflected in this testimony. As long as you say nothing to anyone, they will never know those particular words are about you. My intention is to be as kind to you as possible while also being as honest as possible. Please know that I willingly shoulder a majority of any blame to be doled out, but not all of it, by any means. I say “a majority” simply because these things happened in my home and on my property. That reason alone makes me more culpable than anyone else. I would also like to extend to each person my very sincere apology for the hurt and pain that you felt, as well.

For the sake of my own sanity as well as my own marriage relationship, I have no plans to ever attempt this again. Lest you think ill of my dear wife, and think that she is in any way manipulating me into this position, you would be wrong to think such a thing. What my dear wife and I experienced through all this was rather horrific at times. She ended up in a nervous breakdown at one point and was admitted to the mental ward in the local hospital. Thankfully, she has fully recovered.

Sadly, I was somewhat dense in this matter, and we made several more attempts after she recovered. At one point, she nearly relapsed into another nervous breakdown. I am happy to report today that I have my act together much more so than in those days, and she is happy and healthy. If there was ever anyone to whom I owed an apology, it is my wife. I have put her through more than any woman should have to go through in an attempt to

build a Torah community. I will not do so again! It is my duty to protect her. This I willingly and lovingly shall do without apology to anyone.

Another by-product of repeatedly attempting to build a Torah community is the cost of children who moved away from Torah. I grieve in my spirit continuously for each and every one of these children. If there was one thing I could undo concerning all that happened in these past attempts, it would be to have these children back in His fold. I doubt that any of them will ever read this, but if you do, please know that I am sorry for the hurt that I personally caused you and I ask for you to forgive me!

Along this path, I have met a few people with whom I still have a good relationship. I am quite thankful for those individuals. Perhaps in time, other relationships can be restored. There are a few, of which I seriously doubt that can ever happen. Not because I doubt the sufficiency of YHWH's grace, but rather, because I know those individuals and it is highly unlikely that such persons will be able to humble themselves enough to make things right with me, particularly when said individuals hold me solely responsible, and are unwilling to share any of the responsibility for what happened. I know that my own conscience is clear because I have reached out to those particular individuals and have done what I could do to make things right. And frankly, at this point, even if they do come to me and do what is right in YHWH's eyes to make amends, things can never be like they were once; that is just simply not possible. Please understand, I have forgiven each and every person. However, just because I have forgiven a person does not mean such a person needs to be a part of my life again. Considering some of the repeated actions of some individuals, it is doubtful if those actions shall cease. Therefore, I do not need to be near such a person when those actions manifest themselves again. To do so would be foolish on my part and certainly not healthy.

I have always been a man of vision. I see what could be, as clearly (perhaps, at times, more clearly) as I do what is right in front of me. This ability has allowed me to build things with my hands throughout my life. This is quite easy and fulfilling for me to do this. Consequently, when I began applying this ability to the desire to live in community with other followers of Mashiach, the potential I could see was something great, and increased the desire within me to work towards such a noble cause. This vision has not diminished.

I tend to be a rather simple, honest man, in that, if a person tells me something, I simply tend to believe what he says. Problems develop when I project my honesty upon others when they do not deserve it. This is one of the major problems I experienced in attempting to build a Torah community; many of the motives of people were not like mine. The reasons why various people came to live at our farm were as many as there were individuals. One came because he had nowhere else to go. This is a very poor reason to come to a community. As you can imagine, this didn't work out so well for them or us.

Towards the end, as I began to see many of these things, I put down in writing what those of us in community expected from our visitors, as well as from those who were considering

coming to live on our farm. My thinking was that it would help weed out those who were not serious about keeping Torah, as well as save my own family some personal grief. The last attempt, I actually used these documents, but it was all for naught. I was still locked into the mode of thinking that people are basically honest. This last attempt nearly cost me my marriage. Through it, I realized that it would not be possible for me to accomplish the vision I had because of the nature of mankind.

I do believe that Torah society will be accomplished in this world sometime in the future before Mashiach Yeshua returns. The scale upon which Torah society shall be accomplished will have to be on a national scale, rather than simply a local community. This is one of the errors I have come to see in my own efforts.

I might insert at this point, that this is not easy for me to write all this down, because I am basically telling on myself. I am showing how stupid and blind I was in these many attempts. However, if I can save even one person some of the grief I have experienced, then it will have been worth it. I always did my best to hear and obey His Voice. During each of these times over the years, if someone would have asked me if this was His will, I would have unequivocally said "yes." However, looking back upon all this now, I am not so sure. My attempts to work to do His will have been honest. However, they have not been overly fruitful. This fact alone does not make these attempts outside of His will. It may have been His will for me to experience each one of these failures in order to teach me all He has taught me. While I am thankful for the understanding which He has given me through all this, it lessens not the pain and hurt I have experienced or still have in my heart.

My first attempt at putting together a community was the one which has taken me the longest to understand. Because this is true, I was not able to avert many of the tragedies of the subsequent attempts at building a community. In the first attempt there were dynamics of which I was not aware, which facilitated its failure. This attempt at putting together a community was the catalyst which brought about the demise of my previous marriage. This attempt at building a community was not the cause, but only revealed something long hidden from me. One of the people involved in this attempt, had a long standing intimate relationship with my ex-wife, which this attempt would bring to the surface for me to see.

If I could have properly understood all these things concerning this first failed attempt, I may never have had to go through all the subsequent pain and anguish in the later attempts. Having said that, please let me emphasize, it is YHWH who is in control of my life. I placed my life in His loving hands long ago. My life is still in His hands. I understand what He shows me in His time, not my own time. Thus, I have come to see it was necessary for me to experience all these things. YHWH could have easily opened my eyes much sooner than He did to certain truths and spare me, but He did not. He knows I am willing to walk any path He needs me to walk. The only conclusion I can come to, then, at least at this point in my life, is that it was His will that I experience all these things in order to form and shape my heart and life to be more like Him.

There was one attempt which was particularly devastating to me, personally. I actually considered turning my back on Mashiach Yeshua during that time; I was so deeply hurt. I realized that I could not do that, because I had nowhere else to go. I say this to indicate to you, the reader, just how badly I was damaged in that crisis. Perhaps I should give a little more detail concerning that time.

I could say that my wife and I decided to join a messianic organization, to work with them, and to become an integral part of that work. But that wouldn't be a very accurate picture. What really happened was that I joined it, and then Batya was coerced by the leader of that group into joining. If there was ever a red flag that I should not have ignored, that is one of them! Of course, you know the old saying about hindsight! Honestly, I must say that Batya never did feel a part of that group, and rightfully so.

In looking back upon it, Batya and I were manipulated and bullied into doing things that were not right and not according to Scripture while associated with that particular group. Oh sure, on the surface it looked legitimate, but it wasn't. In fact, there were two different groups (both cults) which attempted to get me to join them in an attempt on their part to have the appearance of being more legitimate than what they actually were. Both were familiar with my work, and could see my heart in building His kingdom. If they could succeed in getting me to sign on, then it would strengthen their cover. They were wolves, and I was to be their sheep's clothing. One succeeded in getting me to join, one did not.

To the group I joined, my wife and I eventually signed over our farm and all our possessions. Let me make this as clear as I possibly can make it: any group with which you have to do this in order to be a part of it, is a cult and it is not doing legitimate work for His kingdom! Don't just walk away from these people, run! They will only cause you grief in the long run. In fact, my personal recommendation would be that a person not only separates himself from such a group, but that he never, ever, reads or studies any of their material, either. Why, you may ask? Such material is tainted with one goal in mind, to suck the reader into their way of thinking, and thus the group would then be able to exert a certain amount of control over the individual. Sure, there is truth in what they say and write, but the cost of getting that truth out is simply not worth it! And running the risk of being sucked into false ideas is very great. Such groups subtly change every idea of Scripture and teach it in such a way as to subvert one's mind into thinking things which are not according to Scripture; all the while, Scripture is being manipulated in order to manipulate the people who read their material.

While we were a part of this organization, a subtle change began to take place in my thinking. I did not see it at first. I began to write studies in such a way as to please the leader of the group. What this entailed, was putting in certain ideas or not saying certain things, in order for him to be pleased. The leader accomplished this by editing everything I wrote and pointing out how to say things. He did this in order to get me to think, write, and

talk like him. He was grooming my thinking and actions and I did not recognize it; at least at first.

Once I came to see what was happening, I knew I was in trouble—deep trouble. I began moving out from under his control and placing myself back under the exclusive control of the Spirit of YHWH. I knew this would bring a confrontation, eventually.

Not too long after I began moving back towards YHWH, the leader leveled unfounded accusations against me. This came out of the blue one day for no apparent reason that I could see. I showed this email to my wife and we discussed it at length. We decided together that we would do what was right in the eyes of YHWH, and simply trust in Him to get us through what we knew was about to become a very tumultuous time for us.

I wrote back and asked for specifics about the accusations he had made against me. His response was that he had no specifics, just general feelings about the matter. Furthermore, specifics were not necessary since he was the leader and I needed to submit to his authority. I responded back to him, via email, and asked for three days to pray about the situation. I asked that he not contact me during those three days and that I would not contact him. His response was, again via email, to attempt to kick us out of our home. I later learned that after he sent us that email, he went immediately to his local courthouse and filed an eviction notice, which was served on us three or four days later.

When we signed over our property to this organization, which really only consisted of one man, we did so with honest integrity. That is, it was our intention to give him all of our property without any strings attached. This was stupid and foolish on my part. My wife was against it and the leader had to do a lot of fancy talking to convince her to do it. Anyway, YHWH had other plans, which we were not to discover until years later during the legal battle to remove us from our home. In fact, we would not even discover the truth of the whole situation until everything was said and done and completely settled.

After a settlement out of court was reached between us and the leader of this cult, I took the papers to the courthouse to file the necessary documents to get the property back in our name. It was in the office of deeds that we discovered the truth. Our property originally consisted of four separate tracts of land, purchased at different times. These smaller tracts were added to the larger tract upon which our home was located. One of the tracts of land had upon it, an old two room school house. When the deed was drawn up to sign over all of our land to this cult leader, the title company made a mistake and only put in the legal description of one tract of land, that piece of land which included the schoolhouse and two acres. While it was our intent to sign over all of it, YHWH was in total and complete control and only allowed that one piece to be signed over. He was protecting us even when we did not know we needed to be protected.

When I discovered this at the courthouse and then later told my wife, we had a real time of rejoicing. Even in our foolishness, YHWH was watching over us and providing for our needs

before we even knew we had a need in that area. Even our attorney who represented us in this matter did not discover this. Only the office of deeds found it out. Praise YHWH!

Largely as a result of this experience, we are rather reluctant to let other people into our lives. It has made us very cautious towards others, particularly, those who write to me and “volunteer” to come and be a part of our lives. Occasionally, I receive an email in which a person desires to come and work for me on my farm at no cost to me. Having had this happen in the past, considering the “no cost” to me in the past has been extremely great; that is just not going to happen again! I cannot afford these “no cost” offers any longer. They have already cost me way too much.

One of the things that happened with the above mentioned group (person) when we signed over our farm to him, was that he later put debt upon it to buy a local print shop. When we signed over our farm, there was no debt upon it. Now all of a sudden there was a note for \$30,000, and he expected us to go and work in the print shop to produce all of his materials, as well as working outside orders for businesses. This was disastrous in every way.

When the breakup came, we ended up being saddled with the print shop and had to once again pay off a loan we were not responsible for obtaining. We had to do this in order not to lose our farm. Financially speaking, this was a very costly lesson! We ended up selling the print shop after a year for a significant loss. It took us a couple of years, but we once again got our farm debt free.

While my motives in doing this were noble, the person on the receiving end was anything but noble. In fact, we found out during the legal struggles that this person has a long history of doing this very thing, tricking other people out of their properties. This cult leader did everything he could to make it seem like he was legitimate, but he was anything but legitimate. Sadly, he is still in business today, still taking people’s money under false pretenses.

A few of the people we met while in this group are still friendly towards us. We are blessed by their friendship. Some of those people have not seen what kind of person this cult leader is. This is due mainly to not having the close relationship with him that we did.

At one point I was contemplating joining in with another group which turned out to be another cult. During this exploratory time there were several red flags, doubts which came up. I had already told my dear wife that we would do nothing unless she was completely comfortable with any move we decided upon. As I was out walking and praying one day, YHWH strongly impressed upon me, that as long as there were any doubts in my mind and heart about this matter, I could not move forward. If I ignored the doubts which He had put there, he would strip me of everything I had. Needless to say, He had my full attention.

To move onto the property of this cult meant one would sign over all of his possessions and all his possessions would become community property. If for any reason the person then

later chose to leave or was asked to leave, all their possessions would have to be left behind as they now belonged to the “group,” which in reality, once again only consisted of one man.

I say this to the reader, to help you understand the importance of not ignoring those little nagging doubts. This is true of anything in our lives. Often times YHWH places those little nagging doubts in our lives in order to protect us. However, because the world in which we live is so very fast-paced, as well as having a constant background noise of so many things vying for our attention, all too often we ignore these little pricks in our mind and heart to our own undoing. I am speaking from the school of hard-knocks in this matter.

One attempt we made brought us in contact with people who had severely critical spirits. Sadly, I did not act as quickly as possible. It is good to give others the benefit of any doubts. However, there is also a time when action is warranted, to put an end to criticism and condemnation. I came to see during this time that many hurtful words are spoken under the guise of “YHWH told me to tell you...” Words such as these, or others in the same vein, are words used to disguise the true nature and intent of the critical and condemning spirit behind the words. This is another one of the red flags I learned to recognize, and more importantly, how to deal with it. It will often manifest itself publicly, but needs to be dealt with in private a.s.a.p.!

I do not feel the need at this time to write down a lot of the specifics of each of the attempts we have made. Having written down these general thoughts seems to be enough at this time. Once again, my purpose is to help those who would like to put together a Torah community or join one. Take your time and be extremely cautious.

If you wish to dialog via email about your own attempt to build a Torah community or if you are considering joining a Torah community, I would be blessed to discuss these matters with you. I can only draw upon my own experiences and my own understanding of Scripture. However, I will be as honest as possible with you and hopefully spare you some of the great hurt and heartache we have experienced.

Glossary

Aharon (ah-HA-rone) – the actual Hebrew name of the first high priest of Israel, the brother of Moshe and known in the West as “Aaron”

Ahav (ah-HAWV) – English transliteration of a Hebrew name known in the West as “Ahab”

Amein (ah-MANE) – English transliteration of a Hebrew word often seen in the West as “amen”

Aviv (ah-VEEV) – English transliteration of a Hebrew word meaning “green ear” as it refers to barley in the springtime, thus signifying the first month of the year to determine all other festivals

Avram (ahv-RAHM) – English transliteration of a Hebrew name known in the West as “Abram”

Babel (ba-VEL) – English transliteration of a Hebrew name often translated as “Babylon” in the West

Chavah (kah-VAH) – English transliteration of a Hebrew name known in the West as “Eve”

Diaspora – term signifying the dispersion of Israel, which includes two different Diaspora, one for the northern house of Israel (Ephrayim) which came first; and a second Diaspora which happened to the southern house of Judah

Echad (eh-KAHD) – English transliteration of a Hebrew word commonly translated as “one” in the West

El (ALE) – singular form of Elohim

Eliyah (eh-lee-YAH) – English transliteration of a Hebrew name known in the West as “Elijah”

Elohim (eh-LOW-heem) – transliteration of a Hebrew word which is wrongly translated as “god” in the West

Ephrayim (ef-RAH-yeem) – English transliteration of a Hebrew name known in the West as “Ephraim” and refers to both the ruling tribe of the northern kingdom of Israel as well as the northern kingdom as a whole

Gan (gone) – English transliteration of a Hebrew word known in the West as “garden”

Ger (gair) – English transliteration of a Hebrew word signifying one who “sojourns” with Israel

Gerim (gair-EEM) – plural form of “ger” – sojourners

Halakah (ha-la-KAH) – English transliteration of a Hebrew word signifying the way a person lives his life, that is, his walk

Hebrew language – Hebrew is read from right to left and consists of 22 characters, all of a consonantal value; however, several of the letters can act as a vowel and thus become characteristic vowels

Ketuvah (keh-TUE-vah) – English transliteration of a Hebrew word meaning “writing” which came to be used to signify a marriage contract; the Torah Moshe is a Ketuvah between YHWH and Yisrael

Ketuvim (keh-too-VEEM) – English transliteration of a Hebrew word which means “writings”

Kohen (koe-HEN) – English transliteration of a Hebrew word known in the West as “priest”

Kohenim (koe-he-NEEM) – plural form of “kohen”

Korach (kore-AHK) – English transliteration of a Hebrew name known in the West as Korah

Mashiach (ma-SHE-ock) – English transliteration of a Hebrew word meaning “Messiah” often rendered as “christ” in the New Testament

Mishle (mish-LAY) – English transliteration of a Hebrew word meaning “proverb” or “parable”

Mo’ed (moe-EHD) – English transliteration of a Hebrew word which means “appointed time” and is used to signify the feasts of YHWH

Mo’edim (moe-eh-DEEM) – plural form of mo’ed

Moshe (moe-SHEH) – the actual Hebrew name of the man the Torah was given to Israel through, known in the West as Moses

Navi’im (ne-vi-EEM) – English transliteration of a Hebrew word which means “prophets”

Omer (oh-MER) – English transliteration of a Hebrew word used to signify the counting of the fifty days, or seven full weeks plus one day, from the day of First Fruits to Shavuot

Pesach (peh-SOCK) – English transliteration of a Hebrew word known in the West as “Passover”

Rosh Chodesh (roesh koe-DESH) – English transliteration of two Hebrew words known in the West as “New Moon,” “rosh” meaning “head” or “beginning” and “chodesh” meaning “moon”

Scripture – comes from a Hebrew word which means “writing,” today in the West it is known as the “Holy Bible”

Shabbat (shah-BAHT) – English transliteration of a Hebrew word known in the West as “Sabbath”

Shabbatot (shah-bah-TOTE) – plural form of Shabbat

Shalom (shah-LOME) – English transliteration of a Hebrew word meaning “peace” and is also used as a greeting for “hello” and “goodbye”

Shavuot (shah-VUE-ote) – English transliteration of a Hebrew word known in the West as Pentecost

Shema (sheh-MAH) – English transliteration of a Hebrew word which means to “hear with the intent to obey” often translated as simply “hear” or “listen”

Shemittah (sheh-meh-TAH) – English transliteration of a Hebrew word meaning “release” and is used to signify the year of “release” every seven years

Sukkot (sue-KOTE) – English transliteration of a Hebrew word known in the West as “tabernacle” and is significant of the fall feast of YHWH

Talmid (tahl-MID) – Hebrew transliteration of a Hebrew word known in the West as “disciple”

Talmidim (tahl-meh-DEEM) – plural for “talmid”

Tanak (the-NAHK) – an acronym formed from three words, Torah, Navi’im, and Ketuvim – TaNaK. This word refers to all the writings of the “Old Testament”

Techelet (teh-KAY-let) – English transliteration of a Hebrew word known in the West as “blue” or “violet”

Torah (toe-RAH) – in the primary sense Torah is the “Law of Moshe” (Moses), in the secondary sense Torah can also refer to all of Scripture; the word “Torah” literally means “instruction,” which comes from a root word meaning “to hit the mark”

Torah police – a person or group of people who take it upon themselves to bring every other person into their own way of thinking; all other ways are wrong and sin in their eyes

Transliteration – the act of substituting an English equivalent letter for a Hebrew character

Tzitziot (tzee-TZEE-ote) – plural form of “tzitzit

Tzitzit (tzee-TZEET) – English transliteration of a Hebrew word known in the West as “tassel” or “fringe”

Ya’aqov (yah-ah-KOVE) – English transliteration of Hebrew name known in the West as “Jacob” and sometimes as “James”

Yah – a shortened form of the proper name of YHWH

Yarden (yar-DANE) – English transliteration of a Hebrew name known in the West as “Jordan”

Yehudah (yeh-WHO-dah) – English transliteration of a Hebrew name known in the West as “Judah”, it is from this name which the term “Jew” comes from and refers to the descendants of the southern kingdom of Judah, but not to the descendants of the northern kingdom of Israel

Yeshua (ye-SHOE-ah) – English transliteration of Messiah’s Aramaic name wrongly known as “Jesus” in the West

YHWH – English transliteration of the Hebrew Tetragrammaton, which is the proper name of the Creator recorded in Scripture and appears nearly seven thousand times in the Tanak; one pronunciation is as “ye-WHO-ah” which is how we currently understand it to be pronounced

Yisrael (yis-rah-ALE) – English transliteration of a Hebrew name known in the West as “Israel”

Yitro (yit-ROE) – English transliteration of a Hebrew name known in the West as “Jethro”