

ONE TORAH FOR ALL

Zerubbabel ben Emunah
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Do Not Make False Vows

Matityah [Matthew] 5:33

***“Again, you have heard that it was said to them of old time,
‘You shall not make false vows, but shall fulfill your vows to YHWH;’”***

Apparently, it seems that Yeshua is either quoting or making reference to Numbers 30:2. The basic idea is that we are not to make vows with the intent to deceive. If a person says he is going to do something, he should do it. This brings up the question; just exactly what is a vow? Is it only something that one promises to do, or swear to do? On the other hand, is it something much simpler than that?

To help us in our search for the truth, let us examine the passage to which Yeshua is making reference.

B’midbar [Numbers] 30:2

“When a man vows a vow to YHWH, or swears an oath to bind his soul with a bond, he shall not break his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.”

In this passage, YHWH, speaking through Moshe, commands His people that they are to do all that comes forth from their mouths.

Ya’aqov [James] 3:2

For in many things we all stumble. If any stumbles not in what he says, the same is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body also.

Yeshua also taught about what comes out of one’s mouth.

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 what comes out of one’s mouth that will either justify him or condemn him. It is by one’s own words and actions that YHWH will judge him. The fewer words one utters the better off he will be in the Day of Judgment! Is it any wonder Scripture teaches that teachers will incur a stricter judgment? One’s intent is what makes the difference here. Does one’s intent match up with his words? YHWH knows!

Ivrim [Hebrews] 4:12

For the word of Elohim is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.

If one’s intentions do not match up with his words, then deceit is present. When deceit is present, that person is in trouble. As an example of a vow given, look at Avraham. YHWH told Avraham to go and sacrifice his son as a burnt offering. Avraham made the commitment to go and obey. His intent matched his words. Therefore, YHWH spared him and did not require the task to be completed.

Do Not Make Vows

Matithyah [Matthew] 5:34-35

***34 “but I say to you, swear not at all; neither by the heaven, for it is the throne of Elohim;
35 nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.”***

Yeshua indicates that a person would be further ahead if he did not even vow at all. Surely, the wisdom of this approach can be clearly seen. If one does not make a vow, then he certainly cannot break it. Moreover, if he does not break a vow, then he has not sinned in the matter, when it comes to making and breaking a vow.

One is not to promise to do something, and then attempt to verify that promise by injecting something greater like the earth or His city or heaven or any such thing. When a person does such things as this, it is just that much worse for him when the vow is broken.

You are Not the Creator

Matithyah [Matthew] 5:36

“Neither shall you swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black.”

The essence of what Yeshua is stating in this passage is that, as a human, he cannot create in the same manner as YHWH. He is not dealing with something as simple as hair dye. This is only a temporary change and only changes the outward appearance of the hair. What Yeshua is stating, is that, as a human, he does not have the means, power, or authority to change one's hair from the inside out and make it a permanent change; only Elohim can do that!

Guard Your Answer

Matithyah [Matthew] 5:37

“But let your speech be, Yes, yes; No, no; and whatsoever is more than these is evil.”

I remember one time many years ago when YHWH first dealt with me on this passage. I was standing in the church foyer one day after service and someone came up to me and asked me to do something in the church. I thought for a moment and realized I was not supposed to do that. So I said “no.” They stood there and just looked at me. The expression on this person's face clearly indicated that they were waiting on a reason why I was not going to do it. The longer we stood there looking at each other the more puzzled this person became. After an awkward silence, they turned and walked away.

Typically, this is what happens to people. One person will ask another to do something. If the person being asked does not want to do what is being requested, he will say “no” accompanied by a reason why he cannot do it. Some may think this is the polite thing to do, but it is not! It is sin according to Yeshua. Therefore, once the reason is given, then the bargaining back and forth begins, with one person explaining why he can't do it. Then the other person countermands the reason why the other can't do it, with why he should. Back and forth the game is played. As this game is played, it is inevitable that lies and deceptions are told. The longer it is played, the worse it gets. It is clear why Yeshua said that anything beyond “yes” or “no” is evil!

When one says a simple “yes” or “no” it gives no room for the other person to attempt to bargain with such a simple answer. It saves a person from a lot of heartache and trouble and keeps one out of things he shouldn’t be doing in the first place. A “yes” or “no” answer is better for everyone involved, both the giver of the answer and the receiver of the answer!

Equal Weights and Measures

Matithyah [Matthew] 5:38

“You have heard that it was said,

‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth;’”

Once again, Yeshua quotes another verse. He quotes Shemot 21:24. Every person alive or who has ever lived has a strong sense of fairness. That sense of fairness that each person has is based upon the individual’s concept of right and wrong and how it affects him personally. The closer to the person an incident or action is; the stronger the feelings will be when that sense of fairness has been violated. The stronger the feelings, the more likely action containing some type of vengeance will be forthcoming from the person experiencing that fairness towards him has been violated.

Torah provides that whatever a person did that deprived another individual of something, even to the point of body parts, he is to pay in like kind. Certainly, when something like this happens to one personally, what he feels inside is something very much akin to treating the person in the same way that he treated him. However, Yeshua teaches what the true intent of this commandment of Torah is.

Matithyah [Matthew] 5:39

“but I say to you, do not repay evil for evil; but whosoever smites you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also.”

The above verse was taken from the Shem Tov and is slightly different than what is found in the Greek texts. This text was chosen because it seems to make much more sense in light of what Yeshua is teaching and in the larger context of Torah.

When a person does something that is hurtful to one personally, he is not to repay in like kind. Just because someone has hurt us in some fashion, does not give one the license to hurt him in return. Yeshua is calling those who follow Him to live above the base standards of this world, in which self is the motivating factor in most actions and reactions.

Later in this sermon, Yeshua teaches this:

Matithyah [Matthew] 7:12

“Therefore, however you want people to treat you, so treat them, for this is the Torah and the prophets.”

The standard that Yeshua is calling one to is the standard of heaven. It is a standard in which one is not to repay evil with evil. Rather he is to repay evil with good and kindness.

Matithyah [Matthew] 5:44-45

44 “but I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you;

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.”

If one truly wants to be counted as sons of our Father in heaven, then he must not allow the world to drag him down to the level of existence found in the world. He must take the higher road and walk in the fullness of the power of His love.

Do More – Go More – Give More

Matithyah [Matthew] 5:40

“And if any man would take you to court, and take away your coat, let him have your coat.”

The walk that Yeshua has called us to walk is not about material possessions. It is about hearing and obeying His Voice. If material possessions get in the way of doing that, then those possessions are being misused and are not good for anyone. One should give up such possessions.

The person who follows YHWH is to be detached enough from the material possessions that YHWH places in his stewardship that if a person needs or wants something that belongs to him, he can simply give it to him without a lot of fuss. Of course, this is done at the direction of His Spirit.

Matithyah [Matthew] 5:41

“And whosoever shall compel you to go one mile, go with him two.”

In those days of Roman occupation, it was Roman law that if a Roman soldier asked a common person to carry his burden or to do something for him, the person being asked must comply and go up to one mile with the soldier. However, Yeshua is teaching that one is to go further than what man's law compels him to do; he is to do what YHWH's Law commands. In His Law, Yeshua teaches that he is to go further.

Matithyah [Matthew] 5:42

"Give to him that asks you, and from him that would borrow of you turn not you away."

The talmidim of Yeshua are to do more, go further, and give more. That is the standard that Yeshua has set forth. With these things squarely in our minds, particularly my own, let me address some additional issues in light of this passage, and in light of what I have been through in my own life.

I am fully aware that I have not done everything exactly right in my own life. However, it was not because I was not trying. The supreme desire of my life is, and always has been, to lovingly please my heavenly Father. The path YHWH has led me down in my life has not been an easy path to walk. It has been full of hardship and heartache, both for me and for those who are closest to me. I hope and pray that those closest to me have learned along with me.

Matithyah [Matthew] 7:15

"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves."

These wolves are sometimes very difficult to detect because of the great care they have taken to perfect their camouflage.

Matithyah [Matthew] 7:16-20

***16 "By their fruits you shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?
17 Even so every good tree brings forth good fruit; but the corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit.
18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.
19 Every tree that brings not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.
20 Therefore by their fruits you shall know them."***

Sometimes it takes time for a tree to produce fruit. Sometimes it will even be years before that happens. Sometimes it will be when the pressures of life come crashing down, that what is inside of a person will come out and be seen by all. We must be patient and prayerfully watch for the fruit. It will manifest itself at some point.

Kohelet [Ecclesiastes] 3:1-8

1 For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven:

2 a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;

3 a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;

4 a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

5 a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

6 a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;

7 a time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

8 a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace.

I am sure you are all familiar with this passage. Please take the time to read it through thoughtfully and prayerfully several times. There are times and situations in all our individual lives in which we are faced with a choice. Is it a time for ..., or, is it a time for...? It is incumbent upon each person to determine what time it is in his own life. Then, upon making that determination, a choice is made as well as a course of action. Please understand, no one else can either made these decisions or walk that course.

My prayer for each one of you, is that YHWH will help you to determine what time it is in your life and that His people will be there to support you in love even if they do not understand your choices.

ABBA YHWH, we are listening for the sound of Your Voice. Please open our ears that we may hear clearly, for our desire is to obey You and what You tell us; in the name of Yeshua our Mashiach. Amein.

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www.onetorahforall.com

zerubbabel@onetorahforall.com

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