

ONE TORAH FOR ALL

Zerubbabel ben Emunah
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Religiosity vs. Spirituality

Qorintyah Aleph (1st Corinthians) 2:14

Now the natural man cannot discern the things of the Spirit of Elohim; for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually appraised.

Manmade religion spans the world and comes in so many varieties that it is often hard to comprehend. However, all manmade religions have some things in common regardless of under what label they operate. But do not think that all manmade religions are easy to see or that they all even operate under the guise of being a religion. Many manmade religions do not carry the label of being a religion at all. These are some of the more insidious ones for they are hard to see for that which they truly are. Any movement or group of people that has adherents and which moves in any way to control its followers, is in some way a manmade religion.

One of the main tenets of all manmade religion is control; control of the masses by a select few. But no man has the right or authority to tell another man what to do or what not to do. For when one man or a group of men take it upon himself or themselves to dictate to others what is right or wrong, then they have elevated themselves to the status of a god regardless of whether they or anyone else will admit it. This is tantamount to enslavement; enslavement of one man to another or to a system that does not have the individual's best interest at heart, even though it is often under the guise of being in the individual's best interest. This is simply a smoke screen to hide the reality of control.

This enslavement of one man by another begins when one man seeks followers or when one man follows another man. Whenever this happens it is a sure recipe for disaster. The only way that this can be avoided is for each and every individual not to follow another man. This following includes following oneself, which is also a man. The only one worthy of following is our Creator.

It is at this very point that one's true spirituality is assailed by religion and religious men who establish religious systems. Our Creator created all men as spiritual beings. This does not mean

that all men will attain to the olam haba (world to come). This is what we are to strive towards. We are also to help one another in this endeavor.

Philippians 2:12

12 So then, my beloved, even as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;

The point in the above passage that we would like to focus upon at present is that we are admonished to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. In part, this means that I cannot work out your salvation and you cannot work out my salvation. As much as one person might desire to have another person “saved”, it is simply outside the realm of reality. One person cannot save another. It is simply not possible. But this does not mean that we cannot assist another in his walk, for we most certainly can and should do this. We just need to recognize our limitations in this matter and be careful not to go beyond what we can do into an area that we not only can't do, but in which we shouldn't even be involved, in another person's life.

For example, when seeking the advice or counsel of another, the one giving counsel should never attempt to tell the other person what to do. What I do is to tell others what I might do or what I have done in a similar situation. I most likely would also include some pertinent Scripture to help the person in his decision making process. What I should not do is to tell the person what to do. In the end, whatever decisions the other person makes, even if I do not agree with it, it is their decision to make and they are the one who has to live with it, not I. That person must seek to hear and obey His Voice in the same manner that I must do.

So, how does one work out his own salvation with fear and trembling? First and foremost, one must be honest with himself. If a person cannot be honest with himself, then it is highly unlikely that he will attain to the world to come, the olam haba. This self honesty is going to require one to face some very difficult questions regarding one's spiritual walk. This is so because of the prevalence of religion in this world. One of the immense tasks before each one of us is weeding through all of the manmade religious practices and finding our way to true spirituality. True spirituality is based upon a personal relationship with one's Creator and Redeemer.

The context of the above verse is discussing Mashiach Yeshua as the person one must obey, for He is our Creator. It is only our Creator who is worthy of our obedience. We certainly have not created ourselves, have we? To be sure, we have not! All of creation points to intelligent design in everything that we observe.

Romans 1:20

For the invisible things of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even His everlasting power and divinity; that they may be without excuse:

If one is willing to be honest, when one looks into the created world it clearly testifies of intelligent design, which in turn points to an intelligent Designer. If one denies this, then he will walk the path of religion rather than the path of true spirituality. For, one of the paths of manmade religion (and there is no other religion except manmade), is secular humanism which is based upon the erroneous theory of evolution. One of the scientific principles which evolution completely ignores, which it cannot overcome is the second law of thermodynamics or the law of atrophy. This law clearly states that everything in the universe is going from harmony to disharmony; from unity to disunity; from order to chaos.

The erroneous theory of evolution states exactly the opposite of the second law of thermodynamics. Therefore, one must be true and one must be false, for both cannot be true. However, the second law of thermodynamics, the law of atrophy, is clearly observed in everything that we see. This is why when a dad buys his children a swing set and puts it together then he must periodically retighten all the bolts and nuts. It is the law of atrophy at work. It is why one must repaint his house every few years. It is the law of atrophy at work.

But the reality is that not one time has the theory of evolution been observed in this world. Not once! Please do not confuse the adaptability of the species with evolution! So, if a person was going to bet on the odds of which one was true, he would be wise to take the bet supporting the law of atrophy and bet against the theory of evolution.

Now if one is observant one might ask why one of these is referred to as a “law” and the other is referred to as a “theory”. The answer is simple. Science has observed and proven a law to be true. Science has not observed and proven a theory to be true; therefore, it remains only a theory.

Romans 1:21

because that, knowing Elohim, they glorified Him not as Elohim, neither gave thanks; but became vain in their reasoning, and their senseless heart was darkened.

The Creator of this realm does not want us simply to accept things by blind faith. He wants us to prove all things. His desire is for us to use the power of our mind to work out our salvation. His desire is for His highest creation, man, to reason together with Him about all things. It is when other men come between one person and his Creator that the trouble starts. It is when a person lays aside his spirituality and takes up religion that one goes off on the wrong path.

Romans 1:22-23

22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23 and changed the glory of the incorruptible Elohim for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.

Down through the ages the objects that man has worshipped fit into one of the above categories. Man has worshipped something that was just as created as he. Man’s most common object of worship has been other men. The worship of something created by man has

even happened in the name of the Creator all the while being told that they were worshipping Him.

For example, one of the earliest examples of man worshipping a creature in the name of his Creator is found recorded in Scripture.

Shemot (Exodus) 32:3-5

3 And all the people broke off the golden rings which were in their ears, and brought them to Aharon.

4 And he received it at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, and made it a molten calf; and they said, "These are your gods, Israel, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt."

5 And when Aharon saw this, he built an altar before it; and Aharon made proclamation, and said, "Tomorrow shall be a feast to YHWH."

Let us be very clear about this. Just because some man declares something to be good, right, and in the name of YHWH, does not make it so! I wonder if we will ever learn this lesson.

This is part of working out one's salvation with fear and trembling. When we are told something by another person it behooves us to check it out, to prove it to be either true or false. If we do not do this, then at some point we will be misled; and if there is such a thing as a "sure thing" then that would come as close as anything.

1st Thessalonians 5:21

prove all things; hold fast that which is good;

We are admonished to prove all things. We cannot afford simply to take another person's word for something. For that matter, we cannot afford to take another person's word on anything. We must prove all things. We cannot afford to be blindly led down some path that takes us where do not even know where we are going.

Yochanan Aleph (1st John) 4:1

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of Elohim; because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

I work very hard at sticking with what Scripture teaches us. And when I teach others what I have learned I also work hard at sticking with what Scripture teaches. But I also know that I am just a man, a man who makes mistakes from time to time. I have no desire for any person to follow me, nor to mislead anyone. I insist that those who read what I write and listen to what I say check it out for themselves to make sure that what is being said lines up with Scripture. This is what each one of us should do with all things; test them to make sure they are right and from YHWH our Elohim. If it does not stand up to the test, then why would a person want it in his life anyway?

This is surely true of traditions, regardless of from where those traditions have come. Now we are not suggesting that all traditions should be discarded, but we are suggesting that all traditions should be tested and measured against Scripture. If it does not measure up, then it should not be done. However, if the tradition is not specifically commanded in Scripture, yet does not cause one to violate or to go against any of YHWH's commandments, then it can be done. But it needs to be recognized that it cannot be made binding upon another in the same way that one of His commandments is binding upon us. We cannot force others to keep traditions that are not specifically spelled out in Scripture. For that matter we cannot and should not force others to keep His commandments either!

Yochanan (John) 8:36

"If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed."

Are you free in Mashiach? Do you realize that He came to free you? Here is the question: Mashiach came to free us, but free us from what? He came to free us from sin. For sin held us as slaves and we had neither choice nor power in this matter to get free from this evil master.

Romans 8:2

For the law of the Spirit of life in Mashiach Yeshua made me free from the law of sin and of death.

One's spiritual well-being depends upon his being free from sin. If a person is not free from sin, then there is no freedom at all in his life.

Romans 6:16

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

Now let us expand our understanding of this passage. If a person is following another man, then he is obeying that man. If one man obeys another man, then he is the servant of that man. However, if a man obeys His Creator, then he is the servant of his Creator. And make no mistake about it; every man obeys something or someone. Even if that someone is himself, then he is being obedient to a man and not to YHWH our Elohim. And remember, no man can serve two masters!

Galatians 4:9

But now that you have come to know Elohim, or rather to be known by Elohim, why do you turn back again to the weak and beggarly rudiments, whereunto you desire to be in bondage all over again?

Once having been freed from sin why do so many turn and go back to what they were doing before they came to Mashiach Yeshua? If Mashiach Yeshua has set you free, then walk in the fullness of that freedom and stop sinning and stop living in lawlessness, which is living without Torah! Sin is breaking Torah.

Kepha Bet (2nd Peter) 2:19-20

19 Promising them liberty, while they themselves are bondservants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he also brought into bondage.

20 For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of Adonenu and Savior Yeshua Mashiach, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the last state is become worse with them than the first.

Brothers and sisters in Mashiach Yeshua, I implore you to take a good hard look at your life and whom you follow. Are you following Mashiach Yeshua who set you free? Or, are you following some other man who not only cannot set you free but in the end to whom you will be enslaved to do his bidding? If Yeshua our Mashiach has truly set you free, then walk in the fullness of that freedom. However, do not let your freedom be an occasion for stumbling in yourself or in another.

Luqa (Luke) 17:1-2

1 And He said to His disciples, "It is impossible but that occasions of stumbling should come; but woe unto him, through whom they come!

2 It would be better for him if a millstone were hung about his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, rather than that he should cause one of these little ones to stumble."

True spirituality recognizes its rightful place in this world, which includes having a right relationship with one's Creator as well as walking in such a manner that others do not stumble because of our actions and words. Typically, it is the actions of another which are selfish in nature that cause stumbling in another person. When what we are doing is from a heart of love for our Master YHWH, then others are also cared for and protected.

However, when a person acts in a selfish way then others will get hurt and possibly stumble; this is the spirit of religion, the spirit of selfishness. For the spirit of religion is more concerned about self than anything else. The spirit of religion is primarily concerned about getting one's way.

We have one final thought concerning the idea of religion and the spirit of religion as opposed to true spirituality.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 12:32

"Whatsoever thing I command you, that shall you observe to do; you shall not add to, nor diminish from it."

YHWH has given us His written word which contains His commandments to us. When man presumes to know better than YHWH our Elohim who gave them to us, then he adds to those commandments in some places which he thinks to be deficient; and in other places he takes away from them, believing that it is too much of a burden to do them, or some other such reason. Either way, whether adding to or taking away from His commandments, what one has

is a manmade religion. What one is guilty of is eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. This we cannot afford to do!

Let each one of us not only walk the path of true spirituality, but let us also give to others in abundance the freedom to walk that same path of freedom in the spirituality which YHWH gives to each man. Let us not become mini dictators over others attempting to force them into our own mold thinking that ours is the only right way when the truth of the matter is that His is the only right way and I have no authority to declare what that is for another person. Let us let YHWH be the Elohim of our neighbor and stop trying to be that which we cannot be, neither should we attempt to be.

Let us recognize the spiritual makeup of all with who we come into contact and respect that which YHWH has created. Let us deal with each person with grace and dignity due to one of His creations!

ABBA YHWH, open our eyes to the true path to spirituality and a personal relationship with You; in the name of Yeshua our Mashiach.

Amein and Amein.

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