

ONE TORAH FOR ALL

Zerubbabel ben Emunah

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Radical Obedience

Ma'aseh (Acts) 5:29

But Kepha and the apostles answered and said, "We must obey Elohim rather than men."

This is a much-discussed passage these days in the light of the restoration of Israel, particularly when we bring the traditions of man into the discussion; and rightly so! In this particular context from the book of Acts, the council told these talmidim of Mashiach Yeshua not to teach others in the name of Yeshua. However, these men did not listen to the council and taught in His name anyway. As a result, the council rearrested and warned them again not to teach in His name. Again, they did not listen to the unrighteous words of this council.

When man speaks, the hearer must measure what is being spoken. To do this, one needs a measuring tool. The only reliable measuring tool given to us is the Torah of YHWH. When we measure the words of man by this standard, we will get an accurate understanding of what is being said, provided the person doing the measuring is using the standard of Torah in a righteous manner.

When one sets out to measure the words of man with the Torah of YHWH, he must measure his own words first before he will be able to judge the words of another accurately. The first requirement for being able to use the Torah in a righteous manner is obedience to it. If a person is not being obedient to the Torah, proper understanding cannot ensue. Yeshua teaches us this very concept.

Yochanan (John) 7:17

"If any man is willing to do His will, he shall know the Torah, whether it is of Elohim, or whether I speak from Myself."

From the Peshitta we learn Yeshua did in fact use the word “Torah” in this context. Please note that what Yeshua is teaching us is that it is the person who is willing to do (i.e., keep, observe, and obey) the Torah, who will truly know the Torah. Now, a person can read and study the Torah, but if that person does not implement what he finds in the Torah, what good has it done him? None! In fact, such a person would be better off not studying the Torah at all if he is not going to do what he learns from it.

Kepha Bet (2nd Peter) 2:21

For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after knowing it, to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them.

As we study the written word and learn what it means through our teacher, the Ruach Qodesh (the Holy Spirit), we should apply and implement what He shows us immediately. In this way, He continues to build upon what we know and do to take us to greater heights towards YHWH our Elohim. One of the difficulties in doing this, however, is the traditions of man.

Yochanan (John) 15:22

“If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin.”

Yeshua taught us this same principle. Many understand that Yeshua is referring to His coming in the flesh when He speaks these words. To be sure, this is the pashat level of understanding this verse. However, there is also a deeper meaning to these words. Please consider this next verse as well.

Galatians 3:19a

What then is the Torah? It was added because of transgressions,

Please note that the plain teaching of Scripture is that the written Torah was given to us because of our sin. What Mashiach Yeshua was saying in the passage above is that He came and gave the Torah to Israel on Mount Sinai; and because He gave Israel the Torah, Israel is without excuse.

However, what YHWH wanted from His people Israel was not simply obedience to the letter of the law, but that they would hear and obey His Voice. If YHWH would have wanted simple obedience to the letter of the law, He would have (and He is certainly capable) given us a very detailed list of do’s and don’ts. However, when we examine the Torah we do not find this at all. What we find is great latitude within the majority of the commandments, statutes, and

ordinances. This is because what YHWH actually desires from each one of us is not for us to be automatons, but rather to have a viable relationship with Him, via – hearing and obeying His Voice.

Yirmeyah (Jeremiah) 7:23

“but this thing I commanded them, saying, ‘Hear and obey My Voice, and I will be your Elohim, and you shall be My people; and you walk in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you.’ ”

It is at this very point, the point of hearing and obeying His Voice, that we need to exist and live our everyday lives. It is at this point that we must cry out to our Master in the same way Kepha cried out to Him.

Matithyah (Matthew) 14:28-29

28 And Kepha answered Him and said, “Master, if it be You, bid me to come to You upon the waters.”

29 And He said, “Come!” And Kepha got out of the boat, and walked upon the waters to come to Yeshua.

If we will but call out to Yeshua and ask Him to call us to Himself, He will bid us to come to Him. Then it is up to us to get out of the boat and come to Him. This is not going to be easy for us to do, as we are comfortable and safe in our own little manmade boat. It may even be on the verge of sinking, but it matters not. This is where we feel safe and secure regardless of whether this is actually true or not. What we may not perceive is that there is no real safety in the boat. The only real safety is walking with Yeshua.

If we are going to walk with Yeshua, we need to obey His call to us.

Matithyah (Matthew) 11:28

“Come to Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

We all grow weary from time to time of this world and all that is of this world. The world does everything in its power to bring us down and to keep us down. Mashiach Yeshua wants to lift us up out of all the mess, filth, degradation, and sin that fills this world. Nonetheless, we must step out in faith and come to Him.

In this world, the storms of life rage around us. However, in Mashiach we will find a shelter in the time of storms. Nevertheless, we must come to Yeshua. What does it mean to come to Mashiach Yeshua?

Yochanan (John) 6:37-38

37 "All that which the Father gives Me shall come to Me; and him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.

38 For I am come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me."

Just as Yeshua came not to do His own will but the will of His heavenly Father, so too Yeshua sent us out into this world not to do our own will, but the will of Him who sent us. If we are actually going to have the courage to go out and do His will, it is going to take being filled with His Spirit, for nothing else will suffice. The obedience He asks from each one of us is nothing short of complete. Many would call this "radical" obedience. Take this prophet as one example of complete obedience.

Yeshayah (Isaiah) 20:2-3

2 At that time YHWH spoke to Yeshayahu the son of Amoz, saying, "Go, and loose the sackcloth from off your loins, and put your shoe from off your foot." And he did so, walking naked and barefoot.

3 And YHWH said, "Like as My servant Yeshayah has walked naked and barefoot three years for a sign and a wonder concerning Egypt and concerning Ethiopia;"

Now, a person's obedience does not get much more radical than this. I dare say that, if a person did this today, they would quickly arrest him and lock him away in some institution. This is, of course, barring some kind of divine intervention that would prevent this from happening. Actually, this is likely what happened in Yeshayah's day when he did this very thing. I am sure that he offended many people, including the king, walking around butt-naked for three years, telling everyone this was what YHWH was going to do to all of them, unless they repented. However, when we are obedient to His Voice, regardless of what He tells us to do, He will watch over us to see that we are able to do that which He has commanded. However, we cannot fear man in doing it. We must fear YHWH, and only YHWH.

Luqa (Luke) 14:26

"If any man comes to Me, and does not hate his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple."

One of the things this verse means, is that our love for Mashiach must be so complete, that it does not matter what He tells us to do, we do it. However, what actually happens instead is we often take into consideration what our parents, our spouse, or our children might think if we did what He told us to do. Therefore, instead of simply obeying His Voice as we should, we reason it away by virtue of our “loved” ones. These loved ones certainly must include one’s brothers and sisters in Mashiach as well!

May I be so bold as to say what this truly is? When a person does this, it is nothing short of idolatry. It is elevating that loved one over and above what His Voice has commanded us to do.

If one truly is going to be His talmid, it is going to take radical obedience from him. Furthermore, within the body of Mashiach, one always needs to support this type of radical obedience to His Voice from each and every member of His body. When we all begin to see such obedience, we will see a miraculous outpouring of His Spirit among His people.

Let each one of us say, “Let it begin with me!”

ABBA YHWH, I will obey whatever You tell me to do; all I ask is for You to make it clear to me; in the name of Mashiach Yeshua. Amein.

Shabbat Shalom

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