



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

Zerubbabel ben Emunah

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Understanding Torah Society part 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 preserved¹ 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

¹ 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.

living in a Torah society. Without shema, there can be, and will be, no such society based upon His Torah.

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 Samuel 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 tzitzit; 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.

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