

Torah Rediscovered

Friday 19th June 2009

What's Your View?

"Typical" View of Torah

- Legalistic
- Restrictive
- Rules and regulations
- Archaic – 'Old' Testament
- Brings death
- 'Foreign' – culture and experience

These are inconsistent, even hypocritical views – mostly based on prejudice and misinformation...

Inconsistent, Hypocritical?

~ A Detestable Abomination ~

- **Leviticus 18:22** – "Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable."
- **Leviticus 11:12** – "Anything living in the water that does not have fins and scales is to be detestable to you."

שְׂקֵצִים (*sheqets*) – detestable / abominable

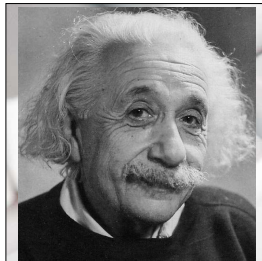
Is 'It' Working?

"*Insanity*: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results."

"Only two things are infinite, the universe and human *stupidity*, and I'm not sure about the former."

"The important thing is to never stop *questioning*."

Albert Einstein, US (German-born) physicist (1879 - 1955)



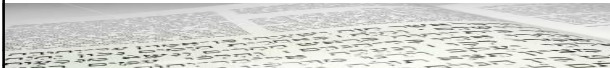
God Said Torah Is Good

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Check out Deuteronomy 6:8 or Psalm 119

- *Torah*, from *arah* "to aim / shoot"
- *Chata* is the opposite "to miss the mark" (translated 'sin' in the Bible)

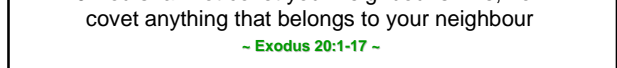
"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"
~ Romans 3: 23a ~



The Nine Commandments

1. You shall have no other gods before me
2. You shall not make for yourself an idol
3. You shall not make wrongful use of the name of your God
4. Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy
5. Honour your father and mother
6. You shall not murder
7. You shall not commit adultery
8. You shall not steal
9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour
10. You shall not covet your neighbour's wife, nor covet anything that belongs to your neighbour

~ Exodus 20:1-17 ~



Teaching, Discipline and Rules of a Loving Father



"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him."

~ Genesis 1:27a ~

"When man creates his god, he creates him in his own likeness."



Torah: What It Is, And What It's Not



Torah and Halakhah

~ Written versus Oral Tradition ~



Background to Halakhah

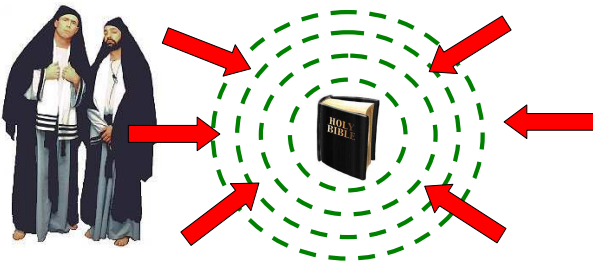
Ethics of the Fathers

~ Pirkei Avot 1:1 ~

"Moses received the Torah from Sinai and gave it over to Joshua. Joshua gave it over to the Elders, the Elders to the Prophets, and the Prophets gave it over to the Men of the Great Assembly. They [the Men of the Great Assembly] would always say these three things: Be cautious in judgement. Establish many pupils. And make a safety fence around the Torah."

Torah and Halakhah

"Build A Fence Around The Law"



One Sabbath Rule

"Moses assembled the whole Israelite community and said to them, "These are the things the Lord has commanded you to do: For six days, work is to be done, but the seventh day shall be your holy day, a Sabbath of rest to the Lord.""

~ Exodus 35:1-3 ~

39 Rabbinic 'Work Types'

"The generative categories of acts of labour are forty less one: (1) he who sews, (2) ploughs, (3) reaps, (4) binds sheaves, (5) threshes, (6) winnows, (7) selects [fit from unfit produce or crops], (8) grinds, (9) sifts, (10) kneads, (11) bakes; (12) he who shears wool, (13) washes it, (14) beats it, (15) dyes it; (16) spins, (17) weaves, (18) makes two loops, (19) weaves two threads, (20) separates two threads; (21) ties, (22) unties, (23) sews two stitches, (24) tears in order to sew two stitches; (25) he who traps a deer, (26) slaughters it, (27) flays it, (28) salts it, (29) cures its hide, (30) scrapes it, and (31) cuts it up; (32) he who writes two letters, (33) erases two letters in order to write two letters; (34) he who builds, (35) tears down; (36) he who puts out a fire, (37) kindles a fire; (38) he who hits with a hammer; (39) he who transports an object from one domain to another - lo, these are the forty generative acts of labour less one."

~ Mishnah Shabbat 7:2 ~

613 Positive and Negative Commandments

God (10)	Property and Property Rights (11)
Torah (6)	Criminal Laws (7)
Signs and Symbols (5)	Punishment and Restitution (24)
Prayer and Blessings (4)	Prophecy (3)
Love and Brotherhood (14)	Idolatry, Idolaters and Idolatrous Practices (46)
The Poor and Unfortunate (13)	Agriculture and Animal Husbandry (7)
Treatment of Gentiles (6)	Clothing (3)
Marriage, Divorce and Family (23)	The Firstborn (4)
Forbidden Sexual Relations (25)	Kohanim and Levites (30)
Times and Seasons (36)	Trumah, Tithes and Taxes (24)
Dietary Laws (27)	The Temple, Sanctuary and Sacred Objects (33)
Business Practices (14)	Sacrifices and Offerings (102)
Employees, Servants and Slaves (19)	Ritual Purity and Impurity (16)
Vows, Oaths and Swearing (7)	Lepers and Leprosy (4)
The Sabbatical and Jubilee Years (17)	The King (7)
The Court and Judicial Procedure (36)	Nazirites (10)
Injuries and Damages (4)	Wars (15)

<http://www.jewfaq.org/613.htm>

Types of Law

- **Sacrificial**
 - Not in force without a Temple
- **Ritual**
 - "an established or prescribed procedure for a religious or other rite."
 - Halakhah / Oral Tradition
- **'Lifestyle' – A New Paradigm?**
 - Added value for Messianic believers?
 - More of this later...

Yeshua and Torah

Yeshua and Torah

~ Genesis Rabbah 10: 1 ~

"Everything has an end - heaven and earth have an end - except one thing which has no end. And what is that? The torah."

~ Exodus Rabbah 6: 1 ~

"No letter will ever be abolished from the Torah."

~ Matthew 5: 17-18 ~

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished."

'Fulfil' and 'Destroy'

• Technical Rabbinic terms...

- "You are *destroying* the Law!"
- *Levatei* (Bivin) – to cancel or destroy, or;
- *Lehapher* (Shem Tov Ibn Shaprut) – to break or make void, see Ezra 9: 14
- "Destroy..." = incorrectly interpret

'Fulfil' and 'Destroy'

• Technical Rabbinic terms...

- "You are *fulfilling* the Law!"
- *Lekayem* (Bivin) – to preserve, sustain, or;
- *Lehashlim* – wholeness, fill in, correct completeness (Shem Tov Ibn Shaprut)
- "Fulfil..." = correctly interpret

Fulfil and Destroy

"Do not think that I have come to *incorrectly interpret* the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to *incorrectly interpret* them but to *correctly interpret* them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished."

~ Matthew 5: 17-18 ~

Yeshua and Torah

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.

The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

~ Matthew 7:24-27 ~

Paul and Torah

Paul and Torah

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Messiah Yeshua.”

~ Galatians 3:28 ~

In the context of receiving *salvation* and receiving the *Holy Spirit*, also, it was spoken to *gentiles*.

Paul and Torah

“For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the *law* with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace...”

~ Ephesians 2:14-15 ~

Νόμος (*nomos*)

Paul, *Nomos* and Torah

- νόμος (*nomos*) – “anything established, anything received by usage, a custom, a law, a command” (Strong’s, 3551)
- In NT (used 194 times) can refer to either Torah **or** Halakhah
- Definition depends on the context, otherwise...
 - Yeshua contradicts Torah (impossible),
 - Paul contradicts Yeshua (impossible),
 - Paul contradicts Torah (impossible),
 - Paul contradicts himself (impossible)

Paul’s Biblical Lifestyle

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

~ 2 Timothy 3: 16-17 ~

Do I Need To Keep Torah?

Do I Need To Keep Torah?

- The Council at Jerusalem (Acts 15)

"Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the brothers: "Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.""

~ Acts 15:1 ~

- Again, the context is clearly *salvation* not lifestyle (see vv 1 & 11)

Council at Jerusalem

The apostles and elders, your brothers,
To the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia:
Greetings.

We have heard that some went out from us without our authorisation and disturbed you, troubling your minds by what they said... It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements:

You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things.

Farewell.

Torah Rediscovered

A Change in the Law

"For when there is a *change of the priesthood*, there must also be a *change of the law*. He of whom these things are said belonged to a different tribe, and no one from that tribe has ever served at the altar. For it is clear that our Lord descended from Judah, and in regard to that tribe Moses said nothing about priests."

~ Hebrews 7: 12-14 ~

A New 'Lifestyle' Paradigm?



"... you are to make tassels on the corners of your garments... You will have these tassels to look at and so you will remember all the commands of the Lord... and not prostitute yourselves by going after the lusts of your own hearts and eyes."

~ Numbers 15:38-39 ~

A New 'Lifestyle' Paradigm?



"These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts..."

Write them on the door-frames of your houses and on your gates."

~ Deuteronomy 8:6 & 9 ~

A New 'Lifestyle' Paradigm?

~ Helps For A Regular Prayer Life ~

- *Shacharit* – "dawning" (circa 7am)
- *Minchah* – "offering" (circa 3pm)
- *Ma'ariv* – "evening" (circa 8pm)

"One day *Peter* and *John* were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon."

~ Acts 3:1 ~

"*Cornelius* answered: "Four days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon."

~ Acts 10:30 ~

A Good 'Rule of Thumb'

"Everything is permissible"—but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible"—but not everything is constructive."

~ 1 Corinthians 10: 23 ~

What's The Alternative?

- **Hellenistic existentialism?**
 - Anything goes, live for the moment, be care-free (or care-less?)
- **Natural law?**
 - Law of the 'wild', survival of the fittest, law derived from nature under human reason

Children living without rules or boundaries is not freedom, it's parental negligence.

Further Reading

~ In No Particular Order ~

- Bivin, David, *New Light on the Difficult Words of Jesus: Insights from His Jewish Context*, En Gedi Resource Centre, 2005
- Friedman, David, *They Loved The Torah: What Yeshua's Followers Really Thought About the Law*, Lederer Books, Maryland, 2001
- Gordon, Nehemiah, *The Hebrew Yeshua vs. The Greek Jesus*, Hilkiah Press, 2006
- Lancaster, D. Thomas, *Restoration: Returning the Torah of God to the Disciples of Jesus*, First Fruits of Zion, Colorado, 2005
- Jacobs, A J, *The Year of Living Biblically*, William Heinemann Ltd, 2008
- Psalm 119, *The JPS Tanakh Translation*, The Jewish Publication Society, Oxford University Press, 1999

Questions and Answers

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What About Kosher Food?

"... Peter went up on the roof to pray... he fell into a trance. He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles of the earth and birds of the air. Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat."

"Surely not, Lord!" Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything impure or unclean." The voice spoke to him a second time, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean." This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven.

While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon's house was and stopped at the gate..."

- Acts 10 and 11 -

What About Kosher Food?

Inconsistent, Hypocritical?

~ A Detestable Abomination ~

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שֶׁטֶט (sheqets) - detestable / abominable

What About The Seven Laws of Noah?

Sheva Mitzvot B'nei Noach

~ Seven Laws of Noah ~

- ✓ 1. Prohibition of idolatry
- ✓ 2. Prohibition of murder (Genesis 9:6)
- ✓ 3. Prohibition of theft
- ✓ 4. Prohibition of sexual promiscuity:
including adultery, incest, bestiality and male
homosexual intercourse
- ✓ 5. Prohibition of blasphemy
- ✓ 6. Do not eat flesh taken from an animal
while it is still alive (Genesis 9:4)
- ✓ 7. Requirement to have just laws

✓ - Dealt with in Acts 15, Council of Jerusalem

✓ - Dealt with in the 'Ten Commandments'

יעקב עמדין - Jacob Emden

~ 1697 – 1776 ~

“... the original intention of Jesus, and especially of Paul, was to convert only the Gentiles to the seven moral laws of Noah and to let the Jews follow the Mosaic law — which explains the apparent contradictions in the New Testament regarding the laws of Moses and the Sabbath.”

