



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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Community vs. Family

There is a lot of discussion and dialogue these days concerning the idea of living in community, particularly living in a believing community of those with like minds and with those whose faith is similar. There are even those who have made the attempt to start communities within the context of the “Hebrew Roots” movement. Most have failed miserably. A few are still struggling to survive. And the harmony within these groups of people is far from being where it should be. We have made several attempts to start a community here only to meet with great disaster each time.

Through a series of events in my own personal life, YHWH has brought into very sharp focus the difference between living in community and being a family. The truth is that those living in Babylon are already living in communities of various sizes. Do we really want to pattern what we do after the Babylonians? After all, YHWH commands us not to do this!

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 20:23

“And you shall not walk in the customs of the nations, which I cast out before you; for they did all these things, and therefore I abhorred them.”

This idea is found many places in the Torah. It is also found in many places in the prophets.

Yirmeyah (Jeremiah) 10:1-2

***1 “Hear the word which YHWH speaks to you, house of Israel;
2 thus says YHWH, ‘Learn not the way of the nations, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the nations are dismayed at them.’”***

YHWH is concerned for our safety and spiritual well-being. This is why YHWH warns us again and again not to follow after the customs of the nations who do not serve Him. One of their customs is to live in communities. Ever wonder why people in general like to live in communities? In short, one of the reasons for this is because there is much less personal

accountability. In community, one can do things with a much greater degree of anonymity. One can get away with things in community that one could never get away with in a family!

It is at this very point that the attempt to start and to live in a believing community will always fail. It will fail on at least two fronts. The first reason that it will fail is because it is patterned after the nations, and YHWH will not bless something He has warned us against doing! And secondly, communities will fail because human nature being what it is – sinful – will always tend to take the short, easy, sinful way of doing things whenever possible; and since community actually fosters this, it will self-destruct.

Please take careful note of what the following verse teaches us.

Luqa (Luke) 3:38

the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of Elohim.

Scripture teaches that Adam was the son of Elohim. Not in exactly the same way as Yeshua is, but he is still the son of Elohim. What one needs to learn from this is that the emphasis is upon family, not community! When we begin to see this truth in Scripture, then we will see it everywhere.

At this point, please allow the writer to say a word about the title of this teaching. The title is *Community vs. Family*. The title is not *Family vs. Community*. Why? The title is the way that it is simply because the family came first and then community rose up in opposition to the family.

B'reshit (Genesis) 4:17

And Qayin (Cain) knew his wife; and she conceived, and bore Enoch; and he built a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch.

Please note that Qayin built the first city. But in order to understand the significance of this we need to keep in mind the following passage.

B'reshit (Genesis) 4:12

“When you till the ground, it shall not yield its strength to you; a fugitive and a wanderer you shall be in the earth.”

YHWH's judgment upon Qayin for killing his brother was that he was to be a fugitive and a wanderer upon the earth. So as strange as this may sound, living in a city is related to being a fugitive and a wanderer. The larger the city, the more true this is; the larger the city the more a person can go back and forth in the streets and not be recognized. There is a high degree of anonymity in a city. And where there is anonymity, sin is bound to follow. When a man believes he can get away with something, he will more than likely try; such is the sinful condition of man. This is why cities were built! Cities were originally built for and by wanderers and fugitives. We are not to do as the nations do! Instead of building cities or communities, we

should be building family! Let us now look into Scripture and see what it has to say about this all important concept.

B'reshit (Genesis) 18:19

“For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of YHWH, to do righteousness and justice; to the end that YHWH may bring upon Avraham that which He has spoken of him.”

Please note that YHWH tells us that His will for Avraham is not only for Avraham to do the will of YHWH, but that the household of Avraham is also to do the will of YHWH, and this all the way to the end. So the household of Avraham consists of all those in his family and all those who are members of his household, whether family or slaves. The slaves were so much a part of his household that he treated them as family. Let us not forget this and let us also emulate it!

Galatians 3:6-7

6 Even as Avraham believed Elohim, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness.

7 Know therefore that they that are of faith, the same are sons of Avraham.

Now we begin to see that those of the faith are not just a bunch of people grouped together. Rather those of the faith are all sons of Avraham. This makes them brothers, that is, family. In this next passage, notice what Yeshua taught concerning this concept of who His brothers are.

Matithyah (Matthew) 12:48-50

48 But he answered and said to him that told him, “Who is my mother? And who are my brothers?”

49 And he stretched forth His hand towards His disciples, and said, “Behold, My mother and My brothers!

50 For whosoever shall do the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother, and sister, and mother.”

They were not just His brothers, but His sisters and mother, as well. And who are these that are His brothers and sisters and mother? They are those who do the will of His Father YHWH. It is important to note that these three terms: “brothers,” “sisters,” and “mother,” are all terms dealing with family.

Romans 8:29

For whom He foreknew, He also foreordained to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers;

Yeshua is the First-fruits of the harvest of many who will be brought into the family of Elohim. Furthermore, each person brought into this family will be, and are, brothers. We are to lovingly interact with one another within the family of Elohim.

The difficulty is that, in the Babylonian system in which we all grew up, families tend to fight and argue and bicker and all sorts of evil things, with one another.

Kepha Aleph (1st Peter) 1:18

knowing that you were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers;

What we have learned from our parents is vain and follows after the ways of the nations. It is time we stop following after the nations and follow after YHWH. Scripture teaches us a different way to behave towards our brothers in the faith.

Romans 12:10

In love of the brothers be tenderly hearted one to another; in honor preferring one another;

In YHWH's family we are actually supposed to give preference to one another in all things. We don't see that too often these days, do we? It is because we are much too focused upon building community rather than focused upon what we should be focused upon, and that is building the family of Elohim!

Ephesians 2:19

So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of Elohim.

When we come to Yeshua as Mashiach, we are no longer considered to be strangers and aliens; rather, we are of the household of Elohim. We are part of His family! Now, don't you think that, if YHWH our Elohim considers someone a part of His family we should also consider that person the same as well? Furthermore, don't you think that we should also treat a son or daughter of YHWH with the respect and dignity that a son or daughter of YHWH our Elohim deserves? I think so!

Ivrim (Hebrews) 3:6

But Mashiach as a son, over His house; whose house are we, if we hold fast our boldness and the glorying of our hope firm to the end.

As we see in this passage above, over the house of YHWH our Elohim is Yeshua our Mashiach since He is the Son of YHWH Elohim. This makes Yeshua as the Son of Elohim our brother since we are adopted into the family of Elohim and call upon YHWH Elohim as our Father. Since we, as believers, have the same Father as Yeshua, we are also then brothers with one another and part of the same family.

Romans 8:15-16

15 For you received not the spirit of bondage again to fear; but you received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit, that we are children of Elohim;

When a person comes to the heavenly Father and is adopted into His family, His Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are, in fact, His children. This enables us to call upon YHWH our Elohim as our Father.

Marqos (Mark) 10:29-30

29 Yeshua said, "Amein I say to you, There is no man that has left house, or brothers, or sisters, or mother, or father, or children, or lands, for My sake, and for the besorah's sake, 30 but he shall receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brothers, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life."

Notice that what Yeshua is describing is a very large family with brothers, sisters, mothers, and children. He makes it quite clear that He is speaking of this physical realm in which we now live. Later His followers will receive eternal life, but for now we will receive a very large family. And family is supposed to take care of each other.

Please note in this next passage one of the ways in which we are to interact with one another.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 25:46

"And you shall make them an inheritance for your children after you, to hold for a possession; of them shall you take your servants forever; but over your brothers, the children of Israel you shall not rule, one over another, with severity."

Notice that we are to leave an inheritance to our children. Notice also that those who rule are to do so in such a way as to not to be severe or harsh. We do not want to be the cause of His children to stumble. Those who rule are to do so with love and compassion, fairness and justice. But please take note that YHWH refers to all of Israel as "brothers." YHWH knows that we are all family and we are to treat each other as family, taking care of one another to the very best of our ability.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 25:48

After he has been sold, there is a right of redemption of him; one of his brothers shall redeem him.

YHWH teaches us that if one of our brothers in Israel is sold into bondage to pay his debt, and then he is unable to redeem himself, then one of his brothers shall redeem him. And since we are all brothers in Israel, there is no excuse for anyone in Israel to ever be in bondage for any length of time. Someone should redeem him as soon as possible. After all, we would not want to be in bondage for very long if it were us. Therefore, one should take the approach that as soon as he hears of someone being in bondage, he should do what he can to redeem him. It is the right thing to do. It is commanded from YHWH. This is one way in which family takes care of each other. This does not happen in communities.

Galatians 6:10

So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith.

In this passage we see that we are to do good to all, but especially to those who are brothers and sisters in the faith. We are to take care of those who are our family. We are to build and foster the care and nurturing within our family to the degree that love is evident among us.

Let us examine some passages from the book of Devarim to see that there are many such commandments dealing with how those in Israel are brothers, and how we are to interact with one another.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 1:16

“And I charged your judges at that time, saying, ‘Hear the causes between your brothers, and judge righteously between a man and his brother, and the sojourner that is with him.’”

YHWH recognizes that sometimes there arises strife, even between brothers. In order for the strife to be properly settled, righteous judgment must take place. When righteous judgment takes place, then relationships can and will be restored.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 15:7

“If there is a poor man among you, one of your brothers, within any of your gates in your land which YHWH your Elohim gives you, you shall not harden your heart, nor shut your hand from your poor brother;”

Sometimes things happen through no fault of one’s own doing; sometimes this brings hard times. YHWH clearly states that we are not to forget or neglect those who are poor among us.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 24:14

“You shall not oppress a hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of your brothers, or of your sojourners that are in your land within your gates.”

Not only are we not to forget to do good to the poor among us, but we are not to oppress them, either. This not only includes those who are native born among our brothers Israel, but it also includes those who attach themselves to Israel to serve YHWH.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 17:20

“that his heart be not lifted up above his brothers, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left; to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children, in the midst of Israel.”

The commandments concerning when Israel would have a king include that the king would not think more highly of himself than his brothers. The king is not to consider himself above anyone else in Israel. This idea would certainly include anyone who is in a leadership position.

Just because YHWH places a person in a leadership position does not mean that he is better than, or elevated above, his brothers in Israel. In fact, Yeshua clearly portrayed what it means to be a leader in Israel; it means that one is first a servant of others. A leader in Israel is to lead by example and he is to be at the service of others regardless of what type of leadership position YHWH places him in.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 18:15

“YHWH your Elohim will raise up unto you a prophet from your midst, one of your brethren, like unto me; unto him you shall listen.”

One of the difficulties with communities is the leadership, namely, one man being in charge. While the prophet Moshe prophesied that there would be another one man leader to come after him, this one man leader was Yeshua our Mashiach and does not apply to individual leaders of so-called communities. However, this is actually what happens many times in the attempt to build a community; one man takes it upon himself to be the leader of all those under him. Neither this man, nor those under him, recognize the family relationships of all being brothers. Be on your guard against one man shows!

Tehillim (Psalm) 133:1

A Song of Ascents; of David.

***Behold, how good and how pleasant it is
For brothers to dwell together in unity!***

This passage teaches that, as brothers in the faith, it is good for us to dwell together in unity. Please do not confuse the idea of unity with uniformity! Uniformity is doing the same thing in the exact same way while looking exactly alike. Nowhere in Scripture is uniformity commanded. Unity, on the other hand, is when we are all serving the same Elohim, but not necessarily in the same manner. Remember, as Scripture teaches, YHWH has placed each one in the body of Mashiach just as He has willed, but not all have been given the same task, nor the same gifts to accomplish that which is His will.

Since uniformity is not commanded, let us allow YHWH to be Elohim and allow Him to deal with each person according to His will, and stop trying to force each other to conform into one's own image. When each person allows YHWH to be the Elohim of all his brothers (and sisters), then, unity will naturally follow.

When a person begins to act in a manner that is not kind and loving towards one or more of his brothers in Israel, then YHWH specifies what must be done to such a person. Please consider a couple of admonitions from Scripture concerning when a person begins to walk in the flesh and not according to His Spirit.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 24:7

“If a man be found stealing from any of his brothers of the children of Israel, and he deal with him as a slave, or sell him; then that thief shall die; so shall you put away the evil from the midst of yourselves.”

When a person steals from one of his brothers in Israel, then he is to be cut off from Israel. In fact, this passage specifies that such a person shall die. We are not to tolerate sin or evil among us, but rather we are to purge it out so that it does not cause others to stumble and fall as well.

Romans 16:17

Now I beseech you, brothers, mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the teaching which you learned; and turn away from them.

If a brother causes dissensions among the brothers of Israel, then everyone else is supposed to turn away from him and not have fellowship with him. Hopefully, this will be a cause for repentance in such a person.

Mishle (Proverbs) 6:19

***A false witness that utters lies,
And he that sows discord among brothers.***

One of the things that is an abomination to YHWH, is a man who disseminates strife among brothers. When Scripture teaches that this is an abomination to YHWH, then we know that this is a very serious matter, one that we should never take lightly. If we see one doing such a thing, then we need to pull such a person aside and speak to him to see if he can be turned back into the way.

Matithyah (Matthew) 5:47

“And if you greet your brothers only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?”

Yeshua taught us that we are to greet all men. We should never neglect greeting our brothers in Israel as they are our brothers. However, let us also greet others as well. Then if that greeting of shalom returns to us and does not rest upon the one to whom it was given, then we can act accordingly. However, if the greeting remains and there is shalom present, then how would we know this if we did not offer the greeting?

Offering the greeting of shalom is like continually offering forgiveness and love. If it is rejected, then it is rejected. However, if it is received, then we know that we have a brother. However, if it is never offered, then how can shalom exist between two such men?

Matithyah (Matthew) 10:25

“It is enough for the disciple that he be as his teacher, and the servant as his master. If they have called the master of the house Ba’al Z’vuv, how much more them of His household!”

The religious leaders of Yeshua's day called Him Ba'al Z'vuv because of some of His miracles, particularly when He cast out demons and unclean spirits. Yeshua teaches that, if a person is a part of His household, then he is a part of His family; therefore, he can expect to be treated the in same manner as his Master was treated.

How sad it is when this occurs among brothers. However, let me point out that the one calling the names in the above passage is not included as a member of the household of faith, and a brother to Yeshua, and a son to YHWH. So, with that in mind, please be very cautious about saying someone is demonic or satanic. Doing so may just put the name-caller outside of the family of which he thinks he is a part.

Matityah (Matthew) 25:40

"And the King shall answer and say to them, 'Amein I say to you, Inasmuch as you did it to one of these My brothers, even the least, you have done it to Me.'"

Yeshua, in teaching about the Day of Judgment, indicates to us that He has brothers. And as we have already seen above, those brothers consist of those who have been adopted into the family of Elohim because they have confessed their sins and believed upon Yeshua as Mashiach. This adoption process is further brought about by His Spirit filling us, which enables us to call out to YHWH as our Elohim.

As we have demonstrated from many passages of Scripture (and we could easily have included many more passages of Scripture), YHWH is establishing a family. He is looking for those who are willing to be a part of that family.

Now, some of our families may be so large that they would be the size of a small city. Consider Avraham when he went out to rescue his nephew Lot. Avraham took with him from his own household 300 armed men. Now to be honest, we can be fairly certain that Avraham did not take even close to all his armed men. He needed to have enough to stay behind to protect the women and children that were a part of his family. According to Torah, a person needs to be over the age of twenty to be considered a warrior. This also means that it is highly likely that each one of those men was married and had children. This makes the camp of Avraham quite large.

The point of bringing this up is to show that Avraham did not live in a community. Rather, Avraham lived in a family group. Now, Ya'aqov had twelve sons; and each of those twelve sons had families. Each one of those sons became one of the tribes of Israel. When Israel went into the land YHWH had promised to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'aqov, the land was divided up according to the tribes (families) of Israel. YHWH wanted each of these families to stay together within its own land. Family is very important to YHWH.

YHWH desires for us to build in like manner. He desires for us to build our families so that we stay together. If two families come together to live together, then they should do this because

they desire to be one family. We do need to come together to live, not in community, but rather, to live as families. In this way Israel will be reestablished.

Let us prayerfully consider this truth that YHWH is our heavenly Father and that Yeshua is our Brother and that we are all brothers and sisters in Mashiach. Then let us act in accordance with this truth.

ABBA YHWH, open our eyes that we may see Your truth about family; in the name of our Brother Yeshua our Mashiach. Amen.

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