

# ONE TORAH FOR ALL

Zerubbabel ben Emunah  
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## Understanding Torah Society

Part 5 – Public Goods – Infrastructure

### *Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 19:36*

***“Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin, you shall have; I am YHWH your Elohim, who brought you out of the land of Egypt.”***

To refresh our memory, the six public goods as commonly seen by government today are 1) order, 2) defense, 3) public health, 4) infrastructure, 5) education, and 6) social welfare. So far we have examined order, defense, and public health. This study will examine Infrastructure. Infrastructure consists of everything needed for an organization or nation to run itself economically and physically. For example, part of the infrastructure of a nation would be its roads, bridges, electrical grid, monetary system, water and sewage services, and anything else needed for a country or society to exist.

The common thought by many today is that it is the responsibility of the government to provide for and maintain the infrastructure of a nation. However, as we are about to see, this is not necessary, nor the best option. To begin with, please note that historically, the electrical grid was not government owned or maintained, but privately owned, in many cases by co-ops. “Co-op” is short for cooperative, which means a group of individuals banded together for a common purpose. Also, banks have been historically privately owned and operated. The government did not really get involved in banking until 1933 after the crash of 1929, when it created the FDIC—Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. When a person looks at the beginnings of nearly every part of a nation’s infrastructure, it would have its roots in the private sector.

One aspect of government and infrastructure is the notion of *the right of eminent domain*. What this means is that the government has the right to confiscate any and all lands or private property which it deems necessary for the efficient function of itself. There are few limits upon this supposed self-given right. And who is supposed to oversee this power? The government is supposed to police itself in this matter. It is like sending a small child into a candy store and not placing any limits upon him except what he places upon himself. Few children would willingly constrain themselves.

Sadly, the power of a government to take is very far from Torah!

***Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 25:23***

***“And the land shall not be sold in perpetuity; for the land is Mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with Me.”***

The earth belongs to YHWH by virtue of YHWH being its Creator. YHWH gave a small portion of the earth to Israel as a perpetual possession. They are His stewards of the land. The land actually belongs to YHWH as He is the Creator. As such, He assigns whom He desires to steward that land. In this case, His desire was for the children of Israel to steward the land of Israel. He had this land divided by lot and given to the tribes. The tribes then further divided the land to the families by lot. Once the land was divided by lot and assigned, it was to stay in that family forever. If a man fell upon hard times, he could sell the crop off of the land for a period of up to six years, but no more.

***Devarim (Deuteronomy) 15:1***

***At the end of every seven years you shall make a release.***

When the year of שמיטה *shimittah* (literally—release) came, the land (crops) reverted back to the rightful owner. This is a law and a statute forever!

Please take careful note of this next passage.

***Yirmeyah (Jeremiah) 34:17***

***“Therefore thus says YHWH; you have not hearkened unto Me, to proclaim liberty, every man to his brother, and every man to his neighbor; behold, I proclaim unto you a liberty,” says YHWH, “to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine; and I will make you to be tossed to and fro among all the kingdoms of the earth.”***

One of the major reasons YHWH kicked Israel out of His land, was for not obeying this particular commandment, the commandment to observe the land shabbat.

***Dibre Hayamim Beit (2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles 36:21)***

***to fulfill the word of YHWH by the mouth of Yirmeyah, until the land had enjoyed its shabbatot; for as long as it lay desolate it kept shabbat, to fulfill seventy years.***

Of all the sin and disobedience of which Israel (southern house of Yehudah) was guilty in not listening to and obeying the Voice of YHWH, it was not observing the land shabbat that caused them to be kicked out of the land.

In order to understand the infrastructure of a Torah society, the rightful ownership of the land must be rightly understood. YHWH is the owner of the land. YHWH has given the stewardship of that land to individuals within the nation of His people. YHWH has not assigned any of that stewardship to some government or government agency.

One of the weaknesses of a nation when it comes to being attacked from another nation is its infrastructure. Consider how much stronger a nation would be if there were no electrical grid. If there were no electrical grid, then there would be no way to attack or sabotage it. It is well within the technological advances today, that each and every person be sufficient unto himself in such a matter. If each and every farm had its own water system, its own electrical system, its own sewage system, etc., then it would be completely free to obey YHWH in all that He says.

However, if a man is dependent upon someone else, like the government, for such necessities, then when there is a threat of losing those necessities, he lives under constant coercion. He is not free to hear and obey His Voice.

Once we understand the true nature of the infrastructure, then we can begin to see how the infrastructure should be ordered in a Torah society. There are two aspects of the infrastructure which we need to briefly discuss here—money and roads.

#### ***Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 27:25***

***And all your estimations shall be according to the shekel of the sanctuary: twenty gerahs shall be the shekel.***

There is a lot of information about money in the Torah Moshe. We will cover this in more detail in a later study in this series dealing with tithes and offerings. What we need to see here is that YHWH has already provided a means of trade amongst His people; a monetary system based upon weight—the shekel.

As the opening passage from Vayyiqra 19:36 states, a Torah society is to have a just and equal weights and measures system. Precious metals, like gold, silver, and copper, were the coinage, and the value of that coinage was based upon weight. There is to be no such thing as fiduciary money; a system of imaginary value. Paper has no true value. Taking a piece of paper and printing a number on it is has no intrinsic value like precious metal. A Torah society's monetary system is based upon real value of items being exchanged. Gold, silver, and copper is spoken of as a means to trade, but it is not the only means. Even grains, such as barley and wheat, can be traded. This is also done by weight. Anything of value can be weighed and used as a trade medium.

We will go into a lot more detail in part fourteen of this series.

Of particular concern might be roads and bridges. What many people do not know, is that in this country (USA), a person's property extends to the middle of the road, and that such a person actually owns half of the road, and that because of the right of eminent domain, the government causes individuals to "grant" an easement across their property to itself and others. The government then takes the responsibility to maintain that access (road), effectively taking the ownership of that portion of a man's property away from him.

However, as we saw above, any given piece of land is to stay in the possession of the family to which it was granted. In one extreme case in Scripture, king Ahav took a portion of another man's property because he wanted it for his own purposes.

***Melekim Aleph (1<sup>st</sup> Kings) 21:2-3***

***2 And Ahav spoke to Naboth, saying, "Give me your vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it is near to my house; and I will give you a better vineyard than it; or, if it seems good to you, I will give you the worth of it in money."***

***3 And Naboth said to Ahab, "YHWH forbid me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers to you."***

The king (government) wanted this man's piece of land. In fact, when one reads the whole account, the king killed Naboth and took his land. As a result, YHWH sent a prophet to the king and pronounced judgment upon him and his household.

YHWH is serious; when He assigns stewardship of land to a family, it is to stay in that family. Once this truth is solidly fixed in a person's mind, then he can address the idea of roads and bridges. Basically, if a road or bridge is on a person's property, if he chooses to make a road or bridge, then it belongs to him. He is responsible for it. Yes, he can make agreements with other owners to work together to build and maintain such, but according to Torah, whatever is on a man's land belongs to him and he is responsible for it.

There is one final thought concerning the infrastructure—corporations.

In a Supreme Court of the United States ruling in 1933 in *Lee v. Liggett*, the court stated that corporations were a *Frankenstein-like monster*. Interestingly, corporations in the USA have the status and rights of a human being. However, what happens is that when an individual deals with a corporation, his rights get lost in the shuffle. Corporations are for the express purpose of shirking personal responsibility. In other words, corporations are not Torah friendly. Corporations cannot be justified in a Torah society. Cooperatives can certainly be seen in Scripture, but not corporations. When a person does or makes something, that person must be accountable for that action to maintain and preserve proper order. Because corporations are a legal entity, that is, a corporation enjoys all the same rights afforded to an individual person, if a corporation does something to harm or injure another person, no one is truly accountable to the same degree as an individual would be accountable. Corporations cannot be justified in a Torah society.

Infrastructure is about the interactions between the individuals of society. YHWH has given to us a general outline of what that structure is supposed to look like. Furthermore, He has recorded for our instruction many examples of what not to do.

***1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 10:6***

***Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.***

The truth is, that most of what is recorded in Scripture in the way of history, is what not to do, rather than what to do. Historical Israel rarely got it right. And when they got it wrong, YHWH had it written down so we could learn from it.

The bottom line of understanding infrastructure is this: who is the owner? It is YHWH and He has assigned the stewardship to individuals, not to a government or corporation.

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