

ONE TORAH FOR ALL

Zerubbabel ben Emunah
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Understanding Torah Society

Part 6 – Public Goods – Education

Mishle (Proverbs) 1:8

***My son, hear the instruction of your father,
And forsake not the Torah of your mother.***

Once again, 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, public health, and infrastructure. This study will examine education. Education is the process of acquiring or imparting knowledge from one generation on to the next. In this study we will examine that process; in particular, whose responsibility it is, as well as what type of knowledge is to be imparted in a Torah society.

The above passage helps one to understand the context of the whole book of Mishle; namely, that these proverbs are from a father to a son. It is one of the primary responsibilities of the parent to train, educate, and instruct one's own children, especially when it comes to the idea of passing on the culture of a Torah society. Namely, YHWH charges the parents in particular with the responsibility of teaching and passing on the Torah commandments to their own children.

In the above passage, there are two words which grab our attention: *instruction* and *Torah*. "Instruction" is translated from the Hebrew word מוסר *musar* – which means *discipline, chastisement, correction*. This teaches us that one should never forsake, but rather earnestly heed, the correction from one's parents in particular, and from one's elders in general. "Torah," which is often translated into English as *law*, means *instruction*. The difference between these two words is that the Torah is instruction in the primary since, whereas מוסר *musar* is instruction in the secondary since. What this means is that Torah (instruction) is given first and then it is acted upon. If a mistake or misjudgment results for some reason, then a slight course correction is needed to get the child back on the correct path; מוסר *musar* is needed. The primary person responsible for this according to the above passage, as well as other passages, is the father of the child. However, both parents are intimately involved in both Torah instruction, as well as מוסר *musar* correction.

As we stated above, according to Scripture, it is the responsibility of the parent to teach and train one's children. Here is one passage in which this commandment is found.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 6:6-7

***6 "And these words, which I command you this day, shall be upon your heart;
7 and you shalt teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up."***

Everything that a parent does should teach his children how to walk in Torah and to be a part of a society which loves YHWH and hears and obeys His Voice. This is one of the primary duties of a parent. If a parent fails in this, then he has failed. This is not to say that the success or failure is measured by whether a child accepts or rejects the Torah; for even after being fully trained to keep and do Torah, a child still must make his own choices in the matter. Rather, success is measured by whether a parent has done his very best to teach and train his children to walk in the way of YHWH. The primary way of teaching and training one's children is by keeping and doing Torah. Then, regardless of what the child chooses then, the parents have succeeded in obeying YHWH in the matter of raising their children.

It should be pointed out here, that the first thing mentioned in the above passage is that the Torah is to be upon one's heart. If it is not upon one's heart, then it truly is not possible to pass it on to one's children. Historically, this is exactly why ancient Israel failed as a nation in the past. It is also why YHWH spoke these words through the prophet.

Yirmeyah (Jeremiah) 31:33

"But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days," says YHWH; "I will put My Torah in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their Elohim, and they shall be My people."

The bottom line is this: if one does not own it, then he cannot pass it on to his children; it is impossible. However, if he does own it, that is, it is written upon his heart, then it is wholly possible to pass that which he has on to his own children. As mentioned above, the implication of the Torah being written upon one's heart means that one is keeping Torah. If one is not doing his very best to live Torah every single day, then the Torah cannot be written upon his heart. Thus, there is no way he could possibly pass the Torah on to his children.

Luqa (Luke) 6:45

"The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth that which is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth that which is evil; for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks."

It is this good treasure, Torah, which a parent is charged with passing on to his children. He may pass on other things as well, but if Torah is not passed on, then what point is there? None!

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 32:46

And he said to them, "Set your heart on all the words which I testify unto you this day, which you shall command your children to observe to do, even all the words of this Torah."

Please note that we are commanded to do all the words of the Torah and then to pass on all those words to our children. If we leave some out, that is, we teach them that it is not necessary to do certain parts for any reason at all, then we have failed to obey this commandment.

Ya'aqov (James) 2:18

But, a man may say, "You have faith, and I have works; show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works."

One cannot separate what is in his heart with what he is doing. The way a man lives is what is in his heart!

Ya'aqov (James) 1:22

But prove yourselves to be doers of the word, and not hearers only, who delude themselves.

If something begins to be manifested in a child's life that the parents do not like, the first place to look is in the mirror. This is the most likely source of that behavior. Obviously, this is not the only source, but it is the most common source.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 4:9-10

9 "Only take heed to yourself, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things which your eyes saw, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life; but make them known to your children and your children's children;

10 the day that you stood before YHWH your Elohim in Horev, when YHWH said unto me, 'Assemble Me the people, and I will make them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days that they live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children.'"

Please note that in order for one to teach and train his children, he is commanded to *diligently* watch over his own being (soul) first and foremost. In the training of one's children, this is a very important aspect that is often overlooked. This can and does have tragic results in the lives of the children, that is, when a parent fails to *diligently* watch over his own life.

As one lives Torah, YHWH does many things in his life. He is to use these eye-witness accounts to teach and train his children. In part, this helps the parent to pass on the knowledge that YHWH is alive and active in the lives of His people, specifically, in his own life. This will help the child to make the right choice to want to follow YHWH himself.

Shemot (Exodus) 12:26

"And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say to you, 'What do you mean by this service?'"

We see that this is particularly true in obeying the commandments of Pesach (Passover). However, this should not just be true during the keeping of the days of unleavened bread, but it should be true all the time. Whenever a child asks questions of his parents, one or both of the parents should use that as an opportunity to teach and train their children about YHWH and His ways, and this from the early days on into adulthood. Once again, this is one of the primary duties of the parent. A parent cannot relegate this duty to another. Nor, can a parent pass off this responsibility before YHWH to teach and train his own children to another. One day, each parent shall stand before YHWH and give an account of this responsibility. Woe to him who thinks to say to YHWH that it was the duty of the government to train his children!

Romans 12:2

And be not fashioned according to this world; but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what the good and acceptable and perfect will of Elohim is.

It is the image of our Creator in which we were made. It is His image in which we should be formed. It is His image which we should cultivate in our children. We should not foster the image of the world in our children.

Mishle (Proverbs) 22:6

***Train up a child in the way he should go,
And even when he is old he will not depart from it.***

A parent cannot wait until the child is a certain age to begin his training. Training commences at birth and never ceases until death. When training begins at birth, then when the child is older, he shall not depart from that path. He may on occasion stumble on that path, as we all do from time to time, but he will not depart from the path.

Take a look at what YHWH says about Avraham for just a moment.

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."

One of the apparent reasons YHWH chose him in the first place, was because YHWH knew Avraham would pass on to his children what YHWH taught him. Not only would Avraham do righteousness and justice, but he would teach (command) his children to do the same.

Not only are parents commanded to teach and train their own children the ways of YHWH, but the Levitical priesthood as represented by Moshe was also charged with this duty.

Shemot (Exodus) 18:20

"And you shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and shall show them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do."

The context of the above passage is Moshe's father-in-law, Yithro, speaking to Moshe under the inspiration of the Ruach Qodesh (Holy Spirit). His point in what he was teaching Moshe, which Moshe accepted as being from YHWH, was that no one person should bear such a burden alone. Thus, the Levites were to equip the parents with the tools and knowledge necessary for the parents to then teach and train their children.

The teaching of Torah to the next generation includes many things. For example, above we quoted Shemot 12:26 and Devarim 4:9-10. Both of these passages, as well as many others, show us the importance of teaching history to our children, both one's own personal history as well as national and world history, not the type of history typically taught in public schools today, but rather a history in which YHWH is intimately involved in the lives of His people, leading, guiding, and lovingly correcting.

Furthermore, there is to be a strong emphasis upon mathematics.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 19:35-37

35 "You shall not do any unrighteousness in judgment, in measures of length, of weight, or of quantity.

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.

37 And you shall observe all My statutes, and all My ordinances, and do them; I am YHWH."

One can rightly understand that in measuring length or weight or quantity, he should be careful to be as accurate as humanly possible. This we are commanded to do by YHWH. We are to teach this to our children. However, this is not the only thing the above passage can mean. Please consider that in science and in the scientific method used today, in large part it is based upon methods developed and used by Galileo. He said:

"Measure what is measurable, and make measurable what is not so."

Galileo was a highly religious man. Everything he did was to prove Scripture and to protect his church. The point of bringing this quote forward is to show that whatever we do, whatever we investigate, it must never be divorced from YHWH our Elohim. When a person sets out to define something, he is in effect measuring it. Thus, when certain scientists today set out to define the existence of this world through the idea of evolution, it is in direct violation of the above commandments.

Mishle (Proverbs) 1:7

***The fear of YHWH is the beginning of knowledge;
But the foolish despise wisdom and instruction.***

It is the Levites who are to protect His people from going astray by making sure that what is being taught is according to Torah, that is, nothing added and nothing taken away. This is not

to say that all subjects known to man today cannot be taught, however, they must be taught within the context of Torah. YHWH is the Creator, and as such, He is the Source of all knowledge. Whatever subject is taught, it must be taught with this as the foundation. Otherwise, it is only a perversion of the truth, that is, one would be teaching error.

1st Corinthians 12:18

But now Elohim has set the members each one of them in the body, even as it pleased Him.

There are several stages of one's schooling process. The first stage is what can rightly be called the homeschool stage. It is in this stage which the parents are directly involved in the daily instruction of one's children. The age of the child to which this training lasts most likely will vary from child to child. However, there are a couple of passages which should be considered here in this study to help guide us in a general way.

Shemot (Exodus) 30:14

"Everyone that passes over unto them that are numbered, from twenty years old and upward, shall give the offering of YHWH."

This offering is the half shekel offering that every single person is to give to make atonement for Israel. Please note that only those from twenty years old and up are to give this offering. This indicates to us that it is upon reaching one's twentieth birthday that one enters into the full life of the nation. This seems to indicate that by the age of twenty a child should be fully trained to function in the Torah society. We see this also reflected in the following passage.

B'midbar (Numbers) 1:3

"From twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel, you and Aharon shall number them by their hosts."

Notice that the men of war are also from twenty years old and upward, indicating there is a close connection between the half shekel offering for atonement and the men of war.

Now, let us prayerfully consider the years of the Levitical priests.

B'midbar (Numbers) 8:23-26

23 And YHWH spoke to Moshe, saying,

24 "This is that which belongs to the Levites, from twenty-five years old and upward they shall go in to wait upon the service in the work of the tent of meeting;

25 and from the age of fifty years they shall cease waiting upon the work, and shall serve no more,

26 but shall minister with their brethren in the tent of meeting, to keep the charge, and shall do no service. Thus shall you do to the Levites touching their charges."

In a nut shell, here is what we see per the above passages of Scripture. From birth to age twenty, a person is schooled in the elementary things pertaining to life. At the age of twenty he

can, if he so chooses, go on to formal schooling until the age of twenty-five. At the age of twenty-five he enters into his profession and does that work until the age of fifty. At the age of fifty he stops doing and starts teaching those who are coming behind him, to pass on his knowledge and understanding gained through experience to the next generation.

Please understand that while the ages are specified for the Levites, they are not for the rest of Israel. Therefore, the ages are much more flexible for all the other tribes. However, this gives one a general picture of the stages of schooling in the life of a person who lives in a Torah society.

Please bear with me as we quote this passage once again.

1st Corinthians 12:18

But now Elohim has set the members each one of them in the body, even as it pleased Him.

YHWH has a special and unique plan for each and every single member of the body of Mashiach, which is the nation of Israel. It is incumbent upon us to discover where that place is and then do our best to fill up that which YHWH has given us to do. Please understand that even though each and every person has a unique place to walk in as given by YHWH, no single person can accomplish that which YHWH has given him to do by himself. He needs the help and assistance of his brethren.

We need to discuss one more item as it pertains to education—the school of the prophets.

Sh'muel Aleph (1st Samuel) 10:10

And when they came near to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the Spirit of Elohim came mightily upon him, and he prophesied among them.

The above passage is speaking about Shaul, who was about to be made the first king of Israel. However, what we are interested in at this time is *the company of prophets*. In Israel there was a *school of the prophets*. This school, also known as a *company of prophets* in the above passage, and *sons of the prophets* in other passages, served several purposes in Israel.

While prophecy is one of the gifts YHWH gives to individuals among His people, that gift still needs to be perfected, that is, the person receiving such a gift needs to learn how to use it properly. Just because a person receives such a gift does not give him carte blanche to do whatsoever he pleases. Along with the gift comes a great responsibility, which is why it is often spoken of as a burden in Scripture.

One of the primary purposes of this school was to be a means of accountability among the prophets of Israel.

1st Corinthians 14:32

And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets;

When a person had received a vision or dream or a word in any form from YHWH, then he would write that message down. After writing it down, then he would present that message to the school of the prophets. The prophets then judged the content of that message according to His Spirit that indwelt each one of them and according to Torah. If the message passed this stage, then it was approved for publication to the public. However, if it was not approved, then the receiving prophet had to revise or discard the message. This was one of the primary purposes of the school of the prophets, to make the prophets accountable among themselves. As it states in the passage, prophets are to be in subjection to prophets.

It is the duty of each and every person to find his place according to the Spirit of YHWH in His Torah based society. Only in this way is the good of the nation served. When each individual completely fills up the purpose to which YHWH has created him, then all things are in its proper order. Finding this place and preparing one to fulfill that which He has called one to do is the whole point of education from the beginning under the tutelage of one's own parents, to all the higher modes of education that one needs to accomplish the calling of YHWH.

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