



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 21

Is Torah Society a Democracy?

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 4:2

“You shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall you diminish from it, that you may keep the commandments of YHWH your Elohim which I command you.”

Before one can answer the question of whether the Torah society of Israel is to be a democracy or something else, one must define what a democracy is. We have chosen the following definition as it is fairly concise and is the common understanding of what a democracy is.

Democracy – government by the people; a form of government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised directly by them or by their elected agents under a free electoral system.¹

In short, a democracy consists of people who are self-ruled. In one very small sense then, the Torah society is a democracy, in the sense that each individual has covenanted with all the others of said society to follow the rules of the society in which they all live. However, if this conclusion was where a person stopped, that Torah society is a democracy, then he would be wrong because such a conclusion would be incomplete.

While in this one small sense Torah society could be viewed as a democracy, that is about as far as it goes. Beyond that, Torah society is not a democracy. Torah society is not a democracy because the members of the society do not make the rules, regulations, and statutes which govern their everyday living. YHWH has already done this by giving Israel the Torah. Furthermore, as the opening passage of Scripture states, the Torah society is forbidden to alter the Torah in any way. The society cannot add to the Torah, nor can the society ignore or delete any part of the Torah. Rather, the society, in order to be a true Torah society, must adhere to every bit of the Torah—every jot and every tittle without alteration.

¹ <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/democracy>

Let us examine a couple of incidents in which the people of Israel attempted to make the Torah society a democracy so we can see the disastrous results which they brought upon themselves as a result of acting as a self-rule democracy.

B'midbar (Numbers) 16:1-3

1 Now Korach, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men:

2 and they rose up before Moshe, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, called to the assembly, men of renown;

3 and they assembled themselves together against Moshe and against Aharon, and said unto them, "You take too much upon you, seeing the whole the assembly is holy, every one of them, and YHWH is among them; why then do you lift up yourselves above the assembly of YHWH?"

Korach and all those he was able to convince of this foolish action decided that they had as much right to rule as Moshe did. They wanted to be a democracy. They wanted to have a say in what they did as a society and where they went and who their leaders were. They made an attempt to force democracy upon the people of Israel.

B'midbar (Numbers) 16:31-32

31 And it came to pass, as he made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground split under them;

32 and the earth opened its mouth, and swallowed them up, and their households, and all the men that appertained unto Korach, and all their goods.

The end result was that Korach and every member of his family and household perished by having the ground open up, and they all went straight down into Sheol. The confusion that must have flooded into the mind of Korach at that moment must have been overwhelming. He had been sure of his position. He had been sure that he had been correct with two hundred fifty other leaders backing him up to confront Moshe and Aharon. He had failed to take into consideration that it was not Moshe or Aharon who was at the head of Israel, but it was YHWH. Moshe and Aharon were just the two men who were His temporary chosen leaders.

B'midbar (Numbers) 16:35

And fire came forth from YHWH, and devoured the two hundred and fifty men that offered the incense.

Immediately after the ground opened up and swallowed Korach and those with him, fire came forth and killed the other two hundred fifty leaders. YHWH put a stop to the whole idea of self-determined rule by the people. He did so in a dramatic way.

In this incident, only a small portion of Israel attempted to institute a democracy. They all paid for it with their lives. In this next incident it is the whole nation which acts upon self-rule and pays a huge penalty for such foolishness.

B'midbar (Numbers) 14:1-4

1 And all the assembly lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night.

2 And all the children of Israel murmured against Moshe and against Aharon: and the whole assembly said unto them, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would that we had died in this wilderness!"

3 And therefore does YHWH bring us unto this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will be a prey; were it not better for us to return into Egypt?"

4 And they said one to another, "Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt."

Moshe had chosen one man from each tribe to go into the land and spy it out. When they returned, ten of those men gave an evil report to the assembly of Israel. As a result of this evil report, the people refused to believe YHWH and turned away from Him as their leader. Notice, in verse four above, they decided to elect a different leader than Moshe and return to their captivity, to return back to Egypt.

This is truly where a democracy will lead a nation, into captivity. Only following the Torah will lead one into freedom. When we say "only the Torah" will do this, we mean at least three things. 1) It is the living Torah which we are to follow. Only He is the One who can properly lead us. 2) In following the written Torah, it must always and ever include following the Voice of YHWH! If one is not hearing and obeying the Voice of YHWH, then He is deceived and not following Torah at all. 3) Finally, following the Torah must also include the written Torah—every jot and every tittle.

B'midbar (Numbers) 14:34

After the number of the days in which you spied out the land, even forty days, for every day a year, shall you bear your iniquities, even forty years, and you shall know my alienation.

The price the nation paid for acting in self-rule is the number of days which the spies were in the land spying it out; they had to wander in the wilderness one year for each day. Since the spies were in the land forty days, they had to spend forty years in the wilderness. Furthermore, the whole generation twenty years and older which voted to return back to Egypt had to die in the span of that forty years and would not be allowed to enter into the promised land.

B'midbar (Numbers) 14:37

even those men that did bring up an evil report of the land, died by the plague before YHWH.

The ten men who brought the evil report and caused the people to democratically choose rebellion against YHWH, all died immediately.

B'midbar (Numbers) 14:45

Then the Amalekite came down, and the Canaanite who dwelt in that mountain, and smote them and beat them down, even unto Hormah.

The people then saw the foolishness of their actions and attempted to make it right with more foolish actions. They attempted to go into the land and take it anyway. While we are not told the exact number who died in this battle; it must have been a great number, perhaps too great to count easily.

We could easily choose many more incidents in which something similar happened and many people died because they thought to make the Torah society a democracy, that is, a society whose people determined their own course to walk. In each case, it ended with those directly involved in the rebellious action of self-determination to die immediately. Then, those who were indirectly involved were disciplined in some other way.

Torah society is not a democracy. Nearly every time in which the majority was pitted against a minority within Israel, the majority was wrong and paid a great price for it. If one follows the majority in spiritual matters, he is quite likely on the wrong path. The path to YHWH is narrow.

Torah society consists of two parties who have covenanted together to walk a certain path. If one party deviates from that path the covenant stipulates certain penalties for said actions. For a fuller treatment of being in covenant with YHWH please see the study [Covenantal Relationship](#).

The covenantal relationship between YHWH and Israel consists of a marriage. The Torah is the binding force between the two parties. This agreement, called a “ketuvah” in Scripture, cannot be breached without a high cost to the relationship between the parties. When one or more chooses to walk down the path of self-rule, then such a person or group has chosen to disregard the ketuvah, the Torah, and the result will always be discipline, in some cases, severe discipline.

Torah society, then, is based upon the parties acting in love towards one another as well as watching out for the interests of all those within the covenant relationship. When this is done, then all benefit, including, and especially, the one who chooses to walk according to the ketuvah. Please understand that it is only those who [voluntarily](#) walk in this manner who are truly a part of the Torah society.

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