

“All The Difference In The World!”

The Path Less Traveled

Re’eh

a Devotional Study by Pat Adamson

Someone very dear to me once said,
“Choose your path – it doesn’t really matter what you choose, ALL PATHS lead to God!”

ROAD LESS TRAVELED

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth

Then took the other as just as fair
And having perhaps the better claim
Because it was grassy and wanted wear
Though as for that, the passing there
Had worn them really about the same

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet, knowing how way leads onto way
I doubted if I should ever come back

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence
Two roads diverged in a wood
**And I took the one less traveled by
And that has made all the difference**

This very popular secular poem written by **Robert Frost** makes poetical reference to choices, the decisions we make, and the consequences of those decisions.

Have you ever considered that there are alternate paths in life – a whole myriad of choices? Are all paths good? Absolutely not! But as long as we are truly pursuing Truth, when we do come to a fork in the road and somehow choose the wrong way, He will direct and redirect our course to keep us moving in the right direction...if we continue to seek after Him through His Word.

Divergent paths – what does Scripture say about God’s Torah, and the many divergent alternatives? We know that Israel was given the Torah, but they were constantly led astray by false prophets and false religions.

In the book of Judges Chapter 2 verse 17, we’re told the people of Israel blew it again. It says, “. . . *they did not pay attention to their judges, but made whores of themselves to other gods and worshipped them; they quickly **turned away from the path** on which their ancestors had walked, the way of obeying ADONAI’s mitzvot – [His commandments; it says] they failed to do this.*”

They failed God by failing to honor His commandments. On the other hand, for believers in Messiah who do their best to honor God’s commandments – well, this is a path less traveled today isn’t it? In Psalm 119:35 David wrote: “*Guide me on the path of your mitzvot, for **I take pleasure in it.***” Was David perfect in following the commandments? Of course not – we know he wasn’t! But did he allow God to bring correction and change when it was required in his own life? You bet he did! He would humble himself and turn to God and His Word to find his way back.

In Tehillim/Psalms 119:105 David wrote, “*Your Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.*” In Proverbs 16:9 his son, King Solomon wrote, “*A person may plan his path, but ADONAI directs his steps.*” And one other verse (there are many, many others): “*Thus says ADONAI, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Isra’el: “I am ADONAI, your God, who teaches you for your own good, who guides you on the path you should take.”* Isaiah 48:17 (CJB)

What is the Path to take? HaShem has always pointed to the ancient paths of Torah as the way of blessing for those who would follow Him.

Proverbs 3:18 identifies God’s Word as wisdom. It says this kind of wisdom – the Torah, is a tree of life to those who cling to it, blessed are they who uphold it. (Hmmm, seems I’ve heard that phrase somewhere before! It’s part of our Shabbat liturgy!) Did you know that this kind of Divine Wisdom is mirrored perfectly in the person of Yeshua? Proverbs 17:24 says, “*The discerning person focuses on wisdom there before him, but a fool’s eyes wander to the ends of the earth.*” To have Yeshua is to have Wisdom.

Now, let’s take a look again at the beginning of the parashah reading for D’varim chapter 11. What important message does Moshe provide for his people in the sunset of his life? In Deuteronomy (D’varim) 11:26-28 he says,

*“See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse - ²⁷the blessing, if you listen to the mitzvot of ADONAI your God that I am giving you today; ²⁸and the curse, if you don’t listen to the mitzvot of ADONAI your God, but turn aside from the way I am ordering you today **and follow other gods that you have not known.**”*

The Torah portion Re’eh begins with Moshe placing before the people two choices. The choice is either a blessing or a curse which will be the result (or consequence) of either doing God’s mitzvot (His divine will – His commandments), or abandoning His holy Torah and embarking on a path of their own.

In Deuteronomy 30:19, the path of blessing is very clearly laid out. Again, Moshe says,

*“. . . I have presented you with life and death, the blessing and the curse. Therefore **choose life**, so that you will live, you and your descendants, loving ADONAI your God, paying attention to what He says and clinging to Him – for that is the purpose of your life.”*

There’s a message here for the believing community today. As believers, we are commissioned, just as the people of Israel in the desert wilderness, to choose the ways of HaShem – to keep His mitzvot (His commandments), so that they would begin to replace – to purge out any ways and traditions of our own that have departed from Him.

As we follow Yeshua, every believer eventually asks, “What was Yeshua’s relationship to the Torah? How did He respond to God’s mitzvot?”

Yeshua lived Torah and everything about Him exuded a Torah lifestyle. This is what He taught – and He lived what He taught! Whenever Yeshua taught others, He directed them toward a Torah-centered understanding of Kingdom life.

Let’s hear directly from the words of Yeshua. In Yochanan (John) chapter 8, beginning in verse 51, Yeshua is in the middle of a rather extensive dialogue with some of the ruling Pharisees and Torah teachers.

“Yes, indeed! I tell you that whoever obeys My teaching will never see death.” ⁵²*The Judeans said to Him, “Now we know for sure that You have a demon! Avraham died, and so did the prophets; yet You say, ‘Whoever obeys My teaching will never taste death.’”* ⁵³*Avraham avinu [that is, Abraham our father] died; You aren't greater than he, are You? And the prophets also died. [Just] Who do You think You are?”* ⁵⁴*Yeshua answered, “If I praise Myself, My praise counts for nothing. The One who is praising Me is My Father, the very One about whom you keep saying, ‘He is our God.’”*

⁵⁵ ***“Now you have not known Him, but I do know Him; indeed, if I were to say that I don't know Him, I would be a liar like you! But I do know Him, and I obey . . . [what?] . . . His Word.”***

You see, Yeshua is saying here that the by-product of knowing God is to obey His Word.

And what “Word” was available when Yeshua spoke? It was the Torah of course – the Tanakh! Yeshua knew the Father not merely from intellectually and theologically knowing the Torah, but by **living it** – by keeping and doing those things that please HaShem.

Keeping Torah was not a burden for Yeshua – nor is it intended to be a burden for us!

In fact, every individual believer should examine the Messiah they are following – we are to examine the message we are listening to and the traditions we uphold regarding Yeshua. How do we know who He is?

In D’varim chapter 18, Moshe teaches the people regarding the coming Messiah. Moshe says, “**ADONAI will raise up for you A PROPHET like me from among yourselves, from your own kinsmen. YOU ARE TO PAY ATTENTION TO HIM . . .**”

So, the people of Israel were instructed to look for a Prophet – and not just any prophet, but one with the power of God in His words.

In our parashah reading for today, in Deuteronomy chapter 13 beginning at verse 2 (or verse 1 if you’re not using a Complete Jewish Bible), God says everything He has commanded we are to do. He says,

*“If a prophet or someone who gets messages while dreaming arises among you and he gives you a sign or wonder, ³and the sign or wonder comes about as he predicted when he said, 'Let's follow other gods, which you have not known; and let us serve them,' ⁴you are not to listen to what that prophet or dreamer says. For ADONAI your God is testing you, in order to find out whether you really do love ADONAI your God with all your heart and being. ⁵You are to follow ADONAI your God, fear Him, **obey His mitzvot [His Commandments], listen to what He says, serve Him and cling to Him;**”*

Ok . . . now . . . the big test for us to know that we know that we are following the true Messiah is that He will teach us to follow God and to keep His . . . what? What does it say? Verse 5 (or verse 4 if you don't have a Complete Jewish Bible). What would this Person teach us to follow? **God's** mitzvot! His commandments!

Back to the beginning of our parashah reading in Deuteronomy 11. Through Moshe, our Father instructs us this way. He says,

*“I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse - ²⁷the blessing, **if you listen to the mitzvot of ADONAI your God that I am giving you today;** ²⁸and the curse, if you don't listen to the mitzvot of ADONAI your God, but turn aside from the way I am ordering you today **and follow other gods that you have not known.**”*

Folks, if anyone from the church or any religious system is teaching that the Torah – the commandments are done away with – that person is in error! And if these holy men (many of whom have gone to seminary) paint a Messiah who has done away with the mitzvot (commandments) and teach that in “fulfilling the Law” the commandments are no longer relevant to us today, my friends – these people are lacking understanding regarding the roots of the faith, the redemptive history through Israel, and are teaching falsehood regarding Yeshua. We are **not** to follow that teaching!

To “sin” is to violate the Torah. Think of it! The reason Yeshua was put to death was because of the political insecurities of the ruling authorities, not for any violation of the Torah! In Hebrews 4:15 it reads, *“For we do not have a cohen gadol [high priest] unable to empathize with our weaknesses; since in every respect He was tempted just as we are, the only difference being that **He did not sin.**”*

Again, Yeshua kept the Torah perfectly and lived His life in Torah-faithfulness as a model for those who would follow Him on **the path** of righteousness. Most certainly, we cannot follow the Torah perfectly as He did, but as believers we cannot call ourselves His disciples if Yeshua's relationship to the commandments is not our example to follow as well (Ref. Matthew 5:17-19).

*“Thus says ADONAI, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Isra'el: "I am ADONAI, your God, who teaches you for your own good, **who guides you on the path** you should take. ¹⁸If only you would heed my mitzvot! Then your shalom would flow on like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea.” Isaiah 48:17-18 (CJB)*

We choose the path, but few people make a deliberate choice between good and evil. The choice is usually between what we want to do and what we ought to do! And when we need to make a choice and don't make it, isn't that a choice in itself?

In closing, the nation we live in today – is a nation that, according to Wikipedia statistics, claims to be 76 percent Christian. For any of those folks to follow a Messiah who supposedly has done away with the Law, is to follow a **FALSE MESSIAH**.

Is the church teaching this today? If not, **WHY NOT?** It's God's Word! In contrast, a Torah-centered lifestyle is the God-honoring/Messiah-exalting relationship that Yeshua desires to have with His followers – and it doesn't matter if you are Jewish or not! Check out Shaul's first letter to the Messianic congregation in Corinth. In 1 Corinthians chapter 7 verse 19 he says, *“Being circumcised means nothing, and being uncircumcised means nothing; **what does mean something is keeping God's commandments.**”* Both Jew and non-Jew alike are to keep Torah!

This does not mean that the expression of Torah is the same for everyone, but every believer should (at least) know the people, the culture, and the context the Torah was given in order to draw closer in our relationship to the Jewish Messiah.

I'll end with three statements from Yeshua Himself:

1. **John 14:15 (NASB)** *“If you love Me, you will **keep** My commandments.”*
2. **John 14:21 (NASB)** *“He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.”*
3. **John 15:10 (NASB)** *“If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.”*

In other words,

**Just as Yeshua mirrored the Father in keeping His commandments,
we should also mirror Yeshua who said to keep them.**

And finally, the most telling Scripture that speaks most directly to believers who try to make a false separation between Yeshua's commandments and those given by God to Moses, is found in 1 John 5:2-3:

*“By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments. ³**For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.**”*

If you were ever taught that keeping the commandments of God are a yoke that even the Jewish forefathers were unable to bear (Acts 15:10), you have been sold a bill of goods! Quite the contrary, in Acts 21:20 we're told that 10's of thousands of the God-fearing believers of Israel were **zealous** for Torah. This is pictured as being VERY GOOD! And it was! The only “burdens” were the man-made legalisms attached to social traditions – NOT the Law – NOT the commandments from God! Sha'ul said the Law is “holy, righteous, and good” (Romans 7:12).

So of that 76 percent of believers in the United States, how many would you suppose are actually honoring Torah . . . by living it?

Without a doubt, to be Torah observant is to fly in the face of mainstream Christianity. Messianic Judaism is a road less traveled, but for me and for many other Jewish and non-Jewish believers, it has made **ALL THE DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD!**

Baruch HaShem!