

Alone

Everyday the remnant gains a few souls who are willing to walk in Torah. What does it mean to walk in Torah today? It is a difficult and often times lonely way. When we make the decision to be obedient, we often lose friends and alienate family. If those friends were part of a church community it can be a very trying time. One of the things taught in church is that fellowship is very important. There are weekly Bible studies, various committee meetings, the women's club, men's club, choir rehearsals, Vacation Bible School for children, not to mention Sunday services, and Sunday School. Church is a *very* social place. It is also a place where the Torah adherer will begin to feel very out of place, shunned, accused of trying to earn salvation, etc. We finally reach the point where we let go of "church" and fellowships that we have become the center of our lives and venture down the path that The Eternal has laid out for us.

But what happens next? If we follow the way we have been conditioned, we immediately seek out like-minded believers to have some type of fellowship. Many find Messianic synagogues, some form home fellowships by finding other believers living in the same area. There are even a few who will attend Jewish Orthodox, Conservative, or Reform services. The only recourse for many of us is to attend online services on the Internet. Online services give you the ability to hear the Word, and be encouraged but does not provide the social connection that many of us long for. Often times we are so desperate for fellowship that we will seek out ANY kind of fellowship, instead of first seeking The Eternal in the matter. When it doesn't work out, we try again and again, kicking against the pricks, (Acts 9:5) instead of being still and seeking His will. We assume that the constant socialization that we had as Christians must carry over into our new found walk. But why doesn't it? Why is it so difficult for many Torah obedient believers in Yeshua to find the solace that fellowship brings? To answer this we must look at the Biblical exile which was proclaimed in Torah. The Eternal declared that if they did not keep His Word and obey His commandments that He would expel our ancestors from The Land.

After the death of Solomon, Israel divided into two separate kingdoms, each with their own kings. The Southern Kingdom (Judah) was made up of the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and the Levites, and continued to be ruled by a descendant of David. The Northern Kingdom (Israel) was comprised of all the rest of the tribes, and its first king was Jeroboam. The Eternal promised Jeroboam that if he was faithful and kept the Torah, his kingdom would be established forever. However, Jeroboam began to worry that if the people in the north went back to worshipping at the appointed times in Jerusalem that he would lose his kingdom, so he set up another altar in the north and golden calves in Bethel and Dan and declared: "It's too much trouble to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, Israel who brought you out of the land of Egypt!" (1 Kings 12). This began a downward spiral from which Israel never recovered, no matter how many prophets YHWH sent to them. The result was the punishment that was declared in the Torah, and they were carried away into exile by the Assyrians. Judah repented and their punishment was put off, but they fell into sin again, and during the time of the prophet Jeremiah YHWH allowed Babylon to capture Jerusalem. After seventy years Judah was able to return but suffered another exile by the Romans after the Bar Kokhba revolt.

These exiles occurred because of the disobedience of the people to the Torah. Exile is punishment. (Deuteronomy 28 -29) Well isn't the exile over? After all isn't Israel a nation once again? Yes, and this too was told to us through the prophets, but is the exile truly over?

Therefore thus says the Lord Yahweh: Now will I bring back the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy on the whole house of Israel; and I will be jealous for my holy name. They shall bear their shame, and all their trespasses whereby they have trespassed against me, when they shall dwell securely in their land, and none shall make them afraid; when I have brought them back from the peoples, and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and am sanctified in them in the sight of many nations. They shall know that I am Yahweh their God, in that I caused them to go into captivity among the nations, and have gathered them to their own land; and I will leave none of them any more there;

neither will I hide my face any more from them; for I have poured out my Spirit on the house of Israel, says the Lord Yahweh. Ezekiel 39:25-29 (See also Zechariah 8; Isaiah 11; Hosea 11)

It is clear from the above passages that while Israel has been established as a nation, not all has been fulfilled. Not all of His people are in the land, her enemies still trouble her, and peace and prosperity have not been established. As I stated before exile from the Land of Israel is punishment for breaking covenant. Exile in Hebrew thinking is death. It means to be removed from the Land which The Eternal promised to Avraham, Yitzhak, and Yaacov, and deported to a land which does not know Him. If you were fortunate to survive you would be separated from your nation, place of worship, and family, to be ridiculed and mistreated by a people who do not worship YHWH. There is the loss of your home, your job or business, everything you were in the past is gone. You are alone.

The covenant made between YHWH and Israel at Sinai was a binding contact. Israel promised to obey the Torah, and to worship only Him.

I am making this covenant, with its oath, not only with you who are standing here with us today in the presence of the LORD our God but also with those who are not here today. Deuteronomy 29:14-15

Who are those who were not there? Us. Our ancestors not only obligated themselves to the covenant, but also their children, and their children's children, and so on. It is my belief that if you have a deep rooted hunger to keep the Torah, then you had an ancestor who stood among the people and made covenant with The Eternal. However, even if you have no ancestral roots in Israel, and have committed yourself to obey Torah, then you have placed yourself at the foot of Sinai, and if you were at Sinai then you have come under the blessing and the curse, which extends to those of us living in the End of Days. (Deuteronomy 30:1-10; Hosea 2; Ezekiel 36: 16-38) This is why you have come into Torah. The restoration of all things is drawing near, and He is calling his children back to him.

The hand of Yahweh was on me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of Yahweh, and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it was full of bones. He caused me to pass by them all around: and behold, there were very many in the open valley; and behold, they were very dry. He said to me, Son of man, can these bones live? I answered, Lord Yahweh, you know. Again he said to me, Prophecy over these bones, and tell them, you dry bones, hear the word of Yahweh. Thus says the Lord Yahweh to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you, and will bring up flesh on you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am Yahweh. So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold, an earthquake; and the bones came together, bone to its bone. I saw, and, behold, there were sinews on them, and flesh came up, and skin covered them above; but there was no breath in them. Then said he to me, Prophecy to the wind, prophecy, son of man, and tell the wind, Thus says the Lord Yahweh: Come from the four winds, breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up on their feet, an exceedingly great army. Then he said to me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are clean cut off. Therefore prophecy, and tell them, Thus says the Lord Yahweh: Behold, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, my people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel. You shall know that I am Yahweh, when I have opened your graves, and caused you to come up out of your graves, my people. I will put my Spirit in you, and you shall live,

and I will place you in your own land: and you shall know that I, Yahweh, have spoken it and performed it, says Yahweh. Ezekiel 37:1-14

Before we knew Torah we may have had fellowship, but we were like this valley of dry bones. Our ancestors had broken covenant with YHWH, as had we. Then He breathed into us the knowledge of truth and we became alive. Is there any one of us who when confronted with the truth of Torah, didn't feel ashamed and despicable? "*Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are clean cut off*". What does this have to do with finding like-minded believers for fellowship? We are still in exile! We are still living out the punishment. You see, even though certain truths have been restored to us, we still haven't been fully restored. Full restoration is connected with the coming of Mashiach, and The Land. "*I will put my Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land: and you shall know that I, Yahweh, have spoken it and performed it, says Yahweh.*" As soon as we step into the realm of Torah, we stepped into exile. Family reject us, we are ridiculed, our friends desert us and some may even try to harm us. We are isolated, living among those who do not follow YHWH and His Torah. We are alone. Yes, we do receive blessing for being obedient, but why is it that we believe the Eternal's promises for the good things we receive but think that the punishments don't apply to us? You may ask, "Don't we have forgiveness through Yeshua?" Yes, but the forgiveness we have through Mashiach does not give us a license to sin, and it does not absolve us from the consequences of our sin, nor the sin of our ancestors.

Yahweh passed by before him, and proclaimed, "Yahweh, Yahweh, a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger, and abundant in loving kindness and truth, keeping loving kindness for thousands, forgiving iniquity and disobedience and sin; and that will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, and on the children's children, on the third and on the fourth generation." Moses hurried and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped. Exodus 34:6-8

He does forgive our sins, but does not not “clear the guilty”. In other words our sins have consequences, and those consequences affect future generations. When our ancestors sinned and committed idolatry they also taught their children, if not by word, then example, to follow the same practices. Each generation MUST be taught Torah. Then the cycle of suffering for those who sinned before us will stop. Think of your own children, and how they will have to deal with the consequences of your sin. Imagine if you didn't pay your electric bill. Eventually you will have to live with the consequence of that action, and so will everyone in your home, when they are in darkness. We have crossed over into Torah, and the rules have changed - dramatically. Things are not going to be the way they were before. We are now living according to YHWH, and not our own whims.

It is only natural that we search for others who are like-minded to share and worship with, so we can have the same fellowship that we had when we were in the church. We are after all very social beings. It is the way The Creator made us. Surely he would want us to join with others. However, we can not pass from sin into obedience without dealing with the consequences of the sin that we spent years in. Like our ancestors we have to deal with the punishment of disobedience. That punishment is exile.

“You must unlearn the things you have learned.” Yes, I just quoted a line from Star Wars. There was no way I could phrase this without plagiarizing George Lucas, so I will confess it now and be done with it! Yoda was trying to tell Luke that he needed to throw everything he knew from before out the window, because he was teaching him a different way of looking at things. The same can be said of Torah. We need to discard, (and I know it is not easy) the Greek mindset that has permeated our beings and think like Hebrews. Until we do, our walk will be more of a struggle than it needs to be, filled with a litany of almost-but-not-quotes. Am I saying that you need to go off by yourself and become a hermit? No, but there comes a time when you must stop struggling against whatever circumstances you find yourself in - the circumstances where the Eternal has placed you - and wait on Him. Or, you can continue to kick against the pricks, and hurt yourself every time.

Some of you find yourself completely alone except for the Internet. I know the pain that you feel, but if you don't struggle (rebel) against what you can not escape, that particular exile will be more bearable and The Eternal will send special comfort to you.

Some have joined with fellowships that teach doctrine which goes against Torah. You may be hearing that certain believers are not obligated to keep Torah, that it is ok to eat non kosher foods, put up a x-mas tree, or break the Sabbath. Perhaps you are being made to feel that you must be there every Sabbath, which requires you to drive long distances. Perhaps there is a known sin among the congregation which is intentionally being overlooked. You feel that check in your spirit, but then you think, "I won't have anywhere else to go. I will lose fellowship." Many churches teach their congregants that they must be there every time the door opens and try to connect salvation with church attendance. There are also many Natsari/Messianic teachers out there who seem to feel that bad fellowship is better than no fellowship. In other words, it is better to align yourself to a congregation or even home fellowship no matter the cost. Even if you know there is false teaching or sin within it. What does Torah tell us we should do in this circumstance? We must not join ourselves to those who teach against the Torah of YHWH, nor listen to what they say. Examine your present circumstances and compare it to the Torah. Are you in a place that you should not be?

Don't be afraid of the king of Babylon, of whom you are afraid; don't be afraid of him, says Yahweh: for I am with you to save you, and to deliver you from his hand. I will grant you mercy, that he may have mercy on you, and cause you to return to your own land. But if you say, We will not dwell in this land; so that you don't obey the voice of Yahweh your God, saying, No; but we will go into the land of Egypt, where we shall see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor have hunger of bread; and there will we dwell: now therefore hear the word of Yahweh, O remnant of Judah: Thus says Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel, If you indeed set your faces to enter into Egypt, and go to live there; then it shall happen, that the sword, which you fear, shall overtake you there in the land of Egypt; and the famine, about which you are afraid, shall follow close behind you there in Egypt; and there you shall die. So shall it be with all the men who set their faces to go into Egypt to live there: they shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence; and none of them shall remain or escape from the evil that I will bring on

them. For thus says Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel: As my anger and my wrath has been poured forth on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so shall my wrath be poured forth on you, when you shall enter into Egypt; and you shall be an object of horror, and an astonishment, and a curse, and a reproach; and you shall see this place no more. Yahweh has spoken concerning you, remnant of Judah, Don't you go into Egypt: know certainly that I have testified to you this day. Jeremiah 42:11-19

Some of the people of Jerusalem thought to escape the the King of Babylon and the decreed exile by fleeing to Egypt. YHWH through Jeremiah told them under no circumstances were they to flee to Egypt. He told them that The Eternal would protect them and have mercy on them, but if they went into Egypt to escape Babylon He would make them an object of horror, a curse, a reproach. Have you decided to join with a congregation but are very unhappy there? Yet you feel you have to have to stay to satisfy what you believe is an obligation for fellowship? Are you mistreated by others? Slandered? Ridiculed? Made to feel uncomfortable or unwanted? Then you are in exile but you have chosen to flee that exile to live in Egypt. You may say, "But these are fellow believers!" Egypt can be anywhere that The Eternal doesn't want you to be. Your situation will only get worse there until you stop rebelling and retreat to that quiet exile. Jeremiah also says that there will be famine, pestilence, and death by the sword. Is your situation is so bad that you are not learning? Famine. Are you being troubled constantly? Pestilence. Have you heard of others who joined congregations and fellowships, but because of the way they were treated or harmed they gave up on Torah or rejected Yeshua as Messiah? Death.

What about Hebrews 10:25 which tells us not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together? At the time that this verse was written, Israel was in exile, but Judah was not. The book of Hebrews was written before the destruction of the Temple. At that time Jews lived among Jews in and outside of Judea. They lived and worshipped together, and scattered amongst them were Jewish believers in Yeshua, their numbers growing everyday. In fact, Jewish believers in Yeshua (Natsari) were considered another sect within Judasim itself. After the destruction of Judea the Romans put forth a concerted

effort to prevent Jews from establishing any type of settlement. Any attempt, even 40 years after the destruction of Jerusalem, to establish a colony was suppressed by Romans. (For more information on the revolts and the Natsari (called Nazarenes on this site) population who lived in Judea you can visit: <http://www.yashanet.com/library/temple/nazarenes.htm>)

Suffice to say, that the writer of Hebrews was speaking pre-exile. As the faith became more and more indoctrinated with paganism it became more difficult to practice the true faith, however I believe that throughout time there has always been a remnant who kept the commandments of Elohim and faith in Yeshua. That remnant is now spread far and wide, but there will be a time when we will join together.

What are the benefits to being alone without fellowship? For one, we grow and are strengthened. When we are alone, we can hear the still small voice that speaks within us, and we allow the Ruach Hakodesh (the Holy Spirit) to teach us and show us the proper way. The first 18 months of my Torah walk I learned more than I ever did attending any Sabbath meeting. I was totally alone. I prayed for and received my instruction from YHWH. He guided me to the Scriptures and opened my eyes to understanding.

Remember it is His will, not our desires. We must get to the place where no matter what the circumstance, we are submitting to His will - not grumbling or complaining. It is as Rav Shaul so eloquently declared:

I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength. Phillipians 4:11-12

While exile may be uncomfortable, it is also beneficial. We learn to depend on YHWH alone. We learn to listen to Him, and recognize His voice. We become strengthened and are able to endure. This should be our goal, and the goal for our families. Does He give us any instruction during this time of exile?

Thus says Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the captivity, whom I have caused to be carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them. Take wives, and father sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; and multiply there, and don't be diminished. Seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to Yahweh for it; for in its peace you shall have peace. For thus says Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel: Don't let your prophets who are in the midst of you, and your diviners, deceive you; neither listen to your dreams which you cause to be dreamed. For they prophesy falsely to you in my name: I have not sent them, says Yahweh. For thus says Yahweh, After seventy years are accomplished for Babylon, I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says Yahweh, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you hope and a future. You shall call on me, and you shall go and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You shall seek me, and find me, when you shall search for me with all your heart. I will be found by you, says Yahweh, and I will turn again your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places where I have driven you, says Yahweh; and I will bring you again to the place from where I caused you to be carried away captive.

Jeremiah 29:4-14

Study the Torah and diligently follow it for it is your life. (Deuteronomy 4:1). Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, AND your place of exile, so that you in turn will have peace.

(Psalm 122:6; Jeremiah 29:7) Do not be afraid to have children; and for your children to have children (Deuteronomy 10:22; 26:5, Jeremiah 29:6) It is always The Eternal's intention for us to multiply wherever we may be. It is one of the promises given to our father Avraham. If you are alone, do not struggle against it. He knows where you are. He knows you are alone. Pray, study, learn of Him, and He will strengthen you AND your children. If you are alone there will come a time when you will join with others sooner or later. He will not forget you in the place where you are.

It shall happen, when all these things have come on you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you, and you shall call them to mind among all the nations, where Yahweh your God has driven you, and shall return to Yahweh your God, and shall obey his voice according to all that I command you this day, you and your children, with all your heart, and with all your soul; that then Yahweh your God will turn your captivity, and have compassion on you, and will return and gather you from all the peoples, where Yahweh your God has scattered you. If [any of] your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of the heavens, from there will Yahweh your God gather you, and from there he will bring you back: and Yahweh your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and he will do you good, and multiply you above your fathers. Yahweh your God will circumcise your heart, and the heart of your seed, to love Yahweh your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, that you may live. Deuteronomy 30:1-6

(c) Hadassah Michal bat Yisrael 2011

