

A Call For Unity—Returning to the Ancient Ways

Part I

“Thus said Yahuweh, “Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; and find **rest** for yourselves. But they said, ‘We do not walk *in it.*’” ---**Jeremiah 6:16**

No rest = confusion = division –exactly what has happened in 2016 regarding the aviv barley and the determination of Pesach.

What does it mean to return to the ancient ways?

My wife Rivkah and I, of The Well Trodden Road (thewelltroddenroad.org), position ourselves on no side but the side of unity amongst the ones who desire to return to the Creator’s Calendar. That in itself...is a broad topic. For there are many who profess that desire but fail to understand the whole point of why the Creator set up times and seasons.

Stating up front—we have no interest in being right, nor side with any man’s opinions or perceptions—for we must answer individually to one Judge.

The first order of topic today is:

- A thank you to all! People doing their best with what they know!
- Background of who we are and Nehemia having the only report we knew of
- 2016, more teams surfaced (Solomon Meyer, Brian Convery)—next year Norman Willis is contemplating a trip
- From the search and evidence provided--two groups emerged
 - In favor of the Aviv (the websites: AbibofGod.com, learnfromthebible.org, elijah.com, sightedmoon.com, paleotimes.org, nazareneisrael.org)
 - In favor of no Aviv (nehemiaswall.com, hoshanarabbah.org)

The conclusion of the worldwide community of “Torah-Guarders?”

CONFUSION, DIVISION, STRIFE

1. From elijah.com – section on credentials – *“Now, perhaps it is a matter of credentials. Perhaps the team saying "not Aviv" is more well known and relied upon while the other 2 teams are not as well known. This would behoove us to investigate the credentials before dismissing the "Pro Aviv" witnesses outright. Based on my own investigation of Solomon Meyer and Brian Convery, who have both stated that harvestable barley (Aviv) has been found in Israel, they both are very very well qualified to make that determination.”*

1. Note: the credentials in detail are listed in this report for the two teams “for aviv”, and not listed for the third team of “no aviv”

“The leader of the team claiming "no Aviv" is an unbeliever who, directly or indirectly, has led many people away from having faith in Yahushua. For this

reason I will not mention his name. An audio was provided but no video and no pictures.”

I understand about wanting people to have the “truth”, but if there is going to be a report of all of the teams who conducted the search for barley, then every team deserves proper credential recognition. A good report must state the facts. Facts must not be based upon personal bias of one or more parties. If it is, then it will cast doubts on other legitimate findings, leaving the reader unknowing to the real truth. And something as important as determining the correct Passover times, must not be presented as an opportunity to bash another “ancient way seeker”. Even the condemned “no aviv” team should receive a chance to defend themselves.

2. On Nehemia Gordon’s YouTube channel – there was a Messianic comment stating: “repent and accept Yeshua the Messiah”. What kind of witness is this? Right...This is exactly the kind of response the Jews and Karaites need to hear. Show the Gospel in action!
3. Solomon Meyer’s Conference Call – first off – I must say that Rivkah and I listened to the entire 1 hour and 20 minute audio of the call. I think the report was excellent and Solomon as a modern day farmer, we believe, has done his best to understand the ancient ways of barley harvesting. He does have excellent credentials. We had wished we could have found his report in earlier years.
 1. As we listened along, we were pleased to hear of the communication between Solomon and Nehemia and how they were looking in the same areas. But one comment during the question and answer session, concerning why Nehemia was holding back on giving an answer, was to us, quite unnecessary. Solomon states: **“I’m sure he wants the attention, so he can have it”** It is not the words, but the tone in which it was said—a tone of great animosity. What reason have we given the Jews and Karaites to think of the Messianics any differently? Isaiah 11:13, “And the envy of Ephrayim shall turn aside, and the adversaries of Yehudah be cut off. Ephrayim shall not envy Yehudah, and Yehudah not trouble Ephrayim.”
 2. What I do not understand—and maybe he was, so forgive me if I am wrong—but why was Nehemia not invited to join the call? In all of this, to whom is the glory due? The barley is not a matter of “religious beliefs” No one team holds the end all to the barley search. And I know each team understands this. Were we born in the ancient times? What is it that would behoove us going forward??....
4. Next we listened to Nehemia Gordon’s 1 hour and 8 minute audio report. For those who have not listened to the report, I would recommend it. Nehemia, a Karaite Jew who despised and rejected his own pharisaical heritage to find the truth of the Scriptures, has been at this since 1991 I believe, learning from someone who had been doing it since 1988.
 1. Other than a few defensive comments regarding “cherry picking” and somehow having an “agenda”, I did not hear in his report—sarcasm, or any other attempt to claim that he owns the market on the barley search.

In fact, Nehemia's team, being the official search, was joked about by Keith Johnson – a Methodist Pastor.

2. As with the other teams, I believe he has every intention to give an accurate report based upon his team's **knowledge of aviv**.
 3. However, in his video Shattering the Barley Silence published on March 27, he describes the video as follows: **A follow up on the Aviv Barley on Sunday March 27, 2016. Find out what happens when agricultural reality collides with elegant arm-chair interpretations of Biblical verses.**
 4. Ok Nehemia, what good is that going to do for your search team's credibility, even if you may think it justifiable based on your "treatment" as a non-believer in Messiah Yahushua?
5. Now—to bring to a conclusion of why I did this recording: I want to read the last few statements from Norman Willis's article entitled: **on Aviv 2016: Passover by Houses on 3/24, 1ULB 3/25** – located at nazareneisrael.org:

"Praise Yahweh for everyone's continuing patience! If Yahweh wills, I will try to get you new calendar data, and a full study by Shabbat (because there is some real meat in there), And please pray for all of our Aviv searchers! They all deserve encouragement for sacrificing of themselves, for the cause. PLEASE PRAY FOR A NAZARENE ISRAEL SEARCH TEAM NEXT YEAR! And I hope we can meet up with ALL of the other barley searchers, and inspect the same fields TOGETHER, at the same time, and issue one report. (It will absolutely take Yahweh to do that, so He gets all the credit!)"

My initial comment was: We don't need another team, but unity among the ones we have!

However, it was only after I wrote my blog entitled: One Last Breath on the Aviv Barley 2016 -- A Personal Cry for Unity, that I saw what Norman wrote—and it was a confirmation.

There is a reason why we have over 33,000 denominations and organizations in this country alone. One group doesn't like how another group is doing things, so they go off and start their own "Assembly of the Aviv Barley". Is that what we are heading for? Israel doesn't need any more barley teams, but a **unified understanding of what aviv really means!**

What we, at The Well Trodden Road, are calling for is **A TIME OF UNITY** among those who desire to go by the Creator's ways and thinking. And the first thing we need to do is to start thinking like our Creator. The first thing He did was to establish order out of chaos by separating the light from the darkness.

We are calling for a standardized process of determining the aviv barley—and that my fellow brethren—does not require everyone to believe that Messiah has already come. I speak to the Messianics—What kind of Messiah are you portraying in front of those who do not believe yet? What image are we portraying and will they recognize the same image in the Messiah who comes to rescue them? Are we who claim to be believers in Messiah, at the same time, displaying an anti-messianic image? If that is what we do, no wonder were in such a mess! Jews thrive on their intellectualism—we as believers in Yahushua

will hardly win them over by the same methods. Our intellectualism does nothing but anger Judah, and what incentive does he have to even listen to what we have to say? Walking in love as Messiah walked, and addressing the issues at hand in His nature, will eventually earn enough respect for Judah to listen to Ephraim. It has been proven over and over. We should walk in such a way to cause jealousy in those around us—jealousy to have what we have. Who would even pay us the time of day if they perceive we are exactly like they are?

What about the new ones just coming into the walk of Torah going to think when they read your blogs, reports, and listen to your audio messages blasting away at one another? Are we to become a stumbling block to others because of a failure to join together for a common cause?

Every team has something to bring to the table. I was in the aviation industry for over 20 years and I knew what it meant to “standardized processes”

Where's the humility and contriteness of heart? Here, we sit in our own congregations, and assemblies to partake of the “Lord’s Passover”, when all along we have discontent for our brothers. What’s the point of celebrating Passover when we remain in the same darkness we were once called out of? Oh—wait a minute... Nehemia is not our brother! Well, I hate to remind you but we as believers, will be judged on how we treated Messiah’s brothers. Some may say, “well you do not know what kind of problems Nehemia has caused in the past!” Wow, it is so wonderful to know that the greatest Pharisee of them all, Sha’ul of Tarsus, became practically the greatest Apostle of all! We do not always see who Messiah will use in the future.

Now is the time for unity and to communicate! STOP the jesting, the poking, and the name calling. Messiah is on His WAY! What kind of state will He find His people in? Or is it that He would have to destroy the earth because He found no unity among His people? Malachi 4 IS returning to the ancient ways!

Here, I will read from the blog: “One Last Breath on the Aviv Barley 2016 -- A Personal Cry for Unity “

Unity...I've written so much about it. We have no way of determining what the conflict this year has done to precious relationships within communities, families, and even marriages. What does it take for people to come together? Must the barley bashing continue? Splits and divisions amongst the brethren--Elohim forbid! What loyalty is left in the earth for the Most High, is being put into the fires of testing.

"He has more education..." "He's the expert..." "He is a non-believer..." "They believe this is a factor in determining..." "Those over there believe there must be this much to qualify for the offering..." "They sound sincere in their reports..." "They cherry-picked their stalks..." "What does it mean by aviv?" "The crescent moon versus the black moon..." "Green ears and parched grain..." "Well I celebrate Shabbat on Monday's..." "The month doesn't start until..." "He's wrong, their right.." "It's in aviv--no it's not in aviv..."

To all of this the Creator says—

“Unless Yahuweh of hosts had left to us a small remnant, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been made like Amorah. Hear the word of Yahuweh, you rulers of

Sodom; give ear to the Torah of our Elohim, you people of Amarah! “Of what use to Me are your many slaughtering’s?” declares Yahuweh. “I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts. I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs or goats. “When you come to appear before Me, who has required this from your hand, to trample My courtyards? “Stop bringing futile offerings, incense, it is an abomination to Me. New Moons, Sabbaths, the calling of meetings (your appointed seasons) – I am unable to bear unrighteousness and assembly. “My being hates your New Moons and your appointed times, they are a trouble to Me, I am weary of bearing them” — Isaiah 1:9-14

If there is no love for the brethren, we have nothing. For without love, our very best is as rotting filth in His eyes and a stench in His nostrils!

To the hearts of all who desire to celebrate the Passover of Yahuweh—remember this of the ancient ways:

The same ancient barley fields that were inspected for the determining of the beginning of the month of Aviv, were the same barley fields from which each individual Israelite would bring an offering to Yahuweh--the choicest and best of his crop.

With that said--in the future--if there remains a lack of unity among the teams that go to Israel and search for aviv barley, as each team determines what is “right” in their own eyes, where does that leave the people who truly desire to do what is right in the eyes of Yahuweh? For to do what is right in the eyes of Yahuweh, is to abandon what seems to be "right" in our own eyes. We must, with great humility, ban together for the common cause of the unification of His family--all for the sake of what the Creator says is right.

Did the Children of Israel leave Egypt together or divided?

Yahuweh WILL have a unified family--one stick--never to be divided again! It is coming--are we rehearsing for it now?

If the same discord, confusion and division over the barley reporting occurred back in the ancient times of King Solomon, the very wave offering itself would be rejected (not accepted as the Scripture says in Leviticus 23:11). This acceptance is the favor of Yahuweh upon our lives. If we lack the favor of the Most High, we have no salvation. If the resurrection of Yahushua would have been rejected by Yahuweh Himself, where would that leave us today?

What effects one individual will effect the entire community. We are not to be part of the "I" society, but exist as one body of believers. This is not a light ordeal. What we have been allowed to experience this year is a test of loyalty to our First Love. For in loyalty to Him, therein lies no confusion--only peace and order.

Without humility, and a genuine interest to please Yahuweh Elohim in His festivals, He will reject anything we offer unto Him—especially if that offering is rooted in disorder, confusion, and discontent for others who may not believe the same. If Nehemia served and worshipped Allah, then I would have a reason not to listen to his agricultural findings as they pertain to how I worship my Creator. Nehemia believes in the Creator of the universe, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I find it interesting of how many Messianics get their feathers ruffled when even the name of Nehemia is mentioned.

I recently read a blog from nazareneisrael.org on the many meanings of Aviv. Here is an excerpt: “I don’t want to stir up controversy, but we are dealing with lives, and those who are new to the movement should know that from 2001-2004 there was a huge rash of conversions FROM Hebraic Roots, TO Orthodox and Karaite Judaism. “ I do not doubt what he writes here, but I must point out the FROM and TO. From one religion to another religion! Yahuweh Elohim and Yahushua the Son are not a religion. They are not classified as a movement. Are we not to go FROM serving the kingdom of darkness TO serving the Kingdom of Light? Elohim is to be known—not to be labeled as some religious movement! We have not been called into some movement, but into the unity of the faith once delivered!

If we do not all come together into the unity of the faith that was once delivered to Messiah's taught ones, we will never reach a complete measure of the fullness of Messiah (Ephesians 4:13). And if we do not look like Messiah, we will be rejected as an imposter--a phony sheaf of barley. For what will eventually be sickled, and used as a wave offering unto the very ONE who deserves our utmost finest---what is presented...will be counted as dung.

Unity MUST begin with people who are all together willing to go through the same process of becoming an acceptable offering unto Him---from the planting, aviv, harvest, thrashing, winnowing, grinding, crushing--to the emerging from the oven as a sweet smelling fragrance unto Him. Until His people realize this, there remains zero concept of what Messiah Yahushua really accomplished.

So whether Karaite, Jew, Messianic or whatever you call yourselves, DO NOT inhibit, with your intellectualism, those whose simple desire is to celebrate Yahuweh’s Passover! And to my friends and believers in Messiah, if you have a problem with a “non-believer”—do not write about it—lift that person up in prayer! Do not drag them through the dirt to somehow prove that your being right is the will of “God”. In fact, it was the case of being right that caused six million Jews, and countless others to lose their lives at the hands of the Crusaders and Inquisition. What a price to pay for someone else being “right”. Though I understand the reluctance in using a report by someone who is trying to convert “gentiles” to their religious views and followings, I must again state that the nature, ways and thinking of Messiah Yahushua have nothing to do with religion. A person will never be loyal to anyone they do not know. It is not a battle of who is converting who that is the concern. The concern is that what are we who are suppose to be exhibiting the true Messiah of Israel doing to show others the love of our Savior?

We, Derek and Rivkah, do not follow any man or man-made religion. We have no interests in following man and his consistent nature to fail. What we do appreciate is people who come together for the sake of an agricultural determination of the aviv, not discounting the expertise of someone who holds great understanding in the ancient ways. Sometimes it takes someone who does not believe like we do to show us how far we are off from the truth. Or maybe I should just state—sometimes we need a little pep talk from a donkey to let us know that we are heading the wrong way. Elohim uses who He wills. In our arrogance, we must not discount who and what He chooses to use. Have we gone into our prayer closets to find out why the confusion this year? Is Abba Yahuweh up to something? Did He allow the confusion this year for some higher purpose? It is time we all get our noses out of our intellectual thoughts and thinking processes and put them

to the floor in crying out for the Savior Messiah Yahushua to come—repenting and praying for those who are walking straight into hell’s flames!

All I have spoken here, I speak to myself as well—lest I think more highly of myself than I ought to think. We are not perfect, but I do know when it is time to make a “CALL FOR UNITY”

This is Derek and Rivkah from thewelltroddenroad.org,

Shalom

Part II

Most people like being right. In fact, I might jump out there and say that practically everyone likes being right. No one enjoys being wrong. This is basic human nature. I like being right—however—I have come to a point in my life, and in my walk along this path that having to be right all the time is nothing more than a sign that I am afraid to be wrong—afraid to lose control. I was called by the Master to spread His Truth, and the light of the gospel—not to solve debates and convince people that my way of thinking is the best way—regardless if I believe my way of thinking is truly based upon the Scriptures. I only want to die in order for Messiah to be seen in me!

I grew up in a house of "order and perfection". I would say that within a 50 mile radius, we had the most beautifully landscaped yard, and the cleanest, most spotless house you have ever seen. I remember having my best friend over on Saturdays to help me weed the rose garden. I remember my older sister and I spending countless hours swabbing the house from top to bottom with a dust rag in our hand. At the end of a long, hard day of cleaning, everything was in order, everything was in place—however, inside, the family was in shambles to the very core of our beings.

For some reason, the way that I felt back then, is the way that I feel today regarding the endless passion to be right amongst the “Torah Guarding” folks.

Lets step back to the Apostles—no, lets step back to the ancient children of Israel as they had just left Egypt approximately 50 days prior. Talk about people having it right? These people were led out of Egypt by Moses with signs and wonders. Now they had come to the mountain of Sinai. They heard the voice of Yahuweh Himself. I would say that compared to us today, those people who heard the voice of Yahuweh booming down the Words of the Commandments, with great thunders, lightning and fire, trembled in fear before the awesome might of the set-apart one of Israel. These same people were led into the wilderness where Elohim provided for their every need--They had it right—Yet--they still rebelled. They still questioned. They still did not trust in the simplicity of being led by an unseen “God”.

The endless debates: The lunar Monday Sabbath verses the Saturday Sabbath; the conjunction, dark of the moon versus the visible crescent; the barley and the multi-faceted meanings of aviv; There is a 13th month versus there is not a 13th month; the Creator’s days begin at evening versus the Creator’s days begin at the first light of dawn—debates, intellectual questioning—all to which I reply with a very non-kosher statement: HOGWASH!

It wasn't but a short time after King Solomon died, that the Kingdom of Israel split into two. Israel had it right. They knew how to determine the new year by the sighting of the moon and the condition of the barley. They celebrated the festivals in the correct seasons and timing by the Creator's calendar. They rested on the proper day of rest. They UNDERSTOOD the ancient ways because to them—the ancient ways were lived everyday. Did knowing the “ancient ways” prevent them from being kicked out of the land of their inheritance? NO!!!

And here we are...thousands of years later, trying to return to the ancient ways of our fathers...Selah...

It is not a matter of convincing others that we are right, but a matter of the heart. Do we truly understand the ancient ways? Is it mere ceremony or something etched into the heart? Think of how hard it was after only a few returned from Babylon to rebuild Jerusalem, in re-discovering the ancient ways of their fathers. Think of Hezekiah who wanted to celebrate the Passover, yet there was a shortage in the priesthood. King Josiah, I am certain, must have thought he was running his kingdom as righteously as possible—until the day the scroll of Deuteronomy was discovered. He found out that they were not doing all of the things as were commanded by Yahuweh through His servant Moshe.

Herein lies the problem. If so many righteous men and kings were that far off from the ancient ways, where does that leave us today? It's not about trying to study and learn the ancient ways of how they determined the new month, or what have you, but what a person does when they find out how far they have drifted from the good instructions of Yahuweh. With Nehemia and Ezra—it was repentance. King Josiah tore his garments when he found out how far they were from what was expected of them.

How are we truly to return to the ancient paths, when it was our own transgression of the Torah that got us kicked out of the land in the first place? We left the path in search of our own way. And if generations long past, have found it difficult to return to the original ways as passed down from Moshe, why are we today, in 2016, arguing and debating—trying to prove that we know what those ancient paths really are? In trying to return to the ancient ways, are we doing it with the same heart that got our fathers kicked out of the land to begin with? Are we changing His appointed times to suit our own conveniences?

Yahuweh said, “I hate your new moons and festivals.” King David said that he would offer sacrifices to Yahuweh but he knew that was not what he truly wanted. No wonder people are going off into crazy theologies, and twisted doctrines that have nothing to do with the simple ways that Yahuweh left us. I know of people who have completely abandoned the faith once delivered and are now atheists. I know of people who have completely abandoned Messiah as their Savior and have embraced Judaism.

Shame on us who attempt to hammer down peoples throats, our own interpretations, scientific calculations, philosophical reasoning's and gnostic patterns of thinking! We condemn others who do not believe like us. We try to convince them of the error of their ways, operating in the same nature as our “convert.” To that Messiah said, “Hypocrites! You cross land and sea to win one convert, only to turn them into twice the son of hell as you are!”

Just because a person does not believe exactly as we do, it is no excuse to enter into debates in trying to prove how right we are. This describes Romans 14. We know of some friends and family members who have seen Messiah appear to them graciously in their time of need, yet one of them believes in the conjunction of the moon as being the new moon, and the other one still uses the “wrong names” of the Creator. Why is that? Why does it seem that the Creator does more for those who “appear” to have it all wrong doctrinally, yet they are the ones who are the most joyful, with signs and wonders taking place?

What if we had it all right? What would that change? How do we truly know what they did thousands of years ago?

The point of the matter is this: Like the perfect and orderly house example I spoke of earlier—at the end of the day, what does it all amount to? Disorder, confusion, chaos, unrest and division? THIS is EXACTLY why the Torah never saved anyone! It is nothing more than a mirror to show us how ugly we are and how far we have fallen from the image of Elohim’s nature and character.

Mark 7:5-6,

“Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, “Why do Your taught ones not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?” And He answering, said to them, “Well did Yeshayahu prophesy concerning you hypocrites, as it has been written, “This people respect Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.”

1 Corinthians 10:1-12

“For I do not wish you to be ignorant, brothers, that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were immersed into Mosheh in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed, and the Rock was Messiah.

However, with most of them Elohim was not well pleased, for they were laid low in the wilderness. And these became examples for us, so that we should not lust after evil, as those indeed lusted. And do not become idolaters as some of them, as it has been written, “The people sat down to eat and to drink, and stood up to play.” Neither should we commit whoring, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell, neither let us try Messiah, as some of them also tried, and were destroyed by serpents, neither grumble, as some of them also grumbled, and were destroyed by the destroyer.

And all these came upon them as examples, and they were written as a warning to us, on whom the ends of the ages have come, **so that he who thinks he stands, let him take heed lest he fall.**”

Romans 14

“And receive him who is weak in the belief, not criticizing his thoughts. One indeed believes to eat all food, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. He that eats, let him not despise him who does not eat, and he that does not eat, let him not judge him who eats, for Elohim received him.

Who are you that judges another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. But he shall be made to stand, for Elohim is able to make him stand. One indeed judges one day above another, another judges every day alike. Let each one be completely persuaded in his own mind. He who minds the day, minds it to Yahuweh. And he who does not mind the day, to Yahuweh he does not mind it. He who eats, eats to Yahuweh, for he gives Elohim thanks. And he who does not eat, to Yahuweh he does not eat, and gives Elohim thanks.

For not one of us lives to himself, and not one dies to himself. For both, if we live, we live unto the Master, and if we die, we die unto the Master. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Master's. For unto this Messiah died and rose and lived again, to rule over both the dead and the living. But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you despise your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Messiah.

For it has been written, "As I live, says Yahuweh, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to Elohim." Each one of us, therefore, shall give account of himself to Elohim. Therefore let us not judge one another any longer, but rather judge this, not to put an obstacle or a stumbling-block in our brother's way.

I know and am persuaded in the Master Yahushua that none at all is common of itself. But to him who regards whatever to be common, to him it is common. And if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not by your food ruin the one for whom Messiah died.

Do not then allow your good to be spoken of as evil. **For the reign of Elohim is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Set-apart Spirit.** For he who is serving Messiah in these matters is well-pleasing to Elohim and approved by men. So, then, let us pursue the matters of peace and the matters for building up one another.

Do not destroy the work of Elohim for the sake of food. All indeed are clean, but evil to that man who eats so as to cause stumbling. It is good not to eat meat or drink wine, nor to do whatever by which your brother stumbles. Do you have belief? Have it to yourself before Elohim. Blessed is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves.

But he who doubts, if he eats, is condemned, because it is not of belief, and all that is not of belief is sin."

As Messiah and Sha'ul taught--all things that Elohim made were good, and were created for some purpose. Leviticus 11 outlines the animals that were made unclean to eat. There were animals that were simply put on the "do not eat" list for the simple reason that the Creator knows exactly what is good for us.

In Romans 14, and in 1 Corinthians chapters 8 and 10, Sha'ul writes beautifully and carefully to explain to the believers in Rome and Corinth that we are not to criticize those who are weak in the belief, as trying to prove how right we are (verse 1). If we eat something that the weak one even perceives is defiled--how can we be the kind of example Messiah expects us to be?

As believers in Messiah, we are commanded to go into all of the world to preach the good news of the Gospel--spreading His light and love to a lost and dying world. Those of us

who claim to have come out of all religious systems of man in order to return to the ancient ways—must not turn around and start another religion. Take a look around us! How many different sects do we need? Is Messiah divided? It is sad to see that many who have left the “church” system to embrace the true Elohim of Israel and His ways, have wandered off into various arenas, only to end up involved in another religious system. I cannot tell you how many have started new movements which all seem to stem from the Hebrew Roots movement. What started out as something precious in re-discovering the Name of the Creator, is now called the “Sacred Name” movement. There are conferences even, on how man is going to organize the re-gathering and unification of the two sticks of the House of Israel. Man is obsessed with always trying to control in the natural the things which can only take place in the Spirit and His timing. Here is an excerpt from one organizations vision and belief:

“...the establishing of a Righteous restored and re-united 12-Tribed Kingdom of Yisrael to rule over the nations according to the Principles established by His Torah.”

Let me just say, that the only thing that will bring unification of the entire assembly of Israel is brokenness and repentance. There must be unity within the assembly of Yahuweh, yes...but to form **another** organization complete with the establishment of a 70 member leadership board? It is only when the entire house of Israel cries out for Messiah to return, and only after the severe tribulation culminates in the wiping out of nearly the entire earth’s population, does He return for the few—the Isaiah 6 stump.

It is time now to stand up for what believe. This is a call to unity--a call to child-likeness and simplicity. Are we in the wilderness again? How many times do we have to go around on this merry-go-round before we realize that we need to get off of it and start walking the straight path and simple ways of our Creator? “Oh, that is what we are attempting to do,” as many would say. However, look at the fruit of their works of serving the Master. Messianic folk are about as miserable and morose as the darkness they claim to be set free from. If indeed we have returned to the ancient ways, where then is the joy? Disputes, debates and arguments about what is right does nothing for the Gospel of freedom and light. What incentive does the world have to believe in the Elohim of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the Savior, Messiah Yahushua, if we are as miserable as they are?

Where is the joy in being right? Is it found through basking in the warmth of our own radiated pride?

Our joy **MUST** be found in “*not being right.*” It must be found in our continual observance into the mirror of His greatest love—for that is the only opportunity to see our sin unmasked for what it truly is. The Torah unmask our sin so there is no more deception. And when there is no more deception, we can embrace the truth of being set free from our prisons of religious observances and prideful ways! That is true salvation! That is when true joy comes! For when we see ourselves for who we really are, we will finally recognize our need for the Savior! When our sin is unmasked, it brings a crushing sorrow that spawns a repentance with tears undammed. His mercy breaks forth, and forgiveness flows--we learn to laugh and smile again as we begin to see ourselves through the eyes of His forgiveness.

The mirror of the law of love reflects back to us no longer who we were, but the image of the love we have received. It is with this image of love, that we are able to see through

into our own inner being. And without the image of His love and forgiveness, we would only see what we want to see--deceiving ourselves. His love brings clarity to who we really are on the inside. And only until we see the horror of our own sin, can we truly begin to reflect—exhibit the same image of forgiveness which we have received. Too many times we attempt to point out the erroneous belief systems in others while we remain blinded by our own filthy ways. The attitude is ‘as long as my sin doesn’t exceed the sins of others, I have a right to point out their faults.’ Truly, we must remove the plank from our own eye first, before we are able to see clearly to remove the spec from our brother’s eye.

The enemy blinds us of our sins so that we stand convinced stating: “there is nothing wrong with me!”

The greatest love Abba could have ever shown me was when He sent His Son to expose the horrors of my concealed sin. I once thought it important to prove how right I was, but that only led to me grabbing a shovel and burying again what had been exposed—my sin.

If I do not look upon my brother with compassion, through a broken and contrite heart, what am I really accomplishing? There is never such a cold of feeling as when the Father Yahuweh turns his face away from the one who thinks that he is doing the right thing unto Yahuweh, yet within his heart, he is only proving that his own ways reign supreme.

Isaiah 66:1-2 is the portrait I want painted upon the canvas of my heart. I know longer care about being accepted by man—receiving his approval. I have a responsibility to one Master, and if I am doctrinally wrong, but my heart is simple and inclined unto the bosom of my Beloved—does it really matter if I’m wrong? As long as I cling to my Master, listening to His heartbeat, I will possess great fear in making sure I cause no one to stumble. As I walk with Him daily, He will correct my wrongness.

Really, it is not a matter of being wrong that concerns my Master, but my willingness to admit I do not have it all together yet—crying out for the Teacher to come and tutor my unlearned heart. It is the fear I have of my Master and the Most High, Almighty Elohim, that keeps me from dogmatically proclaiming what I have not 100% received from the Spirit. Too many times, the Pharisees arrogantly responded with answers steeped only in the education of their minds. Only until Messiah had pointed out how far they missed what the Torah was trying to say, did the Pharisees recognize their whole way of life was shipwrecked.

It is not a matter of finding out how shipwrecked we are in our doctrinal beliefs, but what we do in response. That is what people look at! That is what people want to see—how do we respond when someone crosses our “doctrine!” Big deal if we are wrong. It is how we handle the fact that we are wrong that determines whether or not people want to follow the same “God” we profess to follow. And how will people react when they see us condemn and crucify the truth just because we were told we were wrong in what we believe?

The religious offered up the Savior to be killed because they refused to receive the message of truth. What was important to them was not truth, but the exalted throne upon which they sat to receive the worship of others. If that is our position today as “Torah-Guarders”, we have not only damned ourselves, but also all of the people who have looked to us for answers to their tender-hearted questions.

Are we telling our next door neighbors of the truth of the Gospel? Are we handing a piece of bread to the hungry? Are we visiting the sick and praying for their healing through the laying on of hands? Or are we too busy trying to prove how knowledgably we are in the Torah and in the understanding of the ancient ways? Are we too busy to serve Elohim because we are too busy “serving Elohim”?

The ancient paths have nothing to do with pomp and ceremony--it has everything to do with following His paths and ways--so as our heart does not condemn us. Until we are able to grasp what it means to have a love for our brother, in the same manner as we have for ourselves, there is no need to continue analytical pursuits of the ancient paths--for Yahuweh’s ancient ways begin and end with love.

As the Creator we profess to serve and worship created life through love, so we must find ourselves, as his creation, to beget life through our love for others. Intellectualism will not help in the days which are coming. When people are scrambling around in chaos because we have been hit with an EMP attack, what message are they going to listen too? The top 10 reasons why the month begins with the dark of the moon or the hope of everlasting life through the shed blood of Messiah?

Consider greatly what you spend your time on in learning. The third world believers, who have nothing more than a half a page of the book of John, are doing more for the Kingdom of Elohim than most who have libraries full of research material. We must ask ourselves this question: For what purpose have we been chosen before the foundation of the world? To display the nature, ways and thinking of our Creator in the presence of a dark and dead world, or to display how well versed we are in the “ancient ways?”

Daniel knew the “ancient ways!” He was a scholar of all scholars! Yet, was it his knowledge that caused him to escape the mouth of the lions, or was it his blamelessness in the sight of man and Elohim? In the days ahead, it will not be the intellectual head knowledge of the ways of Yahuweh and His Torah that will save, but a simple child-like trust in Yahuweh Who will do just as He promised. We will never trust anyone who we do not intimately know. The test of loyalty must be passed if we are to make it through the times of severe trial and tribulation.

Sha’ul, a Pharisee of Pharisees said this in Philippians 3:7-11:

“But what might have been a gain to me, I have counted as loss, because of Messiah. What is more, I even count all to be loss because of the excellence of the knowledge of Messiah Yahushua my Master, for whom I have suffered the loss of all, and count them as refuse, in order to gain Messiah, and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through belief in Messiah, the righteousness which is from Elohim on the basis of belief, to know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if somehow I might attain to the resurrection from the dead.”

According to the knowledge of the law, Sha’ul had it all right. But an encounter with the One He persecuted, showed Him the true value of His knowledge. And only when he finally recognized that even with all of his knowledge, that he was still lost, then Elohim used what he was willing to give up for the sake of Messiah, as a tool to win many to the Kingdom.

As with Moshe, the only way that the goodness of Yahuweh will ever pass before us, is if we remain hidden within the secret place of the cleft of the rock. When it is no longer I who is seen, then He that is unseen will pass before me with all of His goodness—favoring whom He desires to show favor and showing compassion upon whom He desires to show compassion.

Ask yourself--when all is stripped away...what will be left? A smoldering ruin of a once highly exalted tree, or a stump with roots of love, running down deep for the Beloved of your soul? It is not a matter of how right we think we are today, but a matter of how we will respond when the time comes when we find out how wrong we have been. It is not whether we are right or wrong that is the focus of our endeavors...rather, it is the attitude of humility to accept the times when we are right or wrong.

Do we raise our prideful heads high when we are right? Do we justify ourselves when we are wrong? It is time we find out for ourselves what kingdom we are working for. Love has no interest in being right. It does not care if it is wrong or is wronged.

I leave you with these final questions:

What is the motivator behind what you do? What is the most important thing to you? Is it not to love? Must it be love?

“If I speak with the tongues of men and of messengers, but do not have love, I have become as sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophecy, and **know all secrets and all knowledge**, and if I have all belief, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am none at all. And if I give out all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but do not have love, I am not profited at all.

Love is patient, is kind, love does not envy, love does not boast, is not puffed up, does not behave indecently, does not seek its own, is not provoked, reckons not the evil, does not rejoice over the unrighteousness, but rejoices in the truth, it covers all, believes all, expects all, endures all. **Love never fails.**” ---1 Corinthians 13:1-8b

The answer, I hope, is quite clear...

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