

Torah is Light

“For the mitzvah is a lamp, Torah is Light” (Proverbs 6:23)

The Hebrew word Torah comes from the Hebrew word “Orah” which means “Light” as well as “Teaching”. In the Jewish world the Torah is continually referenced as Light. For example; In “Derech Etz Chaim” the master Kabbalist, Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzato (Ramchal) writes:

The Torah is not like the wisdom of the nations and the secular knowledge, which are nothing more than knowledge which the intellect grasps after toiling to understand it. Rather, the Torah, behold, it is holy. It has a supernal existence in the upper spheres. And when a man toils in it below, it is a light which illuminates in his soul to elevate it to the treasures on high, the treasures of the Creator, blessed be He. And this is what the wise man said (King Solomon) “And Torah is light” (Mishlei 6:23), literally light, and not just wisdom. And not that it is called “light” as a kind of metaphor rather it is literally “light”. Because this is its existence above (in the higher worlds), and when it enters the soul, the light enters it just like the sun’s rays enter inside a house.

And to quote a modern writer Yosef Sebag in regard to Torah:

Do not think it is just religious concepts. These are laws governing human conduct, which apply as rigidly as the law of gravity. When we disregard these laws in any walk of life, we distance from truth and from G-d and chaos results.

But it goes deeper than this. The Torah is not just a book of laws. It is a spiritual world. One who studies torah draws spiritual light unto himself and gains access into this spiritual realm. Without this, he walks in darkness and sees only the physical side of things.

It was the same in Jesus’s day. Torah was equated to the Word, and Torah was equated to Light. And when John wrote John 1:1-14 every Jewish man and woman who read these words in that day knew John was equating Jesus to Torah.

John 1:4-13 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God – children born not of natural descent or a husband’s will, but born of God.

Also, Jesus himself claimed to be Torah when he claimed to be the light of the world. We see this in John 8:12, John 9:5, and John 12:46. The people he was talking to knew the Psalms and would remember; *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path (Psalms 119:105) and The entrance of thy words give light; it gives understanding to the simple (Psalms 119:130)*. So, for Jesus to equate himself to light was to equate himself to Torah in the minds of the Jew.

This is why the Pharisees challenged Jesus in John 8:13, because they recognized that he was claiming to be the Torah by claiming to be the light of the world and unless he could provide two witnesses to verify this was so, then he was speaking blasphemy and by law should be stoned. Jesus claimed himself and his Father who sent him as his two witnesses (John 8:14-18). They obviously didn't accept his explanation, *yet no one seized him, because his hour had not yet come* (John 8:20).

If the Pharisees did not understand the word Light equaled Torah in the Hebrew mind, then this whole passage would make no sense for what would it matter if Jesus said, "I am the light of the world." And the meaning was only "light". Why would the Pharisees get upset? So, this guy thinks he is a bright guy, who cares.

No, for the Pharisees it was as if Jesus had said, "I am the Torah to the world." To their expanded "law" of Moses this meant that Jesus was committing a grave sin claiming to be the Torah and without witnesses. And they did not mean just anyone could be his witness, they meant he needed two great Rabbi's, who are recognized without question as being from God, needed to give testimony that this man was who he said he was. For he said not only that he was the Torah, but that he was the Torah to the world. This meant he would take the Torah to the world and only the Messiah could do that in their minds. So, Jesus was claiming to be the Torah, and claiming to be the Messiah.

And then it gets worse for Jesus in the minds of the Pharisees. For Jesus then says that he and his father are the two witnesses. Which means he is claiming to be a great Rabbi and his father is a greater Rabbi than him (John 8:14-18). This is why in verse 19 the Pharisees ask him, "Where is your father?" They must be ready to pull out their hair for this man isn't anyone great and nobody seems to know of him, or his father so how can this nobody from Nazareth come to Jerusalem and start claiming to be the Torah and the Messiah?

And now to make matters worse; Jesus is speaking these things while standing in the temple courts (John 8:20) which is another sin to the Rabbi's, to speak blasphemy on the temple mount, just shameful. And it really is remarkable when you understand this passage from the time period Jewish mind, that nobody seized him and stoned him, but nobody did, for his hour had not yet come (John 8:20)

Yes, Jesus claimed to be Torah. For he is the Living Torah. But did you realize that the Torah also claims to be Jesus? I'm not talking about the Hebrew scriptures; I'm talking about the Torah scroll.

For the observant Jew the Torah is considered to be alive. They call it *Torat haim*, a living Torah. Not only does it contain all knowledge – past, present and future – but the Torah actually has feelings, it has emotions, no less than does a human being. It can cry, it can be sad, it can even be angry and upset; but on one special day, Simhat Torah, the Torah is boundlessly happy. The literal meaning of 'Simhat Torah' is, 'The happiness of the Torah itself.' This is why observant Jews dance with the Torah on Simhat Torah.

And when a Torah scroll is destroyed or damaged it is given a funeral. They put it in a small plain pine coffin and deliver eulogies over it. But how does the Torah scroll claim to be Jesus?

Well, a kosher Torah scroll is made of lambskin on which the Word of God has been written, which is impaled on two rollers of wood which the rabbis refer to as the *Etz Chaim*, or Tree of Life. It is then "dressed" in a beautiful mantle and adorned with a breastplate representing the breastplate of the Cohen HaGadol (High Priest). Finally, a crown or pair of finials representing crowns are set on the top of the *Etz*, representing the crowns of a king.

And who is Jesus? He is the Word of God (John 1:1) in the form of the Lamb (John 1:36), impaled on two pieces of wood (the cross) which are to us a Tree of Life (Gal. 3:13). He was then robed in glory (Rev. 1:13). Given the role of our great High Priest (Heb. 7-10) and crowned with many crowns (Rev. 19:12).

So, the Torah scroll is claiming to be Jesus as well as Jesus claiming to be Torah.

Psalm 18:28

For it is you who light my lamp; the Lord my God lightens my darkness.

Isaiah 60:1

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

May Yeshua HaMashiah, Jesus Christ, The Living Torah, The Light of the World, The Word of God, keep your hearts and minds.

Thank you,

A Voice in The Wilderness