

Shayla: What is the purpose of the Old Covenant's Law if not to save? Does grace make it obsolete?

Meforshim:

Viewed with the proper hermeneutic filters in mind, the Law's role is to teach us that there is a God to whom we owe obeisance and worship.¹ In that sense, the Law is our schoolmaster, teaching us the meaning of sin and warning us of the consequences of continued rebellion to our rightful King.² It clearly elucidates the depths of our depravity and our complete inability to do anything about it.³ Thus, the Law can be a terrifying thing because disobedience in spite of knowledge of God's ways can bring greater damnation.⁴

However, on the positive side, it gives us guidelines on the proper treatment of our fellowman, discussing at great length the role of justice and equity.⁵ We can think of that aspect of the Law as a manual titled "Happiness Through Submission to God's Ways."⁶

While it's true that the Law was not given as a means of salvation, it does give us a prioritization framework as well as a working definition of "goodness".⁷ It is a moral compass, if you will. It reveals God's holy nature, giving us a clear target to aim for as we pursue to obey Hashem's command to be holy like Him.⁸

Yahweh M'kaddesh⁹ does not change.¹⁰ Salvation has always been about faith and grace.¹¹ The Law is only as effective as one's faith makes it. Even in the Old Covenant, those who believe God are justified, regardless of the form of His demands. So the Law is very much about faith.¹²

Through the gift of the Holy Spirit (received when we submit to the Christ's rightful rule) the Law is written on our hearts. Every path before us will become clear¹³ through the whisperings of the Spirit in our conscience¹⁴ and the study of God's Word.

Far from making the Law outdated or outmoded, the "Age of Grace" has made the Law that much more pertinent now that we understand its purpose and limitations better.

¹ Psalm 19:7-9; Acts 18:13-14

² Romans 3:19; Galatians 3:21-24

³ Romans 7:6-25

⁴ Luke 20:47; Romans 2:12-15; 3:20; 4:15; 7:7-8

⁵ Leviticus 19:18; Galatians 5:14; 6:2

⁶ Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:1-3; Luke 12:32

⁷ Romans 2:12; 1 Corinthians 6:1-12; 3:13; 1 Timothy 1:8-10; 2 Timothy 2:5; Revelation 20:12-13

⁸ Psalm 19:7-9; 119:9-10; Acts 18:13, 18; Romans 7:12; 2 Peter 1:4

⁹ Yahweh M'kadash – God Who makes holy (Exodus 31:13; Leviticus 20:8; Ezekiel 37:28)

¹⁰ Numbers 23:19; 1 Samuel 15:29; 102:26-27; Psalm 33:11; Isaiah 31:2; Malachi 3:6; Romans 11:29; Hebrews 1:11-12; 6:17-18; 13:8; James 1:17;

¹¹ (faith) Deuteronomy 32:51; 1 Samuel 23:16; Habakkuk 2:4; (grace) 2 Samuel 7:28; Psalm 84:11; Proverbs 3:34

¹² Romans 3:27-31

¹³ Psalm 119:105, 165; Proverbs 3:23

¹⁴ Isaiah 30:21