

Is the Tora Binding Upon the Nations?

By Hakham Meir Yosef Rekhavi

The Covenant.

Before the giving of the Tora, YHWH made a covenant with Avraham. In this covenant Avraham and his descendants were to be circumcised in the flesh, by its nature this covenant excluded the other families of the world. This covenant is to be a "sign" between Avraham "his seed" after him and YHWH. It is only a covenant between YHWH and Avraham's family.

"And God said to Avraham, and you shall keep my covenant, you and your seed after you throughout their generations. This is my covenant, which you shall keep between you and me and between your seed after you; every male among you shall be circumcised. And you shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be for a sign of the covenant between you and me. And at eight days old every male among you shall be circumcised throughout your generations, he that is born in the house and he that is purchased with silver from any foreigner, who is not of your seed. Circumcised, he shall be circumcised he that is born in your house, and he that is purchased with your silver, and it shall be as my covenant in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the foreskinned male that does not circumcise the flesh of his foreskin, and that soul/life force shall be cut off from his people; he has violated my covenant." (Gen. 17:9-14)

Then there came the Covenant at Mt. Sinai, given to the Children of Yisrael, a special covenant between YHWH and Yisrael. This covenant was not made between the Gentile Nations and YHWH, it is a covenant strictly between YHWH and the Children of Yisrael, a covenant made with a separate people alone. "Now therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then you shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And you shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak unto the Children of Yisrael." (Exodus:19:5-6). If a gentile desires to keep this covenant then they are obliged to join the Children of Yisrael.

If a person keeps every commandment in the Tora but still considers him/herself as a non-Yisreeli, by Tora definition this person is a Gentile, cut off from the covenant of Tora.

Therefore, keeping Shabbath, denouncing idolatry, and eating kasher are pre-requisites for the act of conversion; they are not in themselves conversion, which consists of being circumcised (males) and vowing that you accept Yisrael as your own people and YHWH as your God. Why would a person not want to be a part of a people who are keeping his covenant? Is not the Miqra (Hebrew Bible) filled with references to becoming a part of His people? "Do not let the son of the foreigner, who has joined himself to YHWH, speak, saying, YHWH has completely separated me from his people; nor let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree. For thus says YHWH to the eunuchs who keep my Shabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant; And to them will I give in my house and within my walls a memorial and a name better than sons and of daughters; I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off. And the children of the foreigner those that attach themselves to YHWH, to serve him and to love the name of YHWH to be to him for servants all who keep Shabbath, from profaning it and grasp hold of my

covenant. Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples." (Is. 56:3-7)

Therefore, to truly keep the Covenant of the Tora a person has to convert and become a part of the Children of Yisrael.

The Spiritual Categories of Man.

It can be ascertained through the Miqra that mankind falls under four spiritual categories;

1) Idol-worshippers, that is anyone that worships a false god or places something else other than YHWH as the greatest good i.e. money. Atheists also come under this category as they place man as the highest being.

2) God fearing Gentiles, that means Gentiles who confess that YHWH the God of Yisrael is the one and true God, but do not observe the Tora.

3) Sojourners (Gerim), this is not the Rabbanite version of a Ger i.e. a convert. A Ger is someone who accepts the laws of a Ger as laid down in our beloved Tora, therefore it is a half way house between a God fearing Gentile and a Yisreeli.

4) A Yisreeli, who, correctly speaking goes according to the Tora, whether native born or a convert.

God Fearing Gentiles.

If we read Yesha'yahu (Isaiah) chapter 24 we see that this section refers to the basic code of morality. In the Book of Genesis and elsewhere in the Miqra there seems to be indications that there is a "natural" moral code for mankind, which might have been impressed upon the subconscious of every individual by YHWH. For instance, mankind is wiped out in the great flood because of mankind's wickedness. What represents wickedness needs to be defined and seeing the flood occurred before the giving of the Tora, some sort of "natural" moral code must have defined it. In addition, if we look at Genesis chapter 26, we see that Avimelekh, king of the Pelishtim (Philistines), knew that adultery was wrong; again, this can be seen as a case for some form of a "natural" moral code. This "natural" moral code is probably stamped upon our spirits from conception, courtesy of Adham and Hawwa. When Adham and Hawwa ate from the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, they suddenly awoke to their nakedness and lost their spiritual innocence; and became aware of the differences between Good and Evil. Sometime during our formative years, we too learn the fundamental differences between Good and Evil as well.

This "natural" moral code can be found dispersed throughout the Tora. The early Karaite Hakhamim classified this "natural" moral code, as those ordinances in the Tora that are rooted in reason. In other words those miswoth that we would today refer to as being common sense. Such examples are:

"You shall not take up a false rumour." (Ex. 23:1)

"You shall not hate your brother in your heart, rebuke you shall rebuke your kinsman, that you not bear sin because of him." (Lev. 19:17)

"But be helpful to your neighbour as one like yourself, I am YHWH." (Lev. 19:18)

"You shall not steal." (Lev. 19:11)

"There shall not be to you in your purse weighing-stones and weighing-stones, large and small. There shall not be to you in your house epha and epha, large and small. A weighing-stone perfect and just there shall be to you, an epha perfect and just there shall be to you, in order that your days may be lengthened on the soil, which YHWH your God gives to you. For an abomination to YHWH your God is anyone doing this, anyone doing injustice." (Deut. 25:13-16)

"You shall not murder." (Ex 20:13)

"And you shall make a parapet for your roof, and you shall not put blood-(guilt) on your house, if someone falling will fall from it." (Deut. 22:8)

The laws of forbidden sexual unions found in Leviticus chapter 18 are also part of this "natural" moral code as for it is written, "You shall not defile yourselves in any of these, for in all these they make themselves defiled the nations that I am sending out from before you." (Lev. 18:24)

It is a requisite of the Righteous Gentile to keep all the moral laws of the Tora that concern our relationships with our fellow humans and the world around us.

The Ger.

"It is a night of keeping-watch for YHWH, to bring them out from the Land of Misrayim, this is, it is the night of YHWH, a keeping-watch for all the Children of Yisrael throughout their generations. And YHWH said to Moshe and Aharon, "This is the law of the Pesah [Passover], any son of a stranger shall not eat of it. And any servant of a man purchased for silver, and you shall circumcise him, then he shall eat of it. A resident-settler and a hired-hand shall not eat of it. In one house it shall be eaten, you shall not take out from the house, from the meat outside and you shall not break a bone of it. All the Community of Yisrael shall do it. And if a sojourner shall sojourn with you, and shall make the Pesah [Passover] to YHWH, circumcise him (and) all (his) males, and then he shall come near to make it and he shall be a citizen of the land, and all uncircumcised-males shall not eat of it. One Tora [Instruction] there shall be for the citizen, and for the sojourner that sojourns in your midst." (Ex. 12:42-49)

From the above passage, we can see that only a Yisreeli can offer the Pesah Sacrifice and that if a Ger (sojourner) desires to offer the Pesah Sacrifice, they must first become a fully-fledged Yisreeli. Since it is stated, "And if a sojourner shall sojourn with you, and shall make the Pesah [Passover] to YHWH, circumcise him (and) all (his) males, and then he shall come near to make it and he shall be a citizen of the land, and all uncircumcised-males shall not eat of it," we can see that from this particularly verse the bringing of the Korban Pesah forms part of the initiation ceremony of a convert into the ranks of the Children of Yisrael. The Pesah Sacrifice is thus part of the conversion process, along with circumcision, to becoming a fully-fledged Yisreeli. This means that the convert does not become a fully-fledged Yisreeli until Pesah Night. In other words, even if an individual converts before Pesah Night their conversion does not become active until Pesah Night.

Since the verse in question states, "And if a sojourner shall sojourn with you" the potential convert has to become a Ger before they can become a fully-fledged

Yisreeli. Therefore, all the laws in the Tora that pertain to a Ger has to be observed by them before they can become a Yisreeli. There are then two separate stages for a non-Yisreeli to go through before they are allowed to enter into the Children of Yisrael. The fact that one has to become a Ger before they can become a Yisreeli is backed up by the following verse from the same passage, "any son of a stranger shall not eat of it" thus meaning that even if a stranger does circumcise himself he is still not a Yisreeli unless he goes through the process of being a Ger first because it does not mention "but if he circumcise himself".

The verse, "One Tora [Instruction] there shall be for the citizen, and for the sojourner that sojourns in your midst" refers to the Ger after he becomes circumcised and therefore becomes a fully-fledged Yisreeli. A Ger is uncircumcised; if he were circumcised, he would be a Yisreeli.

As pointed out above the Tora sees the Ger not as a convert but as a half way house between a God fearing Gentile and a Yisreeli. This can be proved by the fact that in the Tora there are miswoth that are incumbent upon a Yisreeli but not upon a Ger, for example:

"And when the hand of a sojourner or resident-settler with you attains means, and your brother with him is lowly, and has been sold to a sojourner or a resident-settler with you, or to an offshoot of the clan of a sojourner. After he has been sold redemption shall be to him; one of his brothers shall redeem him. Or his uncle, or a son of his uncle shall redeem him, or kin of his flesh from his clan shall redeem him, or his own hand attains means then he shall be redeemed. And he shall calculate with his purchaser from the year that he was sold to him, until the Year of the Yovel, and the silver from his sale shall be by the number of years, as the days of a hireling he shall be with him. If many years remain, according to them he shall return his redemption payment from the silver of his purchase. And if a few years remain until the Year of the Yovel, then he shall calculate to him, according to his years he shall return his redemption payment. As a hireling, year-by-year, he shall be with him, and he shall not oppress him with tyranny before your eyes. And if he has not been redeemed in any of these ways, then he goes out in the Year of the Yovel, he and his children with him. For to me are the Children of Yisrael servants, they are my servants, whom I brought out from the Land of Misrayim [Egypt], I am YHWH your God." (Lev. 25:47-55)

We can see from this passage that a Ger is not the same as a Yisreeli for the above passages states, "And when the hand of a sojourner or resident-settler with you attains means, and your brother with him is lowly, and has been sold to a sojourner or a resident-settler with you." This passage thus distinguishes between a Yisreeli, a Ger, and a Toshav (resident-settler) and if the Ger were a fully-fledged Yisreeli, the distinction between a brother Yisreeli and a Ger would not be necessary.

In the following verse, we see that there is a separate law for the Yisreeli and for the Ger; therefore, it is impossible that the sojourner is a fully-fledged convert. "You shall not eat any carcass, to the sojourner that is within your gates you may give it that he may eat it or sell it to a foreigner, for you are a holy people to YHWH your God." (Deut. 14:21) When the Tora states in Deut 31:12 that the Ger is required to join the rest of the people to hear the commandments so that he will keep them, "Assemble the people, men and women and the little ones, and your sojourner that is within your gates, in order that they shall hear, and in order that they will learn, and they shall revere YHWH your God, and they observe to do all the words of this Tora." The Tora means that the Ger will learn and fulfil all the words of the Tora that relates to the Ger, and in time, once he fully converts will keep the entire Tora. When it says in

Exodus 12:49, "One Tora [Instruction] there shall be for the citizen, and for the sojourner that sojourns in your midst." It means he who was a former Ger, but is NOW, after circumcision, a fully fledged Yisreeli.

In conclusion, a Ger, as can be seen from the above, is not a convert. If he were a convert there would not be a Halakhic distinction between the Ger and the Yisreeli as can be seen from Deut. 14:21. Therefore, before someone converts to being a Yisreeli they must become a Ger first, for a period, and observe those laws of the Tora that pertain to a Ger, only after this can they convert and partake of the Korban Pesah (when the Temple stood).

Examples of the laws of the Tora that pertain to a Ger are as follows:

"Remember the Shabbath day to make it holy. Six days you shall work, and do all your vocation. But the seventh day is a Shabbath for YHWH your God; you shall not do in it any kind of vocation, you and your son and your daughter, your servant and your maid and your beast and your sojourner that is within your gates. For in six days YHWH made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and he rested on the seventh day, therefore YHWH blessed the Shabbath day and he hallowed it." (Ex. 20:8-11)

"And this day shall be to you for a memorial and you shall celebrate the pilgrimage as a pilgrimage festival to YHWH throughout your generations, a law for all times you shall celebrate the pilgrimage. Seven days you shall eat massoth [unleavened bread], indeed by the first day you are to get rid of leaven from your houses, for anyone who eats what is fermented/soured, from the first day and until the seventh day that soul/life force shall be cut off from Yisrael. And on the first day a holy proclamation, and on the seventh day a holy proclamation shall there be to you, all vocation you shall not do on them, only that which every soul/life force must eat that alone may be done by you. And you shall keep this commandment for on this same day I have taken out your hosts from the Land of Misrayim [Egypt], and you shall keep this day through out your generations, a law for all times. In the first (month), on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat massoth [unleavened bread], until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. Seven days leaven shall not be found in your houses, for whoever eats what ferments/sours, that soul/life force will be cut off from the community of Yisrael, whether sojourner or citizen of the land. All that ferments/sours you shall not eat, in all your settlements you shall eat massoth [unleavened bread]." (Ex. 12:14-20)

"And it shall be to you for a law forever, in the seventh month on the tenth of the month you shall afflict your souls/life forces, and all vocation you shall not do, the citizen and the sojourner that sojourns among you. Because on this day atonement is to be made upon you to purify you from all your sins, before YHWH you will become pure. A Shabbath Shabbathon it will be to you, and you shall afflict your souls/life forces a law forever." (Lev. 16:29-31)

"And (any) man, (any) man from the House of Yisrael, or from the sojourners that sojourn among you, that eats any blood, I will set my face against the soul/life force that eats the blood, and will cut it off from among its people. For the soul/life force of the flesh it is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the slaughter-site [altar], to make atonement for your souls/life forces, for it is the blood (that) makes atonement for the soul/life force. Therefore I said to the Children of Yisrael: Every soul/life force among you, you shall not eat blood, and the sojourner that sojourns in your midst shall not eat blood. For the soul/life force of all flesh is its blood, it is its soul/life force, and I said to the Children of Yisrael: The blood of all flesh you shall not eat: for the

soul/life force of all flesh it is its blood, everyone that eats it shall be cut off." (Lev. 17:10-12,14)

We notice that the Ger is obligated to celebrate Hagh Hammassoth (The Pilgrimage Festival of Unleavened Bread), but not to bring the Korban Pesah. This is because the Korban Pesah, as pointed out above, was distinctly Yisreeli, no non-Yisreeli being allowed to partake unless he first submitted to circumcision and thereby embraced the Biblical faith and identified himself with the people hood and destiny of Yisrael.

A Ger, like a Righteous Gentile must keep all the moral laws of the Tora that concern our relationships with our fellow humans and the world around us. In addition to this, the Ger must keep the Shabbath and the Festivals including Yom Hakkippurim, but not the Korban Pesah (Passover Sacrifice). The Ger must not consume blood, therefore all the meat that a Ger eats must be slaughtered correctly, but they are not obliged to eat only pure animals as the Yisreeli is.

Therefore, is the Tora for All Peoples and All Nations?

The answer is yes and no; let me explain. As pointed out above there are certain laws in the Tora that state that a foreigner, i.e. a non-Yisreeli or someone who is not a sojourner, is not obliged to follow the whole Tora. For example;

"At the end of seven years you are to make a release, and this is the matter of the release. He shall release every possessor of a loan of his hand, which he has loaned to his friend; he shall not impel his friend and his brother, but has proclaimed a release to YHWH. The foreigner you may impel, and that which will be to you, with your brother your hand shall release. However, there will not be among you any needy person, because YHWH your God will bless you, bless, in the land which YHWH your God is giving to you to possess it as an inheritance. Only, if you will listen, listen to the voice of YHWH your God, to keep and to do all this commandment which I am commanding you today. For YHWH your God will bless you as he spoke to you, and many nations will give pledges to you, and you will not give pledges, and you will rule over many nations and over you they will not rule." (Deut. 15:1-6)

To quote more verses will be to labour the point. Now, as stated, a foreigner is not obliged to follow the Tora before the Messianic Era, but it is recommended. The Miqra in fact calls upon the Gentiles to abandon their false gods and to become apart of the Children of Yisrael; this can be seen from the following passage;

"Do not let the son of the foreigner, who has joined himself to YHWH, speak, saying, "YHWH has completely separated me from his people;" nor let the eunuch say, "Behold, I am a dry tree." For thus says YHWH to the eunuchs who keep my Shabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant. And to them will I give in my house and within my walls a memorial and a name better than sons and of daughters; I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off. And the children of the foreigner those that attach themselves to YHWH, to serve him and to love the name of YHWH to be to him for servants all who keep Shabbath, from profaning it and grasp hold of my covenant. Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their ascent-offerings and their slaughter-offerings shall be accepted upon my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples. The Lord YHWH who gathers the outcasts of Yisrael says, "Yet will I gather others to him, beside those who are already gathered." (Is. 56:3-8)

Now, come the Messianic Era all foreigners WILL be obliged to follow the Tora as can be seen by the following;

"And it shall come to pass, that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Yerushalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, YHWH of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Booths. And it shall be, that whoever will not come up of all the families of the earth to Yerushalem to worship the King, YHWH of hosts, upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Misrayim [Egypt] does not go up, and does not come, they will have no rain. This shall be the plague, with which YHWH will strike the nations that do not come up to observe the Feast of Booths. This shall be the punishment of Misrayim [Egypt], and the punishment of all the nations that come not up to observe the Feast of Booths." (Zech. 14: 16-19)

So therefore, what is the difference between a foreigner who accepts the Tora before the Messianic and one who accepts the Tora come the Messianic Era? As can be seen from the Isaiah 56:3-8 the foreigner who accepts the Tora before the Messianic Era becomes an Yisreeli and shares in all the blessings of Yisrael come the Messianic Era. Now a foreigner who does NOT accept the Tora before the Messianic Era but only accepts the Tora come the Messianic Era remains an Egyptian, a Russian, a Korean etc who follows the Tora. They therefore do not become a Yisreeli, do not share in the blessings of Yisrael come the Messianic Era and remain 'other Nations' as can be seen by Zech. 14: 16-19.

Therefore, the convert who converts prior to the Messianic Era is absorbed into the Children of Yisrael physically and spiritually. The Hebrew word that the Tora uses for conversion is haya "he shall be", which donates a process of becoming something, slowly changing one's status from one thing to another. When one accepts YHWH and His Tora they also accept His people as their people and become a part of the nation of Yisrael sharing in their collective memory. It is a method of adoption; my ancestors become your ancestors; the history of Yisrael becomes their history. In other words, when someone converts it is as if they were born a Yisreeli. That is why it is important to study Jewish history when one is learning to become a Child of Yisrael.

The Mission of the Children of Yisrael

As has been pointed out above the Tora is for all mankind and not just for the privilege of the Children of Yisrael, what is left of mankind after the Day of Judgement will observe the Tora to the full. We, as a nation were given the Truth on Mt. Sinai by YHWH the creator and master of the universe. Truth is for all, to be shared amongst all who want to embrace it. YHWH's intention for Yisrael is, "And you shall be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." (Ex. 19:6) We cannot be priests unto ourselves, but we are priests unto the Nations. Seeing we are to be priests unto the Nations then logic dictates that the nations must practice the same religion as we do. YHWH gave the Tora to Yisrael so that they could become "a light to the nations," (Isaiah 42:6) this however is not to be achieved by the sword or through forced conversions for as I have written before, "Whatever is gained by force, Must be sustained by force. But whatever is gained by truth and justice, Will support itself." Therefore, Yisrael is to bring the Nations to the Tora of YHWH by setting the example. Yisrael is to teach the nations the Tora, a mission that most of Jewry has forgotten.

Questions and Answers.

1) *If all of the above is correct, then what about the Rabbanite Nowahian Laws?*

The Rabbanite Nowahian Laws have very little basis from the Tora. They are totally arbitrary having the same origins as the so-called Oral Law, i.e. "a commandment of men learned by rote".

2) *How did the Rabbanites come up with the number 7 for their so-called Nowahian Laws?*

The Rabbanites are very much into gematria, hence the number 7. In gematria, the number 7 represents completeness, therefore, according to their way of thinking; all a gentile has to do is observe the 7 laws to be "complete". The so-called 613 miswoth of the Tora also comes from gematria, $6+1+3=10$ i.e. they are a representation of the 10 Commandments. The Rabbanites also say that the so-called 613 are divided into two categories, i) 248 positive commandments which correspond to the 248 bones of the human body, and ii) 365 negative commandments which correspond to the muscles of the human body, as well as to the 365 days of the year. However, no count of the miswoth of the Tora will yield the number 613, therefore the various Rabbanite scholars who have attempted to enumerate such a list have all come up with differing lists.

3) *Do the designations "sojourner that is within your gates" and "citizen of the land" only apply within Eres Yisrael (Land of Israel)?*

'Am Yisrael was meant to dwell in Eres Yisrael, but because of the sins of the nation now dwells in Exile, spiritual as well as physical. Therefore, the Tora was written for the true status of 'Am Yisrael and that being in their land, and not as guide on how to get by while in the punishment of Exile. Therefore, these references i.e. "of the Land", "within your gates" were written with this fact in mind.

The phrase "citizen of the land" refers to the Yisreeli whether by birth or by full conversion. The Tora calls the Ger/Sojourner a "sojourner that is within your gates" because, as pointed out above, the ideal state of 'Am Yisrael is within their land and therefore anybody wishing to convert would do so in Eres Yisrael, of course this is not the case today because of the Galuth (Exile). In Ancient Yisrael the way, a Righteous Gentile converted was by the process of assimilation into Yisreeli society. They would learn by being in a Tora environment and by seeing how the Tora is applied to every day life. Conversion therefore probably took several years to complete, and once the potential convert mastered one stage, they moved onto the next. Today because of the Galuth everything is that much harder, there is no Temple and Kohen, no prophet to guide us and no true Tora environment in which the potential convert can truly immerse themselves, so we do the best that we possibly can.

4) *If someone was to ask you why one should convert to become a full-fledge member of Yisrael, what would be your answer?*

I suppose it would depend upon their motive for wanting to convert. If one desires the fullness and depth of a true and meaningful communion with YHWH and a personal spiritual completeness, then this can only be truly attained by the observance of the Tora. The laws for the Righteous Gentile are concerned mainly with morality, man's relationship with man, while within themselves such laws enable society to function

on a state level, and in harmony with nature and also on a personal one to one level, they are only part of the whole picture. The other part of the picture is our relationship with YHWH. When it comes to our relationship with YHWH, the laws for the Righteous Gentile only touch the tip of the iceberg. Yes, they do command belief in one indivisible God, the rejection of other gods, all other forms of idolatry and trust in the Almighty, but it is only through our complete dedication to the observance of the Tora that we can achieve the type of relationship with YHWH that so many desire.

5) *How would you describe the blessings and privileges of YHWH and the delights of Tora living to them?*

The best way for me to answer this is by taking a page out of my own life.

I have dedicated myself to the spread of Karaism for as long as I have been observing Karaism and that is over 20 years now. Since I finished my last contract as a Computer Hardware Engineer in January 2000 and was unable to find another, I decided to dedicate myself full time to the spread of Karaism. This is something that I have always wanted to do, but I was always frightened to "take the bull by the horns" so to speak. I guess the reason that I found it so hard to get a new contract was because my destiny laid elsewhere and that elsewhere is in the spread of Karaism. The proof of this is the fact that YHWH has taken care of me and my family, we might not be rich but we are not starving there is always good food on the table, a roof over our heads, clothes on our backs and the bills are always paid on time.

I guess it is a matter of being totally loyal to YHWH and putting one's complete trust in him. I feel content within myself, there is a reason for getting up in the morning and not just because one has to. Life seems so much clearer, there is a reason for our being and each one of us has our own personal destiny to achieve, if we so desire to. By the observance and the striving to understand the Tora and the rest of the Miqra, a veil has been removed from my eyes and I see the world how it really is. Yes, being able to see the state that mankind is in through his own stupidity, greed and arrogance and that 'Am Yisrael has neglected the truth of the Tora and is destined to pay the consequences until they return to their mission in this world, does cause me a lot of anguish and sorrow. However, I would rather suffer this heartache than to have never come to the truth of YHWH and his Tora. For me the principles of my life are; YHWH is my God, Moshe is my Prophet, The Tora is my law and therefore my mentor, the Temple of God built by Shelomo in Yerushalem is my orientation. The examples of the Prophet's are my rule of life. The Miswoth are my guide, and all believers are my brothers. As I once wrote; "If I follow your ways O' YHWH to gain entrance into Paradise. Then send me to Damnation."

6) *What grouping would you put a circumcised non-Yisreeli in, who isn't following all of the commandments (yet), but desires to?*

At the time of the Miqra, other nations also practised circumcision. The Ishmaelites were circumcised because they were descended from Avraham, and so were the Edhomites being the descendants of 'Esaw, Ya'akov's brother, the Ancient Egyptians also practised circumcision. Just because these nations practiced circumcision did not mean that they were "naturalized Yisreelim". A very important principle found in the Tora is the intention of the individual. If someone brought a sin-offering to the Temple but did not intend to change their ways, in other words the offering of their sacrifice was just lip service - formalistic religion, then the sacrifice had no benefit whatsoever. The same is true in this instance, if one is circumcised for health reasons or for any other reason, it does not behold them to the Tora. However, if they were circumcised with the intention of beholding themselves to the Tora, then they

are to observe the entire Tora and their status is no longer that of God fearing Gentile or that of a Ger, but as a "naturalised Yisreeli".

7) Is a married non-Yisreeli, who converts, but their partner doesn't, or the non-religious Yisreeli who marries a fellow non-religious Yisreeli and then becomes religious obliged to divorce their non-religious/non-Yisreeli partner?

I believe that anything of this nature should not be rushed into. An answer to this question can be seen in the book of 'Ezra, where the men had to evict their idolatrous wives and children who were influencing them to worship idols. It was a severe thing to do and therefore it was not done lightly. It took a long time for the process of evicting the idolatrous wives and children to be complete and only after each case had been thoroughly examined, (see 'Ezra 10:13-14 and Deut. 7:1-4). Who knows, maybe the non-religious Yisreeli partner might become influenced by the partner who has returned to YHWH! The same can be said of the non-Yisreeli partner of someone who converts. Of course with everything there is a time limit and a line that cannot be passed, the non-Yisreeli women in 'Ezra 10:13-14 had no intention in a million years of accepting YHWH and his Tora plus they attempted to turn their husbands to idol worship.

8) What is the status of the children of someone who converts?

The children are not automatically converted because the parent has. If they are young children they can be converted while they are young, this is not unusual as whole families have converted in the past. If the children are older children then they cannot be forced to convert, the decision has to be theirs. If the convert is a woman and her husband is a non-Yisreeli and does not convert then all subsequent children born are not automatically Yisreeli. If the convert is a man then all subsequent children born are Yisreeli by birth, this is because according to the Tora all descent is patrilineal.