

Yahshua's Teaching On The Believer's Right Of Self-Defense



6/19/07

By Rabbi Moshe Yoseph Koniuchowsky

NEW TEACHING!

The believer has a biblical right and even a mandate to provide self-defense for him, or herself as well as for loved ones. The many teachings that are set out in both Christian and Nazarene Yisraelite/Messianic circles regarding how believers are to react to attacks against their physical harm are just plain unscriptural and even outright dangerous. Adoption of a variety of such unscriptural positions can make us believe that Yahshua taught us pacifism in the face of danger to our physical beings, when nothing can be further from the truth.

We need to see the following points clearly:

- **Criminals will get guns and weapons regardless of the laws, as they are by definition law-breakers.** Criminals are armed and dangerous ready to attack, threaten maim and kill believers in Yahshua, who they believe and have been told, are easy prey as pacifist targets.
- Today we see the violence perpetrated against believers on the increase worldwide, including during worship services as both criminals and Islamic murders enter churches and slaughter believers, knowing that they have been taught to disarm and turn the other cheek. **Is forsaking the duty of self-defense another one of those non-Hebraic, or church based misinterpretations of Yahshua's words? Yes they are.** And the danger is that millions of believers worldwide are now at the mercy of murders, thugs and rapists, because we have adopted a pack of lies. **Many of is have been told**

that self- defense is a lack of trust in YHWH. We must remember historically that had Yisrael not defended itself in Tanach/First Covenant times, there would be no Yisrael and no Son of YHWH born in Bethlehem of Yahudah/Judea. It is time to relearn some crucial things.

- The underlying argument for all forms of gun control or complete gun bans is that guns cause crime. That's how I was trained to think. I was trained both in and out of religion to fear the handgun, as opposed to mankind, the abuser of the firearm. However what you, or I believe is irrelevant; what does the Bible actually say? **It teaches us that men cause crime and their evil hearts cause crime Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 17:9.**
- In Beresheeth/Genesis chapter 4 we read of the first murder. Cain/Qayin was angry with hate and thus killed his brother Abel/Avel when no guns were available. The murder weapon could have been a rock, a knife, or his hard fist. **The point is the murder was in his heart not in his choice of a weapon.** We see the same situation with Lamech also a murder without gun access. **How did YHWH respond to these murders? Did He ban rocks, knives, or fists? No.** He banished Cain/Qayin the murderer and then instituted capital punishment (Beresheet/Geneses 9:5-6). He destroyed Lamech in the flood and banned Cain himself (not rocks, or knives) from other humans. Not one word about banning weapons, or any other type of weapon.

In Matthew/Mattityahu 5:38-39 many wrongly believe that Yahshua taught total pacifism and forbade any means of self-defense by His disciples. The first understanding is that when Yahshua teaches us 'to turn the other cheek,' it is not so we can just sit still and be pummeled, or annihilated, but to see, or to determine whether our assailant is determined to 'go all the way' and destroy us, or if he just reacted in a spur of the moment. If that is the case, he certainly will not touch the other cheek if it is offered to him.

Once and IF the other cheek is also struck, you know your assailant is serious about his intention to inflict harm; then self defense measures including fleeing may be necessary. Remember also that context ALWAYS determines what is actually being taught and in this 'Sermon on the

Mount," Messiah is not teaching about national conduct, but individual believers' personal conduct and their personal responses.

In this particular portion Yahshua is making it clear that the proper conduct for individual believers is NOT TO TAKE VENGEANCE, or retribution on criminals, because that is not the job of the individual believer, but of civil authorities, who have the authority to take righteous vengeance on those who threaten society. We read in Romans/Romiyah chapter 13:1-5 that believers are to be subject to all the rules of civil government and authority, as YHWH has given them the 'power of the sword' to execute justice and vengeance upon the criminal elements that threaten society.

In Matthew/Mattityahu 5:38-39 the individual believer is forbidden to execute vengeance and retribution, because that authority is solely that of the gov't that YHWH has placed over us to take vengeance on our behalf. That is if the government is one that does its responsibility in such matters, as opposed to an unrighteous government that executes, rather than protects its citizens.

Yahshua's very language in the entire 'Sermon on the Mount' indicates that He was clearing up some long held incorrect perceptions among the believers. His phrase "you have heard that it has been said, or taught" followed by His own true statement of contrast "BUT I SAY UNTO YOU," indicates that He was teaching His disciples the truth of certain matters, as opposed to mans' adopted traditions.

One of the traditions He was rebuking was that believers simply hand over their rights of self-defense to others, or to a government that may not be able, or willing to protect them. What happens if the government refuses to protect its citizens, but instead becomes their murders and rapists? Then according to Yahshua the believer is to turn the other cheek to DETERMINE where his enemy is going with his attack and how quickly his enemy is willing to pursue the attack. It is not an admonition, at all to pacifism, as we have far too many other Scriptures contradicting this incorrect pacifistic interpretation of these verses. When Yahshua wishes to make a scriptural point, He often uses the term "it is written," as in Matthew/Mattityahu 4, as opposed to "you have heard it said."

When Yahshua goes on to rebuke the eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth vengeance in this same sermon, He is again discouraging personal vengeance and personal retribution against others by taking the law into their own hands. He is in no way forbidding believers to defend themselves, as that would contradict the Torah that He Himself gave Yisrael our people on Mt. Sinai. Again as said before, He is merely forbidding retribution not self defense. He does admonish us however that we ought to pray and petition YHWH on behalf of our enemies, as opposed to partaking in personal vigilantism. Remember it is a far cry between vigilantism and self-defense.

Government has the duty and calling of vengeance, but the individual has the duty and calling to protect himself and his, or her family when and if attacked. It is the basic human right of self-defense. Both the Tanach and the Renewed Covenant teach an individual's right and duty of self defense, as an obligation and duty to our families, spouses, friends and congregations. We cannot rely on the government for individual self-defense, as sometimes the government cannot, or will not, protect its citizens, or may do so in a belated, or tardy manner, due to poor social services, or worse yet, due to a tyrannical form of rule. **We have a Torah bound obligation to defend our loved ones and our properties including our houses of worship.**

Exodus/Shemot 22 verse 2 and 3 teaches us clearly that if our lives are threatened by a murderer, or intruder into our properties, we must kill him and if we do so in the act of self-defense, we have no guilt whatsoever. A threat to our lives and lives of our loved ones must be met with lethal force, even if it results in the death of the assailant. This is YHWH's command and is required of us. If however the thief, or intruder escapes, so that our lives are no longer threatened, we are not to kill that person. We are not to pursue them to the ends of the earth!

Proverbs/Mishle 25:26 is clear that if we fail to defend our lives before an assailant, we the righteous, have abdicated our duty by faltering before the wicked and evil.

Private vengeance is forbidden, where someone would stalk, or hunt down a criminal, even after their life is no longer in imment danger. We are

forbidden to take private vengeance, or retribution, but we are also warned not to falter before the wicked.

The 6th commandment teaches us to not to murder. Yet Torah is filled with examples and situations where we are allowed to kill in order to defend ourselves and in order for the death penalty, or capital punishment to be carried out. Clearly YHWH has told us not to murder, which means we must not take an innocent life. But He also has told us to defend ourselves and that we would not be guilty when doing so.

We know that Messiah also approves of self-defense as Malachi 3:6 and Hebrews/Ivrim 13:8 both speak of YHWH-Yahshua being the same yesterday, today and forever. We see the sad irony of those believers who teach that the Torah, or the instructions of YHWH, have been done away with and nailed to the cross, in order to make room for a new dispensation of abundant grace. Ironically it is the Torah that is the very foundation of their right of self-defense! Even secular U.S. courts based on Torah principles differentiate between murder in the first degree and mere manslaughter. Yet believers often make no such difference and are thus sitting ducks for terrorists, who love to massacre them in the name of jihad, or for some other demonic political objective.

No wonder these pacifists are slaughtered during worship services and prayer meetings by Muslim terrorists, or other evil wicked people, because their pastors and their spiritual leaders have told them that it is a lack of faith, or a lack of trust in YHWH to possess a firearm. Moreover, they are told that YHWH alone will defend them, even though YHWH has told us in many places to defend ourselves. Yes, YHWH defends us when we cannot defend ourselves, but under no situation are we to abdicate our call to be priests over our own homes and over our own assemblies.

Part of the priestly calling is to withstand evil and not falter in the face of the wicked men and women who come to do us harm. The reason this 'don't defend yourselves' garbage has spread, is because pastors teach that the Torah has been done away with and so the self-defense admonitions of Exodus/Shemot 22:2 allegedly no longer apply.

Second Timothy/Timtheous Bet 3:16 and 17 teach us that ALL scripture is for our instruction in this world and not just the Renewed Covenant. First Timothy/Timtheous Alef 5:8 speaks of the believer PROVIDING FOR THOSE OF HIS OWN HOUSE. Meaning, the believer is the priest of his home and part of that duty is to provide for ones own home, the priestly duty and obligation of self-defense. If a believer does not provide basic safety and protection for his own home, than he, or she (single parent/woman) is worse than an infidel and has denied the faith.

It would be absurd to buy a house, furnish it with all necessities such as food and water and such and then refuse to install locks and other security devices in order to provide protection for those in the believer's house. How many men would sit idly by while their wives and children were raped, or killed? What kind of guardianship is that? Yet that is exactly what many pulpits teach all in the cloak of 'turning the other cheek.' In like manner, not taking the life of say a threatening 'night time thief,' or murderer, or kidnapper, or Islamic terrorist, is a severe form of not providing the nurture and protection of ones own home according to Shemot/Exodus 22 verse 2.

In Luke/Luka 22:36-38 we see Yahshua admonishing His disciples to sell their non-essentials and to purchase swords for self defense, as the sword was like an assault rifle in our days. It was the finest offensive weapon of that time. If Yahshua forbade us the self-defense of our lives and properties, why would He command the disciples to buy swords? Couldn't Yahshua alone protect them? Of course He could, but He was showing them the difference between vengeance and self-defense.

In Matthew/Mattityahu 26:52-54 Yahshua tells Kepha/Peter to put his sword back in its holder, as he was using it inappropriately. He was using it to stop Yahshua from dying for the world's sin and that was outside the will of the Father. Peter/Kepha was using it to defend Yahshua, who needed no help in defending Himself and moreover was actually born to die and to be slaughtered as the Lamb of YHWH. Peter/Kepha needed the sword for his own protection from the Romans, but surely Yahshua did not need such protection, as He was the universe's Creator and Savior! But notice what Yahshua did not say. He did not say 'GET RID OF YOUR SWORD FOREVER YOU FOOL AND START TURNING YOUR CHEEK.' He merely told Peter to

put it back in its holder, as Yahshua had to be slaughtered as the world's Lamb and didn't desire Peter's protection.

In Luke/Luka 10: 30-37 the 'Good Samaritan' protected and defended the mugging victim. We don't know if he first had to chase away this Efraimite's assailants before ministering to his wounds. Most likely he did. And notice Yahshua commends the "Good Samaritan" and not the religious, who saw no need to physically defend their Efraimite brother. We have no right, or calling by YHWH to turn the other cheek, to be continually pummeled until death, but we do have a right and an obligation to provide protection for our house and for YHWH's house of faith.

Every rabbi and pastor in this sick day and age should immediately consider what firearms they have and what security arrangements they have made for the people of YHWH right now. This is a far cry from seeking violence and looking for violence, like some other religions that offer their deity innocent human blood as ascension offerings.

It is the obligation of a shepherd of YHWH's flock to also take into account the safety and well being of their flock. Pastoral care without security arrangements in this sick and wicked day and age when the end time beast's deadly wound is being miraculously healed (the Ottoman caliphate is being revived) is the sin of presumption, negligence and omission. You can shrug your shoulder if you choose, but in so doing you are not providing true pastoral care, which like Yahshua, seeks to guard the entire body, soul and spirit!

There are other examples of biblical self-defense. In the days of the judges, we see in Judges/Shophtim 5:8, that every time the rulers of Yisrael oppressed the people and led them into idolatry they also caused the citizens to disarm as the Scriptures says "there was no sword, or shield even among as many as 40,000 Israelites." This verse goes on to say that to forsake the right of self defense, is akin to obedience to strange and new elohim, as YHWH requires Yisrael to defend themselves!

The disarming of the people of YHWH is what allowed unrighteous rulers to prevail over us in the first place! Furthermore, we see in First Samuel/Schmuel Alef 8:10-13 that Yisrael demanded a king like all the

surrounding nations. Originally when YHWH was their King, EVERY MAN HAD THE RIGHT, CALLING AND THE DUTY OF SELF-DEFENSE and there was no need for a national standing army in which their sons and daughters would be recruited for political wars in foreign lands.

However once King Saul set up his kingship, immediately self-defense fell into the hands of a wicked government and foreign wars had to be fought. If Yisrael had maintained YHWH as King, all self-defense, individual and national defense, would have remained YHWH's job, as Yisraelite individuals would have borne their own arms as commanded by Torah. That was the original design friends! Under King Saul, the Philistines overcame Yisrael and notice one of the first things that they did was to put Yisrael under a weapons ban, so that they could not defend themselves. See First Samuel/Schmuel Alef 13:19-20, 22-23. Today the same goals and the same 'spirit of the Philistines' oppress the people of Yisrael, by banning guns from the land.

The sword of today is the handgun. The sword control of the Philistines is the "gun control" of any government that does not trust their people with firearms for self-defense, but wants them removed, so that unjust governments can reign havoc on the people and leave them like ancient Yisrael, with no means of self-defense. Of course, the crazy, the mentally ill and the quick tempered, should have strong restrictions from ever having a weapon. That goes without saying. That's not gun control; that's mere logic and sanity!

In Numbers/Bamidbar 31:3 we see Yisrael as a nation of armed individuals who brought their own weapons to fight against the Midianites. There was no government army to give them weapons and to fight unjust foreign wars that put the people in slavery to their own government. Moshe said "arm yourself for war." In this way, the individual has the obligation for the provision and protection both of his own home and of his own people. It is the spirit of the Philistines that tries to remove the self-defense capability from us, and it is the Spirit of YHWH and Yahshua that tells us to arm ourselves for self-defensive purposes only.

Remember whether we are armed, or not, the growing criminal elements around us, as well as the end time Islamic beast is well armed. Should we

then break Torah and disarm? Was not ancient Yisrael required to have a shovel attached to their personal weapon, so that even when doing their 'private business,' they were protected (Devarim/Deuteronomy 23:13)? Were they to wait for the government or 911 to arrive?

We may not need tanks and assault rifles, but surely we all are commanded to keep and maintain a sword or two. All of King David's men along with King David himself carried swords for self-defense. Had they not, King David would have no doubt been slaughtered by King Saul way before his ascension to the throne. See First Samuel/Schmuel Alef 25:13. In Nehemiah/Nechemyah 4:17-18 we see that upon the Jewish peoples return from Babylon, they used both the physical sword and the word/sword of faith. Both were required to restore and rebuilt Yahrushalayim/Jerusalem.

Today these basic needs have not changed. In Yahrushalayim/Jerusalem today the only way that Yahrushalayim/Jerusalem can be rebuilt including the future Temple is with those Yisraelites who obey Torah, but who also bear arms during that restoration and rebuilding. If the 2 house movement and their leaders think that the Tabernacle of David will be rebuilt without the right of self-defense and without the citizenry's right to bear arms, they are sadly mistaken.

Note that Nehemiah and his helpers never sought violence, nor sought to execute vengeance, but when the Arab inhabitants of the land tried to destroy them and stop the work, they responded in self-defense. What would have happened had Nehemiah and Ezra the PROPHETS, been unarmed? Yahrushalayim/Jerusalem would have remained in ruins and Yahshua our Savior would never have been born into this world!

In the USA, the framers of our wonderful constitution knew and grasped well the biblical command of self-defense and did not desire that the instruments of defense should be concentrated in the hands of a few in a central government. They knew that the government had no reason to monopolize the stock of arms, unless it had evil intentions to use them on their citizens. They saw the dangers of an unarmed population from both foreign powers and from future possible unrighteous governments of America as well.

One can honestly debate whether assault rifles should be banned, but one cannot debate the biblical admonitions of both the Tanach and the Renewed Covenant to bear our own arms, only in self-defense and only in matters and situations where one's life is in imminent danger. If we refuse to follow the teachings of our true King, we will inevitably have another King Saul to reign over us, as the spirit of the Philistines rises up, in order to disarm our homes and our properties.

In Luke/Luka 22:36-38 we see Yahshua encouraging His talmidim to sell clothing in exchange for swords. He knew they would need them in the Jewish wars against Rome and in their flight from the Yahrushalayim/Jerusalem authorities, but He limited their collection to two swords, because while He allowed and taught self-defense, He also limited the weapons to a limited supply that was needed and not a stockpiling of weapons.

That is because unlike the world, we realize that ultimately Yahshua and Yahshua alone is our fortress, defense and shield, our high tower and buckler! Let us do what we have been called to do and then YHWH will surely do what we cannot do!