

Detrich Bonhoeffer and the Torah: Excerpts from “*The Cost of Discipleship*”

By Rabbi Edward Levi Nydle-Levi bar Ido; B’nai Avraham

“When [Messiah]* calls a man, he bids him to die,” proclaimed Detrich Bonhoeffer, a Lutheran Pastor in the mid 20th Century. Bonhoeffer would lose his life in a concentration camp at Flossenburg, on April 9th, 1945; just days before its liberation by the Allies from the Nazis. His book, “**The Cost of Discipleship**” has become a classic. There are some very startling statements within its covers. The foremost being that Bonhoeffer believed in the Torah, and that a true disciple of Yahshua should govern his life by its precepts. Here are a few excerpts from the book:

- “Discipleship means adherence to [Yahshua the Messiah] alone, and immediately. But now comes the surprise—the disciples are bound by the Old Testament Law.” **Page 136**
- “The law that [Yahshua] refers to is the law of the old covenant, not a new law, but the same law which He quoted to the rich young man and the lawyer when they wanted to know the revealed will of [Yah]. It becomes a new law only because it is [Messiah] who binds His followers to it. For the [Believer], therefore, the law is not a “better law” than that of the Pharisees, but one and the same; every letter of it, every jot and tittle, must remain in force and be observed until the end of the world. BUT, there is a BETTER RIGHTEOUSNESS which is expected of [Believers]. Without it NONE can enter the Kingdom of [Yahweh], for it is the indispensable condition for discipleship.” **Page 137**
- “[Yahshua] manifests His perfect union with the will of [Yah] as revealed in the Old Testament law and prophets. He has in fact NOTHING to add to the commandments of [Yah], except this, He keeps them... He alone understands the true nature of the law as [Yah’s] law: the law is not itself [Yah], nor is [Yah] the law. It was an error of Israel to make the law their [Yah] and their [Yah] a law. The disciples were confronted with the opposite DANGER OF DENYING THE LAW, ITS DIVINITY ALTOGETHER, AND DIVORCING [YAH] FROM HIS LAW. BOTH ERRORS LEAD TO THE SAME RESULT... in BOTH CASES the GIFT is confounded with the GIVER. Confronted with these twin errors [Yahshua] vindicates the divine authority of the law... There is no fulfillment of the law apart from communion with [Yah], and NO COMMUNION WITH [YAH] APART FROM FULFILLMENT OF THE LAW. To forget the first condition was the mistake of the Jews, and to forget the second was the temptation of the disciples.” **Page 137-138**
- “That is to say, [Yahshua the Messiah] and Him alone fulfills the law, because He alone lives in perfect communion with [Yah]. It is [Yahshua] Himself who comes between the disciples and the law, NOT THE LAW THAT COMES BETWEEN [YAHSHUA] AND THE DISCIPLES. They find their way to the law through the [stake] of [Messiah]. Thus by pointing His disciples to the law, which He alone fulfills, He forges a further bond between Himself and them. He must needs REJECT the notion that men can cleave to Him and BE FREE FROM THE LAW... This allays the disciples anxiety that adherence to the law would sever them from [Yahshua].” **page 139**
- “Only the DOER of the law CAN REMAIN IN COMMUNION WITH [YAHSHUA].” **page 140**
- “It is not the law that distinguishes the disciples from the Jews, but the “better righteousness.” **page 140**
- “Again, it is not enough to teach the law of [Yahshua], it must be done, otherwise it is no better than the old law... In a word it means following Him. It is the REAL ACTIVE FAITH IN RIGHTEOUSNESS of [Messiah]. It is the NEW LAW, the LAW of [Messiah].” **Page 141**

We as Yisrael read these quotes from Bonhoeffer with astonishment, and wonder why other “churchmen” do not comprehend this great truth he proclaimed. We realize that the Torah (instruction) is for all the *talmidim* of Yahshua to grasp and observe as a redeemed way of life. Torah belongs to us as Yisrael not just the *Yehudim*... We are to walk as Yahshua walked (since He is the personification of Yisrael). First Yochanan is an excellent book to use as a beginning study in true discipleship. As we mature as Yisrael in Messiah, let us endeavor to become true disciples of Yahshua by following and learning Torah as He is our Master. Then, may we walk in it in the “better righteousness” that Yahshua taught us. Rabbi Edward Levi Nydle-Revised 6-13-03

* All pagan titles and names have been changed and bracketed to show changes by Rav Nydle

