

Karaites Believe

By Bernie Besherse, *Chief Justice*, Beyt Din Hillel

1. Karaites *believe* and *keep* the original religion of Ancient Israel, as prescribed by **YHWH** in the **Tanakh** (*Torah*, *Nevi'im*, and *Kethuv'im*, AKA, *Old Testament*) as understood by the Israelites before the Pharisaic period.
2. Karaites *do not* accept later *additions*, such as the *Talmud* and “*Oral Torah*” of **Rabbinic Judaism**, as if they were divinely inspired. Those are merely the opinions of fearful, fallible men, not the **WORD** of The Almighty Creator.
3. Karaites *place* the *ultimate responsibility* of interpreting the Tanakh on *each individual*. This requires study and intimate familiarity with the Tanakh.
4. Karaites *hold every* interpretation up to the same, *objective scrutiny*, regardless of its source.
5. Karaites *believe* in **ONE**, Omnipresent, Incorporeal, Eternal, and Almighty **YHWH**, the **Creator of the Universe**, who gave the Tanakh to the Israelites through **Moses** and the **Prophets**.
6. Karaites *trust* in Divine providence, and *hope* for the coming of the Messiah, who will be a **man**, a physical descendant of King David, who will have a special anointing by **YHWH** empowering him to fulfill all of the *prophecies* regarding **The Messiah** that are *found in the Tanakh*.

When **YHWH** told Moses to come up to Mount Sinai to receive the Torah, He said in **Exodus 24:12** [JPS], "**Come up to me into the mountain, and wait there, and I will give you the stone tablets with the teachings and commandments which I have inscribed to instruct them.**"

It says that the commands are **written**, and **no mention** is made of an **Oral Law**.

The Tanakh reports that the **written** Torah was both **lost** and **completely forgotten** and only *rediscovered* by the Temple priests after being lost for **50 years** (**2 Kings 22:8**; **2 Chronicles 34:15**). It is **inconceivable** that an **Oral** Law could have been *remembered* when the **written** Law was completely *forgotten*.

2 Kings 22:8 [JPS] Then the high priest Hilkiyah said to the scribe Shaphan, 'I have found a scroll of the Teaching in the house of the **LORD**.' And Hilkiyah gave the scroll to Shaphan, who read it.

2 Chronicles 34:15 [JPS] Hilkiyah the high priest spoke up and said unto the scribe Shaphan: 'I have found a scroll of the Teaching in the house of the **LORD**.' And Hilkiyah gave the scroll to Shaphan, and he read it.

The words of the **Mishnah** and **Talmud** are the words of **people**, living in the **2nd–5th centuries CE**, in contrast to the **Torah**, which is held to be a **direct revelation** by **YHWH** through Moses.

The **Torah** states in **Deuteronomy 4:2**, "You shall **not add anything** to what I command you, **or take anything away from it**, but keep the commandments of **YHWH**, your Elohim, which I enjoin upon you."

Karaites **accept** that this **excludes** the possibility of later **changes** being viewed as divinely ordained. This verse also **prohibits** such concepts as *changing the dietary, divorce, and Sabbath laws* at the **Council of Nicea**.

Joshua 8:34–35 [JPS] states:

34. After that, he [Joshua] read **all** the words of the **Teaching** [Torah], the Blessing and the Curse, just as it is **written** in the Book of the **Teaching**.

35. There was **not a word of all that Moses had commanded that Joshua failed to read in the presence of the entire assembly of Israel**, including the women and the children and the strangers who accompanied them.

First of all, because **Joshua 35** says that Joshua read from the Torah **every word** that Moses had **commanded** (not just the commandments that had been **written**), this says **by inference** that Moses **had not** been given an **Oral Law**, because Joshua could not have **read** any of an **Oral Law** out of the **written Torah**.

Secondly, there could **not** have been any **additional commandments** outside of the **written Torah**, because **ALL** of the commandments that existed could be read from the Torah scroll.

And **Thirdly**, **Joshua 1:8** [JPS] states: "Let not this Book of the Teaching cease from your lips, but recite it day and night, so that you may observe faithfully **all** that is **written** in it. Only then will you prosper in your undertakings, and only then will you be successful."

The blessings are in the **studying** and **keeping the written words of the law**. The blessings include peace, plenty, protection, and even having *eternal life*, as indicated in **Ezekiel 18:27 – 28**.

27. And if a wicked person turns back from the wickedness that he practiced and **does that which is just and right [i.e., obeys Torah]**, such a person shall save his life.

28. Because he took heed and **turned back from all the transgressions that he committed [i.e., quits disobeying Torah]**, he shall live; he shall not die.

The terms “live” and “not die” as well as “save his life,” carry an *eternal* connotation, not just a temporal limitation. These verses clearly establish that forgiveness of sin and obtaining eternal life depend upon obedience to Torah, not upon mere “belief” in the **blood, life, death**, or *purpose* of the death of **anyone**.

We are to obey the laws in the Torah.

Deuteronomy 11:26 - 28

26. Behold, I set before you this day **a blessing and a curse**;

27. **A blessing, if ye obey the commandments** of the LORD your God, which I command you this day:

28. **And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments** of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known.

Deuteronomy 30:19 - 20

19. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:

20. That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, *and* that thou **mayest obey his voice**, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he *is* thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.

These commandments of which Deuteronomy is speaking are the commandments given by YHWH unto MOSES.

I will ask you to remember the **Shma**, – Deuteronomy 6:4.

In Hebrew, with transliteration and English translation below it:

: שמע ישראל יהוה אלהינו יהוה אחד 6:4 ←
echad YHWH eluhenu YHWH Israel Shma ←
one YHWH Almighty YHWH Israel Hear ←

In the **King James Version**:

6:4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:

In the KJV with Strong’s definitions:

6:4 Hear,^{H8085} O Israel:^{H3478} The **LORD**^{H3068} our **God**^{H430} *is* **one**^{H259} **LORD**:^{H3068}

In the **JPS 1917**:

6:4 HEAR, O ISRAEL: THE LORD OUR GOD, THE LORD IS ONE.

In the JPS 1999:

6:4 Hear, O Israel, The LORD is our God, the LORD alone.

Interesting, isn't it?

You can immediately see by comparing the Hebrew and the KJV that the final word, LORD, is *present* in the KJV but is *absent* in the Hebrew. The final word in the Hebrew is **יְהוָה**, - **echad**. The final word in KJV is **LORD**. This is an addition to the Torah, which is prohibited. It also imposes upon the reader the preconceived ideas of the translators.

I dislike raising an issue or pointing out a problem unless I can also suggest a peaceful solution. Sometimes raising an issue can cause more confusion than it assists in understanding, so let's try to make sense out of the **Shma**, OK?

The **ORDER** by YHWH to "HEAR," does not mean just to be aware of a sound.

Shma means to listen **CLOSELY**, with implication of attention, obedience, etc.

The **ORDER** is directed toward **Israel**, which is obviously **am_Israel** (the PEOPLE of Israel), because **eretz_Israel** (the LAND of Israel) *cannot* hear, and **Medinot_Israel** (the civil government of Israel) *will not* hear.

Who is **am_Israel** supposed to listen to?

YHWH, their Almighty ONE.

Why or *how* are they to listen?

In the **KJV**, they are supposed to be listening because He is one LORD.

In the **JPS 1917**, because He is one.

But do either of these options make sense? Not really.

The final word is "**echad**," which is a number (singular) that is often translated as **first**, **alone**, or **only**.

In the **JPS 1999**, where it says we are to pay attention to YHWH our Elohim, and to Him alone (possibly, to Him ONLY), then the sentence makes the most sense.

A shorter version of the sentence, in modern English, **might be:**

"Listen to and obey YHWH your Elohim, - to YHWH only."

Therefore, because the above blessings are for *obeying* YHWH and the curses are for *disobeying* YHWH, and we are to *listen to YHWH alone*, then our primary study and attention should always be directed toward more complete

understanding and compliance with the Torah. Even having preference over the Prophets and the Writings.

This would certainly *exclude* the Talmud, Oral Torah, Mishna, Book of Mormon, and the New Testament.

Does this make sense? Or does this violate Deuteronomy 4:2? What do you think, and why?

Please send any comments about this article to:

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יהוה

The name of our Creator is made up of four, Hebrew vowels, Y H W H יהוה. Vowels are sounds, not just marks on paper. (source: **Flavius Josephus** - *Antiquities of the Jews*)

The letter ה (h) when used as a vowel, usually has the "ah," "ha," or the "huh" sound. The ה is the *definite* article, or *THE, SPECIFIC, to the EXCLUSION of ALL others*.

This is exemplified in showing the difference between the word "eretz," meaning land, and the words "ha Eretz," meaning *THE Land of Israel, to the exclusion of all others*.

In Hebrew, the letters י (y) and ו (v)(w) are used interchangeably, and when located in the first, second, or third position in a word, indicate the tense of the word, either past, future, or continuing.

Being placed in the first and third positions, the י and ו indicate that the name is **both past and future**, or, - *Eternal*.

The ה associated with **both** the י and the ו means that the name is specifically, to the exclusion of all others, both *past* and *future*, or **THE Eternal**.

Furthermore, being *singular*, and *being found twice*, the ה would also allow the addition of the word, **ONE**, as a descriptor.

The Name, **YHWH**, could then be logically rendered as **The Eternal ONE**, because **He** has eternal existence, **to the exclusion of all others**.

It is pronounced in one, long breath, like the wind, with the accent on the middle syllable. .

eeeeeeaaaaaa UUUUUU' waaaah