

The role of Law as identified in the Old Testament and its impact on the Hospitality Industry

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Abstract

Within the social fabric of Israelite society in the Old Testament period, there were many rules of law derived from the *Tôrāh* (*dāt*), pertaining to the expected social and moral behaviour of individuals, that were generally basic to life that needed to be adhered to in order for harmony to prevail in society. These laws tended to change as society altered its structure and so legal rules were altered from time to time. Consequently, the conception of the law in the Israelite community also altered. This paper strives to investigate certain Old Testament texts with a legal perspective and analyses how these were viewed in society in terms of their philosophical value. The regulations as evidenced in the Law were considerably higher than the laws of the ancient pagan nations that bordered Israel and were handed down to Israel, as the 'chosen few' for their good. If they adhered to the law and maintained the covenant with God, He would bless them¹. The laws as such were not impossible to adhere to². The subject of the law enjoys a large part of Old Testament scripture and it provides guidance for human conduct in all the activities of daily living³. The purpose of this article is to explore the subject of the "law" passed down to the Israelites from a theological-philosophical perspective. This study is a meta-analysis of select literature pertaining to the theme.

Definition -The *Tôrāh* (Law)

The term *Tôrāh* may refer to:

1. The Pentateuch (first five books of the Old Testament).
2. The 613 laws as given by Moses to the Israelites including the Decalogue or Sinaitic Code.
3. The complete Old Testament.
4. The complete Old Testament plus the Oral Law.
5. The complete Old Testament plus the Oral Law plus Rabbinic teachings (Hebrew Talmud).

http://www.i-amfaithweb.net/law_blvr.htm#law

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INTRODUCTION

The Hebrew name for the Pentateuch is the *Tôrāh*, and the law is the first part in the three separations in the Hebrew Canon, namely the Law, the Prophets and the Writings. In the Hebrew tradition the Sinaitic Law given to Moses by God was considered to be more sanctified than the other two parts. The Law of

Moses was subdivided into a total of 613 requirements. Of these, 248 were of a positive nature and 365 of a negative nature⁴. Amongst this array of requirements for living in accord with God were the Ten Commandments⁵.

Despite the reference by Jews to the five books of Moses as "the Law". In reality, the Law was limited to only four books. To be more precise,

the Law proper is found in Exodus chapters 20-31; 35-39; the book of Leviticus; Numbers chapters 5-6; 8:1 - 9:14; chapters 26 - 30; and Deuteronomy 4:44 - 26:19. None are found in Genesis. The Israelites were required to try to understand God and to obey His Law⁶. The heart of Old Testament religion cannot be characterized as legalism, nor was the Law given as the means of achieving a right relationship with God by obedience. On the contrary, the context of the Law was the covenant that preceded and underlay the Law, and the covenant was initiated by the gracious act of the God.

The Law of Moses was given to the Israelites only⁷, and Malachi 4:4) and this idea has been presented in the *Talmud* (The rabbis of Palestine edited their oral law discussions and their work became known as the *Palestinian Talmud* -in Hebrew, *Talmud Yerushalmi*, which literally means "Jerusalem Talmud"). Gentiles were subject to the commandments of the Noahic Law, which was the law given to Noah after the flood. Those commandments are distinct from the *Tôrāh* and are to be found in Genesis 9:1-17. The Law of Moses was in essence a temporary legal requirement of God whereas the other covenants that God made with Israel, namely the Abrahamic, Davidic, and Land covenants, are all referred to as "everlasting". This is apparent in Genesis 17:7 and 2 Samuel 23:5. The Law of Moses is seen as temporary. Jeremiah prophesied that it would soon be substituted: "*Behold, days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers... My covenant which they broke..*"⁸.

The Law was a binding covenant between God and His people, Israel⁹. All ancient covenants were generally made between a powerful leader and his servants. The servants would obtain protection and favoured status rights and benefits from the ruler in return for which the servants would be guaranteed the total loyalty of the leader. The servants could show their allegiance to the leader by observing all of the covenant rules. Once rules were broken by a servant, he was liable for punishment. The Law of Moses as obtained from God on Mt. Sinai was constructed with these rules of conduct in mind.

The divine injunctions of God were heard by the entire community from God himself. Exodus 20:22-23: 19, provides laws for right conduct and these are followed by the Book of the Covenant (24:7). This came to embody the common law of Israel from the time of the judges to the initial monarchies. Most of the provisions of the laws are paralleled in both Egyptian and Hittite laws. If one compares the laws in the Book of the Covenant with various other legal codes in the Near East, it becomes clear that it was too a large extent based on cuneiform Law in Mesopotamia (This refers to any of the legal codes written in the cuneiform script, that was developed and used in the ancient Middle East). This includes the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi, which could be dated to roughly 1700 B.C. This is several centuries earlier than the laws to be observed by the Israelites¹⁰. In a sense the laws in the Covenant could thus "represent the Hebrew version of the general legal system of the Near East"¹¹.

The Law was given as the means of binding Israel to her God in an agreement. Obedience to the Law did not constitute Israel God's people; rather, it provided Israel with a standard for obedience by which the covenant relationships must be preserved "*The man who obeys the law shall live,*" i.e. enjoy the blessings of God¹².

Life is understood as a gift. Furthermore, the obedience demanded by the Law could not be satisfied by a mere legalism, for the Law itself demanded love for God¹³ and for neighbor¹⁴. Obedience to the Law of God was an expression of trust in God; and only those who offered God such that were really His people.

THE BOOK OF THE COVENANT

In Mesopotamian societies, the king was the developer of law. Kings were divinely granted justice and wisdom that allowed them to develop suitable laws for their subjects. Law was thus essentially secular in nature. Conversely, in Israel, God was the provider of the law. This implied that where violations of the law existed, these were sins against God himself. The bond between man and God was thus broken and in need of reconstruction. If the people violated the law, curses would befall them collectively. In

Mesopotamia, the law was basically civil legislation, whereas in Israel, all the moral and religious requirements resided in the Pentateuch. National leaders were obliged to inform people about the law and it was not the preserve of only legal authorities. The king and all the people were responsible for keeping the law¹⁵.

*"And Moses took the Book of the Covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words"*¹⁶. The Book contained all the conditions of the Covenant. It was the Book which would guide them so that they could know all that God wanted them to do, and all that they may wish to enquire of Him. Jesus abides as High Priest forever, he is "the surety of a better covenant"¹⁷. He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance¹⁸ something that the Old Covenant was unable to accomplish. Deuteronomy 5:1-6 also makes it clear that the Decalogue and the Covenant are not separate sets of laws. The Decalogue is the pivot of the Covenant. In cases where immorality reared its ugly head in society and where the people failed to worship God, curses would befall them at individual and national levels. Deuteronomy focuses its attention on the Decalogue, and many laws in Exodus are presupposed in Deuteronomy. The Decalogue is thus the basis of all Covenant law.

The greatest revelatory act of God in the Old Testament was the deliverance of the Jews from the bondage in Egypt. This was no ordinary event of history like the events that befell other nations. It was not an achievement of the Israelites. It was not attributed to the genius and skillful leadership of Moses. It was an act of God. *"You have seen what I did to the Egyptians and how I bore you on eagles wings"*¹⁹. This deliverance was not merely an act of God: it was an act through which God made Himself known and through which Israel was to know and serve God.

Within the Pentateuch there is legal material from which one can infer the shape of society in which what is related took place. We also find ample evidence concerning what God wants from the Israelites. In the Old Testament we see the divine act of deliverance of the Israelites which we find in the words: *"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage"*²⁰. Essentially, the entire corpus of sociology in Israel revolved around the Covenant with God. The Covenant laws dealt with all aspects of daily life concerning dealings with other people and also to an extent stated dietary regulations and how to conduct religious festivals.

The words of the Covenant, the Decalogue²¹, were written on stone tablets. These Ten Commandments as they are known comprised the initial part of the Covenant. Exodus 20:24–23:33 was also made part and parcel of the Covenant. Apart from the Decalogue, shrines were to be erected to God²² in which sacrificial altars would be housed. There was to be a weekly day of rest on the Sabbath²³. Slaves would be protected and their limited rights were to be safeguarded (21: 2-11). Slaves of the fairer sex, from time to time had equal status with their male counterparts (Ex 21:20, 26-27, 32). The crime of murder and that of assault were subject to strict retribution on the idea of *"an eye for an eye a tooth for a tooth"* (21:23-25). This law, known in Latin as *Lex Talionis*, was despite its seemingly harsh and ruthless aspects, a great advance on the blood-feuding and tribal vendettas that took place prior to its enforcement²⁴. Aliens also had limited rights and were afforded some protection as in Exodus 22:21. Widows and orphans and the elderly were also to be protected and had legal rights (22:22). Some of the provisions dealt with crimes such as theft (22:1-8) and trespassing (22:9). Rules were also in place on how to deal with dangerous animals (23:10-11). The poor were also protected from extortionists (22:25-27). If an animal took a human life that was endowed with the image of God, it was deemed to be guilty of committing a criminal act and was objectively guilty and was therefore to be executed²⁵. Human life was paramount in all biblical corpora. There were a number of laws against idolatry, many on love and fellowship and reverence

toward God. The epilogue of Exodus, includes a divine promise of protection during the future conquest of the Land of Canaan as long as Israel remains faithful to God and His laws. We must be careful that we do not view the Decalogue as case or statute law. There are no human penalties listed for their violation. It is God who will curse the violators and bless the keepers of the law. This aspect makes the Covenant akin to a treaty²⁶. The Decalogue was not Israel's criminal law, as it was not a list of offences that the state would prosecute.

TWO *Tôrāh*

There were essentially two *Tôrāh* (*dāt*), handed down to the people of Israel. The Sinai *Tôrāh* was the first, and is the most prominent in the Pentateuch. The Decalogue is the terms of the Covenant. It sets the path for Israelites to follow and marks them as an elect few who agree to abide by the rules as a response to thanking God for delivering them from bondage. This *Tôrāh*, the bulk of which resides in the book of Deuteronomy, has traditionally always been associated with Moses²⁷. In an apodictic form, the Decalogue emphasizes the aspect of holiness, how to worship God, how to serve ones family and society in general. It hinges mainly on the Decalogue (Ten Commandments), which were given to the Israelites by Moses after his ascent from Mt. Sinai. The *Tôrāh* becomes the one and only mediator between God and man; all other relationships between God and men, Israel or the word are subordinated to the *Tôrāh*. The second *Tôrāh* or Zion *Tôrāh*, was intended for all people, not only the chosen few (see Jeremiah 31:31 and Micah 4:1-4). For the Israelite, to know God, was to know what He desired of His people in terms of conduct as expressed in the Sinai *Tôrāh*²⁸. The Israelites were an 'elect' group and even Moses asks, "And what other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today?"²⁹. At the very beginning of the Decalogue, stands God who has authority that should not be question: I am the Lord thy God"³⁰. The *Tôrāh*, including the Ten Commandments, was given to Israel to regulate their society for a specific period of time, namely from the time of their acceptance of the Sinaitic Code until the coming of Jesus Christ. "These are the commandments the Lord

gave Moses on Mount Sinai for the Israelites"³¹. Once Jesus appeared, a new law came into being³²; Galatians 6:2; 1 John 3:21-24). A New Covenant relationship, between God and humanity came into existence. This was not merely for the 'elect' few but rather a covenant with all people.

The Israelites of the Old Testament believed that they had received a divine mandate to create a theocracy in the land that God had promised to Abraham. Consequently, they were, as a collective group of believers, desirous of cooperating with God to establish His Kingdom on earth. Israelite society in general was expected to seek God in all that it undertook. A first step in this regard was the observance of the Sabbath as a day of rest. On this day, individuals as well as the collective nation could reflect on their steps to attain godliness. Jews that failed to observe the Sabbath would not be able to reach the desired state of godliness and thus fail to achieve their full spiritual potential, to the detriment of Israelite society in general. The nation would either survive or perish, depending on how it utilized its time in atoning with God. To Israelites, God had initiated the mutually binding contract between Himself and Israel, as the 'people of God'. The 'divine' contract was thus based on the mutual assent of both God and the Israelites as His 'chosen' people. God presented His people with laws because of his love for them and His desire that they should not stray from his will: "Commands and prohibitions were not presented to the community as harsh and onerous impositions, but as loving protections safeguarding this space for fellowship with God" (Hanson: 1986). "And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes . . . for our good always"³³. In terms of the Covenant, God (*elōhîm*) was to be revered like no other.

The Israelites were brought to Mount Sinai where they received God's Law. The Covenantship bond implied an obligation by God for His people who through the transcendent (*Kādōsh*) intervened for His people. The Israelites were His servants (*Ebhedh*) and were partners in the covenant. The Decalogue emphasized the demand of God for His people to be obedient to Him. It is clear that the Israelites followed a distinctive pattern of life which corresponded to the faith "that Yahweh

*had acted and was acting on His peoples behalf and indeed constituting that faith as something as real consequence to the world*³⁴. In Hebrew society it was the priests who supplied the *Tôrāh* and who instructed the people on liturgical matters as well as ethical conduct.

In the book of Deuteronomy there is clearly a drive to alert the people of Israel to their status as God's elect and much prominence is afforded to the Covenant form of community life amongst the Israelites³⁵. The word *berīth* (Covenant) is aligned with the word *hesedh* (Devotion) and demonstrates the bond of the Covenant. In Deuteronomy, lays down many rules and regulations but is especially important to those Israelites with a deep understanding of the nature of the community in which they lived. In Deuteronomy we also find the word *Baḥer* (choose) used to describe God's Israel's relation to God. God tells His people *"lay to your heart all the words which I enjoin upon to you this day, that you may command them to your children, that they be careful to do all the words of this law. For it is no trifle for you, but it is your life"*³⁶. David says in Psalm 119:23: "I will never forget thy precepts, for by them thou hast given me life".

In any society where the source of laws is ancient scripture, such as in Judaism, the job of the jurists becomes essential as they seek to remain true to the *Tôrāh*. The *Tôrāh* was an extensive list of instructions which clearly demarcated between what was considered holy and what was profane as found in Leviticus 11. Leviticus further explained what rites were to be carried out by priests so as to placate the supra-personal or impersonal law which had within it a built-in system of retribution, for example, and how these should be conducted³⁷. So we see here a precise *modus operandi* on how to do things in the event of a person violating the law³⁸.

It was common sense to do things in a certain way, to fail to act wisely was considered foolish, rather than wrong³⁹. Each and every contract agreed to by two individuals was in essence considered to be a contract between three individuals- the two human parties and God.

TWO DISTINCT OBJECTIVES

In the Old Testament period, there are clearly two distinct legal perspectives that jurists would have to consider, namely the supra-personal or impersonal and the personal⁴⁰. It is apparent that there existed a principle of law to which all of God's creation had to subscribe within a distinct order. The notion that there existed standards which applied in a court with all means of coercion and within which no one could appeal, in both Old and New Testament times, was certainly a valuable one⁴¹. In this scenario, God was also bound by His oath and his actions had to be justified, the idea of theodicy, was thus also founded on the belief that God was also subject to the law.

However, the supra-personal legalities could not be placated and man had to try to remain in harmony with the natural law. The idea of a heavenly contract gradually filtered through Israelite society to result in a strong group conscience. If the Israelites kept the conditions of God's divine contract, He would be magnanimous and benevolent to their society. If they failed to live up to His part of the contract with them, they would be punished. The strong Covenant theology which the Israelites observed produced a social ethic which was not limited to the external sanctions of society via its legal system, but also internal control via the human conscience. Consequently the taking of oaths was considered to be very binding. If one broke an agreement made by an oath for example, they would be subject to curses upon them. This led to the conviction that the 'law' *Tôrāh* contained both history and a word concerning the ultimate meaning of history.

The law (*Tôrāh*) which God gave to Moses, by which Israel should be governed, was the paramount legal 'document'. This was a comprehensive list of instructions which served to regulate Israel's Covenant with God. According to RE Clements the: *"Torah is the comprehensive list of instructions and stipulations by which Israel's covenant with God is controlled"*⁴². The Torah was concerned with the structuring and regulating of society and the Israelites in particular as His elect few.

In Leviticus 18:1-5 God says to His people: "*You shall keep my statutes and my ordinances; by doing so one shall live. I am the Lord*". God's torah at Sinai, was one handed down by grace and it stresses that all people are required obey God and His rules for life, failing which they will not be delivered. The Torah's of God were gifts instituted expressly for the happiness of the covenant people. They were not to be an imposition, but rather a means of attaining the favour of God. Paul Hanson (1986), has stated that: "*Commands and prohibitions were not presented to the community as harsh and onerous impositions, but as loving protections safeguarding this space for fellowship with God*". God gave His laws to people in His Covenant with Moses and also imprinted this on their consciences. The law applied equally to kings and lay people. If a person committed an offence, not only would he be punished, but the whole of his community as well. Martin Luther was of the opinion that the Mosaic Law had a temporal role in God's plan of redemption. Within this framework, he stressed what is commonly referred to as the "second use" of the Law. This was to push the sinful unbeliever towards acknowledging God⁴³.

Within the supra-personal legal; perspective, one also finds the law relating to taboo and imprecation as well as the taking of oaths, although there was no reason expounded for the prohibiting of these. If one violated a taboo, he would be removed from the community or even sentenced to death⁴⁴. A curse pronounced on a person was also disastrous as it was not addressed to God or channelized via Him⁴⁵. Where curses were linked to God, as was the cases in 1 Samuel 26:19 and again in Joshua 6:26, it was not God who put them into effect, but rather approved of them. Humans also cursed God, and the implication here is that the power that made these curses reality was considered to be above God as in Psalm 37: 22 and Isaiah 8:21. The effects of curses could be neutralized by the carrying out of specific rites such as by destroying written statements to that effect⁴⁶. Oath taking was equally binding due its reliance on the same 'higher' law.

The personal legal perspective provided the prophetic-canonical perspective on the legal

system, within which all members of society were responsible to a personal legal authority. In the natural law scenario, good was derived from God because of its goodness. Conversely, in the personal legal perspective, all that was ordained by God was considered to be good. In this perspective, God was the final arbiter on legal matters. In Job 9:33, we see job hoping for a mediator between Him and God. God is thus regarded as just and fair in His dealings with humanity.

The law thus assumes takes on different meanings when viewed against different realities in Israelite society. When it is set against God who makes the law it is in itself a good thing. The law "denotes the rule of life which God gives to his people, that way in which they are to walk, those commandments which they are to obey"⁴⁷.

LAW AND THE COVENANT

Old Testament Israel was a theocratic state in which God and the institution of the state were integrated. The *Tôrāh* indicated how God was to be venerated⁴⁸. Apart from this function, it explained how, for example, the military forces of Israel should be organized in the event of war against the Canaanites (Numbers chapter 2). In Leviticus 19:9-14, for example, the majority of the laws were aimed at guiding the people and teaching them principles that could be applied to various situations. As the Law was God-given, once given, it did not require amendment by society. In Deuteronomy 15:12-17 we find examples of various rules and regulations that were part of the Covenant, that were applicable to unique legal cases. All ideas of supernatural acts – miracles, bodily resurrection etc, are *ipso facto* unhistorical but mythological.

Once it is viewed in the context of the Covenant, law begins to define who the people of God are. When placed in a life perspective, the law provides life to those who vigilantly observe it. In the personal legal perspective, it is expected that all people will act ethically at all times and display a strong sense of responsibility to God, who is considered to be a major role player as He provides the law and is thus a party to it. Generally, the *Tôrāh* was seen as a special gift from God and as it derives from Him it must be a good thing. According to the theologian W.

Eichrodt the *Tôrāh* disclosed God's will for humanity. God outlines what is expected. The God of Israel let His people know exactly where they stood in relation to Him and His will for them. Eichrodt states that, "*The fear that constantly haunts the pagan world, the fear of arbitrariness and caprice in the Godhead, is excluded*"⁴⁹. Although Israel was a part of the Levant, she had distinct features when compared with the other inhabitants in the region as far as secular law was concerned. The main difference resides in the fact that Israel emphasized God in all that it did and valued morality more by placing high values on human life. Class distinctions were irrelevant when considering the meting out of justice to those who had transgressed the law (*ibid*). The *Tôrāh* reflected the will of God and allowed people to know Him and His will⁵⁰. God was the controller of all: "*To the Lord belong even the highest heavens: the earth is His also, and everything on it*"⁵¹. The Pentateuch is a means for the Israelites to learn about what God seeks from them in terms of their behaviour towards Him. Both Psalm 78 and Psalm 106 make reference to the Pentateuch as literature which provides clear evidence for either the faith of the Israelites or the lack thereof. In ancient Israel, the judges, law-teachers, prophets, kings and indeed all other rulers played vital roles in promoting the Covenant laws.

Genesis (1-11) provides for us an introduction to the Pentateuch, in which emphasis is laid on its context as applying to all people, not only the elect few. All the writings on Moses, incorporating the large Sinai related sections, are intended to provide the reader with the nature of the laws under which Moses and the Israelites lived. The main purpose of the Law was to teach the Israelites how to become as holy as God⁵². Given that God's basic nature and will nature are unchanging and unchangeable (Malachi 3:6; James 1:17), the principles espoused within the laws served as a means of attempting to understand God and how to please Him in the mutuality of God and man's life. The Covenant bond between God and Israel was far more than a simple contract but rather pointed to a common life within which the elect Israelites would have many responsibilities. The Israelites were obliged to obey the Covenant which God had imposed upon them (Westbrook: 1971). The institution of

the Covenant paved the way for the Israelites to become a religious community. In the Chapter 28 of Deuteronomy we find reference to the moral order of the cosmos in which there are certain laws according to which the world is to be run. These were primarily moral and ethical laws that were expected to be observed.

A society which fails to observe these laws is doomed were as those societies that observe them will have their reward. F. R. Kraus studied law codes of the Old Testament and concluded in his research in 1917 that the nature and purpose of the laws which are included in the final make-up of the Pentateuch, were intended to provide for us, information about the lawgiver (Eilers: 1960). In the later stages of the Pentateuch, Moses is the lawgiver, and the writings have been enlarged to include a sizeable amount of the actual law, hence the name "Book of the law." The Pentateuch may thus be regarded as a series of laws that were intended to regulate life amongst the Israelites. The suggestion has been made that the Pentateuch has included a series of laws for the express purpose of providing its readers with a clearer understanding of what Mosaic Law constituted, and why God gave it to Israel. Mendenhall considers the Mosaic Law in the Pentateuch to be a statement of legal policy rather than a means by which the Israelites could win God's favour (Mendenhall: 1958). In Exodus to Deuteronomy, we are provided with a picture of the lawgiver Moses, and also obtain an idea of the types of laws under which he lived. We also find reasons for God's providing of the law to Moses and his elect few.

THE THEOLOGY OF LAW

Von Rad (1965), states that: "The Decalogue raises one of the most important of all the questions in the theology of the Old Testament—how is this will for Israel to be understood theologically?" He answers that the gift which the elect receive from God is life itself. He cites Deuteronomy which blends the Commands to be followed by the Israelites and the promise of life for their obedience (5:33; 16:20; 22:7) and further stresses that: "*The proclamation of the commandments and the promise of life were obviously closely connected in the liturgy from a very early time*" (*ibid*) (see

also Ezekiel 18:5-9). "The soul who sins is the one that will die" (Ezekiel 18:20). If one obeys God's statutes he will live. This implies that those who are faithful to God will become beneficiaries of His promise that "God will be with you." (Von Rad: 1966). Walther Eichrodt expressed the opinion that within the Pentateuch the law is presented to us in such a way that it: "impressed on the heart and conscience. Application to individual concrete instances is then left in many cases to a healthy feeling for justice" (Eichrodt: 1961).

52 Leviticus 19:1-2. The *Tôrāh* which was a special gift of God for humanity was passed down to humanity and was God's way of informing His people how they were expected to live their lives in accordance with His statutes. The fact that they had a *Tôrāh* passed down to them by God, demonstrated that they were His elect people, His 'chosen' nation. Throughout their history in the Old Testament, the Israelites were in a sense bound to the unifying nature of the law (Clements: 1978). The book of Deuteronomy began the process of Canon formulation for the people of Israel and set the tone for how they should live their lives. "*The Decalogue is thus the culmination of a centuries-long process of a community's identifying itself in response to the creative, redemptive, sustaining and sanctifying acts of God*" (Hanson: 1986). If an Israelite ignored the *Tôrāh*, he could expect severe punishment, such as, in the worst case scenario, exile from the land (Clements: 1978). The prophets lambasted Israel for its many offenses and emphasized that Israel, as the elect, had a mutual covenant with God, and by sinning, they were placing at great risk this special bond (Ibid). The only way one could hope to live was by observing the requirements of the *Tôrāh*. Ezekiel states: "He who follows my decrees and faithfully keeps my laws. That man is righteous; he will surely live" (18:9). By either accepting or rejecting the *Tôrāh*, individuals came to define themselves as either working within a community or outside of it (Hanson: 1986).

Law and the Monarchy

Concerning Israelite kings, it is stressed in the Old Testament that his throne was based on justice. The laws were God's and not his and

had to be obeyed by him (Isaiah 11:3). Unlike the Egyptian Pharaoh the kings of Israel had no autonomy. In terms of the Israelite philosophy of legal matters, the people could overthrow a king by violent means if he was found to have offended the law of God. For example Jeroboam 1 was able to dislodge both Rehoboam and Jehu and even revolted against Ahab. It must however be pointed out that the use of violence was not the favoured method of dislodging a monarch (Hosea 1:4). If the ruler of Men was a king, this was the tyranny of monarchy. If a group of men ruled over others men, this was the tyranny of the oligarchy. If most of the men ruled over others in a particular society, this was considered to be a tyranny by the majority. However, where God ruled men, the truth was liberty and was in line with the Covenant between God and His people.

OLD TESTAMENT HOSPITALITY

In the Old Testament as well as the New Testament period, Hospitality is an art in which a person invited others to their home to share in a meal and often also involved lodging being provided to the guests who could have been strangers.

The act of hospitality was thus very common. It was a privilege to make provision for the needs of travelers either food or shelter. Guests were greeted with gladness. Today, businesses are driven more by enhancing the bottom-line than by sincere intentions and this is due to the moral decline of our society and culture as God-consciousness diminishes. The practice of hospitality for the Jews in Old Testament times was based on the command of God that his people should demonstrate His generous Grace and mercy towards all guests. God commands in Exodus 23:9 "*And you shall not oppress a stranger, since you yourselves know the feelings of a stranger, for you also were strangers in the land of Egypt*".

God ordered that His people should not be inhospitable toward strangers but rather be hospitable toward them. This is further developed in the Levitical code in Leviticus 19:10, 33-34 "*Nor shall you glean your vineyard,*

nor shall you gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the needy and for the stranger ... 33'When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. 34 'The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were aliens in the land of Egypt."

There are numerous examples of hospitality provision in 'legal' parameters. One involves the Patriarch Abraham as the host and not the guest. In Genesis 18:2-5 we read: "2 *And when he lifted up his eyes and looked, behold, three men were standing opposite him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the earth, 3 and said, "My lord, if now I have found favor in your sight, please do not pass your servant by. 4 "Please let a little water be brought and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree; 5 and I will bring a piece of bread, that you may refresh yourselves; after that you may go on, since you have visited your servant."* Abraham is ready to serve his guests and almost begs them to come and rest in his home. We later learn that these guests are no ordinary guests but are in fact God and the two angels.

This is a lesson to us to be careful about how we offer hospitality for we do not know who we are may be dealing with. Abraham was busy with his own business but on the spur of the moment made preparations for the unexpected guests. Abraham by faithfully practicing hospitality showed love for his guests but also showed love for the Lord Jesus Christ who is now preparing a place for us at His heavenly banquet.

HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

In South Africa hospitality is associated with especially etiquette and entertainment for paying guests. This does however not mean that one does not care for the guests and treat them with the utmost care and integrity. In terms of Biblical teachings and laws, guests were considered to be special people with needs that needed to be taken care of. Hotel employees are required to show respect to all guests and indeed all stakeholders. Hotels must provide for the needs

of guests, and treat them as equals. Cultures and subcultures may vary in the extent to which one is expected to show hospitality to strangers, and employees must as far as possible try to become tuned in to the needs of the guest.

The hospitality service industry includes hotels, motels, guest-houses, casinos, and resorts, which offer comfort and guidance to their guest as part of the business relationship that comes into existence once a booking by the guest is accepted. In Biblical Middle Eastern Culture, it was considered a cultural norm to take care of the strangers and foreigners living in the society. These norms are reflected in the many Biblical commands and examples that have been provided in this article.

Hospitality managers and other employees must at all times be honest. They should not mislead or deceive guests by misrepresentations and false promises. They should essentially act with honesty and integrity. The relationships between employees, managers, guests, regional and corporate, suppliers, competitors, and the community at large must be impeccable. The Golden Rule for hospitality employees is simply- "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you" and consider how ones actions will affect guests and impact on the bottom-line. The way in which hospitality operations work so as to benefit and meet the needs of the people are issues that necessitate ethical consideration. Hospitality groups have major responsibilities that include ethics in the workplace, economic and labour related as well as legal and philanthropic elements. The hospitality industry needs to carry out its duties in such a way that it benefits not only individual companies and operators but also all the guests that stay over, as well as employees and the community in which the operation is based. Hospitality industry operations, could think in Old Testament biblical terms and could assume a utilitarian perspective, and consider ethical principles where their acts are deemed morally correct if their effect is for the uplifting of society.

CONCLUSION

It seems that the impersonal and personal perspectives gradually merged. Consequently

the fine dividing line between the legal perspective on life and the perspective of wisdom dissolved until law and wisdom were identified (Deist & Vorster: 1986). The book of Deuteronomy urged people to preserve the law within their heart, so that they could live a long time and that all may go well with them (Proverbs 22:28, Deuteronomy: 25:13-16). The Covenant Code, the Decalogue (Exodus 34), each encompassed a wide range of anticipated punishments in the event of particular infringements of the law and gradually came to characterize an Israelite community of faith. The *Tôrāh* was associated with disclosing the divine will, and it gave shape to the Israelites as the elect people of God. Those who embraced the law and who obeyed God would inherit life eternal. By embracing the *Tôrāh* and the law one embraces God. Once Israel was given the *Tôrāh* they responded; "We will do everything the Lord has said; we will obey" (Exodus 24:7). God responded to them, "Everything they said was good. Oh, that their hearts would be inclined to fear me and keep all my commands always so that it might go well with them and their children forever" (Deuteronomy 5:28-29).

As law was handed down through simple ethical teachings by God who used it to make known His will for the elect people of Israel, it had to be good. It gave order to Israelite society and demarcated them as a special nation, an elect people of God. By means of the *Tôrāh*, Israelites knew how to be a holy nation. Consequently, all Israelites were expected to embrace the law. By doing this they were essentially embracing God. One could argue that much which passed as legal requirement in the Old Testament was catechetical and moralistic rather than legislative in nature. Consequently, we may infer that many of the narratives found in the Old Testament have a wisdom perspective which is deontological rather than legal. The approach had distinct ideas in terms of expression of religious experiences and was not legislation *per se*. The Sinaiatic Law was never meant to be viewed and interpreted as a permanent and full revelation of God's mind to man. Its primary function was to prepare the way for Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:23-25). The law passed down to Moses was never intended for any people except the nation of Israel (Deuteronomy 5:1-3; 6:6-7) and regulated life in Israelite society. In

the Old Testament we thus find comprehensive and demanding ethical codes for right-living before God that regulated the relationship between the 'elect' people of God and their creator.

- 1 Deuteronomy 28:1-14
- 2 Deuteronomy 30:11-14
- 3 Stuhlmacher, P. (1986). "The Law as a Topic of Biblical Theology", in *Reconciliation, Law and Righteousness. Essays in Biblical Theology*, Philadelphia: Fortress, 130.
- 4 Hendriksen, W. (1940). *The New Testament Commentary*, (12 Volumes), Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 809.
- 5 Exodus 20:1-17; Deuteronomy 5:1-22
- 6 Deuteronomy 6:6-9; 27:9-10
- 7 Deuteronomy 4:7-8; Psalm 147: 19-20
- 8 Jeremiah 31:31-32
- 9 Exodus 19:5-6; 24:3-8; Deuteronomy 5:1-3
- 10 Greengus, S. (1977). 'Law in the Old Testament', *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Supplementary Volume, Abingdon, New York, 532-537.
- 11 Neil, W. (1961). *One Volume Bible Commentary*, SCM Press, Nottingham, 98.
- 12 Deuteronomy 12:2
- 13 Deuteronomy 6:5,10:12
- 14 Leviticus 19:18
- 15 Deuteronomy 29:18
- 16 Exodus 29:7, 8
- 17 Exodus 7:22
- 18 Exodus 9:15
- 19 Exodus 19:4
- 20 Exodus 20:2
- 21 Exodus 20:1-17
- 22 Exodus 22: 29-30
- 23 Exodus 23:14-16
- 24 Neil, *One Volume Bible Commentary*, 99.
- 25 Exodus 21:29
- 26 Jackson, B.S. (1975). *Essays in Jewish and Comparative Legal History*, Brill, Leiden, 202.
- 27 Gese, H. (1981). *Essays in Biblical Theology*, Minneapolis: Augsburg, 60-88.
- 28 Childs, B. (1985). *Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context*, Philadelphia: Fortress, 53.
- 29 Deuteronomy 4:8
- 30 Exodus 20: 2
- 31 Leviticus 27:34
- 32 1 Corinthians 9:21
- 33 Deuteronomy 6:24

- 34 Porteous, N.W. (1951) 'Old Testament Theology', Section XI, in *The Old Testament and Modern Study*, Nelson and Sons, Middlesex, 47-62.
- 35 Noth, M. (1966). *The Laws in the Pentateuch and Other Essays*, Oliver and Boyd, 56.
- 36 Deuteronomy: 32:46-7
- 37 Leviticus 6-7
- 38 Kidner, F.D. (1972). *Hard Sayings: The Challenge of Old Testament Morals*, Inter-Varsity Press, 12.
- 39 Deist, F., & Vorster, W. (1986). *Words from afar: The Literature of the Old Testament*, Vol. 1, Tafelberg, Cape Town, 186-187.
- 40 Deist & Vorster, *Words from afar*, 187.
- 41 Derrett, JDM. (2002). "Law and administration in the New Testament world", in J. Barton. Ed., *The Biblical World*, London & New York, II, pp 75-89.
- 42 Clements, RE. (1978). *Old Testament Theology: A Fresh Approach*, Atlanta: John Knox, 1978, p110.
- 43 Strickland, WG. Ed., (1993). "The Law of Christ as the Fulfillment of the Law of Moses: A Modified Lutheran View" in *The Law, the Gospel, and the Modern Christian: Five Views*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, p 319.
- 44 Exodus: 21:1 5-17
- 45 Deist & Vorster: 1986
- 46 Jeremiah 36:24
- 47 Chamblin, K. (1988). "The Law of Moses and the Law of Christ," *Continuity and Discontinuity* ed. John S. Feinberg; Westchester, IL: Crossway, 1988, 181.
- 48 Leviticus chapters 1 – 7
- 49 Eichrodt, W. (1967). *Theology of the Old Testament*, 2 vols. Vol.2, Philadelphia: Westminster, 38.
- 50 Childs, B. (1985). *Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context*, Philadelphia: Fortress, 53.
- 51 Deuteronomy 10:14

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