

A Matter of the Heart
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One of my favourite things to see is the face of someone who begins to learn about the Hebraic Roots. It is the look of the 'lights going on' - how things all of a sudden begin to make sense. It's as if someone finally turned the colour up on the television of life!

Such is the kind of moment often experienced with this week's Tushiya Thought - a 'matter of the heart'.

In western thought, the 'heart' is the seat of the emotions, and especially that of love. Yet, as we discussed in the last edition, scriptural love is not an emotion, but an action of obedience. Continuing this thought then, it is important to realise that in Hebraic thought, the heart is the seat of the MIND, INTELLECT and WILL.

As the examples in the last issue showed, this Semitic idiom is deeply embedded in both Tanakh and the New Testament writings, yet due to western thinking is often misunderstood. We need to put back on the mind of Messiah and interpret scripture from within the guidelines of Hebraic thought.

Good intentions are not enough, Yahweh demands our obedience - the action of our love and the fulfillment of the Torah, loving Him and our neighbour. It is not possible to love Elohim without Torah.

Let that sink in for minute, and we will explore it further. It is not possible to love Elohim without Torah.

There are many millions of people today who claim they love the Almighty, and yet reject His Torah. Many believe that Torah was done away with by Messiah, even though He Himself said such was not the case (Mt.5:17-19). It is not possible to love Elohim without Torah. I've said it three times on purpose, so that it will really register and the reader will know that this rabbi is most serious in its assertion. Those who do not obey His Torah, do NOT love Him.

If that appears a bit harsh, and the reader might protest that many people have good intentions, yet they just don't know any better - they really do 'love' Him - I will remind that we are NOT speaking of an emotional feeling, but of what Yahweh defines love to be. It is HIS definition of love which is required of us all.

Such is the strength of the western paradigm of 'love', that I am certain to get an endless stream of e-mail on this teaching wondering how I could ever say that most christians do not love the one they claim to follow. Yet, by HIS standards they don't, for love equals obedience to Torah.

"My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I will also reject you, that you will not be no priest to me, seeing you have forgotten the Torah of your Elohim, I also will forget your children." - Hosea 4:6

The heart is the Hebraic seat of the MIND, and of KNOWLEDGE, from which springs our love - obedience to Torah. Good intentions don't cut it, and without knowledge people are destroyed.

The nation of Israel worshiped golden calves with the BEST of intentions. WHAT??? That's idolatry. How can idolatry be done with good intentions?

In Exodus 32 we find the story of the golden calf at Sinai. What is often missed in reading this account is that the Israelites were not worshipping a different Elohim, they were STILL worshipping Yahweh, but in a way He forbade. In verse 1 the people ask Aaron to make an Elohim to go before them. Aaron does as they request, and in verse 4 declares that this golden calf is "THE Elohim which brought you up out of the land of Egypt".

Aaron was stating that the calf represented the presence of Yahweh, not that some other Elohim had effected their deliverance. Remember, that the smoke and fire of His glory was STILL on the mountain where they were, they certainly were not trying to compete with that by introducing another deity! If that's not clear enough, then look at verse 5. Aaron builds an altar in front of it and states that "tomorrow is a feast to YAHWEH". He didn't declare a feast to the calf, but to Yahweh.

The Israelites were not replacing Yahweh, they were replacing Moses who had not returned. They were substituting the mediator and physical symbol they followed. They believed, with the best of intentions, that they were still worshipping Yahweh!

Of course, the problem was that this is NOT how He had commanded worship.

Another example is found when the northern kingdom separated from the southern in 1 Kings 12. Jeroboam set up golden calves in Bethel and Dan, yet again, those worshipping there had good intentions and thought they were worshipping Yahweh. The key here is in the context. In verses 26-27, we see that there was political danger in the people going to Jerusalem to sacrifice to Yahweh. Then in verse 28 Jeroboam substitutes the calves as symbols at these new places for worship, identifying them as the deliverer from Egypt. He was thus directing sacrifice to Yahweh at these locations. The calves again were but symbols.

This could have been avoided if Proverbs 3:5-6 had been heeded:

"Trust in Yahweh with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths."

Trusting with the heart is with the MIND, not the emotions, it is not about blind faith, but all about knowledge - His knowledge - Torah! Jeroboam ignored this. He appointed non-levitical priests, and set up his own times for worship. Verse 33 speaks of this new feast as one "he had devised in his own heart".

If Jeroboam had relied on the mind of Yahweh, and done things His way, much grief would have been avoided. Today, most of christianity suffers from the same bad choice. Yahweh said to worship on the Sabbath and His Feasts, yet in their hearts they devise Sunday, Christmas, and Easter. Y'shua said that heaven and earth would pass away before Torah, yet they eat things He said to abhor.

All along, they claim to love Him and follow Him with the very best of intentions, but in reality after the same manner as those worshipping at the golden calf. "No, really, it's OK, our leaders said it was OK, we can worship this way now, Yahweh sees our hearts".

Yes, He does see the heart - He sees a mind rejecting His Torah, doing things its own way rather than His way. At Sinai, over 3,000 men paid the price for that assumption with their lives. When it was repeated by Jeroboam, it started a chain of disobedience which would end with ten tribes being disowned from the Covenant! How many will needlessly perish today, thinking they 'love' Him, only to hear "depart from me, I never knew you, workers of Torahlessness" (Mt.7:23).

Don't be among them. Put on the mind of Messiah, and the true love that is obedience to His Torah.

"Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue but in deed and truth. And by this we will know that we are of the truth and will convince our heart in his presence, that if our heart condemns us, that Elohim is greater than our heart and knows all things. Dear friends, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence in the presence of Elohim, and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do the things that are pleasing to him." - 1 John 3:18-22