



WHAT IS LOVE?

By Rabbi Reuel Dillon

There seems to be many definitions for love in our World. Some believe love is a warm fuzzy feeling. Or, some perhaps believe love is anything that feels good, or right. Many associate love with lust. The question is, "Do you want to receive your definition from the "World", or from the One who created the World?". Maybe you believe in the "Golden Rule" inasmuch as love is doing unto others as you would have others do unto you. If you hold this last statement to be true, you are correct!

But, do we even know what is good for ourselves? If are a father or a mother you feel quite blessed if your children follow your commands and instruction. So how do you apply the saying, "Do unto others as you would have done unto yourself" when it comes to God? That is, imagine that you were the Leader of the Universe...if as fathers and mothers we want our children to do what we say (follow our commands)...should we not do unto our Heavenly Father as we would have our children do unto us (obey)? Think about it. Let us take a look at what the One who created the World has to say on this subject of love. Where did this concept of loving you neighbor as yourself come from? Did it originate from the New Testament writings? In fact, it is in the Torah that we first find this command...

"You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people; but you shall love your neighbor as yourself. I am ADONAI."
- Vayikra (Leviticus) 19:18

"The stranger who lives as a foreigner with you shall be to you as the native-born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you lived as foreigners in the land of Egypt. I am ADONAI your God." – Vayikra (Leviticus) 19:34

Indeed, God views true love towards Him as a love that is characterized by keeping His commandments. It is His love language. We see this in following scripture passages...

"I am ADONAI your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourselves

an idol, nor any image of anything that is in the heavens above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: you shall not bow yourself down to them, nor serve them, for I, ADONAI your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and on the fourth generation of those who hate me, and showing loving kindness to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments." - Shemot (Exodus) 20:2-6

"Now this is the commandment, the statutes, and the ordinances, which ADONAI your God commanded to teach you, that you might do them in the land where you go over to possess it; that you might fear ADONAI your God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, you, and your son, and your son's son, all the days of your life; and that your days may be prolonged. Hear therefore, Yisra'el, and observe to do it; that it may be well with you, and that you may increase mightily, as ADONAI, the God of your fathers, has promised to you, in a land flowing with milk and honey. Hear (Shema), Yisra'el: ADONAI is our God; ADONAI is one: and you shall love ADONAI your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might." - Devarim (Deuteronomy) 6:1-9

I hear many preaching that we should love God with our whole heart, soul, and might like the verse above says. But, many fail to connect what that looks like. This is sad because many miss the previous verses, which qualify what loving God with all your heart, soul, and might means. We see it again in this next few scripture passages.

"Therefore you shall love ADONAI your God, and keep his charge, and his statutes, and his ordinances, and his commandments, always." - Devarim (Deuteronomy) 11:1

"Now, Yisra'el, what does ADONAI your God require of you, but to fear ADONAI your God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve ADONAI your God with all your heart and with all your soul, to keep the mitzvot (commandments) of ADONAI, and his statutes, which I command you this day for your good?" - Devarim (Deuteronomy) 10:12-13

We can see in these last few scripture verses that not only do we show God that we love Him by keeping his commandments, but His commandments are for our own good! He gave us good commandments so we could be blessed.

"Those who love your law have great shalom (peace). Nothing causes them to stumble." - Tehillim (Psalm) 119:165

Do you love the Torah (Law) of The Lord? If you don't, something is wrong with your relationship with Him. The passage above says that if we love His Law we will have peace, and nothing will cause us to stumble. Do you have peace? Do you stumble?

If we practice the breaking of His law, the opposite is true (we reap the consequences). And, we can now see why Satan (the Enemy) wants so badly to deceive us into not keeping our Heavenly Father's commandments. In fact, God commanded that if any

Prophet came and tried to draw away people from following His Torah (commandments), that prophet is false, and should be stoned...

"If there arise in the midst of you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and he give you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, Let us go after other gods, which you have not known, and let us serve them; you shall not listen to the words of that prophet, or to that dreamer of dreams: for ADONAI (the LORD) your God proves you, to know whether you love ADONAI your God with all your heart and with all your soul. You shall walk after ADONAI your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and you shall serve him, and cleave to him. That prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death, because he has spoken rebellion against ADONAI your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to draw you aside out of the way which ADONAI your God commanded you to walk in. So shall you put away the evil from the midst of you." - Devarim (Deuteronomy) 13:1-5

Yeshua (Jesus) the Messiah did not come to draw us after following another God with another set of commandments. In the above passage God told us that if a Prophet taught the people not to keep God's commandments, we should not listen to that Prophet. Yeshua did not come to do away with any of His Father's commandments. Yeshua made this clear:

"Don't think that I came to destroy the Torah (law), or the Prophets. I didn't come to destroy, but to fulfill (complete, fill up). For most certainly, I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not even one smallest letter or one tiny pen stroke shall in any way pass away from the Torah, until all things are accomplished. Whoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and teach others to do so, shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven; but whoever shall do and teach them shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven." - Mattityahu (Matthew) 5:17-19

Has heaven, and Earth passed away?? Walk outside for a moment just to make sure...We should listen to what Messiah says. Are you listening?? There is only one way to love God, and He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Yeshua said:

"If you love me, keep my mitzvot (commandments)." - Yochanan (John) 14:15

The love language that Yeshua (Jesus) understood from his disciples was that of having His commandments kept. Like Father, like Son. But, in all reality, Yeshua's commandments are His Father's commandments. Yeshua said:

"For I spoke not from myself, but the Father who sent me, he gave me a mitzvah (commandment), what I should say, and what I should speak." - Yochanan (John) 12:49

"He who doesn't love me doesn't keep my words. The word which you hear isn't mine, but the Father's who sent me." - Yochanan (John) 14:24

And, what are Yeshua's (Jesus') words to you?

"Don't think that I came to destroy the Torah (law), or the Prophets. I didn't come to destroy, but to fulfill (complete). For most certainly, I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not even one smallest letter or one tiny pen stroke shall in any way pass away from the Torah, until all things are accomplished. Whoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commands, and teach others to do so, shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven; but whoever shall do and teach them shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven."

Would you like to know God better?

"This is how we know that we know him: if we keep his commandments. One who says, "I know him," and doesn't keep his commandments, is a liar, and the truth isn't in him. But whoever keeps his word, God's love has most certainly been perfected in him. This is how we know that we are in him: he who says he remains in him ought himself also to walk just like he walked. Brothers, I write no new mitzvah (commandment) to you, but an old mitzvah which you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning." - Yochanan (John) 2:3-7

What do you think is the "old commandment" that was heard from the beginning? Common...what testament do some call "old"? So, back to the question; What is the true Biblical definition of loving God and loving your brother?...

"By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. His commandments are not burdensome." - 1Yochanan (John) 5:2-3

The subject of this last verse is God's commandments (Torah). And remember, Yeshua's (Jesus') commandments are His Father's commandments.

"For I spoke not from myself, but the Father who sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak." - Yochanan (John) 12:49

How will you love God and your neighbor today? I hope it will be according to God's instructions, and not according to the commandments of men.

The real question is - whom do you love more?

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