

## **If You Love Me...**

**by Aletha Arnold**

“Hear, O Yisra’el: Yahuah our Elohim, Yahuah is one! And you shall love Yahuah your Elohim with all your heart...” (Debarim (Exodus) 4-5a). The Shema. Mosheh rehearsed these words in the ears of the Yisra’elites prior to their entrance into the land of Canaan. Does Yisra’el today truly understand what it means to love Yahuah with all our heart? For many of us the word heart simply refers to our emotion, but in the context of the Hebrew scriptures (the oracles of our Elohim) the word heart refers to the center of man’s thoughts - the totality of one’s inner nature. (The Scriptures - Explanatory Notes pg. 1215). I would venture to say that the heart is the deepest center of you. If loving Yahuah is the center of who you are then you are loving Him with all your heart.

According to Newton’s third law, we know that that every action results in an equal and opposite reaction. So if you love Yahuah with all your heart what will be the resulting reaction? You will guard Yahuah’s commands. If love for Yahuah is at the center of your will - that is your volition - then you will naturally guard His commands. His commands will not be grievous to you, but they will produce great peace in your life. When a love for Yahuah is what motivates our every thought, word and action we will endeavor to think, say and do what pleases Him.

As a result of humanity’s misguided understanding of the words heart and love, there are those who say they love Yahuah, but their actions indicate otherwise - hypocrites. Yahuah said, “...this people has drawn near with its mouth, and with its lips they have esteemed Me, and it has kept its heart far from Me, and their fear of Me has become a command of men that is taught.” (Yeshayahu 29:13). Yahusha makes reference to this scripture in Matthiyahu 15:7. “Hypocrites! Yeshayahu rightly prophesied about you.” It’s interesting that we have the same hypocrisy today. Let’s examine the breath of what Yahuah says in this text. First, He says that this people has drawn near with their mouth. In other words, they say all of the things that would indicate that they love Yahuah. They’re real good at dropping all of the well-known religious buzz words. This façade leads the common observer to the conclusion that these individuals must really love Yahuah. Additionally, these people have no problem speaking Yahuah’s praises, but they have refused to draw near to Yahuah with the deepest center of who they are. The totality of the inner self has not surrendered its will to Yahuah’s. The reverence they have for Yahuah has been born out of man-made traditions and not of the fundamentals of the Torah. These individuals would rather do what man has commanded rather than what Yahuah has required. They would rather please their peers than their Father. Sadly, they have placed the creature above the Creator.

Then there are those whose words and deeds bear witness to the fact that their love for Yahuah is real and flows from a heart that belongs completely to Him. Not only

do they honor Yahuah with their lips, but they have surrendered their total self to Yahauh through His Son, Yahusha. Through the process of regeneration these individuals no longer have a heart of stone, but a heart that is easily entreated by the voice of the Spirit of Truth. They walk in the Torah of Yahuah. They observe His witnesses. They guard His laws. They have treasured up His word in their heart, that they might not sin against Him. (Tehillim 119:1b, 2b, 5b, 11). The essence of who they are is patterned according to Yahuah's right-rulings. These individuals "meditate on [His] orders, regard His ways and delight [themselves] in [His] laws. (Tehillim 119:15-16). Do you see? True heart love allows you to find joy in Yahuah's law. As Yahuah's laws are in your heart, there will be consistent alignment between your daily execution and the Torah. This will not be a difficult process, but a natural one. As long as "love" is love and is with all the heart, one can find the great peace that comes from loving Yahuah's law. Love with all the heart is not an emotion, but the substance of one's existence.

As covenant Yisra'el, we are commanded to love Yahuah with all our heart. When we truly understand this love, our hearts will be fertile ground for the seeds of His word to sprout up and take root. His word will become a part of who we are and will guide our daily lives. Our willingness to walk in the Torah of Yahuah will stem from a heart that truly loves Him. Sometimes I think we really make things more complicated than what they are. Keeping the laws of Yahuah will neither cause dissonance nor anxiety within a heart that loves Him. Yahusha summed it all up in four little words. "If you love Me..." (Yohanan 14:23).