

Eternal Love: Man's Response

For Yahuwah so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

For Yahuwah did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world but that the world through Him might be saved. -John 3:16, 17

Yahuwah is love. When the conflict between good and evil is finally over, Yahuwah will have won because Love is the strongest force in the universe. "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned." (Song of Solomon, 7:7, KJV)

The long-standing controversy between the Kingdom of Love and the kingdom of evil has revealed two different sets of principles. Yahuwah has conducted His campaign to win the loyalty of souls based on principles of love, kindness, forgiveness and justice. Satan has used principles of force, cruelty and deception to lead multitudes to destruction. At times, it has seemed an unequal fight because Yahuwah can only use those means that are in keeping with His standard of Love.

In the end, however, Yahuwah wins because LOVE is the most powerful force of all. "Love awakens love. One is loved *because* one is loved."¹ Here is the secret of Love's immense power. Love can transform – force cannot. Even the hardest heart may respond to loving kindness, while force simply brings out greater hardness of heart.



Force may compel the body, but it does not transform the mind. “A man that complies against his will is of his own opinion still.”² Only Love has the power to transform the emotions and beliefs, to turn enemies into friends.

The extent of human love is summed up in Scripture by stating: “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15:13, KJV)

The demonstration of divine Love, when Yahuwah sacrificed His only Son, revealed a Love that far surpasses all other love: Yahuwah sacrificed His only Son to save *His enemies!*

“Yahuwah so loved the world that He gave” . . . *everything*. When sin entered, Yahuwah revealed depths of love that had not been seen before. He revealed a love that could forgive sin and save sinners. He loved the world so much that “He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)

Scripture gives the reason Yahuwah was willing to sacrifice His own Son: “Yahuwah did not send His Son into the world to *condemn* the world, but that the world through Him might be *saved!*” (John 3:17)

When this fact is meditated upon, when the reality of this kind of Love begins to sink into the mind and understanding, transformation occurs. It cannot be helped. Gratitude is awakened in the heart when a person realizes that Yahuwah sent His Son to *save*, not to condemn!

Gratitude is a very necessary part of feeling loved. The greatest gifts may be given, but if they are not recognized for what they are, demonstrations of love, there will be no awakening gratitude and no returning love.



Children love to give. Their little hearts look for ways to show their love, whether it is a colored picture, or a fist of dandelions.

My youngest grandchild loves to pick me flowers. It does not matter whether it is dandelions or roses. If she sees a flower, she wants to pick it and give it to someone she loves. To her, nap weed is not the noxious, take-over-everything-in-its-path weed we adults view it as. Instead, it is pretty lavender star flowers and she wants to pick it and give it as a token of her love.

Many times I answer her knock at the door, to see her bright, shining face with her hand held behind her back. She smiles brightly, "I have a surprise you!" Then she holds up her precious offering of love.

On one occasion, I took her to town with me. Seeing a large display of colorful flowers, she turned to me with pleading in her eyes: "Please, may I have some money? I need some money! Please?"

Knowing exactly what she had seen that prompted her sudden desire for money, I thought of all the other things I needed to carefully save the money for. However, the eager look, the unabashed adoration in her eyes kept me silent about my adult needs and worries.

Handing her some money, she eagerly instructed me, "Now don't look! It's a surprise!"

In a few minutes her dancing feet announced her return.

"Here! These are for you! Aren't they beautiful?"

I will never forget the love in her face or the joy in her voice as she expressed her love for me. I did not *need* the flowers, but *she needed the chance to show her love by giving them.*

As a wise heavenly Father, Yahuwah knew that all the love gifts in the universe would not draw the hearts of His children if they did not recognize His gifts and feel gratitude for them. He does not *need* our expressions of love and gratitude – but He knows that *we need to give them.*

Satan had accused Yahuwah of creating beings just so He could receive their service and selfishly enjoy their adoration and praise. Unfortunately, many people have believed this lie. This entirely misses the point. The only way love awakens love, is if love is recognized. Once love is recognized, gratitude awakens returning love.

The wise parent will require their child to say, "Thank you." Everything given to the child must be recognized and acknowledged by a word of gratitude. A drink of water as well as brightly wrapped packages deserves a "Thank you." This habit of the recognition of benefit builds a feeling of love and gratitude in the mind of a child.

At birth, a parent immediately loves their child, but the child does not necessarily feel a bond of love toward the parent. All too often stories in the newspaper tell horrid tales of children abusing and hating their elderly parents. While the reasons are many, one underlying cause is children taking parents for granted. Gratitude cannot be taught a young child by example. It must be required in order for it to become a habitual part of the child's character.

It was for this reason that Yahuwah required opportunities for His people to recognize and express their gratitude for His blessings. The Father already knows what is in the heart and mind of every person. He is intimately acquainted with every individual as though there were not a single other person on the face of the planet. He knows our thoughts and feelings. He does not need us to pray for His sake. Prayer is for our benefit so that we can be lifted up to think His thoughts, to enter into His mind.

Prayer provides the opportunity to stop the harried rush of the day, contemplate blessings bestowed, confess failings, and experience forgiveness. The gratitude felt when blessings are acknowledged creates love and trust in the human heart – and *this* is needed.

Likewise, “the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.” (Mark 2:27) Yahuwah knew that without requiring one day of rest and worship, greedy man would continually work for temporal gain and lose sight of eternal realities. Requiring that cooking be done the day before, freed women from slaving away over a hot stove, preparing a banquet for the family. Requiring that no servile work be done, gave the entire family, as well as servants and animals, time to rest and be refreshed.

A wedding anniversary can be a time of precious remembrance and recommitment for the future. Sabbaths are anniversaries of the Creation of the world. Setting aside daily labor to rest on the Sabbath is a reminder of the promises the Creator made at the very beginning – to bless and keep us, and provide everything necessary for our sustenance and happiness.

Monthly New Moons are also times of rejoicing. The blessings of the past month are remembered with gratitude which encourages rededication for the upcoming month. The yearly feasts were required, set apart times of renewal, rededication and, especially, thanksgiving.

Of all the yearly feasts, Feast of Tabernacles was specifically designed for giving thanks. It was a grand, week-long thanksgiving celebration! The year’s harvest had been brought in and it was a time to reflect on the many love gifts given by the Father in the past. Sunshine, rain and growth for their crops; protection from enemies and health for their families - all were to awaken recognition of the special blessings from Heaven.



When the Israelites conquered Canaan, they were conquering a land already inhabited. Their enemies were driven out before them and waiting for them were fully furnished homes, abundant vineyards, rich orchards, plenteous water and every good thing needed for prosperous living. Yahuwah knew, however, that the fallen human heart is quick to forget great blessings and begin to take them for granted.

He wanted to keep their memories fresh so that they would trust Him to continue to care for them. He required the Israelites to gather together and camp in little structures made from branches and boughs. They were to do this every year during the Feast of Tabernacles and rejoice in heaven's rich bounty. They were to always remember that the heavenly Father had delivered them *as a nation* from Egyptian bondage.

Gratitude for national freedom and current temporal blessings, would keep love and trust alive in their hearts. This would be a protection against Satan's seductive temptations to apostatize into idolatry. Satan knew that if he could get the Israelites to turn from allegiance to Yahuwah and worship false gods, then heaven could not protect them from being conquered by surrounding enemies.

It is interesting that the very first feast the Israelites neglected was the thanksgiving of Feast of Tabernacles. True worship then degenerated into mere forms. It became a religion of traditions and salvation by works. Full idolatry quickly followed. This degeneration of their spiritual experience should serve as a solemn warning of the importance of observing all of Yahuwah's feasts with a sincere heart of gratitude.

Yahuwah did not *need* the Israelites expressions of gratitude any more than He needs *your* expressions of gratitude. However, He knows that, like the Israelites, *you* need the chance to remember His blessings, gratefully recognize and acknowledge His gifts and let your heart swell with love in response.



When one is loved and accepted with an undying, unconditional love, barriers are broken down. The heart cannot help but respond because *Love awakens love!*

The natural response of the heart that feels loved is to demonstrate love in return by actions. The person that has once felt divine Love, longs to show love in

return. It becomes the most natural thing in the world to obey the Father. The once-rebellious heart, now softened by love, finds its greatest joy in keeping the divine law of Love.

Yahushua set forth the real test of whether a person loves Him: “If you love me, you will keep My commandments.”³ Obedience to all of Yahuwah’s commandments are the natural response of a heart that is filled with love for the Lawgiver.

This is *not* legalism. Satan is very quick to level the charge of legalism anytime a person tries to keep the divine law. Unfortunately, many people do obey out of fear of the consequences – or because they believe that they can “work their way to heaven” by obedience. It is not always possible to immediately discern between a person who is obeying just to “work his way to heaven” versus a person who is obeying out of love. Obedience can look the same even when prompted by opposite motivations.

However, Yahuwah knows. “For Yahuwah does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but Yahuwah looks at the heart.”⁴ If obedience comes merely as a means to “earn” heaven, the person will be lost.

Yahushua explained:

Not every one that saith unto Me, *Yahushua, Yahushua*, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

Many will say to Me in that day, *Yahushua, Yahushua, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? And in Thy name done many wonderful works?*

And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity. (See Matthew 7:21-23.)

It is possible to go through all the motions, keep every commandment and still be lost. The difference is the motivation for the actions. Are His commandments kept from love? Or from a desire to “earn” heaven?

Yahushua says that those who have done all these “many wonderful works” are not candidates for heaven for one simple reason: He does not *know* them. The word “know” in Scripture has much deeper significance than in modern English. “And Adam *knew* Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain” (Genesis 4:1, KJV) This is more than head-knowledge. This is an intimate *knowing*, as with a lover.

Because to know Yahuwah is to love Him, obedience is the natural response of the heart that loves. Thus, only the service and obedience of love is accepted.

Strangely enough, when *love* is the motivation for obedience, the “works of the law” are not even noticed as being done. Love does not keep a score card, expecting something in exchange for the service done. Yahushua beautifully illustrated this in a lesson He gave about the end of the world:

When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.

Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.’

Then the righteous will answer Him, saying ‘. . . [Yahushua], when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’

And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’ (Matthew 25:31-40, NKJV)

To know the Father and the Son intimately, and to be known by them, it is necessary to spend time with them. If you do not have the relationship with them that you would like, invest time in the relationship, as you would with any friendship. Read of them in their Word; study their expressions of love in nature.

If you feel emotionally distant and do not love the Father and the Son with all your heart, mind and soul, this can be changed. Deliberately choose to think of the many blessings in your life, the many ways they have shown their love for you. Are there times in your life when you have been especially protected? Can you remember occasions when you have received unusual benefits? Meditate on



these things. Keep them fresh in your memory.

Be sure to notice the many little things that come your way on a daily basis. Let your heart be drawn out to your Maker in prayer. As you step outside your home, thank Him for the pleasant weather . . . or for the umbrella that keeps the rain off. When folding mounds of laundry, thank Him for the ability to keep your family clothed. When busy in your round of daily duties, thank Him for the strength to do what needs to be done.

For life, for health, for truth, for love, for friends, for anything that brings joy, contentment and peace, the great Gift-giver can be acknowledged and thanked. This is the perfect cure for loneliness and depression, too.

The joy you experience in heaven will be in proportion to the love and trust you have learned to give Yahuwah here on earth. Throughout endless ages of eternity, the redeemed will find their greatest joy in loving and being loved by their Creator. “The beloved of . . . [Yahuwah] shall dwell in safety by Him: and . . . [Yahuwah] shall cover him all the day long.” (Deuteronomy 33:12)

There, immortal minds will contemplate with never-failing delight the wonders of creative power, the mysteries of redeeming love. There is no cruel, deceiving foe to tempt to forgetfulness of . . . [Yahuwah]. Every faculty will be developed, every capacity increased. The acquirement of knowledge will not weary the mind or exhaust the energies. There the grandest enterprises may be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations reached, the highest ambitions realized; and still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of mind and soul and body.

. . . And the years of eternity, as they roll, will bring richer and still more glorious revelations of . . . [the Father and the Son]. As knowledge is progressive, so will love, reverence, and happiness increase.⁵

An eternity of ever-increasing joy, contentment, interesting occupations and everlasting love awaits you *because* Yahuwah is love.

"Hear the Voice of My Beloved"

Hear the voice of my beloved
Gently call at close of day.
"Come, my love! O come and meet Me.
Rise, O rise, and come away."

Winter's dark will soon be over
And the rain is nearly done.
Flowers bloom and trees are budding.
Time for singing has begun.

I have waited through the shadows
For my Lord to call for me.
Now the morning breaks eternal.
In His light, His face I see.
Now the morning breaks eternal,
And at last His face I see.

When you see the fig tree budding
You will know the summer's here.
When you hear the words I've spoken
You will know My coming's near.

Keep on listening my beloved,
For My coming's very near.

¹ Paulo Coelho, emphasis supplied.

² Samuel Butler (1612-1680), *Hudibras.*, Part iii. Canto iii., Line 547.

³ See John 14:15, *Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament*, fourth edition.

⁴ See 1 Samuel 16:7.

⁵ E. G. White, *Great Controversy*, p. 677.