

GREEK VERSUS HEBREW MIND SET

John is stuck in the rat race of life. He was in charge of the company picnic. John was so mad he blew a fuse when it started raining cats and dogs. His big plans were now ruined and he was boiling over. Straight from the horse's mouth, he was warned by his friend, a TV weatherman, that it was supposed to rain hard. John thought he was just pulling his leg, yet now he was really up a creek without a paddle. "Well, I guess that's just the way the cookie crumbles," John said. He worried that because of this failure, his boss would give him the axe.

We have comments like "a bull in a china shop" and when the cows come home." Idioms add lively ideas to our speech. These phrases have been adapted into our language over the years, to the point where, they have become part of normal speech. They are word pictures that describe situations vividly. "What's the matter, cat got your tongue?" or "I'm just killing time."

Various Hebrew idioms have found their way into the everyday talk of millions of people. Take for example, these Biblical expressions in the story about a man unwilling to "go the second mile," or we're going to kill the fatted calf." She couldn't see the "handwriting on the wall." He thought he could "walk on water."

Yeshua quoted a Hebrew idiom when He said He came not to "destroy the Law or the prophets." He was using a familiar phrase easily understood during Biblical times. Yeshua had been accused of misinterpreting the Torah, yet He said that He was actually rightly and correctly teaching it. What does Yeshua mean by "destroy the Law" and "fulfill the Law"? "Destroy" and "fulfill" are technical terms used in rabbinic argumentation. When a sage felt that a colleague had misinterpreted a passage of Scripture, he would say, "You are destroying the Law!" Needless to say, in most cases, he colleagues strongly disagreed. What was "destroying the Law" for one sage was "fulfilling the Law" (correctly interpreting Scripture) for another." In plain English, Yeshua is saying, "Don't even think for a moment that I intend to do away with the Law by misinterpreting it. My intent is not to even weaken it, but by properly interpreting God's Written word, I aim to establish it. I would never invalidate the Law by removing something from it through misinterpretation.

Unfortunately, for many years translators and teachers have also struggled with the Hebraic concept of the "evil eye.

Matthew 6:22,23 The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. KJV ("But if your *eye is bad*, your whole body will be full of darkness) NKJV

Matthew 6:22 If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. NKJV

Matthew 6:22 Therefore if your eye is sound, your whole body shall be full of light. MKJV

Matthew 6:22 If then your eye is true, all your body will be full of light. BBE

Matthew 6:22 If your eye is unclouded, your whole body will be lit up; TCNT

Matthew 6:22 Thine eye may be perfect, all thy body shall be enlightened, YLT

This is very confusing! The people who heard Yeshua speak these very words immediately recognized what Yeshua meant when he talked of the evil eye. This idea was and still is common in the Hebraic culture. What did Yeshua really mean? Hebraically, what is an evil eye or a good eye?

To answer these questions and bring clarity to this idiom, let's first look at the context of Yeshua's words and the links in the Torah/Tanakh.

First, let's look at the context. The very next verse after the evil eye quotation, explains exactly what the evil eye is about.

Matthew 6:23,24 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

When he spoke of the bad eye, Yeshua wasn't talking about bad eye sight or the need for lasik surgery! From the context it is easy to grasp that Yeshua was using a Hebrew expression to comment on people's greed. Each time Yeshua spoke of the eye he was speaking of the issue of greed. An evil eye is a greedy eye. A person with an evil eye is controlled by the desire of selfishness.

Proverbs 28:22 He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him.

Proverbs 22:9 He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor.

Deuteronomy 15:7-9 "If there is among you a poor man of your brethren, within any of the gates in your land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your poor brother, but you shall open your hand wide to him and willingly lend him sufficient for his need, whatever he needs. Beware lest there be a wicked thought in your heart, saying, 'The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand,' and your eye be evil against your poor brother and you give him nothing, and he cry out to the LORD against you, and it become sin among you." NKJV

The most famous of **Socrates's** pupils was an aristocratic young man named **Plato** who was born in *428BC*, lived in Athens, Greece. After the death of Socrates, Plato carried on much of his former teacher's work and eventually founded his own school, the *Academy*, in *385BC*. The Academy would become in its time the most famous school in the classical world, and its most famous pupil was **Aristotle**.

Alexander the Great *356BC to 323BC*

Gentile believers with a Greek mindset had a hard time believing that Jesus was human as well as divine, because in **Platonic thought** the spirit was all-important. The body was only a prison from which one desired to escape. Heresies developed from a uniting of this kind of Platonic thought and Christianity. A particularly widespread, false teaching, later called **Docetism** (from a Greek word meaning "to seem"), held that Jesus was actually a spirit who only appeared to have a body. In reality they say, "he cast no shadow and left no footprints; he was God but not man."

Another heretical teaching, related to **Gnosticism** (from a Greek word meaning "knowledge"), held that all physical matter was evil, the spirit was good, and only the intellectually enlightened could enjoy the benefits of religion. Both groups found it hard to believe in a Savior who was fully human.

John answers these false teachers as an eyewitness to Jesus' life on earth. He saw Jesus, talked with him, touched him—he knew that Jesus was more than a mere spirit.

1 John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

In the very first sentence of his letter, John establishes that Jesus had been alive before the world began and also that he lived as a man among men and women. In other words, he was both divine and human.

Through the centuries, many heretics have denied that Jesus was both God and man. In John's day people had trouble believing he was human. Today, more people have problems seeing him as God. But Jesus' divine-human nature is the pivotal issue of Christianity. Before you accept what religious teachers say about any topic, listen carefully to what they believe about Jesus. To deny either his divinity or his humanity is to consider him less than Christ, the Savior.

It was easier to believe that holding to some intellectual belief or dogma could be the source of salvation rather than simple submission to the atonement and Lordship of Messiah. As if doctrines constitute divine saving secret knowledge. Many continue to act as if the only people saved are those who share the exact accurate knowledge of the Gospel as they understand it.

Gnosticism involves the relational or experiential knowledge of God and of the divine or spiritual nature within us. Gnostics believe that they have secret knowledge about God, humanity and the rest of the universe of which the general population was unaware. It became one of the three main belief systems within 1st century Christianity.

A one-sentence description of Gnosticism: a religion that differentiates the evil god of this world (who is identified with the god of the Old Testament) from a higher more abstract God revealed by Jesus Christ, a religion that regards this world as the creation of a series of evil archons/powers who wish to keep the human soul trapped in an evil physical body, a religion that preaches a hidden Wisdom or knowledge only to a

select group as necessary for salvation or escape from this world.
(EarlyChristianwritings.com)

Plato believed that reality existed in the realm of ideas not in the material world. Reality and truth exist only in the concept rather than in the thing itself: (Horsiness)
(Unity and diversity)

For Plato truth was obtained through philosophy and reality is found in the mind not in the world in which you live. Our existence is dualistic.

Acts 17:16-18 Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. Therefore, disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him. Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans (pleasure is the sole intrinsic good), and o the Stoics (detachment from emotions and indifference to pleasure), encountered him. And some said, "What will this babbler say?"

When the church separated from the wisdom of the Torah after the expulsion of the Jews, they looked for educated men among the Greek universities who had been schooled in Greek thought for their leaders. So they treated the scriptures allegorically looking for the "idea" behind the text rather than taking scripture literally.

The Hebrew perspective was unified rather than dualistic. Reality exists in both realms, the visible and invisible, and neither was better. So the physical world was not evil or inferior to the nonmaterial world.

Greek: It's the thought that counts

Hebrew: It's the actions that count

Constantine 280AD - 387AD

The end of the Roman Empire. The Greek-speaking Eastern Roman, known today as the Byzantine Empire, preserved Greco-Roman legal and cultural traditions along with Hellenic and Orthodox Christian elements for another thousand years. After 395AD, the emperors in the Western Roman Empire were usually figureheads. (Wik)

Saint Augustine 354AD - 430AD In Roman Catholicism and the Anglican Communion, he is a saint and pre-eminent Doctor of the Church, and the patron of the Augustinian religious order. Many Protestants, especially Calvinists, consider him to be one of the theological fountainheads of Reformation teaching on salvation and grace. He was a student of Plato.

Saint Augustine was in his fifties and the bishop of Hippo when the Visigoths overran Italy and sacked Rome. Augustine saw the refugees pouring into North Africa, including noble families from Rome, and he heard accusations that Rome's destruction was the result of neglect to worship the city's traditional gods.

Christians were responding with uncertainty to these allegations. They believed that their god protected people, and obviously Rome had not been protected. They believed, as had Eusebius, that God had linked Rome and Christianity. And, with disaster befalling Rome, they needed a new view on God's ties with Rome and with Christians. Augustine supplied it, drawing from the old association of evil with the present world and on the habit to put things into the form of allegory.

The church has focused its attention on the hope of escaping this world and getting to heaven. God wants us to live an active life here! God wants to dwell with us here!

The church: Goal of salvation is to escape here and go to where God is in heaven.

The Bible: Goal of salvation is to be holy that God may dwell here among His people and influence others here.

The church: Kingdom of Heaven is Heaven and is not on earth.

The Bible: Kingdom of Heaven is God's reign among His people here on earth.

The church: Messiah is coming to take us away.

The Bible: Messiah is coming to reign over us.

The church: Get your ticket now or miss the train!

The Bible: Kingdom of Heaven is coming get ready to serve the King!