La Fe, la esperanza y al AMOR

Abiding in Faith, Hope, and Love

By Prof. Pinchas Shir - October 21, 2018

FAITH -> FE

Paul charged Corinthians, *"faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love"* (**1 Cor 13:13**, NASB). **The Greek πίστις (pistis) has a Hebrew equivalent — אֱמוּנָה (emunah)**. It may surprise you, but the meaning of this Hebrew word is only partially related to the concept of "belief" or the "act of believing." In Hebrew, the term conveys a *"steadiness," "stability,"* and *"reliability" that manifests as "trustworthiness" and "faithfulness."*

En hebreo, el término transmite una "estabilidad" y "confiabilidad" que se manifiesta como "fidelidad".

Significado de *steadiness*: Directo o seguro en movimiento una mano firme. b: firme en la posición: FIJA; mantuvo el palo estable. c: mantener casi vertical en una vía marítima una nave estable. 2: mostrando poca variación o fluctuación.

Significado de *trustworthiness*: Digno de confianza: Se puede depender en esa persona, una guía confiable, información confiable.

HOPE -> ESPERANZA

The Greek ἐλπίς (elpis) — "hope" — can correlate to several words in Hebrew. The ancient Jewish translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek, the Septuagint (LXX), uses ἐλπίς to translate תִּקְוָה (**tikvah; "hoping for the best"**) and בָּטַח (**batach; "trust" or "reliance"**). The ancient Israelites lived in **expectation of a future** that would be either good or bad — hoping, of course, for the best possible outcome. As the famous New Testament scholar Rudolf Bultmann notes, Biblical Hebrew has "no neutral concept of expectation. An expectation is either good or bad and therefore it is either hope or fear" (Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, 522).

LOVE -> AMOR

The Greek ἀγάπη (agape) **"love" usually corresponds to the Hebrew אַהֲבָה (ahavah)**. There are different types of love, of course. One can see it as a strong selfish desire and, at the same time, as a truly selfless ideal. Further, there is another kind of **love in Biblical Hebrew — חֶסֶד (chesed) "steadfast love", "kindness", "faithfulness", and "loyalty"** — that is often **tied to God's character and the divine loyalty** to keeping covenant **promises**. God's *chesed* **is the glue that binds our relationship with the Lord and ensures our continued place in the divine plan.**

Perhaps that is why Paul says that "love" is the greatest of these three. Still, to abide in all three at the same time would be absolutely amazing!

"Love" in Hebrew Thought

By Dr. Nicholas J. Schaser - July 2, 2018

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Deuteronomy 6:5 states, "You shall love (אהבת; ahavta) the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your life and with all your strength" (Deut 6:5). But **what does it mean to "love" God according to ancient Israelite thought?** For the biblical authors, **love isn't just an intense form of "liking" or some kind of "warm feeling" for another**; rather, **the most common Hebrew word for "love" (אהבה; ahavah) expresses loyalty**.

To understand love as "loyalty" in Deut 6:5, we need to **read the verse in the context of what comes right before it: the Shema**. Most English translations of Deut 6:4 read, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one (אחד; echad)." While the Hebrew אחד can mean "one"—as in, "and there was evening, and there was morning: day one (אחד)" (Gen 1:5)—echad can also mean "alone." Here's a stronger translation of Deut 6:4: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord alone." That is, the Lord is Israel's God, and the people of Israel must "not go after other gods" (**Deut 6:14**); **they must "love," or be "loyal" to, the Lord alone**.

The loyalty we have for the God of Israel—to the exclusion of all other gods—**extends to our fellow human beings, particularly those who are less familiar to us**. **Leviticus uses the exact same word for our "loyalty" to God in the command to love the stranger**: "You shall treat the stranger who dwells with you as the native among you, and you shall love (אהבת; ahavta) him as yourself" (**Lev 19:34**). **When it comes to the heavenly realm, we are to be loyal to God alone, but here on earth, God commands us to pledge that same loyalty to those around us**.

Is "Faith" a Biblical Idea?

By Dr. Yeshaya Gruber - October 16, 2018

Most Bible translations use the word "faith" in hundreds of passages. Yet a strong argument can be made that what many people understand by "faith" – i.e., "just believing," even if blindly – is not a Biblical idea at all! How can this be?

The Biblical Hebrew word sometimes translated as "faith" is אמונה (emunah), which actually **means "reliability, trustworthiness, dependability, steadiness."** We can easily see this from the first two places in the Hebrew Bible where the word appears: **a)** "His [Moses'] hands were emunah until the sunset" (**Exodus 17:12**); **b)** "The Rock… a God of emunah" (**Deuteronomy 32:4**). For this reason, **English Bibles usually translate *emunah* as "faithfulness"** or something similar. However, in rare cases they switch to the **problematic translation "faith."** A famous example comes from **Habakkuk 2:4: "The righteous shall live by his faith."** This English version gives the impression that if someone lives by trusting and believing, then he or she will be regarded as virtuous. However, the Hebrew meaning is very different, more like, "The person of justice lives in steadfast reliability."

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Esta versión en inglés da la impresión de que, si alguien vive confiando y creyendo, entonces él o ella serán considerados virtuosos. Sin embargo, el significado hebreo es muy diferente, más como: *"La persona de justicia vive con una confiabilidad firme"*.

The first-century Letter to the Hebrews is careful to emphasize this point. In quoting from **Habakkuk, it uses Jewish-Greek πίστις (pistis) for Hebrew emunah**. *"My just one will live out of pistis/emunah [i.e., steadfast reliability]; and if he draws back [i.e., is not steadfastly reliable], then My soul will not take pleasure in him. But we are not of those who draw back… but rather those of pistis/emunah [i.e., who are indeed steadfastly reliable]."* (**Heb. 10:38-39**)

This perspective sheds a lot of light on every passage where "faith" appears – including the very next verse, one of the most popular in the entire Bible. In the King James Version, **Hebrews 11:1** reads, *"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."* A better translation would be, *"And steadfast reliability is a foundation for what is hoped, a proving/testing of invisible realities."* The rest of the chapter then gives dramatic examples of people of justice who lived in steadfast reliability before God, thus bearing witness to Invisible Truth. That idea is not the same as "faith" in the sense of feeling an inner conviction and suppressing doubts about unprovable beliefs!

El resto del capítulo luego brinda ejemplos dramáticos de personas de justicia que vivieron en una confiabilidad inquebrantable ante Dios, dando testimonio así de la verdad invisible. ¡Esa idea no es lo mismo que "fe" en el sentido de sentir una convicción interna y de suprimir las dudas sobre creencias no demostrables!

"Hope" in Hebrew Thought

By Dr. Nicholas J. Schaser - July 9, 2018

English speakers often use the word "hope" to express speculative desires: "I hope that I get the job," or "I hope we win this game." In these contexts, we invoke "hope" as we close our eyes, cross our fingers, and wait for the best possible conclusion to an unsure situation, but **this is not what the Bible means when it speaks of hope**. In Hebrew, **"hope" (תקוה/מקוה) is associated with God, so that the term expresses confidence, not in a future outcome, but in a present divine strength.**

According to the Psalms, hope is decisive because it comes from God: "Only for God does my life [wait] silently, for from him comes my hope (תקותי; tiqvati). He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken" (**Ps 62:5-6**). **The psalmist is already certain of his deliverance since God is the one in whom he puts his "hope."**

The Hebrew word for "hope" is the same as the word for a "pooling" or "gathering together" of waters (מקוה; miqveh). The Bible uses mikveh when God gathers together the waters at creation: "God called the dry ground 'Land,' and the gathering (מקוה; miqveh) of waters (מים; mayim) he called 'Seas.'" (Gen 1:10).

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Jeremiah connects this gathering of waters with his hope in God: "Lord, the hope (מקוה; miqveh) of Israel, all who forsake you shall be put to shame… for they have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living waters (מים; mayim)" ([Jer 17:13](#)). **The "hope" that Jeremiah has in God recalls God's strength as the Creator: just as surely as God gathered (mikveh) the "waters" (mayim) in the past, Jeremiah describes God as his present "hope" (mikveh) and living "water" (mayim).** **In biblical parlance, "hope" is not an abstract wish, but rather a complete assurance in God's strength to sustain all things.**

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