

11 Shevat, 5775 (31/1/15) **Aggressive Redemptive Love is Not Perishable** J. M. Terrett

**Beshalach**                      **When He Let Go**

**Torah:**                      Ex. 13:17-17:16      The Power of the Glory

(1) **14:31:** *Israel saw the powerful hand which YHVH had directed against the Egyptians. And the people feared YHVH and believed in YHVH and in Moses, His servant.* A disorganized, disoriented, tired motley crew saw the destruction of the mightiest military force on the planet without anyone having to lift a hand and they understood that His glory has power and they could only believe their eyes. Do not let the frail illusion of human circumstances blind you to the power of His glory.

(2) **15:11:** *Who is like You (mi Chamocha) among the gods, YHVH? Who is like You magnificent in holiness, worthy of praises, performing wonders?* It is not the power of our faith, it is not the power of suggestion (or of positive thinking). It is not the persuasive power of finely crafted arguments which accomplishes miracles. Our magnificently holy G-d has power in His glory and continues to work wonders. There is none like Him and all arguments against Him are like dry chaff in the wind.

(3) **15:26:** *He said: If you listen attentively to the voice of YHVH, your G-d, if you do that which is right in His eyes, if you lend ear to His commandments, and if you observe all of His laws, then I will not strike you with any of the diseases which I struck the Egyptians with; for I am YHVH who heals you.* They were not yet given the ten commandments or the rich history of its jurisprudence and ceremonial majesty which came later, they were given the big "if" - if you hear and obey, I will not smite you like I smote the Egyptians. Their gods looked awesome and sounded fancy, but they had neither power nor glory. Our G-d has both, and if we hear and obey, we are unstoppable.

(4) **16:30:** *And the people rested the seventh day.* The first commandment they were given was the Sabbath - they were not to rest in order to be blessed, they were blessed with quail and manna and told to rest in what was provided for them. We rest in His glory which has power to provide for our needs and to overcome all our adversaries.

**Haftarah:**                      Jud. 4:4-5:31

(5) **4:8:** *Barack said to her: If you come with me, I will go; but if you do not come with me, I will not go.* The guy was scared. He went out with a small number against a proven, superior force - G-d is never limited by our fear, as long as we still obey. The high tech chariots got stuck in the low tech mud (perhaps brought on by rain) and the lightly armoured Jews slaughtered their weighed down adversaries who could not run away fast enough. His glory has power and as we conquer our fears, His glory and power move through us in our obedience.

(6) **5:31:** *Perish thus all the enemies of YHVH! Those who love Him are like the sun, when he appears in his strength. The country was at rest for forty years.* There was no doubt that the amazing victory was brought about by YHVH - this time the enemy was not drowned, but was firmly stuck in the mud and the victory was like shooting fish in a barrel

because the enemy was utterly unable to fight or to run away. G-d gives us complete victory over even the mightiest of enemies, because His glory has power and when we obey, even a humble housewife is given the ability to slay the mightiest warrior.

Brit Chadashah: Rev. 19:1-20:6

(7) **19:8: *Fine linen, bright and clean was given to her to wear, for the fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints [holy ones].*** There is coming a day when the final victory will be won over all the enemies of G-d from all nations and generations of mankind, both military and ideological. And compared to even the splendour and sound and smell of the Roman triumphs (the super bowls of sin), G-d's final victory will blow away all that stands in His way as if it never existed. His glory has power - are you letting His glory be the place where you live (and be the clothes which you are clothed in) so that His power can flow through you. His glory has power and is going to win - serve the winning side.

(Jack p. 31,33) **Ps. 66** Jewish Hero: David Rubin

Passage: ***Love never perishes, Prophecies shall be abolished, tongues shall cease. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when that which is perfect shall come, that which is partial shall be abolished.***

I have been talking to you about aggressive redemptive love and we are looking at I Corinthians 13 - the chapter where this love is described in great detail. In a way we are pilgrims between two worlds and love is our link to the world which shall never pass way and we should never let the business of living crowd it out of our lives.

You see, we live in a world where we are called to constant combat against the lies and deceptions of the enemy, the flesh and the world. While we are involved in this combat, we need to understand that it is only a temporary situation and will not be our permanent state. So over and above our efforts to obey and to keep ourselves pure from the stains and detours of this life, we need to keep love in its primary place in our hearts and lives.

Now before we go into this at any more depth, I must digress and settle a dispute which some of you may have encountered. some feel that once the canon of the Scriptures was settled, then all prophecy and tongues ceased and because we have the complete Bible, we have no more need for these two temporary measures.

Early in my walk as a believer, I encountered this error with some of the Christian groups I received some of my initial training from. At first, as any young believer (child), I accepted this as the truth and thought no more of it until I encountered some charismatic believers who challenged me to look at what the Scriptures actually said and not at what people said it did. When that which is perfect comes refers to the return of our L-rd, the Messiah and the establishment of His eternal kingdom over all the nations and generations of mankind forever, once the new heavens and the new earth have replaced this failing cosmos. Until His final victory comes, we live in a constant battle that will one day be over and our link with that glorious day is love. We need faith, we need prophecy, we need tongues (prophetic pep talk messages from G-d which encourage us and tell us what to do and remind us of who we are and how we should live - Holy Spirit huddles in the midst of the big game of life).

In Romans, Paul says that sometimes we do not know what to pray and the Spirit intercedes with groanings and utterances which words cannot express because we are temporarily out matched and overwhelmed. He says in Corinthians, however, that no temptation has overtaken us which He cannot help us to endure and one of those ways is the pressure valve of tongues and of prophesy.

I know there are many possible crazy abuses of tongues and of prophesy and Paul is addressing these on either side of his discourse on love, but he is not saying that the tongues and prophesy are temporary measures which will soon disappear once the Bible has been completed. He is saying that they are temporary spiritual measures designed to empower us, encourage us, reprove us and keep us on the straight and narrow.

However his big warning has to do with the lack of love, and this lack of love should never be allowed to become one of the casualties of our spiritual combat whether we are struggling with opponents on the outside or with issues among brethren on the inside. The temporary measures are there to make sure that the imperishable measure remains our primary focus.

We must never fail to distinguish between our temporary measures and our final objective. We are not going to spend eternity in constant battle, but we have to learn successful battle strategies if we do not want to suffer permanent loss in our temporary combat. Love has the amazing possibility of being one of the weapons of our warfare that we get to take with us when that which is perfect finally arrives.

Tongues and prophecy are still valid means whereby G-d speaks to His people and empowers and encourages them - never in competition with His Word or as a replacement for His Word - but as an accessory which needs to function according to the stipulations set out in the Word.

Paul dedicates two long chapters to the appropriate use of both devotional and congregational tongues and prophecy and his main thrust is that they should not be used in any way similar to how the pagans used them.

In Delphi, the most popular oracle place in the ancient world, the priestesses would inhale the sulphuric fumes which leaked up from the ground and then they would scream and yell in a combination of jumbled words and unknown languages, singly or in larger groups and once they had finished yelling and writhing, another priestess or priest would interpret the messages. The priestesses would often lose consciousness and it take hours to recover. It was quite a noisy, disorganized gong show where the louder they yelled and the more they writhed, the better and more spiritual it would be, like the prophets of Baal and Astarte who were rebuked and slain in the times of Elijah the prophet.

In the assemblies of believers there is to be peaceful, harmonious order, both when we observe the Lord's Table, and when the Word is preached and when we prophesy and speak in tongues, both individually, when a message is being brought and corporately, when the entire congregation is in worship. Volume must be appropriate to the context of the sharing.

There is never a time when the speaker or the prophet loses control, like one of the priestesses who had inhaled the fumes and was having some kind of seizure. This is because everything must be done decently and in order, even with spontaneous utterances

which are never intended to be disruptive. Ecstatic in the L-rd is never out of control like the carnal raves and riots of the world.

Neither prophecy nor tongues have ceased, because that which is perfect is still to come and the closest we can come to that which is perfect is when we exercise love. We need to be good soldiers and become mature and effective in how we conduct ourselves in spiritual combat and our services need to be clear, harmonious expressions of our love, both our love for the L-rd and for each other - and especially for the lost souls among whom we live.

Our base of operations needs to be in the love which is imperishable and there is no room for disorder and competition, either in our lives or in our services. I encourage the use of the spiritual gifts and am not threatened by the orderly use of them. Sometimes when I preach, I am prophesying and sometimes our worship songs are prophetic. Whenever we have a message given in tongues it will not be disruptive and will never resemble a seizure and we will evaluate it as part of our receiving of it.

I want to hear from G-d, both in my devotional life and in our worship services (and our prayer meetings and our Yeshivas), but if ever I have lost my solid grip on imperishable love, then I make myself incapable of hearing from the L-rd. Love is at the centre of all that the L-rd does in our world today and it is at the centre of all that the L-rd is going to say to us in this world as we wait for that which is perfect to come.

We need to be good at effectively using our temporary measures, but we need to see that all we do, needs to be focused on preparing the way for that which is perfect. And the only glimpse we can have of that which is perfect, is when we learn to move in love, aggressively and redemptively. When we are focused on the imperishable and when this is the foundation of how we conduct ourselves with the temporary, then we shall be enriched and in harmony with the purposes of G-d in every area of our lives and we will never be in disorder or chaos.

The lack of love deprives us of meaning and purpose and impoverishes us and renders our spirituality powerless and ineffective, and often noisy and contentious. We need to let love guide and guard all the temporary spiritual measures we use on our way home as we prepare for that which is perfect to come. Love is that preparation!