

4 Shevat, 5775 (24/1/15) **Aggressive Redemptive love: Love Imperturbable** J. M. Terrett

Bo Enter Complete Deliverance

Torah: Exodus 10:1-13:16

(1) **10:26:** *Our flocks shall go with us and not a hoof will remain behind because it is from them that we will select to serve YHVH our G-d and until we have arrived, what we shall choose to offer to YHVH.* G-d did not deliver His people by half measures and He will also deliver us completely and fully - and work on us until we are completely whole!

(2) **11:8:** *And then all your servants here present will come to me and prostrate themselves before me saying: go, you and all the people who are attached to you. After that I will leave. And Moses went out from before Pharaoh with an ardent wrath.* The proud were brought low to bow before the former slaves. Our arrogant enemies shall also one day bow before the King of Kings. And we do not owe this world any allegiance.

(3) **12:32:** *Take your sheep and your cattle as you have said; go and bless me.* Pharaoh caved in when all of his gods were beaten up and their symbols were used to curse him. This world will also see all of its gods beaten up and used as a curse. Any caving in to the spirituality or the morality of this world will place us in the way of the cursing as the L-RD beats up all of their gods.

(4) **13:9,16:** *This shall be for you a sign on your hand and as a reminder between your eyes, in order that the Law of YHVH would be in your mouth. . .for it is by His powerful hand that YHVH brought you out of Egypt.* What do you have on your hand and between your eyes and in your mouth? Our double deliverance - from Egypt and from the Egypt of this world needs to be both our focus and that which we have a handle on and the subject of our conversations. Complete deliverance and nothing less.

Haftarah: Jeremiah 46:13-28

(5) **46:21:** *His mercenaries are also in their midst as fatted calves. For the day of their trouble shall melt upon them, the time of their chastisement.* Egypt hired many foreign mercenaries - professional soldiers who were good at what they did. Before G-d they are like fatted calves - harmless fodder - the same applies to all and any mercenaries in our lives.

(6) **46:28:** *You, My servant Jacob, do not fear says YHVH; for I am with you. I will exterminate all the nations among whom I have dispersed you, but you, I will not exterminate; I will chastise you in just measure, I cannot leave you unpunished.* Our Jewish people have suffered much because of our various infidelities, but we have never been exterminated and anyone who calls for our extermination does not speak for G-d. He cannot leave us unpunished, but He will never cease to love us and to use us in this world.

Brit Chadashah: Romans 9:14-29

(7) **9:24:** *Thus He has called us not only from among the Jews, but also from among the pagans.* We are truly completely delivered, both as Jews and Gentiles. It is never a

question of one or the other, but out of both He calls and completely delivers us to be His people as both Jews and Gentiles.

(John p. 27) **Ps. 77** Jewish Hero: Fireman Mike Martindale L-RD'S TABLE

Message: Passage: I Cor. 13:4-7

Love is patient, it is full of goodness (kindness), it is never envious; love does not boast, it is never puffed up with pride, it does nothing rude, it does not seek its own interest, it never becomes irritated, it never suspects evil (never keeps a record of wrongdoing), it does not rejoice in injustice (evil), but it rejoices in the truth; it forgives everything, believes everything (trusts), hopes everything, endures everything

This passage makes fourteen assertions about love and though this passage is often used at weddings, it is talking about the kind of love which believers need as we grow in the L-rd and as we grow together in the L-rd. I have entitled this meditation: Love imperturbable because this is the kind of love being described by this passage.

It is not the Hollywood/Bollywood kind of romantic love where the perfect woman falls for the perfect man and they either engage in physical affection (Hollywood) or dance and sing in a chorus (Bollywood).

It is the kind of love which we are called to express towards each other and can be likened to the kind of love moms and dads and grandparents have towards their offspring because they have no trouble believing that they are indeed incredibly wonderful.

It is also a mature kind of spiritual love which understands that life is not always easy and that people are not always lovely, but that this discovery of the downside of life and of people should not affect the way we love one another as we grow in the L-rd.

It is also not a naive kind of love which does not see evil or which turns a blind eye to sin because it sees through the sin and discovers the potential which all sinners possess when they come to the L-rd. It sees through the darkness and believes in the light and it refuses to give up on people even when they misbehave and do hurtful, even shameful things like some of the characters in the Corinthian community.

Paul outlines some very firm discipline which would exclude the offending sinner who refuses to abandon his or her sin but it is for both the sinners good and for the good of the community. It does not excuse sin, but it is always ready to forgive and excuse the repentant sinner.

In the lead up to this passage, Paul has to deal with a community which is full of people who are out of control and living immoral, carnal lives, both in how they relate to each other and in how they worship the L-rd. In fact, he comes down on them like a ton of bricks because if they do not mend their ways, they will tear each other and the community to pieces and completely destroy their reputation with the people they were called to reach out to.

How do you exercise severe, necessary discipline in a way which will not completely overcome or destroy the guilty ones who are causing all the trouble? There is only one way

which will work - love that is imperturbable. This is not an easy word to say, but it can be defined as not easily agitated or upset and even as unable to get troubled or upset.

It is not a fragile kind of love which gives up easily on people or which can be overwhelmed and easily offended when it discovers the downside of people and darker side of life. In the context where Paul is describing it, it is a healing, redemptive kind of love which wants to heal, protect and rebuild, not once the storms have subsided, but while they are blowing at full strength.

Let's look at each of the fourteen characteristics as we realize this kind of love potential in our midst and as we claim this kind of love potential in our lives. It describes the love of G-d (merciful, kind, slow to anger, forgiving) which sent our beloved Messiah to die on the cross and win everlasting salvation for those who richly did not deserve it!

Love is patient: We do not expect people to get it right the first time and we are not always ready to either lower the boom or withdraw from those who are not measuring up to our expectations. Love is ready to give people time to grow and learn and heal.

Full of goodness (kindness): Love wishes to see good triumph and is always ready to extend kindness as the main relational strategy in every situation. Paul had to extend severe discipline to those who practised the ten kingdom exclusions, but he was ready to welcome them back once they abandoned their folly. He did not give up on them as he waited for them to come to their spiritual and moral senses.

Never envious: Our spiritual life is never a competition to see who can get the best deal or the best position and never turns our community life into a scramble for the best at the expense of those less driven or capable - and when some of us excel, those of us who don't do not feel any hostility towards the successes of others.

Does not Boast: Love does not try and paint the best picture of itself or try to prove that it is better than anyone else - because boasting assumes there are the haves and the have-nots, where being the best or the most important is the goal of how we interact with one another. Love does not build itself up at the expense of someone else's sense of worth.

Never puffed up with Pride: In French there are two words for pride: orgueil and fierté. L'orgueil is a negative kind of haughtiness that is often associated with the upper classes who hoard the precious possessions and look down at the less fortunate and consider them less valuable. La fierté is what people feel when they sing the national anthem and it is the positive feeling of self-worth we feel when we have achieved something and done a good job. L'orgueil struts around saying look at me you losers, while la fierté is happy with a job well done and takes pleasure in beauty without using it as a weapon to say those who possess it are better or worth more because they possess it.

It does Nothing Rude: My French translation said malhonnête for this term and it can mean dishonest, but usually means badly behaved or acting inappropriately. Some people seem to walk around with a chip on their shoulder and violate boundaries of goodness and politeness for the shock value and always seem on the verge of a fight or argument, ready to be offended at the drop of a hat.

Love does not always require immediate attention and does not feel it has the right to say and do what it likes without taking others feelings and the appropriate context into consideration. Rude is a disguised form of bad temper.

It does not seek its Own Interest: The world does not revolve around our interests and love is not out to get its own way or fulfil its own needs as the basic or primary motivation in any and all of its dealings. It is a team player looking for the common interest. It is not always out for number one.

It never becomes Irritated: Now we have to understand the difference between strong discipline and irritation. A policeman should not give you a ticket because he is mad at you, but only because you have broken the law. Irritation makes correction personal and attacks the sinner as well as the sin. It feels that all and any mistakes are done on purpose and communicates dislike and disapproval as integral parts of discipline. Irritation feels that discipline should be according to its mood or its preferences and not according to community standards.

It Never Suspects Evil (Never keeps a Record of Wrong): Love is not out to get even and does not want revenge or retribution. It does not always suspect evil intent or feel that everyone is always out to get it. It may require restitution but not as a form of punishment. It seeks truth and reconciliation and does not wish to perpetrate or perpetuate violence or pain of any kind.

It does not rejoice in Evil: Love does not laugh at its enemy's pain or take satisfaction in the misfortune of others. It would abhor terrorism and suicide bombings and not use them as a reason to become a terrorist or a suicide bomber. It says to do as you would have others do to you, not do unto others what they have done to you.

It rejoices in the Truth: It wants to see things fixed and relationships restored and does not focus primarily on punishment or getting even. It believes in a fair trial and never in vendettas. It does not demonize its opponents or make them out to be monsters or accuse them of evil intent without trying to find out what really happened and what their real intentions were.

It forgives Everything: This does not mean it indulges criminal or sinful behaviour; it means it is always ready to forgive criminal or sinful behaviour, seven times seventy times a day and that due to the fact that G-d forgives us with the same tenacious love, it requires that we do the same. When someone does not want forgiveness or just continues to act in a criminal or sinful way, we hold the forgiveness in readiness and hold them accountable for their actions, not out of anger, but ready to forgive.

It believes Everything (trusts): This does not mean love is easily scammed and believes everything that is told to it. It means that love believes in people's capacity for good and for telling the truth and while, like Paul earlier in the epistle, it exercises severe discipline in response to severe breeches, it never loses its confidence in people's ability to learn to tell the truth and come clean and walk in the light.

It hopes Everything: Love always wishes for the best and works towards that goal. It is not naively optimistic and is not prone to deny problems or minimize evil. But it is also not naively pessimistic, nor prone to always see problems or exaggerate evil. Our society has become

quite pessimistic about spiritual people and our justice system has some fatal flaws and contradictions, but love is not like that. Love believes in our innate potential and will work towards that end in everybody around it.

It endures Everything: After having described an energetic commitment to the best and to good, love is now described as not ever giving up, even when everything seems hopeless, as it almost did, given the degree of disorder and immorality the Corinthian community was experiencing. Love understands the intense nature of the struggle and is well aware of all the obstacles and pit falls which it must overcome, but because the Messiah never gave up on us - and has never given up on Israel, the kind of love which Paul is describing is never going to give up. And this is both the love to which we are called and which never gives up on us.

Now in the context where severe discipline was necessary, this kind of aggressive love is also necessary. It is never a choice between discipline and love, because they are two sides of the same coin. Love requires discipline and we always need to discipline with love. We just have to be careful not to lose sight of the kind of love which will both hold us together as a community and also hold us together as individuals in a world where love is sorely misunderstood and disappearing. Our politically correct world wants to redefine right and wrong, light and darkness, bitterness and sweetness.

We are never called to hate our opponents who protect criminal immorality and bombing abortion clinics is just another form of the vigilante criminal behaviour we are forbidden to practice. Our love needs to remain imperturbable as it heals our wounds and bonds us together as a community of love, willing to practice both severe discipline and aggressive redemptive love, because to abandon either negatively impacts both.

We can never accept the unacceptable, but our forgiveness needs to stand as a beacon to draw the lost and hurt to the light we live in and which cleanses us from all unrighteousness and decrees that we act the same way in our lost and dying, spiritually confused world.

Next week, Love imperishable.