

Self Preservation

I walked out... I went home... I crashed... I slept....

In Judaism and Christianity the Greatest Mitzvah (Commandment) is: " Shema (Hear and Obey) O Israel, ADONAI our God, ADONAI is Echad (One and Only), you are to love ADONAI your God with ALL you Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength." In other words, with your whole being! Yeshua the Messiah said that the Second Greatest Mitzvah (Commandment) is like unto the first, "To love your Neighbor as yourself." These 2, sum up the 10 Mitzvot (Commandments) and the 10 sum up the 613 Mitzvot. Sounds simple enough right? We know not to be greedy, selfish, abusive and condescending to others, and to help others, and not to do to someone that you wouldn't want done to you, that's obvious. But there is a very dark, deceptive and sinister twist to this. It's the part about loving yourself. If I don't truly love myself, how can I even begin to love others, or for that matter to truly love Adonai!?

**The one who acquires good sense loves himself;
one who safeguards understanding finds success. – Prov. 19:8 (HCSB).**

Yeremiyahu Ha Navi (Jeremiah the Prophet) said that our heart is the most deceptive thing about us and it is not to be trusted (Jer. 17:9). Satan knows this and uses this against you. He uses YOU against YOU! And he hardly has to lift a finger! He knows man has an uncanny way of destroying themselves. I'm not talking about, drugs, alcohol, etc. No, it's more twisted and deceptive than that. I am talking about burning yourself out in the name of "God" in the name of "ministry" and "helping others".

We fall for the original sin of Pride and Self-righteousness disguising itself as "Sacrifice and Self-less-ness".

Let me explain: "GOD needs me! If I don't do such and such, who will? I must sacrifice for the greater good of others, If I burn out, well glory to GOD, I'll burn out doing His Will. If I stop and take a break now, who will help those I'm

helping, what will people think? I can't appear to be weak, others are depending on me! What will that say of my faith? Blah, blah, blah..." See how Self-righteous and Prideful that sounds?

The Torah says that by the Mitzvot (Commandments/Torah) we shall LIVE. Not just Physically, but Mentally, Emotionally, and Spiritually. And when any of these are out of whack, it effects the entire being, we suffer and begin a slow suicide, ignoring the self-preservation mechanism that Adonai has put within us all that says, "Slow down, pull back, or you will crash and burn!" foolishly thinking that I can handle it ourselves, we have therefore violated this Second Greatest Mitzvot! True, the Scriptures say that GOD will not put any more upon us than we can bear. But when "I" take on things myself, that HE has not placed upon me, I tie HIS hands! My family and friends have become the unfortunate, unintentional victims and bystanders in this whole mess. Because when I hurt, they hurt. What affects me, affects them! I therefore have not loved God nor myself, nor others! For I have disobeyed God and have abused myself thinking it's all for HIM. When in reality it's all about me and keeping up appearances. See how twisted this is!? See the Pride and Self-righteousness in it all? If I wouldn't load the responsibilities I'm carrying on others, why would I expect to do it myself? I'll tell you; PRIDE! We lie to ourselves saying just as Yeremiyahu Ha Navi said. We say, "I can do this MYSELF! I'm mature and strong enough, I don't need anyone's help! I'm a Rabbi in training, I can't appear weak, to many people are counting on me, I have to be strong for them! I've got to learn to handle this sort of stuff, It's just ME and GOD!" We have unwittingly separated ourselves from the rest of the flock and have become an easy target. We have just become our own worst enemy. You know what the Hebrew word for enemy is? SATAN! We in essence become our own Satan! In this way we slowly murder ourselves and loving it! Sometimes I think the Commandments we violate are mostly against ourselves, not necessarily others.

When all the stress, pressure, burdens and responsibilities, build up in such a way to where I can't function at my peak effectiveness and efficiency, and I find myself, crying at the drop of a hat, flying off the handle for some petty reason, when my inner struggles start outwardly manifesting and starts affecting not only me, but my family, my wife and daughter and my friends around me, that's when it's gone too far, not only have I hurt myself, but violated the Command and hurt my "Neighbors," not truly loving them.

Look even the Messiah loved Himself and others enough to know when He needed a sabbatical, a vacation, a break! It is recorded in the Brit Chadasha (the Renewed Covenant/"New Testament") that on several occasions that He and His Talmidim (Disciples), got away from it all for a while.

And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. And they departed into a desert place by ship privately. – Mark 6:30-32

It's the whole putting on your oxygen mask first, and knowing when to retreat so you won't be a liability on the battle field sort of thing. So if I'm supposed to imitate and be like my Messiah, you'd think we would have learned this lesson of getting away by now. But sadly many, including myself have not. We make excuses why we can't right now, we trudge along thinking we are doing HIS Will, when in reality we are doing more harm than good. We think in being a "good solider" and "taking one for the team" our Good Inclination is at work, we are helping others, but sad to say we are just lying to ourselves, and the Evil Inclination has really taken over, and we are cheating God and others out of who we are when we are whole. No more! I put my PRIDE and SELFRIGHTEOUSNESS to the Sword (Torah), and I humbly admit I have failed, I will respectfully for a time bow out, retreat, lay low. But I WILL be back, and I WILL be stronger than ever. After all, what doesn't kill me only makes me stronger!

Shalom,
-- Yehudah ben Shomeyr