

בְּהֵר

B'har

(in mount)

בְּחֻקְתִּי

B'chuqotai

Vayiqra [Leviticus] 25:1-26:2

Vayiqra 26:3-27:34

No Idolatry Allowed!

Vayiqra (Leviticus) 26:1

“You shall make you no idols, neither shall you raise up a graven image, or a pillar, neither shall you place any figured stone in your land, to bow down to it; for I am YHWH your Elohim.”

There are several words in this passage that we truly need to understand, to know what it is that YHWH is commanding us not to do for ourselves. Here is the Hebrew text of the above passage.

לَا תַעֲשׂו לְכֶם אֱלִילִים וּפְסָל וּמַצְבָּה לֹא תַקְימוּ לְכֶם וְאַבּוּ מִשְׁפִּית
לֹא תַתְנוּ בָּאָרֶץ כָּם לְהַשְׁתְּחוֹת עַלְיָה | כִּי אַנְיִ יהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם :

The first word that we need to examine is – אֱלִילִים – “elilim,” which literally means *worthless* or *insufficient*. It is this word that is translated as “idol” in the above verse. This is from the root word אַל – “alal,” which means to *deny* or to *obstruct development*. We see the truth of this word being used as denoting an idol in the following passage.

Yeshayah (Isaiah) 41:29

“Behold, all of them, their works are vanity and nothing; their molten images are wind and confusion.”

There is nothing to benefit a man in anything that he would fashion to worship.

Chavaqquk (Habakkuk) 2:18-19

18 “What profit is there in the graven image, that the maker thereof has graven it; the molten image, even the teacher of lies, that he that fashions its form trusts therein, to make dumb idols? ”

19 Woe to him that says to the wood, ‘Awake’; and to the dumb stone, ‘Arise!’ Shall this teach? Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver, and there is no breath at all in the midst of it.”

The next word in the list that YHWH commands us not to make is **אֱלִילָם** – elilim that a person might make is more than just something physical, it can also be some idea that he serves. In our day this may be more common than the actual making of an idol, but both are equally condemned by YHWH as something that we are to stay away from doing.

The next word that we need to examine is **וּפְסֵל** – “ufesel” which means an “idol or image.” It is because this word begins with a ו -- and this being a conjunction, indicates to us that this word is to be understood separately from the previous word. The root word here is **פְסַל** – “pasal,” which means to *chisel* or to *cut out*. The first word **אֱלִילָם** can be either a physical or metaphorical idol, whereas **פְסֵל** – “pesel” is only a physical idol or carved out image, like a statue.

Yeshayah (Isaiah) 45:20

“Gather yourselves and come; draw near together, you fugitives of the nations; they have no knowledge, who carry about their wooden idol and pray to a god who cannot save.”

Why would someone pray to something that they had either made or had made for them? It does not make any sense does it? Yet, before we are too harsh in our judgment of this, let us prayerfully consider our own actions to make sure that we are not guilty of it ourselves.

While we may not actually make an object that we can carry around that is made of wood or silver or gold or plaster or some other material (and there may be many such items in one's home) there are still those vain imaginations of one's own mind, those things which we make up or accept as true about YHWH which are not true. These things are just as equally idolatrous as those physical idols, and are even more easily carried around by us and passed on to others without so much as a second thought.

A. W. Tozer said in his book The Knowledge of The Holy, that when we imagine something to be true about YHWH which is not true, and then act as if it is true, this is idolatry. Mr. Tozer said it very well; and if we really think about it, we see that this is a true statement. There are many things in the believing community today that are being taught as truth concerning YHWH that simply cannot be supported by Scripture. The only truth about YHWH that we know for certain is what He has said about Himself. Everything else is conjecture. Let us make sure that who we are serving is actually YHWH. And let us make sure that what we know and believe about YHWH our Elohim is supported by His own words given to us.

The next word in the list that YHWH commands us not to make is **וּמַצְבָּה** – “umatztzavah,” which means *pillar*. This is a very descriptive and instructive word and teaches us exactly what it is that YHWH is commanding us not to do. The root word is **צָבָה** – “tzavah” which means “to swell.” **מַצְבָּה** – “matztzavah” is the word used to designate a special pillar; i.e., a male fertility symbol. Scripture later uses the term “Asherah pole,” which was the version of this fertility symbol that was found in the land of Canaan. Today we find these male fertility symbols scattered across the world in the form of church steeples and obelisks. The largest (most swelled) **מַצְבָּה** in the world is the Washington Monument. It quite simply is a phallic symbol. It's pretty disgusting, huh?

The next word that we find in Vayiqra 26:1 that YHWH commands us not to make is מִשְׁכִּית – “mas-kit” (pronounced as moss-KEET). There are two words that act as root words. The first is שְׁכָת – “sakat,” which means “to bow.” YHWH commands us not to bow down to the earth to these things that one makes for himself. YHWH not only commands us not to make them, but also not to bow down to them, indicating that we should not bow down to those that someone else has made as well.

The second word that comes into play as a root word is שְׁכָה – “sakah,” which means “to arouse thoughts.” This is exactly what happens in the beginning of such a process. First, one’s thoughts are lifted up above what they should be and then sin enters when it is given action.

Ya’aqov (James) 1:14-15

14 but each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed.

15 Then the lust, when it has been conceived, bears sin; and the sin, when it is full grown, brings forth death.

16 Be not deceived, my beloved brethren.

There is a definite process which temptation and sin goes through in each person. It is best if a person recognizes this process early on so that he can stop the process and prevent it from bearing its evil fruit!

Mikah (Micah) 2:1

“Woe to them that devise iniquity and work evil upon their beds! When the morning is light, they practice it, because it is in the power of their hand.”

It is so very true that people often allow the thoughts of their minds to run rampant without any checks or stops. When this happens sin is sure to follow, if left unchecked.

B’reshit (Genesis) 6:5

And YHWH saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

From the beginning the thoughts of man have not been under his own control. Men simply let their own imaginations run riot and this is the source of all sorts of evil.

Matithyah (Matthew) 15:18-20

18 But the things which proceed out of the mouth come forth out of the heart; and they defile the man.

19 For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings;

20 these are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man.

These are the types of thoughts that are the root of idolatry. Idolatry is the purest form of selfishness known to man. When a man desires to be self-centered, then that which he devises to get others to serve him is idolatry, for we are to serve YHWH.

Philippians 4:8

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

To help us guard against idolatry and idolatrous thoughts, we need to control our thought life. We need to focus upon thinking about YHWH and about Yeshua and about Scripture. If one is doing something and one's thoughts are getting out of control, then an immediate change needs to take place. Go to a different room, pick up your Scriptures and start reading, and do something to help focus your thoughts upon Mashiach Yeshua.

ABBA YHWH, remove from us all idolatry, all forms of idolatry, and any object that is idolatrous; in the name of Yeshua our Mashiach. Amein.

מְזַקֵּן וְנִתְמַזֵּק בָּמֶשֶׁיִם יֵשֹׁעַ

Chazak! Chazak! Venitchazeik B'Mashiach Yeshua!

Be strong, be strong, and may you be strengthened in Mashiach Yeshua!

Shabbat Shalom

Zerubbabel ben Emunah

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