

THE NAME OF OUR ELOHIM - WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE?

I've recently followed a published correspondence about a conflict between two people with great interest. With each new letter it looked as if the paste was mixed a little bit thicker than before - as if each punch of the arguments grew stronger and stronger with each follow-up letter. Both parties nevertheless had lots of self-discipline to keep to the topic and not to make their attacks personal ... UNTIL one of them made the mistake right at the end of his letter - apparently without any reason - to call his opponent "Danny" and not "Daniel". The sluice gates were properly opened in the next letter and the "Danny" that felt that he was treated unjustly spoke his dissatisfaction out with the most drastic language about the way his name was blatantly violated - only to hear in the next letter that it was because he had repeatedly spelt his components name wrong - something that was openly taken as a slap in the face.

None of us like it when people distort our names without any reason or even to pronounce it wrongly. Most of us will, out of respect for others, never do it - accept when we are very angry with that person. The question that came to my mind lately, is this: Why do we distort and fake and blend the Name that is above every other name - the Name of the only Creator of heaven and earth? Why do Bible translators and denominations and believers over many generations' keep on rejecting His revealed, personal Name, YAHWEH, and keep on calling Him "Lord"? Haven't we got any respect for Him? Doesn't it mean anything to us that He explicitly stipulated in the Word that YAHWEH, His Name, is "to be remembered from generation to generation" (Exod 3:15 - NIV)?

Many will interrupt me at this stage, because they want to know why they've never seen the name YAHWEH in their Bibles. It's precisely on this point that the truth MUST be revealed: The name, YAHWEH, is written on more than 6 800 places in the original documents of the Old Testament, but the vast majority of Bible translations have bluntly translated the original Name of the Creator with "the Lord"! "Lord" (English) or "Here" (Afrikaans) is the normal translation of the Hebrew word "adonai" or the Greek "kurios" - both words mean "ruler", "master" or "owner". It's a shocking fact that "adonai" and "kurios" are used in general as DESCRIPTIVE NAMES for nearly every imaginable idol in the time of the Old and New Testament.

By the time the Bible Translators started to translate YAHWEH with "Lord", "Here" "Herr", et cetera, they were completely aware that these translations had pagan-connotations, which had already existed for generations before the compilation of the Bible. Secondly, they were also completely aware that "Lord" was not a unique proper noun or personal name like YAHWEH, but that it was only a vague and general description of YAHWEH as Master or Ruler. And thirdly, they were (and still are) completely aware of the fact that the replacement of YAHWEH's Name with "Lord" started with a Jewish (and unscriptural) tradition that was later passed on to Christianity.

This tradition (which later became known as the "ineffable name doctrine") determined that YAHWEH's Name was too "holy" to speak out and that the mere pronunciation of His true Name would be a violation of the third commandment ("You shall not misuse the name of YAHWEH your Elohim..."). If one would thus read the Scriptures and came to the Name of YAHWEH, this Jewish tradition forced one to read "Elohim" (literally "mighty one" or "mighty ones") or "Adonai" (literally "rulers" or "my ruler"), even though YAHWEH is written in the text (see the note at the end of this article about the word "God").

A few centuries later when a group of Jewish scribes (known as the Masoretes) took it upon themselves to provide the Hebrew words of the Old Testament with vowels (these words originally consisted only out of consonants), they caused even more damage to Yahweh's Name because of the "ineffable name doctrine". They kept the consonants, YHWH, but combined the vowels of "adonai" and "Elohim" with these consonants. The result was a word that could not be pronounced in Hebrew and was therefore read as "adonai" and "Elohim". The word "Jehovah" that appears in some translations and is used in some church groups, comes from this distorted rendering of

YAHWEH's Name (actually a mixture between YHWH and "adonai") and is definitely not the correct pronunciation of the Father's Name.

The question is: Is it important in the eyes of YAHWEH that we use His real Name? One is almost tempted to answer: "Of course it is - who gave us the right to change His Name?" ... but let's first look what the Scriptures say. Maybe the third commandment is a good place to start with - the commandment that indirectly caused the name-change. "You shall not misuse the Name of YAHWEH your Elohim, for YAHWEH will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses His Name" (Deut 5:11). It's interesting that the Hebrew word that is translated in this verse with "misuse" ("shav") is also used in the ninth commandment: "You shall not give false ("shav") testimony against your neighbour" (Deut 5:20). We have thus an alternative translation of "shav" in the ninth commandment, which is "false". Thus we could translate the third commandment as follows: "You may not FALSIFY the Name of YAHWEH your Elohim, because YAHWEH will not hold anyone guiltless who FALSIFIES His Name..."

Let's see if it's in line with what is written in the rest of the Scriptures: Isaiah 42:8: "I am YAHWEH, that is My Name, and My esteem I do not give to another." Isaiah 52:5,6: "...and My Name is despised all day continually. Therefore My people shall know My Name..." Jeremiah 16:20, 21 (NAS): "Can man make gods for himself? Yet they are not gods! Therefore behold, I am going to make them know - This time I will make them know My power and My might and they shall know that My Name is YAHWEH." Malachi 2:2: "If you do not hear, and if you do not take it to heart, to give esteem to My Name," says YAHWEH of hosts, "I shall send a curse upon you, and I shall curse your blessings."

Jeremiah 23:26, 27 is a stirring passage: "Till when shall it be in the heart of the prophets? - the prophets of falsehood and prophets of the deceit of their own heart, who try to make My people forget My Name by their dreams which everyone relates to his neighbour, as their fathers forgot My Name for Ba`al." (NAS as their fathers forgot My Name because of Baal"). According to Strong's dictionary "Baal" can be translated with "master", "owner" or "lord". It seems as though we are in the same situation as the people of Jeremiah's time: because of false teachings we forgot YAHWEH's Name, exchanging it for Ba`al's name (Lord)! No wonder that Hosea prophesied as follows: "And it shall be, in that day", declares YAHWEH, "that you call Me 'My Husband,' and no longer call Me 'My Ba`al' (i.e. My Lord). "And I shall remove the names of the Ba`als from her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name." (Hosea 2:16,17). I think we came to the complete fulfillment of this prophecy today. The time has come for us to call upon the Name of YAHWEH as Abraham (Genesis 12:7), Moses (Exodus 3:15), David (Psalms 116:13) and Elijah (1 Kings 18:24) did.

I know that this is not an easy message to digest. There should, however, be no doubt in our minds that this is the TRUTH of Yahweh's Word. Yahweh has chosen us to know His set-apart Name and use it. It's the Name that He has chosen for Himself - a Name that's described in the Word as "awesome" (Deut 28:58), "exalted" (Psalms 148:13) and "glorious" (1 Chron 29:13). It's in this Name that we will find help (Psalms 124:8); it's this Name that's a strong tower to us (Proverbs 18:10); it's this Name that guarantees His presence (1 Kings 9:3); it's in this Name that we gain victories and breakthroughs (Psalms 118:10-12); it's this Name that we should call upon when we want to truly praise and worship Him (Psalms 145:1,2; Psalms 148:13); it's this Name that fills our life with joy (Psalms 5:11); it's after this Name that our souls are desiring and longing (Isaiah 26:8); it's in this Name that every victorious person can boast and trust (Psalms 20:8); it's in this Name that we will walk in the last days and that would distinguish us from the unrighteous people (Micah 4:5) and it's because of this Name that the nations of the earth will recognize us and will fear us (Deut 28:10) and finally will also prosecute us (Luke 21:12 - the Name of our Messiah, Y'shua, is dealt with in a separate article).

On pure Scriptural grounds it's quite alright to use Father, Master, Creator and Elohim as ways of speaking and describing YAHWEH, as long as we keep it in mind that none of these is His unique,

revealed, personal Name. Many of the "names" people use for the Almighty in different languages come from origins they are completely unaware of and really should not be used with reference to the Almighty (see the comment on the name "God" in the paragraph below). Satan is clever enough to know that he can handicap us in our faith life by keeping us away from using the correct Name of YAHWEH. This revelation of the Name of YAHWEH does not mean that everything that was done in the past with an upright heart "in the Name of the Lord" was wrong or invalid. Definitely not. In most cases the true Name of the Father is neglected or ignored out of ignorance. The Father knows every part of our heart. However ... "now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them" (John 13:17).

[*] The word "God" that is used in most translations as the title for the Almighty, is not a proper noun (thus it's NOT the revealed Name of the Almighty), but an effort to translate the Hebrew word "Elohim", which merely means "mighty one" or "mighty ones". The shocking fact is that the word "God" is derived from the name of the idol "Gad", which is also known in some cultures as "Godan", "Goda", "Gott", "Guth", "Gud" and "God". According to the *Indogermanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch* vol.1, of Julius Pokorny the word "ghodh" means: association, also sexual association of couples. Apart from the names of the idols given above, the German word "gatten", the Dutch "gaden" and the English "beget, begat, begotten" also comes from this word. There is more than enough evidence (read "GO OUT OF HER MY PEOPLE" by C.J. Koster) that makes it absolute clear that the word "God" is from pagan origin and therefore we choose not to use this word as a "name" for the Almighty