

On G-d and the Heart that loves Him



For many born Jewish, whatever we believe, we will sometimes ask ourselves: *What is Judaism? And, who is a Jew? Am I a Jew?*

How do we know who is obeying the covenant, and how do we obey the covenant ourselves? We look to our rabbis and community leaders for instruction, but we secretly wonder whether they themselves are able to keep the covenant.

We know that Israel has a covenant. But if we say there is a covenant, and we say that this covenant is binding upon all Israel, we say that there is a G-d who wrote the terms of this covenant.

This should lead us to a second question: *Who is G-d? And, what is He like?*

Many will try to answer the first question, and try to work out what Judaism is, but find the second question a lot harder.

In order to know *what is Judaism?* we must use our senses and our judgements. We must look at certain actions and thoughts, and decide whether they are or aren't "Jewish". This alone is enough to give you a headache!

Yet when we ask *Who is G-d and what is He like?*, it is impossible to answer this question just by looking at actions and thoughts. Our conscience cries to us, and we must turn to the inner chambers of our hearts to realise who G-d is.

Of all the acts we do for G-d, and all the good deeds and tzedakah, and all the prayers, and all the lamentations, we know that these are all useless, should our hearts not be turned towards HaShem himself.

The mediaeval rabbi Bahya ibn Paquda wrote that, "if the duties of the heart were to be undermined, there would be no point to any duties of the limbs."

All, then, depends upon the heart. Our religious actions depend upon our heart for guidance, just as our body parts depend upon our heart for blood and life.

Yet Israel's prophet Jeremiah wrote, "*the heart is desperately wicked, who can know it?*"

G-d tells us that our hearts are sick. If our hearts are sick then our limbs are sick, and our actions are not as good as we hope they are.

G-d tells us through the prophet Ezekiel, "*Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit.*"

G-d tells us to get a new heart, so we should do. So now then, we have a new question: **how do we get a new heart?** Only Moshiach can give us a new heart.

This is why Moshiach does not come to end the exile, for even if he were to regather all Jews, we would not be able to perform the deeds he expects us to do if our hearts are still sick.

Moshiach does not defeat all our enemies, for their blood could never change our hearts. Nor does Moshiach rebuild the Temple, for whilst the Temple may be holy and the sacrifices holy, our hearts are still unclean.

Our hearts are sick and only Moshiach has the remedy. We don't want to say our hearts are sick because we are proud, but Moshiach was humble. This is why Moshiach arrives lowly and riding on a donkey.

We know that our hearts need mending because G-d tells us. G-d also tells us how he will mend our hearts, through Moshiach who loves all Israel. We can read about Moshiach in Isaiah 53 of the Hebrew Bible.

Moshiach came and saw us, he pitied us and loved us.

Moshiach was heart-broken for us, and cried to G-d for us.

Moshiach died and spilled his blood to mend the sickness in our hearts, winning a cosmic victory over evil in the spiritual realm.

Moshiach rose to new life, and now offers to give us a new heart and a new spirit.

If we allow Moshiach to care for the duties of our heart, he will also care for the duties of our limbs, and we will finally be able to serve G-d and know who he is.

At last, we will know the name of G-d's son (Proverbs 30:4), Israel's Messiah and future King (Psalm 2). The name of G-d's son is **Yeshua**, and he is Moshiach.