

Word's Mean Something . . . (pt 1)

When my kids were young I used to read them a bedtime story, and afterwards I sometimes asked them "So, what did you think of the book?" More often than not, the answer was a simple "Good." I told them that the word "*good*" was banned. The book could be funny, boring, interesting, scary, lovely, awful, delightful, or a combination of terms. Anything but good. It's time to give the old and tired words "good" and "bad" a well-deserved rest. (I was such a tough dad).

I think the same applies for people. Not that the old and tired need to be put to rest, but that people are rarely just *good* or *bad*. Somebody could be *ebullient*, which means Bubbling with enthusiasm or excitement; or they could be *tremulous*, if they are timid or nervous. Some people are *pavid* which means that they are exhibiting or experiencing fear; or timid.

I feel the same way about many other words. I will argue that the word "*awesome*" only applies to Yehoveh. Think of it. Awesome means: amazing: inspiring awe or admiration or wonder . . . that seems to describe Yehoveh quite well don't you think? I may appreciate Chicago, but I wouldn't say Chicago was "*awesome*."

Yehoveh (YHVH- יהוה , Yod Heh Vau Heh) is the name of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It's the name that Moses was told to use when referring to the God of the Exodus. Some people will argue that the Hebrew word, "*El*" means "*God*," like when you say, *El Shaddai*, and I suppose you are correct, at least in a general sense, but it is a word that is referring to a *title*, a position. It would be like saying "*President*." Well, which president are you referring to? Is it President Bush? Or President Clinton? Or President Obama? Or President Washington?

If you use the Hebrew word, "*El*" when you are talking about *God*, well, which "*god*" are you referring to? Is it Ba'al? Is it Ashteroth; or maybe you mean Allah? Each name identifies a specific entity. Islam and many within the Church want you to believe that Allah and Yehoveh are two names for the same God. After all, Muslims will tell you that Allah means "*God*;" and, all of us know that our Bibles call the God of the Bible "*God*." Well, does it really? The Egyptians also referred to many of their gods simply as "*god*," although they might be referring to one of their family gods. Jews and Christians have brought this problem on themselves. If the translators hadn't replaced YHVH with the generic word "*God*" or *Adonai* (which is simply Hebrew for lord) so long ago, we wouldn't have a problem recognizing that Allah (which is the formal name of the god of Islam), can't possibly be the same god as Yehoveh (which is the formal name of the God of the Bible), because they are two entirely different names. I wonder if my sons would like to be referred to as "Nickolas's son #1 or #2, or #3," instead of by Jonathan, or Christopher or Robert. I realize that if someone is talking to George W. Bush, they will call him "*Mr. President*," but that is not his name. *God*, like the word *President*, is simply the *title* of an office: it is not the name of the person who holds that office. As of this writing, our current president is named "George W. Bush;" his name isn't "*president*." God's name is YHVH, not "*God*"—and certainly not Allah.

I have no idea why the bible translators chose to use the word *God* or *Lord* whenever the word Yehoveh appeared. So, when we look at the original language texts we see that the same people and nations who knew about the events in Egypt concerning Israel, also knew the name of Israel's God—Yehoveh. Back then, knowing a god's name was important because the

superstition was that if you knew the name of the god who had authority over some area of responsibility like the weather, or fertility, or prosperity, or battle, then when you call on that god's name, that god had to do what you requested.

Obviously, Muslims refuse to accept that Arab pagans were already worshiping Allah at the Ka'ba in Mecca long before Muhammad came. Most Muslims will become angry when you point this out to them. But history is a tough nut to overcome. It just isn't on their side. Pre-Islamic literature has proved this. In his book, "*The Muslim Doctrine of God*," Samuel M. Zwemer wrote "But history establishes beyond the shadow of doubt that even the pagan Arabs, before Muhammad's time, knew their chief god by the name of Allah and even, in a sense, proclaimed his unity. Among the pagan Arabs this term denoted the chief god of their pantheon, the Kaaba, with its three hundred and sixty idols."

In fact, at first Mohammad didn't intend to establish a new religion, but rather to reform the belief in Allah which already existed, and to show what this belief truly signified and rightfully demanded.

What we need to understand is that Yehoveh has continually tried to reveal Himself. He began by introducing Himself to the Patriarchs in a different way than He revealed Himself to, say . . . Moses. What's the difference? Well, one significance is in the level of intimacy—I mean you could address me as "Mr. Hiemstra," or use the more personal name, "Nickolas." Slowly, one-step-at-a-time, Yahweh was making Himself more intimately, and more personal, and more accessible. Progressively-step-by-step, He revealed Himself to mankind. This is see all the way through the Scriptures. While we get just an outline of God in Genesis, by the time we reach the end of Torah, we have more information on Yahweh than we can possibly understand. Finally, he reveals Himself in His Son, Yeshua. Jesus made the relationship between God and man almost as personal as it gets. He became one of us; He walked among us; He shared the woes of fleshly human existence with us. Then, after Jesus left, we received the Holy Spirit: you can't get any closer and more intimate than that! Yehoveh no longer walked *among* us, external to us, He made living arrangements within us. In the most literal possible sense, God dwells with us. Internal to us.

I was discussing this with a fellow believer and his response was that this was my opinion. Well again, words mean something. If I told you that Neapolitan ice cream was better than Chocolate ice cream . . . I would be correct, but that would also be my opinion. But if I told you that the Earth was round and revolved around the Sun that would be scientific and historical fact, and not my opinion. By telling you that Yehoveh is the name of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and that Allah is the name of a god being worshipped at the Ka'ba in Mecca by Arab pagans before Muhammad came. That is also historical fact, and not my opinion. My only wish is that when you are praying, you know who you are speaking to. Is it Allah, Buddha Hare Krishna, or Yehoveh?