

The Two Idolatries

Introduction

We can divide idolatry into two principal classifications;

- Cultural assimilation,
- Syncretism.

Cultural Assimilation

Cultural assimilation is the more overt of the two forms of idolatry. It involves the blatant rejection to accept 'YHWH Eloheinu Melekh Ha Olam'- YHWH our Elohim, King of the ages and His Torah (Rules) and to adopt a pagan culture of worship and lifestyle. From the earliest of time humanity has been divided, if not by language then by culture, generally each with its own religious deity. Transition from one religious following to another is a trait that can be traced back through millennia and Scripture.

Religious conversion may result from coercion via conquest, intermarriage or free will. Changing religion remains a common trait today with, for example, people freely swapping Christianity for Islam and vice versa. Others may swap their religion after experiencing the truth of Torah. YHWH's command that there are to be no other Elohim besides Him defines all other worship as pagan. YHWH warns the Israelites of the prominence of pagan religious culture in the Land they are about to inherit and the danger of assimilation. He was quite vehement in His instructions to Israel and thereby His instructions to us,

"When YHWH your Elohim brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you and when YHWH your Elohim delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them. Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son. For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so the anger of YHWH will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly. But thus you shall deal with them: you shall destroy their altars, and break down their sacred pillars, and cut down their wooden images, and burn their carved images with fire." (Deut.7:1-5).

These verses focus on the cultural environment of the pagan people resident in the Land. Not only did YHWH expressly prohibit assimilation of any sort with these pagan nations but He explains the reason for this prohibition: *"For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods."* It was King Shlomo's (King Solomon) susceptibility to the cultural influence of his foreign wives that led to his eventual fall from favour.

Syncretism

Cultural assimilation is a most obvious form of idolatry but syncretism is far less obvious. Syncretism generally relies on the manipulative ability of religious leaders. Whilst this manipulation is more often covert than it is overt, its success is mostly reliant on the degree of complacency amongst worshippers. I would say today that unfortunately Christians are more relaxed than most, making them more vulnerable to syncretism. However, because of its insidious nature we must all guard against the encroachment of syncretism into our faith.

Syncretism is not as blatant as being drawn into another religious deity; it is the result of merging true worship with pagan styles of worship that is, following pagan worship systems and rites when worshipping YHWH. A good example is the golden calf incident at Mt. Sinai,

When the people saw that Moshe delayed to come down from the Mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aharon and said unto him, "Get busy make us elohim which shall go before us; because this Moshe, the man that brought us up out of Mitsrayim we know not what has become

of him.” And Aharon said to them, “Have your wives, sons and daughters strip off the gold earrings and bring them to me.” And the people stripped off their gold earrings that were in their ears and brought them to Aharon. And he took this from their hand, and he formed it with an engraving tool, and made a moulded calf. And they said, “This is your elohim, O’Israel that brought you out of the land of Mitsrayim!” And Aharon saw and built an altar before it. And Aharon called out and said, “Tomorrow is a festival to YHWH.” (Exod.32:1-5).

It is clear that Aharon never intended the calf to represent another deity since he proclaimed a festival in honour of YHWH. The people merely reverted back to the system of worship they had known in Mitsrayim – the pagan system of portraying their gods through imagery, even though YHWH had just given instructions prohibiting the Israelites from this form of worship via His second commandment. Later YHWH not only reiterates this prohibition but commands Israel to completely eradicate this style of worship from the Land,

“These are the laws and rulings which you guard to do in the land which YHWH, Elohim of your fathers is giving you to possess, all the days that you live on the soil. “Completely destroy all the places where the nations which you are dispossessing served their elohim, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree. “And you shall break down their altars, and smash their pillars, and burn their sacred poles with fire. And you shall cut down the carved images of their elohim and exterminate their name out of that place. Do not do so to YHWH your Elohim.” (Deut.12:1-4)

‘Do not do so to YHWH your Elohim’ could better be translated ‘do not worship YHWH your Elohim in this way.’ Complete eradication would preclude the Israelites incorporating pagan customs in their worship of YHWH. This passage in Deuteronomy was merely a reiteration of YHWH’s earlier commands in Exodus,

‘You do not make for yourself a carved image, any likeness of which is in the heavens above, or which is in the earth beneath, or which is in the waters under the earth. (Exod.5:8).

“Do not make for yourselves metal elohim.” (Exod.34:17).

Christianity has fallen victim to syncretism with its different forms of symbolism; the cross and various religious effigies all of which are given spiritual reverence. Another good example of syncretism is the so called statue of St Peter in the basilica: pilgrims bow down in reference before this statue to kiss a specific toe: this is idolatry and a violation of Exod.5:8. It is important to distinguish between mere acknowledgement of an object and attaching a spiritual reverence to it.

Whilst we are all aware of the syncretism that has crept into the Church, the real danger, as I see it, is the universal encouragement towards religious tolerance which, although an old chestnut of the Vatican, is gaining universal acceptance by all leaders today as was confirmed in 2014. In September 2014 the World Alliance of Religions for Peace held its Summit in Seoul, at which the leaders of all the different religions of the world met together and signed the Unity of Religion Agreement. The essence of this document was a promise of the religions represented to unite unconditionally and without discrimination to achieve peace. To unite unconditionally is to validate all religions which is nothing less than capitulation.

The Vatican has courted religious tolerance for over half a century, as is substantiated by the following Papal publication of Roman Catholic Doctrine, agreed at the Second Vatican Council 1965,

DECLARATION ON THE RELATION OF THE CHURCH TO NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS
NOSTRA AETATE PROCLAIMED BY HIS HOLINESS POPE PAUL VI ON OCTOBER 28, 1965.

Thus in Hinduism, men contemplate the divine mystery and express it through an inexhaustible abundance of myths and through searching philosophical inquiry. They seek freedom from the anguish of our human condition either through ascetical practices or profound meditation or a flight to God with love and trust.

Again, Buddhism, in its various forms, realizes the radical insufficiency of this changeable world; it teaches a way by which men, in a devout and confident spirit, may be able either to acquire the

state of perfect liberation, or attain, by their own efforts or through higher help, supreme illumination.

Likewise, other religions found everywhere try to counter the restlessness of the human heart, each in its own manner, by proposing “ways,” comprising teachings, rules of life, and sacred rites. The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions.

The Church regards with esteem also the Moslems. They adore the one God, living and subsisting in Himself; merciful and all-powerful, the Creator of heaven and earth, who has spoken to men; they take pains to submit wholeheartedly to even His inscrutable decrees, just as Abraham, with whom the faith of Islam takes pleasure in linking itself, submitted to God.

Although the Church is the new people of God, the Jews should not be presented as rejected or accursed by God, as if this followed from the Holy Scriptures.

Capitulation by the religious leaders will decide what is ‘true and holy’ and acquiescence will be forced upon all worshippers.

The Papal document above declares that Allah is the creator of the heavens and earth, in other words Allah is just another name for YHWH. A Pope has been photographed kissing the Koran signifying the acceptability of the god of Islam – a god who purports to have no son. This is the first step towards acceptability and eventual unification, all that will remain is agreement on merging together Christian and Islamic worship principals and symbolism: the extent of syncretism. History shows that the Church is not averse to travelling the road of capitulation and quite willing to adopt pagan symbolism and worship rites as a means of enticement for growth and control. The Vatican is currently actively promoting an interfaith movement initially bringing together, Catholics, Protestants, Muslims and Jews. I say initially because I believe Papal Rome has aspirations far beyond these four facets of religion.

The efficacy of merging different religious persuasions requires capitulation to some degree, by one or more of the parties involved and syncretism of one form or another is the result.

However, the underlying principal for the successful amalgamation across different religions is the acquiescence that they all worship the same entity but differently. I believe the world is heading in this direction with the effort spearheaded by Papal Rome. The above publication certainly supports this belief.

But for capitulation, particularly religious capitulation to be acceptable, leaders will have to ensure that mainstream worshippers remain ignorant of the full ramifications of what is befalling them. Thus agreement for capitulation will, by necessity, have to be ensconced within documentation that is couched in such a way, only the academia and the originators fully understand its true effect. Whilst this may seem a little farfetched to some, we have a current example of such an iniquitous procedure within the Church. The 31st October 2017 will see the reunification between the Protestant and Catholic denominations, the leaders of both denominations have already signed a document of re-unification. The document actually has the Protestant Church apologising to the Catholic Church for Luther causing the separation. The document is a masterpiece of academic artistry, with the real ramifications of its contents buried under the eloquence of scholastic presentation far beyond the understanding of the masses. In reality it is nothing less than a complete capitulation by the Protestant Church but the point is, worshippers themselves are quite unaware of what is to befall them in 2017. When it becomes common knowledge it will be too late, it will be a done deal with those responsible no doubt relying on the adage, ‘time heals all wounds.’ Time and the continued complacency of Christian worshippers will ensure the success of this documentation.

Conclusion

The sequel to religious tolerance is religious affiliation. It is by religious affiliation that syncretism will eventually replace cultural assimilation as the main form of idolatry. Religious affiliation will only succeed via capitulation: unfortunately capitulation is today being fermented under the pretence of friendly cooperation, understanding and tolerance.

We must be vigilant in these end times, remember Mashiach warns of deceivers with sufficient skill that even the elect will be misled. If the Adversary is capable of achieving a religious scenario eradicating the polarisation

between the Church, Orthodox Jews and Islam and presented under the charade of religious tolerance/cooperation, we should not assume we are beyond his reach. Indeed religious tolerance and syncretism has already encroached into true worship, with many in the Messianic movement tolerating the use of Jesus for the name of our true Mashiach; Yahusha. Christianity does not acknowledge YHWH's Torah and is therefore a pagan faith; Matt.4:4, Rom.2:13. Consequently Christianity's Mashiach has to be pagan. To refer to our true Mashiach Yahusha using a pagan name is a violation of Deut.12:4 and comes under the umbrella of syncretism. The Mashiach Jesus is not synonymous with the Jewish Mashiach Yahusha, they are very different; one is true the other false. Would you address YHWH using the name Allah? It is the same when Yahusha is referred to as Jesus.

Mashiach warns for us to remain alert in these end times,

Blessed are those servants, whom Mashiach when he comes shall find watching: truly I say to you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to eat, and will come and serve them. And if he comes in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. (Luke.12:37-38).

It is incumbent upon us all to be aware of the insidious arm of syncretism/religious tolerance and to reject any form of it. YHWH is not an advocate of religious tolerance, in the above passages from Deuteronomy chapters 7 and 12, He emphatically instructs the opposite. As YHWH says, He is a jealous Elohim; He will not tolerate competition. Neither will He tolerate the use of pagan names or the encroachment of pagan worship practices, styles or beliefs, when worshipping Him.

One last comment, do not think I am condemning all Christians I am not. What I am condemning is the misrepresentation of true faith by Christian leaders, specifically the leaders of the Catholic Church.

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