

Do You Have a Good Eye or Evil Eye?

In my emails [Discovering How to Destroy and Fulfill the Torah](#) and [Love is the Foundation of the Torah](#), I demonstrated how a basic awareness of the Hebrew alphabet is essential for an accurate understanding the teachings of Jesus. This also proves that Jesus was speaking in Hebrew to people who understood Hebrew. The linguistic evidence to support this position add up as we explore other teachings of Jesus. Hebrew idioms are nightmares for English translators.

Think about what the American idioms below would mean to people who do not speak English.

- *If that happens, I will **eat my hat**.*
- *I got it straight from **the horse's mouth**.*
- *I'll do it **when the cows come home**.*
- *You really **put your foot in your mouth** this time.*
- *It's raining **cats and dogs** outside.*

Take a moment and visualize the literal meanings of the idioms above.

Two idioms in Matthew 6:22-23 have challenged not only Bible translators; they have challenged lots of priests and preachers:

*The lamp of the body is the eye.
If therefore your **eye is good**, your whole body will be full of light.
But if your **eye is bad**, your whole body will be full of darkness.
If therefore the light that is in you is darkness,
how great is that darkness!*

The idioms are “**eye is good**” and “**eye is bad**.” Below are four English translations and their attempts to translate these idioms.

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- King James Version: “eye be single” and “eye be evil.”
- Bible in Basic English: “eye is true” and “eye is evil.”
- Weymouth New Testament: “eyesight is good” and “eyesight is bad.”
- Young's Literal Translation: “eye may be perfect” and “eye may be evil.”

As you saw in my previous emails, Jesus identified himself as an interpreter of the Hebrew Scriptures. The key to accurately understanding the idioms above is locating the Hebrew Scriptures he was interpreting. The Hebrew Scripture that unlocks the meaning of the good eye is Proverbs 22:9.

*He who has a good eye will be blessed,
for he gives of his bread to the poor.*

The meaning of “*he who has a good eye*” is found in what follows – “*he gives of his bread to the poor.*” The basic meaning of “good eye” in modern Hebrew is “generous.”

The Hebrew Scripture that unlocks the evil eye is Deuteronomy 15:9.

*“ . . . you have an evil eye against your poor brother,
and you give him nothing . . . ”*

The meaning of “*you have an evil eye against your poor brother*” is found in what follows – “*and you give him nothing.*” In the context of the verse in Matthew, the idiom means “stingy.”

Now let's update our translation of Matthew 6:22-23.

*The lamp of the body is the eye.
If therefore you are a generous person,
your whole body will be full of light.
But if you are a stingy person,
your whole body will be full of darkness.
If therefore the light that is in you is darkness,
how great is that darkness!*

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What do “**lamp of the body**,” “**body full of light**,” and “**body full of darkness**” mean?

We are going to have to find the Hebrew Scriptures Jesus was interpreting to answer that question.

I will do that in my next email.

Shalom,

Jim Myers, President

Biblical Heritage Center, Inc.

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