

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

You shall have no other gods before Me

Michael Y. Henein* and Ashraf Sadek

The European Academy of Coptic Heritage – TEACH, London, UK

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رأى الله، الذي يفحص قلوب وعقول البشر، كيف انحرف شعب إسرائيل عن معرفته، متأثرين بعيشهم لقرون بين المصريين الذين عبدوا العديد من الآلهة الأخرى، وقلدوهم. ولكن الإله الحق الغيور المحب دعى إسرائيل للقائه عند الجبل في سيناء وأعلن نفسه لهم. وقد سبق هذا رعدٌ هز الجبل، و نار ودخان جعلوا بني إسرائيل يرتعدون. وفي أول وصيتين، تناول الله الوصية الأهم للبشرية وهي الإيمان بالإله الواحد الحق. إن الإله الغيور المحب لن يتسامح مع رؤية أبناء وعده يسرون حسب الممارسات الوثنية ويهلكون بسببها. ذات الإله الذي يملأ كل مكان بمجده هو من يكرر الوصية ذاتها لنا جميعاً: 'لا يكن لك آلهة أخرى أمامي.'

Dutch: God, de onderzoeker van het hart en verstand van de mens, zag hoe Israël was afgedwaald van Zijn kennis, beïnvloed door eeuwenlang onder de Egyptenaren te leven, die vele andere goden aanbaden, en hen imiteerde. De jaloerse ware God riep Israël om Hem te ontmoeten op de berg Sinaï en verklaarde zichzelf aan hen. Dit werd voorafgegaan door een donderend gebulder dat de berg deed beven, vuur en rook waardoor de Israëlieten trilde. In de eerste twee geboden behandelde God het belangrijkste onderwerp voor de mens: geloven in de ene ware God. De jaloerse, liefhebbende God zou niet toestaan dat de kinderen van Zijn belofte heidense praktijken volgen en daardoor ten onder gaan. Dezelfde God die overal met Zijn glorie vervult, herhaalt dezelfde eis aan ons allen: 'U zult geen andere goden voor Mij hebben.

English: God the examiner of man's heart and mind saw how Israel has deviated away from His knowledge, being impacted by living for centuries among the Egyptians, who worshipped many other gods and imitated them. The jealous true God called to meet Israel at Mount Sinai and declared Himself to them. This was preceded by a quacking thunder that made the mountain shake, fire and smoke that made the Israelites tremble. In the first two commandments, God addressed the most important issue for humans which is to believe in the one true God. The jealous loving God would not tolerate seeing the children of His promise follow pagan practices and perish after them. The same God who fills everywhere with His glory is repeating the same request to us all 'You shall have no other gods before Me'.

French: Dieu, qui sonde le cœur et l'esprit de l'homme, a vu comment Israël s'était éloigné de Sa connaissance, après avoir vécu pendant des siècles parmi les Égyptiens, qui adoraient beaucoup d'autres dieux, et les imitaient. Le vrai Dieu jaloux, a appelé Israël à Sa rencontre au mont Sinaï et s'est révélé à eux, précédé par un grondement de tonnerre qui a fait trembler la montagne, avec feu et fumée qui ont ébranlé les Israélites. Dans les deux premiers commandements, Dieu a abordé la question la plus importante pour les humains, qui est de croire au seul vrai Dieu. Le Dieu jaloux et aimant ne tolérerait pas de voir les fils de Sa promesse suivre des pratiques païennes et périr à cause d'elles. Le même Dieu qui remplit tout lieu de sa gloire nous répète à tous la même demande : 'Tu n'auras pas d'autres dieux devant ma face'.

German: Gott, der die Herzen und Gedanken der Menschen prüft, sah, wie Israel sich von Seiner Erkenntnis abgewandt hatte, beeinflusst durch das Leben über Jahrhunderte hinweg

*Corresponding author. Email: henein@gmail.com

unter den Ägyptern, die viele andere Götter verehrten und ihnen nachahmten. Der eifersüchtige, wahre Gott rief Israel auf, Ihm am Berg Sinai zu begegnen und offenbarte sich ihnen. Dies wurde von einem gewaltigen Donnerrollen begleitet, das den Berg erzittern ließ, und von Feuer und Rauch, die die Israeliten erzittern ließen. In den ersten beiden Geboten sprach Gott das wichtigste Anliegen für die Menschen an: an den einen wahren Gott zu glauben. Der eifersüchtige, liebende Gott würde es nicht dulden, dass die Kinder Seiner Verheißung heidnischen Praktiken folgen und dadurch zugrunde gehen. Derselbe Gott, der alles mit Seiner Herrlichkeit erfüllt, wiederholt dieselbe Aufforderung an uns alle: 'Du sollst keine anderen Götter neben mir haben'.

Greek: Ο Θεός, ο κριτής της καρδιάς και του νου του ανθρώπου, είδε πώς ο Ισραήλ απομακρύνθηκε από τη δική Του γνώση, επηρεασμένος από τη ζωή για αιώνες ανάμεσα στους Αιγυπτίους, οι οποίοι λάτρευαν πολλούς άλλους θεούς, και τους μιμήθηκε. Ο ζηλότυπος αληθινός Θεός, κάλεσε να συναντήσει τον Ισραήλ στο όρος Σινά και τους δήλωσε τον εαυτό Του. Είχε προηγηθεί ένας κουρνιαχτός κεραυνός που έκανε το βουνό να κουνηθεί, φωτιά και καπνός που έκαναν τους Ισραηλίτες να τρέμουν. Στις δύο πρώτες εντολές, ο Θεός ασχολήθηκε με το πιο σημαντικό ζήτημα για τους ανθρώπους, το οποίο είναι να πιστέψουν στον έναν αληθινό Θεό. Ο ζηλότυπος στοργικός Θεός δεν θα ανεχόταν να βλέπει τα παιδιά της υπόσχεσής Του να ακολουθούν ειδωλολατρικές πρακτικές και να χάνονται μετά από αυτές. Ο ίδιος Θεός που γεμίζει τα πάντα με τη δόξα Του επαναλαμβάνει το ίδιο αίτημα προς όλους μας: 'Δεν θα έχετε άλλους θεούς μπροστά μου'.

Italian: Dio, l'esaminatore del cuore e della mente dell'uomo, vide come Israele si era allontanato dalla Sua conoscenza, essendo stato influenzato dal vivere per secoli tra gli egiziani. Quest'ultimi adoravano molti dei e gli Israeliti li imitavano. Il vero Dio geloso, chiamò Israele per incontrarlo sul monte Sinai e si dichiarò a loro. Questo è stato preceduto da un tuono che ha fatto tremare la montagna, fuoco e fumo che fecero tremare gli Israeliti. Nei primi due comandamenti, Dio ha affrontato la questione più importante per gli esseri umani che è credere nell'unico vero Dio. Il Dio amorevole e amorevole non tollererebbe vedere che i figli della Sua promessa seguano le pratiche pagane e periscano dopo di loro. Lo stesso Dio che riempie ovunque della Sua gloria sta ripetendo la stessa richiesta a tutti noi: 'Non avrai altri dèi davanti a me'.

Swedish: Gud, som granskar människans hjärta och sinne, såg hur Israel hade avvikit från Hans kunskap, påverkade av att ha levt i århundraden bland egyptierna, som tillbad många andra gudar, och imiterade dem. Den nitälskande, sanna Guden kallade Israel till ett möte på Sinai berg och uppenbarade sig för dem. Detta föregicks av ett skakande åskväder som fick berget att skälva, eld och rök som fick israeliterna att darra. I de två första budorden tog Gud upp den viktigaste frågan för människan, nämligen att tro på den ende, sanne Guden. Den nitälskande och kärleksfulle Guden skulle inte tolerera att se löftets barn följa hedniska seder och gå förlorade med dem. Samme Gud, som fyller hela världen med sin härlighet, upprepar samma budskap till oss alla: 'Du skall inga andra gudar hava jämte mig'.

***'I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image – any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them.'* Exodus 20:4–7**

After 400 years of life in Egypt, God brought the Israelites out, so they can enjoy their freedom and also for them to get to know Him as the One God who had covenants with their forefathers 'Abraham, Isaak and Jacob (Israel). God appointed Moses, the zealous prophet, to lead such a mission by sending him to Pharaoh and pleading with him to release the Israelites. This early part of the mission required 10 signs which started with the sign of the serpent and ended with the sign of the protection of Israel's first born from death. This ultimately made Pharaoh unable to resist God's plan and to release the Israelites. It is without doubt that the main benefit of those signs was for God to reveal Himself as the Only God of heaven and earth to Moses, Aaron, Pharaoh and all the Egyptians who experienced and were affected by the signs.

The loving God continued to treat the Israelites' hardened heart and mind towards the concept of believing in the One God after hundreds of years of living among the Egyptians, with their different theological beliefs and practices. God in His wisdom received them, out of Egypt, with a mystical plan to convert them to Himself, in order to fulfil His promise to their forefathers. That plan had to be in the form of successive wonders and miracles. Signs, they never saw in Egypt and could not comprehend, as humans. The first sign was God's appearance to them on the first part of the journey as a protecting cloud from the desert's heat during the day and a guiding light at night. The second miracle was crossing the Red Sea; the split of the water and the safe walking on the sea bed. This was followed by giving them clean water from the rock to drink and manna and quail from heaven to eat. Despite that, their hearts remained stubbornly hard, resisting God. On the third month after their deliverance out of Egypt, Elohim instructed Moses to bring the Israelites to the mountain of Sinai so He could reveal Himself to them and give them the law which He had laid for them, as the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

The first declaration was ***'I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage'***. I am the unseen God, who you cried out to while under bondage in Egypt. I have chosen Moses and sent him to Pharaoh, having revealed myself to both of them through signs and miracles. Now, you must know the fact of the matter, that your deliverance from the hands of the Egyptians was, and could never have been achieved by a human being (Moses), but only by the mighty power of the God of your forefathers. I can see that your hearts are wandering around searching for the God whom your forefathers followed and received His promises. However, your minds are clouded with centuries of difficult and strange experiences in Egypt. Therefore, I am declaring Myself to you following squawking of the mountain and thunder, you never saw before, so you would know that I am the Lord the true God, whom your patriarchs believed in.

God then tackled an important issue, based on the religious practices the Israelites experienced in Egypt. ***'You shall have no other gods before Me'***. The concept of the one God was not clear to many people. Elohim, the Creator of heaven and earth and everything therein, read their hearts and minds and saw how far they were from knowing and believing in Him. They were indeed quite remote compared to their forefathers, hence His frank and blunt order ***'You shall have no other gods before Me'***. This is also explained by the succeeding statement ***'I am a jealous God'***. This should not be misinterpreted as jealous from someone else, but rather jealous to see His children, who carry His promise, confused following fake man-made gods and abandoning the true God.

Based on this analogy, Elohim elaborated more on specifics and said ***'You shall not make for yourself a carved image.... you shall not bow down to them nor serve them'***. Even the sun and the moon in the sky, the fire and the wind on earth and the other gods under the water, which some Egyptians believed in and worshiped, God said ***'do not make an image of them, do not bow before them or worship them'*** as you saw the Egyptians doing. They are all fake, false and lifeless, you will lose your life if you follow them, since you will be following no more than fog. Because only the royals and the clergy were allowed to worship gods in the temples, the rest of the people formed prayer corners in their houses where they made statutes of their gods and worshiped them. Those practices were engraved in the minds of the Israelites which Elohim recognized, hence was His direct order to them with the detailed specifics of their practices. Elohim continued, later on, with more specifics as He says to Moses ***'You shall***

not make anything to be with Me – gods of silver or gods of gold you shall not make for yourselves'. Elohim wanted to open Moses' eyes to more details about His nature, whose eyes penetrate the thick curtains of darkness. He, therefore, declared to Moses the exact details of the nature of the statues they make and worship, being made from precious metals, silver and gold.

Finally, God stated His heart's desire to them *'You know how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself*. This is a very powerful statement that declares the ultimate desire of God towards all humans who believe in him, to bring them out of their difficulties with His mighty power, to enjoy their life with Him, *'Brought you to myself'*.

Contemporary implications of the first meeting between Elohim and the Israelites after delivering them out of Egypt. God is jealous towards His creation, man, whom He created after His own image and granted him His own Spirit to know and experience His presence. Stuffing our heart and mind with other gods is the disease of our time. Those gods could be in the form of material possessions or relationships including, family, friends, colleagues, employees, and even spiritual figures. God, the unchangeable, made it clear to Israel *'do not make yourself other gods before me'*. Nothing on earth or in heaven should replace God's presence in our life. Indeed, the incarnate Word of God, Lord Jesus said, *'whoever loves, a father, mother, a son or daughter more than me, does not deserve me'*, *Mat 10:24*. What He refrained people from, by those examples, is idolising and putting others, including one's self, ahead of God, and ignoring His real presence in our life. It is not surprising to hear of a person die after losing a dear friend or a family member. This is a clear example of idolising our co-humans over and above the true Lover of mankind who *wants all to be saved and understand the truth. 1 Tim; 2:4*