

Unity in Messiah Yeshua
Studies in the Shema, Part 5

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He who says, “What’s mine is yours, what’s yours is yours” is a Hasid.
Mishnah Avot 5.9

In the last Newsletter we explored the Targumic interpretation of the Hebrew word *me’od* in the *Shema*. To “love God with all your mammon (money/wealth)” may sound funny to some at first, but quite possibly evokes a good question: “How can I love/serve/worship God with all my money?”

Luke in particular underscores that true faith in Yeshua corresponds to a new orientation toward personal possessions. In Messiah’s rebuke of the brothers (12:15), His challenge to the rich young ruler (18:22), and in the salvation of Zaccheus (19:8), we see that finances cannot be compartmentalized and separated from our walk in the Spirit. Those who want to follow Yeshua should consider carefully Luke 14:33, “So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.” (NASB)

To be sure, Yeshua is not asking us all to become homeless beggars. Rather, all our efforts and resources are to be aligned with glorifying Messiah, walking the way He walked, sharing the “good news” of His kingship with the world, and supporting ministries that bring the lost to God’s Torah through Him. It’s an “all or nothing” proposition.

I delight in pointing the reader to yet another passage authored by Luke, keeping in mind all we have said concerning the *Shema*:

Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. (Acts 4:32, ESV; Cf. 2:44ff)

In this one verse, we have a wonderful expression of the early *ekklesia*’s unity in heart, soul, and possessions. If Luke was not intentionally embedding the Master’s exposition of the *Shema* here, then certainly the Holy Spirit was! The point is clear: my identity in Messiah is not as much “individual” (me and mine) as it is a member of His body, the community of believers (us and ours). We are united in Him, and His community is where our individual talents, gifting, and purposes are nourished and find their ultimate fulfillment. For what else were we created?