

Remarriage and Adultery

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B'nai Avraham

¹⁸"Anyone giving the get to his isha and taking another wife commits ni'uf (adultery), and the one marrying a gerusha (divorcee) commits ni'uf (adultery). Lk. 16:18

Unfortunately many people coming out of the "Church" system carry the unnecessary baggage of the "Once divorced- no remarriage" lie perpetuated by many modern denominations. On face value, that appears to be what the Master is teaching in Luke 16:18.

- ¹⁸"Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from *her* husband committeth adultery¹. **KJV**
- ¹⁸Every one who is sending away his wife, and marrying another, doth commit adultery; and every one who is marrying her sent away from a husband doth commit adultery. **YLT**
- ¹⁸Every one divorcing his wife and marrying another, committeth adultery; and, he that marrieth a woman divorced from a husband, committeth adultery. **Rotherham**

We have to be aware that Luke 16:18 is full of Semitic idioms. This proves that Yahshua spoke either Hebrew or Aramaic and not Greek or Latin.. One of the best ways to study the Greek translation is to first put the words back into the original Hebrew.

In Luke the words "divorce" and "marry" are in the present tense. The parallel verse in **Mark 10:11** puts them in the subjunctive mood. In the original Hebrew, the force of the expression would have made them both one continuous action. This knowledge leads us to the next section of this study.

The Hebrew *Vav*

In English the word "and" can mean "also, as well as", or can even be used like a comma to connect sentences together. The Hebrew *vav* (ו) can be used as "but, so, as, then, because, therefore, namely, since, while", and "on the contrary". Translating the *vav* always as "and" can lead to a faulty interpretation of some verses. The Greek "*kai*" (and) does not have a wide range of meanings² as the Hebrew *vav*.³

Since Yahshua spoke Hebrew or Aramaic, an English translation does not take the Hebrew into account. The result has been the faulty translation of the Greek "*kai*" as "and" in every circumstance in the *Brit Chadasha*.

The Hebrew *vav* can also be used for the English "in order to, in order that, so that". The *vav* used in this manner is called the "and of purpose or intention". It is used in this manner in **Shemot (Ex.) 7:16**.

- Let My people go, that they may serve Me in the wilderness; and, behold, hitherto thou hast not hearkened; **JPS**

¹ Evidently Yahshua would not consider a man an adulterer if he divorced his wife and never remarried.

² Kai can mean even, just, also, or according to A Greek Lexicon by Henry Stuart Jones. Greek lexicons can be misleading as they only present the meaning of kai as found in the Gospels.

³ The Hebrew Connection-David Biven

- Send My people away, and they serve Me in the wilderness **YLT**

This is the correct translation of the Greek “*kai*” in **Luke 16:18**. Instead of being translated “and”, it should be read as “in order to”.

If we convert the Greek text into Hebrew it reads: “*kol hamegaresh et ishto venose aheret menaef*, Anyone who divorces his wife and marries –in order to marry another- is committing adultery.

In Mishnaic Hebrew the *vav* can also be used for “in order that-in order to”. An example is:

- He who begins to wish that his wife will die and –in order that- he will inherit her property, or that she will die and- in order that- he will marry her sister. **Tosefta, Sotah 5:10**

Context of Debate

The context of this question posed to Yahshua appears to be a debate between the schools of Shammai and Hillel, concerning the subject of divorce. It is a debate over the verse in **Devarim (Deut.) 24:1**.

- ¹When a man taketh a wife, and marrieth her, then it cometh to pass, if she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some unseemly thing in her, that he writeth her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house. **JPS**
- **6172-***ervah* er-vaw' from 6168; nudity, literally (especially the pudenda) or figuratively (disgrace, blemish):--nakedness, shame, unclean(-ness).

The Hebrew *ervat davar* means “indecentcy of thing”. Its real meaning in Hebrew is very obscure. Since its meaning is obscure, naturally this verse sparked the debate between Shammai and Hillel. According to Shammai⁴ the words mean “a thing of indecency”. According to Shammai, the only reason for a divorce was infidelity. However, Hillel interpreted the term to emphasis “thing”. Therefore, according to the School of Hillel, a man could divorce his wife for anything or any imperfection he found in her. Rabbi Akiva later agreed with Hillel, even to the point that a man could divorce his wife “even if he finds another woman that was more pleasing to him.”

The link is the use of the words “even if- *aheret*” by Rabbi Akiva. It appears that Yahshua’s answer is a direct attack upon the view expressed by Rabbi Akiva.⁵ Yahshua is giving a legal opinion siding with the School of Shammai. Yahshua is saying that the only reason for a divorce is adultery.

Translation

Since the words of the Master were first spoken in Hebrew, the first test is to see how easily the Greek translates back into Hebrew. If a verse translates very easily, then it belongs to the earliest stratum of the text; if it does not, chances are it may have been added or modified by the Greek translators.

The first part of **Luke 16:18** translates easily into Hebrew; but the second part is too difficult to put into Hebrew. Since this is the case, it may have been a modification or addition to Yahshua’s original words. This verse contains two parts, so it is called a Hebrew doublet.

⁴ In the Galilee, the Jews usually followed the School of Shammai rather than Hillel. Yahshua was a Galilean.

⁵ Akiva lived 100 years after Yahshua, but this answer by Yahshua indicates that Akiva’s viewpoint was held by many from the school of Hillel.

Repetition of words, phrases, and sentences is characteristic of Hebrew. Hebrew also has parallelism, which is the same thought expressed in two or more different ways.

- **Example-doublet:** ¹⁹The Son of man came, eating and drinking; and they say: Behold, a gluttonous man, and a wine drinker, and a friend of publicans and sinners. **Matt.11:19**
- **Example-parallelism:** ⁵These twelve Y'shua sent forth: and he commanded them and said: Go not in the way of the Gentiles: and enter not the cities of the Samaritans. **Matt.10:5**

Luke 16:18b reconstructed into the Hebrew(closest possible translation)) *vehanose et haishah hamegoreshet menaef* -“and he who marries the divorced woman commits adultery”. As a Hebrew idiom it would say, “Furthermore, he who marries **THAT**⁶ divorced woman is committing adultery.”

What does He mean?

Yahshua, agreeing with Shammai, holds that adultery is the only Torah grounds for divorce and a *get* (bill of divorcement) given by a man with the intentions to marry another woman is invalid. Therefore, any further marriages by the husband are invalid, and all the children born by these marriages are illegitimate. Since the bill of divorcement is invalid, anyone who marries the woman also would be in an adulterous relationship.

Luke 16:18b is not addressed to the man who would marry the woman with an invalid *get*, but rather it is simply reaffirming the first part of the verse. Yahshua is warning the husband who is contemplating divorcing his wife for another woman to be aware of the consequences of his actions. Not only would he be living in adultery, but also the woman to whom he has issued the invalid bill of divorcement would be committing adultery by entering into a marriage.

Yahshua's interpretation of divorce is strengthening or establishing the Torah of Moshe.

- ¹⁷Do not think that I came to abolish the Torah or the Nevi'im. I did not come to abolish but to complete. **Matt.5:17**

From the Hebraic perspective this verse is not addressing the question “Is divorce permissible?” Nor is the Master addressing the question, “Can a divorced person remarry?” Yahshua believed, as the Torah teaches, that a marriage having been terminated by a valid bill of divorcement, both parties were permitted to remarry.

On the other side of the coin, to paraphrase Yahshua's teaching, “Any woman who causes her husband to divorce her-for instance, by feigning she is no longer attracted to him- in order to marry another man, is committing adultery.” It could also read, “He who marries a woman who obtained a divorce merely for the sake of her second marriage commits adultery.”

WWYD?

What would Yahshua have said to the man that was divorcing his wife in order to marry another woman? We would suppose He hated divorce and would have rebuked the man. He would say, “It is terrible that you want to divorce your wife, the woman who has shared your life and stayed with you all these years, in order to marry a younger more attractive woman. Also, you are causing others to sin by your actions.” Yahshua would have tempered His words with

⁶ In Middle Hebrew, the article is often employed to specify the person previously mentioned. In this case- “the divorced woman” becomes “THAT divorced woman”. This is how Weymouth translates this verse in his “The NT in Modern Speech.”

compassion. He would encourage repentance and reconciliation .If this was possible, then He would have said:

- And Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go and practice chet no more." **Yochanan 8:11**

We can see that knowledge of rabbinical writings is important in understanding the teachings of Yahshua. We also learn of the importance of the Hebraic sources for the Gospels.

Also, one small nuance of one Hebrew letter (*VAV*) changes the whole context of this verse. The “and” in **Luke 16:18** is a Hebraic idiom and means “and purpose of”, and in the context of the word “another” teaches us that this is a rabbinical debate on the meaning of the word “unclean thing” in **Devarim 24:1**. Yahshua interprets this word (*ervat davar*) to mean “infidelity”.

Luke 16:18 has suffered in the translation from Hebrew into the Greek., **Luke 16:18b** consists of five words in the Hebrew. These five small words is a clear reinstatement of the ruling handed down by the School of Shammai.

Myriads of divorced women and men have suffered at the hands of ignorant exegesis of this verse in the context of the Torah and rabbinical teachings of the Second Temple Remarriage after a divorce is not adultery. Divorce is not synonymous with adultery as some teach. However, divorce can be employed to commit adultery. Yahshua never abrogated the Torah’s instruction on divorce and remarriage. But, He did interpret the Torah in a manner that protected all parties involved in the sacred covenant of marriage. Hopefully, this has helped many of those innocent victims who have remained single because of their improper understanding of Yahshua’s teachings on divorce and remarriage.