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TRIBAL RELIGIONS FROM THE HEART:
HEBREW *LĒB* AND TOROBO *OLTAU*

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Abstract:

The systems of belief by the ancient Hebrews of the Old Testament and the current Kenyan tribe of Torobo demonstrate both ancient and modern tribal world view in which the religious is interconnected to all aspects of personal existence within each individual. The most important word in the vocabulary of biblical Hebrew and Torobo anthropology is 'heart'. *Lēb* (Hebrew 'heart') and *oltau* (Torobo 'heart') are divinely ordained conceptual catalysts representing the composite nature of humanity. This paper will explore the concept of heart as the principal, unifying object of attention employed throughout biblical Hebrew and Torobo world view that integrates psychical elements of Self as a cohesive medium for supernatural interaction and moral deportment.

Key Words: nonphysical Self, tribe, identity, heart, mind, east Africa, Hebrew, tribal ideology.

Introduction

Tribe in its basic meaning denotes a community of people from common ancestry who enjoy a shared culture, world view, and often a language specific to their ethnic group. Tribe may be defined as “a confederation of groups who recognize a relationship with one another, usually in the form of common ethnic origin, common language, or strong pattern of interaction based on intermarriage or presumed kinship.”¹ As a particularly adept manner of human organization, tribal society has historically offered a stable means of community continuity on most continents.²

Tribal affiliation has an intense sense of identity with the in-group and distinct boundaries to separate from out-groups. Group identity historically has been and continues to remain central to tribal world view.³ The social order of tribal life hinges on social relationships meant to strengthen tribal groupness. Fundamental to life experience is membership in the tribal community predicated on ethnic distinction. Individual value is typically not based on personal skill or unique abilities but rather on lineage position within the kin group and clan membership within the greater tribe.

If nothing else, tribe is a notion of belonging. Tribal society is a web of relationships weaving together interdependence between kin Other, community Other, and supernatural Other. Tribalism fosters commonality, purposefulness, and a sense of communal trust resulting in deep rooted belonging. The tribal world is one “in which the community rather than the person is central.”⁴ While the world changes, and yes, people too, the tribe is a bastion of continuity, of permanence. Goba comments what is discovered about the concept of tribalism “in Israel and Africa is the unique idea of solidarity, a social consciousness that rejects and transcends individualism. Apart from this, one discovers a unique sense of dynamic community, a caring concern that seeks to embrace all, a love that suffers selflessly for others.”⁵

The notion of tribe can be visualized by a series of concentric circles



Figure 1: Boundaries of Tribal Relationships.

as in Figure 1.⁶ A tribal member is surrounded by kinsmen and tribal community members of whom one is immediately responsible. One's ancestors and divine Maker are significant supernatural Other impacting the tribe and its individual members during the life experience. The moral authority of tribal society is by supernatural design. Social rule demands submission that constrains behavior with the threat of unpleasant consequences but also rewards social obedience with beneficial reciprocity.

Characteristic of tribal world view is the significant relational triad existing between man, nature, and the spirit world which permeates the life experience.⁷ A sense of what is sacred on one hand being distinct from what is secular on the other hand is not realized in tribal world view. Further, land is central to tribal religion. Typically a divine Creator is perceived as occupying the space of earth and the universe. The aetiology of creation is not only explained by the existence of a Creator God, but the divine is organically linked to creation.

The natural world and supernatural realm are fused together and experienced holistically in tribal culture. The use of rituals and oral literature maintain relations between significant actors in tribal life represented by community Other (kin and tribe), earthly Other (out-groups and nature), and supernatural Other (divine, spirits). Life is generalized into a collective experience. If you insult your neighbor, then you have offended the divine and/or spirits. If drought comes to the community, then this natural event is explained in terms of the supernatural with reference to a breach of community harmony. Tribal religious notions provide reasons and explanations for the world as it is and offer a meaningful existence for a person. All aspects of life are believed to be interconnected, and the tribe provides each member a place in this tribal tapestry of life.

A kindred correspondence between ancient Israel and African tribes has long been recognized among Old Testament biblical scholars and missiologists. Ancient Israel functioned as a socio-religious tribe in which a complex of social rules dominated everyday life, governed ritual, and provided a moral compass. African orientation finds affinity in this tribal approach to life where tradition is valued and religion seems to touch every aspect of existence.⁸ Specifically, corporate personality has been named a key source of continuity between ancient Israel and African ethnic groups.⁹ The community itself autogenously generates a tribal consciousness.¹⁰ Corporate personality is envisioned as the tribal collective residing in a person. In this way, each tribal member embodies society itself and uniquely represents the tribe to the outside world. Corporate personality manifests itself through display of acceptable social behavior.¹¹ This paper discusses the ways in which tribal personality as a broad concept of tribalness is bounded within the heart of the ancient Hebrew and the present day, East African tribe of Torobo.

The tribal name, 'ibrî, is coined in Old Testament literature as a direct means of referring specifically to the Hebrew ethnic group.¹² The majority of use is by non-Hebrews referencing the descendants of Israel. There is an interesting correlation between the negative, degrading characterization of the ancient Hebrews by other tribes and the Torobo people of Kenya. The word, 'ibrî, was meant as an insult to Hebrew ancestry just as 'Torobo' is a demeaning term with negative perceptions when spoken by other tribes in East Africa.¹³ The primary criteria for Torobo identity has been a livelihood by hunting-gathering which occupies an inferior place of low status in the views of east African pastoral and agricultural peoples. Both the ancient 'ibrî and Torobo find self value and purpose through tribal anthropology of their heart.

Tribal Anthropology of the Heart

In ancient Hebrew and Torobo thought the query of who or what is Self is answered by an inward focus centered almost exclusively on one concept, the heart. The most important word in the vocabulary of ancient Hebrew and Torobo anthropology is the heart: Hebrew *lēb* and Torobo *oltau*.¹⁴ This paper explores the tribal concept of heart by the ancient Hebrews and the Torobo of Kenya as the principal, unifying object of attention employed throughout both world views. Hebrew *lēb* and Torobo *oltau* are the mechanism by which the various psychical elements of Self are integrated. The translation 'heart' for *lēb* and *oltau* is to be cautiously accepted with the understanding it leads our scientific grasp of the term into incorporeal reality. The extreme relevance of the two terms to tribal ideology and way of life requires a semantic examination based on usage in their respective contexts. A microcosm of significant Self experiences found in 'ibrî and Torobo tribal existence is represented by assumptions concerning the heart. The heart (*lēb* or *oltau*) resides in each tribal member and makes a person self-aware; the heart (*lēb* or *oltau*) as a metonymy for Self belongs to the tribe; and the heart (*lēb* or *oltau*) owes its existence, its very life, to divine creation. Thus, Hebrew *lēb* and Torobo *oltau* are at once personal, social, and spiritual (see Figure 2).

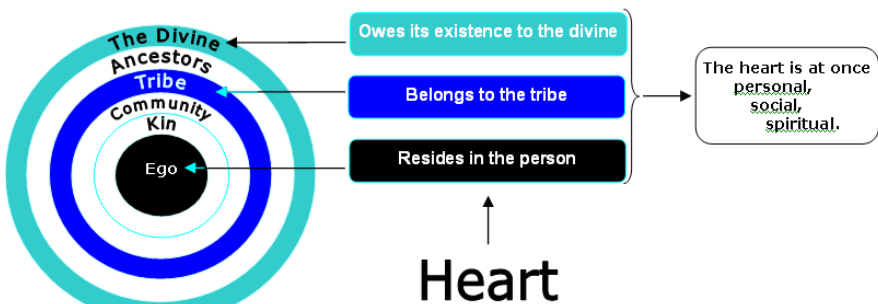


Figure 2: Relationship of the Heart, Hebrew *lēb* and Torobo *oltau*, to Tribal Life.

Torobo and ancient Israel presuppose the function of the human heart as a general physical organ yet envisage far beyond the given anatomical place and physiological role assigned to the heart by modern science. The essential activities of Torobo *oltau* include not only physical duties but non-physical obligations as well. Hebrew *lēb* is most likely the term for the physical heart with Koehler and Baumgartner suggesting *lēb* as the “quivering, pumping organ.”¹⁵ However there are few Old Testament examples to support knowledge of heart as a pumping station for blood in ancient ‘ibrî understanding.¹⁶ Certainly Fabry presents convincing evidence from usage of *lēb* in the Old Testament to categorize heart with key nonphysical meanings of “Personal Identity,” “Vital Center,” “Affective Center,” “Noetic Center,” “Voluntative Center,” and “Religious and Ethical Realm.”¹⁷ Both terms, Hebrew *lēb* and Torobo *oltau*, may metonymically represent either one aspect of the non-physical Self or stand for the totality of a person.

The following discussion considers the threefold purpose the heart concept serves for ‘ibrî and Torobo including: 1) key to vitality; 2) coordinate psychical and emotional states; and 3) control mechanism of individual existence. In addition, the role of the heart concept will be regarded as the seat of consciousness, essential for cognition, appellation of character, source of free will and desire, and determiner of behavior. Finally, we will conclude with the importance of the heart as a divine gift and for tribal identity.

Purpose of the Heart

Key to vitality

The heart serves as the key to vitality in Torobo and ancient Hebrew thought. The Torobo soul element, which is considered life itself, resides in *oltau* giving rise to the belief “the heart exists for the soul.”¹⁸ The Torobo word *enkishui* serves in consuetude as ‘life’ and ‘soul.’ However, Torobo speak of the heart as synonymous with life or soul, *Etii enkishui oltau*, meaning, “Life is the heart.” The status of *oltau* as life giver can be understood in reference to storing the sheer breath or energy of life, “*Etii enkiyanget atua oltau olotungani*,” meaning, “Breath or spirit is in the heart of a person.”¹⁹ *Oltau* is the organ which causes the act of breathing, still further it is considered that which breathes life. Life is in the heart because it contains the breath of Creator God, *Enkai*.

In a prayer given at a ritual sacrifice for healing, the Torobo speaker sought to invoke the power of tree medicine by asking, “Help my heart also and grant me favor with God and people. Allow me to make women fertile. May I have many blessings like the flow of milk in cattle, people, donkey and sheep.”²⁰ The meaning of *oltau* in this context refers to the person’s lifetime. This portion of the prayer is asking for life to be blessed with children, favor with people, and a large blood wealth.

The speaker further entreats, “*Tomituoki oltau lai timira*,” literally meaning, “Prevent my heart from running away.” This section of the petition is spoken to supernatural forces capable of intervening on the part of the living. It is a request to powers of goodness to challenge and overcome whatever evil has afflicted the individual. It is a supplication not to allow the heart, the life of the person, to be defeated and removed by death. According to these accounts, Torobo *oltau* is from where life exudes and represents life itself.

The ancient Hebrew *lēb* also holds the very life force of a person, *Guard your heart with all vigilance, because from it are the sources of life* (Pro. 4:23). Judges 19:5 refers to the life force (*lēb*) of a Levite needing bread to sustain him. This is mirrored in Psalms where bread is said to strengthen the life giving properties of the heart within a person (Psa. 104:15). An Old Testament narrative describes the heart of the Hebrew man, Nabal, becoming as stone, literally dying within him, and a few days later he died (1 Sam. 25:37). King David declares in the depths of his despair that the one who seeks Creator God, *Yahweh* should offer unceasing praise and receive the blessing of living forever i.e. *your heart live forever* in the presence of God (Psa. 22:26). Indeed, even as his life (*lēb*) fades, David asks *Yahweh* to add days to his heart (lifespan) even years to his kingship (Psa. 61:3, 7).

The narrative of Naboth’s Vineyard in 1 Kings 21 describes the selfish actions of an immoral king. King Ahab of Samaria pouts like a baby when Naboth refuses to sell him ancestral land, so much so that he has no appetite. Jezerel his wife is concerned for her husband and chides him with, *Get up and eat some food so that your heart may have joy* (1 Kgs. 21:7). *Lēb* is gladdened by food in the sense sustenance maintains life force and makes possible human existence.²¹

The state of *lēb* and *oltau* dominate every aspect of life both physical and non-physical. A cool hearted Torobo is believed to have a heart deprived of sufficient blood supply resulting in unhealthiness. An unhealthy *oltau* is thought to be untrustworthy, unable to function to its full potential and thus, undependable. A coward is one who holds a cool heart, “A warrior who has a cold heart cannot win.”²² A Torobo folktale speaks of the hero as silent before Creator *Enkai* because of the great respect he had inside his heart. The esteem *oltau* felt toward *Enkai* caused a physical state of silence.

The tribal heart characterized by *lēb* and *oltau* governs those non-physical aspects of Self which make life truly alive for each tribal member. In *‘ibrî* and Torobo thought there are certain significant elements composing the non-physical Self that function within the confines of the heart. Every human being is attributed the capacity to utilize and engage these non-physical Self elements. The heart is the central, unifying medium which integrates the various psychical and emotional distinctives

of the ancient Hebrew tribal member and current Torobo tribal member into a cohesive, functional Self.

Coordinate psychical & emotional states

Heart activities extend beyond that of a material organ to a non-physical realm coordinating the psychical and emotional states of a person. The Torobo non-physical Self features prominent elements located in and under the control of the heart, which are: *enkishui* (soul), *entoma* (breath), *inkiyanget* (spirit), *olkuak* (cultural personality), and *aning* (emotion). And operating within these salient terms contained in *oltau* are other pertinent non-physical elements, these are: ability (*inkidimat*), effort (*enyuaata*), conscience (*olkuak*), honesty (*esipata*), character (*empukunoto*), perception (*aning*), understanding and reason (*atoningo*), desire and will (*iyieunot*), and decision (*adung*).

Lēb may be described as inner humanity and symbolizes the whole of psychical man as separate and in addition to physical man.²³ The semantic range of meaning for ancient Hebrew *lēb* encompasses cognition (mind, knowledge, memory, reason, intellect), volition (free will, desire, proclivity, wisdom), conscience (spirituality, morality), and emotion. From this list of Torobo and ancient Hebrew Self components under the control of the heart, it is quite clear the nonphysical purpose of heart is as the governing center for individual existence within tribal life.

Control mechanism of individual existence

The Torobo and ancient Hebrew view the heart as the central controlling mechanism of individual existence. Consider the Torobo idiom, *Aning tiatua oltau*, translated, "To feel inside the heart." The verb *aning* can be translated 'to hear,' 'to feel' and 'to perceive.' In this respect, *oltau* experiences all sensory stimuli and processes all reactions by the person. A Torobo man who was burned in a fire spoke of "feeling so much inside my heart" during his ordeal.²⁴ The intense agony he suffered was interpreted as pain and felt as such by the heart. From his description, life experience both physical and non-physical is made possible by virtue of a functional *oltau*.

Fabry refers to Hebrew *lēb* as a composite personality that includes the moral, ethical center and the seat of emotion for Self.²⁵ Thus, an 'ibṛî person has the propensity for individual happiness (Ecc. 5:19, *gladness of heart*), fulfillment of personal desire (Psa. 37:4, *give you the desires of your heart*), and behavior with a clear conscience (NIV, Gen. 20:5) because the purpose of *lēb* is as a conduit for life experience. The concept of *lēb* includes controlling the perceptual activities of the ancient Hebrew Self.

Experience is not only a product of the heart but knowledge is likewise. The blessing of a new job was interpreted by a Torobo as, "In my heart, I think it is a gift only from *Enkai*."²⁶ *Oltau* is able to "think" in these terms because Torobo believe all good things come from *Enkai*, Creator

God. The heart “knows” the employment is a positive occurrence, and thus recognizes it could have only come from the divine.

Both *lēb* and *ḥokmâ* (wisdom) are the product of the creative hand of Yahweh (Pro. 2:6). Wisdom is characterized as coming into *lēb* by divine intent. Curiously, when *wisdom comes into your heart*, the result is *knowledge is pleasant to your nepeš* (soul) in Proverb 2:10. Wisdom is attractive to the righteous Hebrew man, and his heart (inner Self) desires to acquire it. Wisdom is defined in *‘ibrî* world view as accepting and living by the Torah (Pro. 10:8). Proverb 19:8 is somewhat provocative stating, *One who possesses his heart, loves his own Self; One who guards understanding finds goodness*. Most translations render *lēb* here as *wisdom*. The idea is to own a wise heart and guard this ability for valued understanding, then success will follow. Ecclesiastes 7:2 warns, *death is the end of all men, the living understand this in their heart*. A man with a wise heart is serious about his life and does not waste his day seeking after foolish laughter. The purpose of *lēb* is to guide a person into a successful life experience.

The dream of one Torobo man reveals the authoritative nature of *oltau*. He said, “One time I dreamed *Enkai* gave me strength” or “strengthened my heart.”²⁷ The word used here for strength, *engolon*, translates ‘strength, power, authority’ but is secondarily a metaphoric expression for ‘encouragement’ when coupled with *oltau*. The man interpreted the dream as an encouragement given to him by Creator *Enkai* that he would eventually experience all good things and have no problems. “To strengthen the heart” indicates *oltau* has the power of love, peace and good desires to guide the person. If the heart is strengthened, the entire person is strengthened; if the heart is encouraged, the whole being of the person is encouraged; if the heart has love, peace, and good desires, the individual will then behave in a tribal manner reflective of those attributes.

Courage is depicted in ancient Hebrew by metaphoric language describing the brave or valiant as, *his heart is like the heart of a lion* (2 Sam. 17:10). The warriors of Israel were to go out to battle their enemies without a divided heart i.e. with courage (1 Chr. 12:34). A collective army can have *strength and courage (lēb)* against an enemy resulting in victory (Dan. 11:25). A courageous heart can also be viewed negatively. King Ahasuerus asked his Queen who dared (*filled his heart*) threaten her life and the life of her people (Est. 7:5). The idiom used here, *he who has filled his heart*, is often translated as *presumptuous* or *presume* and means the heart was courageous enough to act in this evil way. A young David volunteered to fight a Philistine giant saying to King Saul, “*Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him*” (1 Sam. 17:31, NIV). David’s heroism was an indictment against the cowardly heart of each *‘ibrî* soldier on the battle field.²⁸

Torobo believe the non-physical elements of soul, breath and spirit along with emotion and desire are in the heart. While the soul and spirit

originate elsewhere, the heart is the sole genitor of emotion and desire. The heart presides over desire by fueling the will of the person toward attainment. The power or intensity of desire and of the will lies in the strength and ability of the heart to motivate the individual toward striving to fulfill personal desire.

The same Torobo verb, *eyieunoto*, is used for both desire and will. “*Etii eyieunoto oltau*” is a Torobo idiom declaring, “The heart desires.” The proverb, “*Ore iyieunot naa inkidimat*,” further teaches that “desires or will are ability.”²⁹ The word *inkidimat* is translated ‘ability’ and also means ‘power.’ “A person decides in their heart to do or be something” and the heart supplies the ability, the necessary energy, to fulfill their desire.³⁰ The heart holds a position of ascendancy over desire, will, and ability. *Oltau* produces desire, the will to obtain what one desires, and controls the element of ability or power necessary for obtaining that which one longs after. Torobo believe if a person wants something it is attainable because desire and will are in the heart and so is power unto fulfillment.

The heart, Hebrew *lēb* and Torobo *oltau*, acting as an immaterial agent is construed as so crucial that every physical and non-physical experience must be processed through its corridors. The nonphysical purpose of *oltau* and *lēb* are to serve as a conductor of non-physical Self components by supplying life and framing it into a coherent, functional human being. This is accomplished by the ability of *oltau* and *lēb* to connect these elements in a relational interdependence.

Role (Function) of the Heart

Seat of consciousness

A major role of *oltau* and *lēb* are to function as the seat of consciousness from which feeling, perception, will, and thought are derived. In fact, to be conscious is to function as an emotive and perceptual human being in tribal world view. Torobo believe the brain begins the process of thinking, but is only capable of receiving and sending facts to the heart. It is the heart which then processes all the available data from the brain along with perceptions originating in the heart itself, hence *oltau* makes informed, intelligent reasoning. *Oltau* culminates the thought process by thinking and consequently, speaking to the person. If the person acts on the data from the mind alone, it results in irrational actions and most often leads to calamity. In this sense the heart is considered the seat and source of Torobo thought. *Oltau* takes the data from the mind, mixes it with what is felt and perceived in the heart and then reasons appropriately toward a decision.

The concept of *lēb* encompasses cognitive functions in unique ways. Ecclesiastes 7:21 encourages the hearer to not let their heart be focused solely on the comments of others, because no one speaks truth all the

time. In fact, the heart of the hearer knows they themselves have cursed others (Ecc. 7:22). In this way, *lēb* interprets and decides what to do with perception. Proverb 22:17 teaches, *Listen carefully to the words of the wise, and set your heart (mind) to follow my instruction*. The perceptual ability of an individual is interpreted by the heart from which a course of action/being is determined. Indeed, *The heart of hasty people have discernment meaning, The mind of the rash will discern knowledge* (Isa. 32:4).

Lēb processes the perceptual activities of the eyes and ears and is the agent for decisive thought. Ezekiel 40:4 is an example of heart intellect, *Son of man see with your eyes and hear with your ears, and direct your heart by what I show you*. The idea was for Ezekiel to place his heart, his inner Self, in the vision *Yahweh* wanted to show him. Ezekiel's mind (*lēb*) was charged with observing all *Yahweh* revealed to him so the tribe would know exile was not to be permanent. Undoubtedly, 'ibrî tribal life with its valued heritage would be restored.

Learning, gaining knowledge, and developing wisdom are primary activities of the heart. It is the observational technique of listening which allows Torobo *oltau* to gain insight. The traditional hunting and gathering lifestyle of Torobo historically placed the group in constant unfamiliar settings. It was imperative for each tribal member to learn how to coalesce in new surroundings among strangers. A folktale given to explain the proverb, "Be first to listen and not first to talk," tells of a man and his two sons traveling to a new territory to escape the poverty in their homeland.³¹ The boys are instructed that to survive it is important to be accepted by the new community as quickly as possible and not mistrusted as outsiders.

People will ignore the one acting culturally inappropriately; therefore, a new situation necessitates listening first, that is perceive and observe before speaking in ignorance. The heart listens and observes then processes all available data through the grid of understanding, judgment and reason. A Torobo individual is able to interpret a new environment and come to behavioral understanding through hearing by *oltau* and its subsequent reasoning.

Hebrew *lēb* without wisdom is a person lost to the right course of tribal existence. Yet ancient Hebrew world view seems to regard this as a human defect since *the heart of the children of man is full of evil and foolishness throughout their lives* (Ecc. 9:3). Foolishness (*'iwwelet*) is an antonym for wisdom (*hokmâ*) in the Old Testament. A foolish hearted 'ibrî allows Self to be guided by irrational thought which leads to social and moral sins. In Old Testament thought, intellect is associated with *lēb*, *Why would there be money in the hand of a fool? He has no sense (lēb) to acquire wisdom* (Pro. 17:16). A deceived mind (*lēb*) can go so far to have a person eat ashes and yet they are unable to deliver themselves (Isa. 44:20). Perhaps the greatest cognitive madness is a heart that denies the existence of *Yahweh*, *The fool says in his heart, "There is no God"* (Psa. 14:1, NIV).

Yahweh has made humanity with the capacity to be Self aware of the mortal nature of one's life experience and that which is deemed of value. Psalm 90:12 rings out, *So teach us to number our days, That we may present to You a heart of wisdom* (NASB). This heart condition has a volitional function in which Self mitigates an inflated sense of autonomy and directs the person toward loving *Yahweh* with all one's *lēb*, all one's *nepeš* (soul), and all one's strength. The ancient Hebrew is consciously aware that to live wisely is to fear The Name the tribe reveres, give thanks with all the heart to The Name, and glorify The Name (Psa. 86:12).

Torobo regard *oltau* as the most trustworthy storeroom of knowledge and secrets. The idiom, *Ashum olomoni toltau*, translated, "Store news in the heart," teaches to keep private matters in *oltau*. The information has been duly noted by the mind and must be transferred to the heart for safe keeping. *Ashum* means 'to store' or 'to keep' and refers to the heart as a safe haven. It merits confidence because reason resides in the heart and this allows *oltau* to make correct decisions and have full understanding to guide the individual. The brain or mind of the person is a basic intellect for remembering and storing data for use by the heart. It is considered cluttered with all manner of information sent to it by the physical Self, susceptible to change and therefore, untrustworthy of secrets and incapable of correct decision making. The heart has a significantly wider range of processes than the brain including ratiocinative activities. The analytic, logical reasoning capabilities of the person are functions assigned to *oltau*.

A most important role of the heart is one of guardianship. Proverb 4:23 cautions the ancient Hebrew to guard *lēb* more than any other Self aspect. Torobo *oltau* is considered a strong entity which withstands problems without allowing the whole person to be affected. The needs and mental well being of the individual are the responsibility of *oltau*. A Torobo saying, "The heart is pressed down with silence," refers to the heart as the problem solver.³² The heart is unable to speak to the person until it has reasoned toward a solution and has reached an answer to the difficulty at hand.

A strategic problem solving faculty is found in the ability of *oltau* to communicate both to the individual and the supernatural. In a personal account describing escape from wild elephants, a Torobo man experienced fear through an extreme action of his heart and courage as *oltau* returned to normal functioning. The "heart came" and this courage allowed him to pray to *Enkai* for help only the divine could provide. Likewise, the heart speaks in gratitude after a crisis has been weathered. Recognizing deliverance as an act by Creator *Enkai* is a cultural demand. It is *oltau* which gives appropriate acknowledgment to the divine: "I said in my heart, 'Thank you *Enkai* for helping me'...I thought in my heart, '*Enkai* you are our intercessor today.'"³³

Ancient Hebrews did not necessarily distinguish between emotion and perception and knowledge. Often the so-called 'rational' was at the same time 'emotional' resulting in thoughts and feelings merging together as one experience and expression. This is a conceptual understanding quite close to Torobo world view. The phrase, *speaking with the heart*, signifies someone such as Hannah silently praying (1 Sam. 1:13). Hannah allowed her heart to beseech the divine with her request for a child. Her thoughts, emotional turmoil, and desires were at once communicated. *lēb*, in this instance, is not only involved in presenting a petition to *Yahweh* but also comforting the petitioner as well.³⁴

Maintaining a clean heart is a priority for each Hebrew Self. As the seat of moral efficacy, *lēb* contains and directs with purity (Psa. 73:1) and uprightness (Psa. 7:10). Acknowledging divine good deeds and character comes from the nonphysical realm of the heart and is an outward behavioral sign of a proper inner condition. *To give thanks with the whole heart* is a praise formula used to express gratitude to *Yahweh* (Psa. 9:2; 86:12; 111:1; 138:1).³⁵ The heart offers up shouts praise to *Yahweh* in Psalm 84:3 and is encouraged to express joy for covenant loyalty in Psalm 105:3f. Thus, *lēb* is the communicative conduit between the created and their Creator.

In the language of the Maa speaking Torobo, joy, love, fear, and sadness are different conditions exhibited by the person, and *oltau* is identified as the basis for such emotional states. Occasionally emotions such as peace and happiness are initiated in the stomach in reference to sufficient nutrition, but most often *oltau* is attributed the responsibility for emotive capacity. A signal is given by the heart for a particular emotive state and the feeling then comes out from *oltau* such as, "Joy comes from inside the heart."³⁶

To describe extreme fear, Torobo say, "The heart passed through the mouth." To relate courage, the expression, "My heart came," is used. Interestingly enough, this expression of courage implies the person has regained the ability to think. In the personal narrative concerning *Enkai's* protection from wild animals, the storyteller related, "My heart was scared because it thought, 'The elephants are still running after me.'"³⁷ The Maa word for 'thought,' *ajo*, is also translated 'to say.' The heart was able to think and speak to the person and relate fear of continuing presence of danger.

The seat of emotions in ancient Hebrew is also found in the *lēb* construal.³⁸ The heart functions as the inner, emotive state of a person; thus, fundamental emotions of Self existence are the product of *lēb*.³⁹ Both elation and despair are rooted in the heart. Isaiah 60:5 promises the blessing of the Lord is on his people and their hearts *will be in awe* and "expanded with joy."⁴⁰ The heart takes pleasure in relationships between tribal members (Exo. 4:14, Aaron and Moses) which includes the hospitality of sharing food and drink (Ruth 3:7). Joy experienced in *lēb* is a

positive consequence when a father's instruction is received by his son. The son acts obediently and thus, displays wisdom (Pro. 27:11).

Lēb is a gift from *Yahweh* to provide not only life force but give humanity the capacity for love in earthly relationships and love in fellowship with the divine. Belief in the very nature of *Yahweh* as holy, loving, and faithful evokes trust (Psa. 33:21). A joyous *lēb* is possible because *Yahweh* provides security for Self and the 'ibrî tribe (Psa. 16:9).

Speak to the heart is an ancient Hebraism coined to communicate affection and comfort. The Lord commands comfort be spoken *to the heart of Jerusalem* in Isaiah 40:2. It is only in the heart that the 'ibrî tribe as people of The Name will truly know and believe a message of deliverance from captivity and exile. Joseph spoke to the heart of his brothers and in this verbal act reaffirmed his identity with the tribe and commitment to community welfare (Gen. 50:21). David is reprimanded by Joab because he displayed more affection for his traitor son, Absalom, than for his tribesmen who fought to protect him against those who had betrayed their community elders. Joab chides David to *speak to the heart* of his age-mates with words of encouragement and thanksgiving for their loyalty and sacrifice (2 Sam. 19:8). Hezekiah also chose the phrase as a means of expressing his appreciation to the Levites in 2 Chr. 30:22.⁴¹ From his heart Boaz reaches out to the heart of Ruth and fulfills his tribal obligations (Ruth 2:13).

On the other hand, *lēb* is the conduit for negative inner experiences such as in Psalm 25:17, *The troubles of my heart have multiplied; free me from my anguish* (NIV). An overwhelming sense of distress has gripped the person just as one experiencing grief. Causal factors for grief include *sadness of heart* because of barrenness (1 Sam. 1:8) or the destruction of tribal land (Neh. 2:2), and an *unrested heart* due to the lack of satisfaction, uncertainty, and brevity of one's life (Ecc. 2:23). David experienced sorrow through his heart because of the threat of his enemies in Psalm 13:3 and as a result of sinful behavior that brought physical illness and social ostracism in Psalm 38. Ecclesiastes 11:10 admonishes youth to remove from *lēb* any emotional stress such as anger, frustration, or worry so to enjoy a carefree youth.

A sad *lēb* is one in which the motives of the person are self centered to the extent one begrudges others prosperity (Deut. 15:10). Certainly the perversion of hate for one's tribesmen is taboo which is reflected in the socio-religious code of ancient Israel. Leviticus 19:17 warns, *You will not hate your brother in your heart*. To be hated is to be an enemy a person desires to avoid at all costs. Hatred voids relationship, and this is unacceptable within a tribal world view; thus the divine command is given. It is then surprising that Michal as the wife of King David would allow contempt to churn in her heart against her husband (1 Chr. 15:29). The consequence of barrenness for this moral breach is quite expected as divine punishment. A 'ibrî can not expect to despise and rebuke an elder

without dire aftereffects stemming from the supernatural and neither can a Torobo.

Essentiality for cognition

The tribal notions of Torobo *oltau* and ancient Hebrew *lēb* view the heart not only as necessary for experience to be processed but equally essential for cognition. A number of passages characterize the heart as the cognitive center of the ancient Hebrew Self. *Lēb* denotes mental processes associated with thought (knowledge, judgment, and decision), understanding (wisdom vs. folly), and intellect. Exodus 36:8 is an interesting scripture describing the function of the heart as skillful/wise for those men working on the tabernacle, *Every skillful person of heart who worked made the tabernacle with ten curtains*. This example suggests knowledge and ability are the product of *lēb*.

Lēb operates as the mental station of the nonphysical Self.⁴² Deuteronomy 29:3, *Yahweh has not given you a mind (lēb) to understand* and Deuteronomy 8:5, *Know in your heart or Be keenly aware (NET)* demonstrate the centrality of *lēb* for cognition. The lack of a heart (*lēb wā'ên*) characterizes an individual or tribe as a whole with the inability to reason and have understanding. Jeremiah 5:21 commands, *Hear this, you foolish people who have no understanding (lēb)* (NET). The heart is significant in ancient Hebrew world view because it is the means by which *ībrî* tribesmen honor The Name and take seriously the terms of covenantal identity. Malachi 2:2 is a sobering reprimand against those who dishonor this binding relationship, *If you will not make your heart give glory to my name...I will curse your blessings*. In this way, *lēb* governs the realm of decision making. Follow tribal law and have divine blessing; decide to disregard tribal heritage and risk discipline.

Torobo *oltau* stores general knowledge and knowledge of *olkuak* in its memory as a means of modifying behavior. In an instance depicting a Torobo boy ignoring the knowledge of his heart, *oltau* was startled unto death, "I was so surprised my heart tried to come out my mouth."⁴³ This occurred because the boy's heart remembered the teachings of his father, and the lad knew he had failed to comply. These instructions are categorized by Torobo as *olkuak*, the cultural mandates for behavior and values the person is expected to assume as their personality. This illustration shows the heart reacting with extreme emotion due to the disregard of its tribal knowledge and memory. Knowing what is correct and seeing the person ignore the proper course causes the heart great distress since *oltau* reasons that the memory and subsequent behavior are incompatible. In this fashion, the heart functions as the conscience of a Torobo individual.

A *lēb* distinction also includes memory functions. Heart evoked memory serves to guide a person toward right behavior by reminding them of consequences. When the heart fails to do so, then the individual

as well as the tribe can expect divine retribution (Isa. 47:7). Keeping death in the forefront of one's memory (Ecc. 7:2, *give to his heart*) should lead a person to tribal obligations of godliness associated with the covenant. Idolatry occurs when *lēb* forgets the covenant and must be warned to remember, *I am God, and there is no other* (Isa. 46:7-8). Religio-cultural memory of *Yahweh*'s narrative with Israel is to be stored in the heart of every 'ibrî tribal member much like Torobo *olkuak*. As such, it is passed down from generation to generation to ensure sacred history is preserved and continues to lead the tribe in covenantal practice (Deu. 4:9). The exiled in Jeremiah 51:50 are told to remember *Yahweh* and think about or bring to mind (*come up on your heart*) their Jerusalem homeland.

To store, write or bind something in the heart connotes special importance to a situation. Joshua was forty years old when Moses sent him to spy out the covenantal land. He brought word back to Moses as it was *in his heart* (Jos. 14:7). The phrase highlights the faith Joshua exhibited in *Yahweh* and his covenant. After giving Israel the cornerstone command of his covenant in Deuteronomy 6:5, *Yahweh* then punctuates his directive by saying, *These words which I am commanding you today must be on your heart*. To love the Lord will all one's heart, being, and strength should always be in the forefront of one's mind (*lēb*). Covenant loyalty (*hesed*) must be written *on the tablet of your heart* that is in a sense like writing it into the mind (Pro. 3:3). To ensure a son or daughter follow familial and tribal customary code, children are admonished to bind the instructions of parents continually to their heart (Pro. 6:21). It means the person will never be without these moral dictates to guide the life experience. This is true of both ancient Hebrew and Torobo world view.

Appellation of character

Appellation of character occurs in *oltau* and *lēb*. Many instances refer to emotional tendencies as defining features of Torobo character such as, "I came out angry."⁴⁴ In this context, the individual characteristically lost his temper. The Torobo word for character, *empukunoto*, has the verb stem, *puk*, meaning 'to come out.' The character of the person, their emotional make-up, emerges from the heart and much of the time is displayed in some type of emotional release.

As the producer of both positive and negative feelings, Torobo *oltau* challenges the individual to restrain passion in an appropriate manner. "Hold your heart so you do not get hungry" is an admonition to control not only feelings which originate in *oltau* but furthermore, desire.⁴⁵ Desire is placed within the realm of emotion. The longing or urge for that special something which promises some type of satisfaction is categorized by Torobo as a dynamic feeling. Hence desire comes from *oltau* and is in *oltau*.

The nonphysical element of decision occurs in ancient Hebrew *lēb*, consequently it is one of the reasons the Torah is to be written on the heart (Deu. 30:14). If the law by which the 'ibrî tribe lives is carved into *lēb*,

then an individual will *know what is right* and make decisions in accordance with these binding practices (Isa. 51:7). The decision to observe proper social custom requires a knowledgeable heart in such matters and the will to conform. According to Boyle, ancient Israel imaged the notion of lawlessness as broken hearted (Isa. 61:1, Jer. 23:9; Psa. 34:18; Psa. 51:17; Psa. 69:20).⁴⁶

Lēb is the seat of spirituality. As a tribe chosen to be identified with *Yahweh*, the ancient Hebrews were given a divine decree to, *Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength* (Deut 6:5). *Love* in this context means that sacred devotion is a moral imperative for all in 'ibrî society. Certainly each heart must make an individual decision, but the identity and success of the tribe are dependent on every tribesman choosing to follow the laws set forth in the Torah which in turn honors the love command from *Yahweh*. Just as the personality component of Torobo is to be shaped into observing tribal customary law, the ancient Hebrew heart is expected to obediently conform to the spiritual terms and behavioral expectations of the covenant with respect to relations with *Yahweh* and social covenantal guidelines with respect to relations with fellow tribesmen (Deu. 30:14, 17; Ezk. 36:26-30). Ancient Hebrew character has everything to do with *lēb* knowing and observing the Torah.⁴⁷

The ancient Hebrew notion of heart includes the component of conscience. In fact, *lēb* is the term used in Old Testament literature for ethical standards. Just as Torobo have no term limited to meaning conscience, 'ibrî world view considers one aspect of *lēb* as one's conscience.⁴⁸ Job was steadfast in the innocence of his conscience (*lēb*) even though calamity took everything from him. He vehemently declared, *My conscience (lēb) does not rebuke any of my days* (Job 27:6). Proverbs 23:19 instructs, *O my son, listen and be wise and guide your conscience (lēb) down the right path*. Why? Because *the inclination of the heart of man is evil* (Genesis 8:21). In Genesis 20:6, Abimelech speaks of *the integrity of my heart* to convey he acted in good faith when taking Sarah into his household. He did not know she was a married woman and therefore did not deserve punishment. *Lēb* in this passage means a guiltless conscience, one who behaved uprightly.

Notions of godliness associated with covenant faithfulness are to be the very essence of 'ibrî conscience since it is to be *written on the tablet of the heart* (Pro. 3:3). Jeremiah acknowledges the righteous character of *Yahweh* but questions why *Yahweh* allows the wicked to prosper. He humbly follows this life dilemma by entreating the Lord to look at his motives and test his heart. The phrase, *libbî ûḥāhantā*, is appropriately translated *examine my heart's attitude toward you* (Jer. 12:3, NASB). The invitation is to look inside *lēb* and see Jeremiah for who he is as a godly man in personality, conscience, attitude, and character.

Source of free will/produce desire

Torobo *oltau* and Hebrew *lēb* are the initiator and administrator of desire. One of the functions of the heart is to produce desire and whatever effort is needed for possession. Torobo believe all the key elements involved in the process of desire, from initial experience to completing the cycle by achievement, are generated in *oltau*. This is not to suggest the physical Self lies dormant. For example, one Torobo man explained that physical elements are stimulated and seek sensory gratification, “The hand feels something nice, the eyes see something attractive, the ears hear something pleasant, the legs and feet experience an easy surface to walk on.”⁴⁹ These perceptions arouse the heart and cause *oltau* to desire. The desire itself, the will to seek, the ability to try, and the effort and perseverance to endure are all produced by the heart.

The complex meaning of *lēb* includes self purpose and self resolve.⁵⁰ Jeremiah 24:7 declares, *I will give them the desire to acknowledge that I am the Lord. I will be their God and they will be my people. For they will wholeheartedly return to me* (NET). *Lēb* is the instrument whereby ‘*ibrî* perceive the universe and has urges to satisfy self desire born out of life experience. Blessing comes to the one who is able to, *Take delight in the LORD*, because there is the promise *he will give you the desires of your heart* (Psa. 37:4, NRSV). Tribal success over out-group threats is the heart’s desire of all ‘*ibrî* tribesmen and thankfulness for these victories is a repetitive feature in Psalm literature.⁵¹

Lēb like *oltau* is distinguished as a volitional center for the nonphysical Self. In Psalm 57:8, the heart is *determined* to sing praise unto *Yahweh*. The will of the heart can be a driving force in Self to prod a person toward what is rightly expected. The *lēb* of Jeremiah burned like fire when he tried to withhold divine prophetic message (Jer. 20:9), and David is moved to prayer by a hot, burning heart (Psa. 39:4). Balaam swore he could do nothing by his own will (heart) but only by the command of God (Num. 24:13). A person giving sacred offerings should be motivated by a willing heart (Exo. 25:2), stirred to action by the heart (Exo. 35:21), and experience deep joy because of giving *with a complete heart* (NET transl. *willing attitude*; NIV transl. *wholeheartedly*, 1 Chr. 29:9).

In the exodus narrative, *Yahweh* knew the inner man of Pharaoh was proud and unyielding to divine will. Pharaoh would not listen to Moses and Aaron and chose to defy the will of Creator God. Exodus 7:22 says, *Pharaoh’s heart remained stubborn*. In fact, verse 23 notes Pharaoh turned and went into his house and his heart paid no attention to the word from *Yahweh*. Literally, *He did not set his heart* to the divine command, meaning he did not even consider it. The causal reason lies in the fact Pharaoh’s heart belonged to a different people and did not identify with ‘*ibrî* tribal covenantal obligations.

Determine behavior

The primary role of Torobo *oltau* and ancient Hebrew *lēb* outside of supplying life energy is to determine behavior. Controlling what the individual desires and seeks after as well as the ability to act toward that end is a major determinant of behavior. There is little wonder Torobo and 'ibrî believe actions come from the heart. This is further enhanced by the heart functioning as conscience and decision maker.

The heart is the ultimate judge of right and wrong as the foremost perceptive organ. As decision maker, Hebrew *lēb* and Torobo *oltau* determine the choice between corruption and virtue. *Lēb* is the center at which an ancient Hebrew determines rightness and wrongness and behaves accordingly.⁵² It is not unusual for the heart to err in judgment. According to one Torobo proverb, "You cannot see your mistakes."⁵³ At times the eyes deceive *oltau* and the person is unable to correct themselves. Discipline is necessary from others. The whole Self acts on cue from *oltau* and the whole person is affected whether *oltau* is influenced by good or bad forces. So great was the wickedness of ancient people described in Genesis 6 *that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually* (NASB). The source of evil is *lēb*, and wicked thoughts in the heart motivates all a person does so much so that depravity excludes any other course of action.

The heart is the origin from which all immorality is born. An Old Testament idiom, *heart is slipping*, describes a heart that is deceitful, faithless, false, and divided (Hos. 10:2). Consequently, *lēb* needs to be washed from time to time to avoid harsh judgment (Jer. 4:14). It is an undivided heart that is valued in the 𐤎𐤁𐤏𐤏𐤏 tribal moral code as stated in Psalm 119:80, *Let my heart be undivided* (American Jewish Version). The center of Self should not be divided in what the person knows versus what the person determines to do or chooses to feel.⁵⁴

Lēb directs a person in those issues of moral propriety either with honesty or deception. Jacob deceived Laban in his plan to flee Haran by *stealing the heart of Laban*. The weak conscience of Jacob allowed him to plan deliberate subterfuge on his kin. A wicked *lēb* will cause a person to foolishly reject his social responsibilities and relationship with community Other and behave as a tribal outsider (Isa. 32:6). For Torobo, honesty itself is placed in and under the authority of *oltau* by the divine Creator *Enkai*. Deception is from a corrupt heart in both Torobo and ancient Hebrew world views.

There are frequent Old Testament references to those who have hardened their heart (Psa. 95:8; Pro. 28:14). This condition of Self denotes rebellious resistance to authority as in the case of an ox refusing to yield to its yoke. The *lēb* of a single person or the collective tribe may demonstrate obstinacy toward social and/or supernatural authority despite persuasive reasoning. Hardness of heart is paired with rejection of tribal identity so that the individual becomes antisocial with polytheistic

practices. Those whose hearts have become hardened turn away from their social duty to aid needy community members (Deu. 15:7). Psalm 28:3 entreats, *Do not drag me away with the wicked, with those who do evil, who speak cordially with their neighbours but harbour malice in their hearts* (NIV).

As the organ of knowledge, Hebrew *lēb* and Torobo *oltau* plan, make decisions, have intentions, and choose obedience or nonconformity. These tribal heart concepts include all we as Westerners would attribute to the mind: power of perception, reason, understanding, insight, consciousness, memory, knowledge, reflection, judgment, and discernment. As the point of contact with the supernatural, *oltau* houses the divine gift of life and the wherewithal to communicate with the spiritual. As the source of emotion, the heart perceives and generates the total range of emotive states. The role of the tribal *lēb* and *oltau* quite simply is to determine behavior hopefully within tribal expectations.

Importance of the Heart

Divine gift

One need not look further for the importance of the heart than the explicit creative act by the divine. A Torobo newborn is given a heart with a good nature at birth by Creator God, *Enkai*. *Lēb* is created for each person by the divine action of *Yahweh*. He created man and *forms every human heart* (Psa. 33:15, NET). Both *oltau* and *lēb* represent the componential nature of the nonphysical Self with the very essence of life force, emotion, intellect, and free will contained therein, and this is by supernatural design.

Keeping a good heart throughout life is regarded as a prime objective for ensuring a successful and fruitful existence. Torobo parents and elders admonish children and use corporate punishment as a means of preserving the purity of their heart in order to receive blessings from *Enkai* in adulthood. The motivation for retaining a good *oltau* and denying self ambition is “to enjoy a prosperous life with less problems.”⁵⁵

Torobo parents admonish their children to be careful what their heart “sees” and “hears” so that *oltau* is not led astray and corrupted. The Torobo saying, “Breath or spirit is in the heart,” is also spoken as a warning to be cautious of that which could destroy the heart. Wrongful desires corrupt *oltau* thereby weakening its vitality and threatening the very life of the individual. *Oltau* may be regarded as the avenue through which destiny unfolds in the postnatal life of the person. One Torobo father remarked the most important sentiment he could convey to his children concerning their heart was, “You have your own heart and I have mine, so be careful about your future because when I die you are on your own.”⁵⁶

Most Torobo will refer to their heart in response to the question, "Can you give God a gift of any kind?" One young man replied he could give God control of his *oltau* by choosing moral behavior and helping others. Since the heart is created good by the Father of all purity and is the life giver, it follows a gift worthy of God's righteous nature would be a life given to righteous acts. An aged Torobo woman responded, "I give God my heart by being devoted."⁵⁷ By devotion she means "to thank God for her life and all things." This is reverent recognition that life comes from *Enkai* including all that is considered good such as her ability to bear children. The breath of life contained in the heart is a gift from God, and a life lived according to culturally prescribed morals is a gift to God.

Tribal identity

Who the ancient Hebrew and Torobo person are as an individual and tribal member is formed directly by the heart. It is therefore imperative for the person to exercise control over their heart. The nature of the nonphysical heart becomes self evident since all overt actions issue from *oltau* and *lēb*. The behavior of a tribal member whether deemed good or bad speaks to the moral condition of their heart.

Lēb has the ability to direct a single person and/or the whole of 'ibrî society in submission or rebellion to earthly and divine authority. The corporate identity of the 'ibrî tribe is under the authority of *Yahweh* as well as the concept of Self. Consequently, the heart must be submissive which denotes bringing into subjection to *Yahweh*, the covenant, and the law. Joshua 24:23 declares, *Turn your Self (lēb) to Yahweh, the God of Israel*. The charge is for Israel to remain loyal and obedient to *Yahweh* and openly identify themselves as his people through observing the law. 1 Samuel 12:24 exhorts, *fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart* (NET). Wolff describes this as "a conscious surrender of the will."⁵⁸

Ancient Hebrew tribal identity is depicted in the imagery of a circumcised/uncircumcised heart as bearers of the covenant. Jeremiah 4:4 speaks of the *circumcision of the heart* branding 'ibrî identity as people of *Yahweh*.⁵⁹ Joshua 5:8 says *all the nation was circumcised* as a divine requirement as well as Deuteronomy 30:6, *The Lord your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants* (NIV). Metonymically, Israel is the whole representing each individual male member. The covenant was made with ancient Israel as a tribe which is represented by a corporate heart. This communal heart symbolically bears the mark of divine identity and relationship by the physical circumcision of male members.⁶⁰

The example of an uncircumcised heart is coined to describe one unwilling to resist earthly desire despite the consequences demanded by a breach of covenant. Leviticus 26:41 promises, *and I myself will walk in hostility against them and bring them into the land of their enemies, and then their uncircumcised hearts become humbled and they make up for their iniquity* (NET). An uncircumcised heart symbolizes deliberate sin by Israel in

breaking the covenant and not observing the law; and a circumcised heart is symbolic of covenantal salvation at the tribal level.⁶¹

Another aspect of tribal identity demands valuing relationship with community Other and is reiterated again and again in Old Testament passages and Torobo tradition. Zechariah speaks against oppressing widows, orphans, or the poor (Zec. 7:10). He concludes verse 10 by warning, 'Let none of you plan evil in his heart Against his brother.' (NKJV). The heart is not to *plot evil* (NIV), *plan evil* (NET), *devise evil* (NASB), or *think evil* (NJKV) against one's neighbor (Zec. 8:17). Why? Because all these things are hated by *Yahweh* giving divine importance to intertribal social relations. There is to be no wicked thought seeded in the heart against a fellow 'ibri tribesman, because this is a sin against both one's tribal brother and *Yahweh* (Deu. 15:9). *Lēb* functions as the center of willful self thought and self schemes. Self must take care to subdue this free will to the demands of the Hebrew socio-religious context.

The story of the wealthy herder, Nabal, in 1 Samuel 25 is an example of forsaking tribal customary law and thus denying tribal responsibility and identity. King David's men had provided service to the shepherds of Nabal during shearing season, and David requested provisions be given by Nabal to his traveling party. The custom of hospitality was a sacral-legal and sacral-social law during the reign of King David.⁶² It was the practice of that time to extend the act of hospitality during sheep shearing season by giving from one's abundance to wanting tribal members. It was also a tribal value to provide for those sojourning. Nabal insulted David and his men by curtly refusing any assistance. He essentially closed his hand and hardened his heart. These actions rejected his tribal membership by ignoring customary law, *If there is a poor man among your brothers in any of the towns of the land that the LORD your God is giving you, do not be hard-hearted or tight-fisted towards your poor brother*" (Deut. 15:7, NIV). The consequences for not providing for community Other was severe, *Everyone shall be put to death for his own sin* (Deut. 24:16, NASB). Nabal suffered this fate because his heart morally failed him.

A Torobo tribal member regards Self and self identity in terms of something shared by others in the community. Torobo notion of *oltau* rejects the idea of an isolated self existence. A significant portion of heart directed behavior is to be an imitation of those around the person. Each Torobo individual must develop a social personality learned from others in the community.⁶³ Developing a good heart is synonymous with valuing and acting out Torobo ideology. If one turns away from the social identity contained in the heart, one does not only betray the Torobo community and cultural heritage, one betrays themselves and divine will. A Torobo proverb teaches, "Whoever leaves his social personality is a slave," meaning the one who departs from Torobo cultural principles for life chooses evil and becomes a slave to evil.⁶⁴

A fundamental difference between Torobo and ancient 'ibrî is the notion of tribal identity. Yes, both value tribal affiliation and believe the tribe and its members is by divine design. However, the relationship with the Creator plays out in the social context in different ways for Torobo and 'ibrî tribes. A Torobo will say, "You are Torobo, now act like it!" The emphasis here solely on the social group. An ancient Hebrew would say, "You are a people of the covenant, of The Name, now act like it!" The tribal identity of the 'ibrî tribe comes out of the explicit relationship with *Yahweh* and religious assumptions; the tribal identity of Torobo is derived from the community in-group with implicit supernatural overtones.

Conclusion

The spectrum of meaning for 'heart' is particularly broad. Though it undoubtedly embraces a range of physical, emotional and intellectual elements, clearly ancient Hebrew and Torobo view 'heart' as the center of the conscious, living person. The fact that emotion is derived from the heart, decision making takes place in the heart, strength comes from the heart, will and ability are dependent on the heart, desire comes out of the heart, and reason and understanding occur in the heart, underscore the importance of *lēb* and *oltau* in the life of each tribal member. Without *lēb* and *oltau* to govern the physical and non-physical aspects of Self, 'ibrî and Torobo individuals would live in conscious chaos. Without *lēb* and *oltau* to interpret the physical and non-physical senses, the meaning of life would become incoherent. Without *lēb* and *oltau*, communication with the supernatural would become impossible and communication with fellow man would be confused and disorderly. Without *lēb* and *oltau*, human life among the ancient Hebrews and Torobo of Kenya would not exist.

The essential characteristic dominating the concepts of *lēb* and *oltau* is that the heart is called to control the non-physical Self as governing authority. That which controls the heart, controls the person. For this very reason a fundamental value to Torobo and ancient Hebrew society is and was regulating this center of their existence.

Notes

¹ John Friedl, *The Human Portrait* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1981), 362.

² See Paul Hiebert and E. Hiebert Meneses, *Incarnational Ministry: Planting Churches in Band, Tribal, Peasant, and Urban Societies* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995).

³ See Judith Gundry-Vof, *A Spacious Heart: Essays on Identity and Belonging* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997).

⁴ Carolyn Morrison, Kathleen Fox, Terry Cross, and Roger Paul, "Permanency Through Wabanaki Eyes: A Narrative Perspective from 'The People Who Live Where the Sun Rises,'" *Child Welfare* 89, 1 (2010): 108.

- ⁵ Bonganjolo Goba, "Corporate Personality: Ancient Israel and Africa," in *Challenge to Black Theology in South Africa*, ed., Basil Moore (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1974), 69.
- ⁶ Adapted from Marshall Sahlins, *Tribesmen* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1968), 16.
- ⁷ See Kalarikkal Aleaz, "A Tribal Christian Theology from India," *Asia Journal of Theology* 19, 2 (2005): 379-394.
- ⁸ See Kwesi Dickson, *Theology in Africa* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1984); and Temba Mafico, "The Biblical God of the Fathers and the African Ancestors," in *The Bible in Africa: Transactions, Trajectories, and Trends*, eds., Gerald West and Musa Dube (Boston: Brill, 2001), 481-489.
- ⁹ See Bernice Letlhare, "Corporate Personality in Botswana and Ancient Israel: A Religio-Cultural Comparison," in *The Bible in Africa: Transactions, Trajectories, and Trends*, eds., Gerald West and Musa Dube (Boston: Brill, 2001), 474-480.
- ¹⁰ See Lachman Khubchandani, *Tribal Identity: A Language and Communication Perspective* (New Delhi: Indus Publishing Company, 1992).
- ¹¹ See Gabriel Setiloane, *The Image of God among the Sotho-Tswana* (Rotterdam: A.A. Balkema, 1979).
- ¹² See Laird Harris, "Ibri," in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, eds., L. Harris, G. Archer, Jr., and B. Waltke (Chicago: Moody, 1980), 643.
- ¹³ See Ole Sankan, *The Maasai* (Nairobi, Kenya: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1995).
- ¹⁴ Boyle (2005) and Wolff (1974) support *lēb* as the most significant anthropological term in Old Testament scriptures. Ashdown (2001) argues *oltau* is central in Torobo world view. See Margorie Boyle, "Broken Hearts: The Violation of Biblical Law," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 73, 3 (2005): 731-757; Hans Wolff, *Anthropology of the Old Testament* (Mifflintown, PA: Sigler Press, 1996); and Shelley Ashdown, "The Foundational Nature of Self in Torobo World View" (D.Miss. diss., Biola University, 2001).
- ¹⁵ Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament: Study edition*, Vol. 1, transl. and ed., M. Richardson (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 514.
- ¹⁶ See Harold Ginsberg, "Heart," *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 8 (1972): 508-510; and Robert North, "Medical Discoveries of Biblical Times," in *Scripture and Other Artifacts: Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Honor of Philip J. King*, eds., M. Coogan, Cheryl Exum, and Lawrence Stager (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 311-332.
- ¹⁷ Heinz-Josef Fabry, "Lēb," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, eds., J. Botterweck, H. Ringgren, and H. Fabry, Vol. 7, transl. by D. Green (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1997), 412-434.
- ¹⁸ Simon Ngayami, personal communication, February 24, 1998.
- ¹⁹ Mary Nchoshi, personal communication, August 13, 1997.
- ²⁰ Ikayo Lolokula, personal communication, August 16, 1997.
- ²¹ See Christine Mitchell, "Heart and Mind in the Hebrew Scriptures," *Touchstone* 23, 1 (2005): 5-13.
- ²² Nkarusel Ngiria, personal communication, June 25, 1998.
- ²³ See Francis Brown, Samuel Driver, and Charles Briggs. *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Hendrickson, 1979).
- ²⁴ Ketei Kereto, personal communication, February 21, 1998.

²⁵ See Heinz-Josef Fabry, "Lēb," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, 399-437.

²⁶ John Nkoitiko, personal communication, September 25, 1997.

²⁷ Daniel Kimenta, personal communication, September 12, 1997.

²⁸ See Margorie Boyle, "The Law of the Heart: The Death of a Fool (1 Samuel 25)," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 120, 3 (2001): 401-427.

²⁹ Koitec Nashurr, personal communication, November 17, 1998.

³⁰ Moses Ngayami, personal communication, June 20, 1998.

³¹ Soket Letiet, personal communication, February 24, 1998.

³² Nkarusel Ngiria, personal communication, June 25, 1998.

³³ Simon Ngayami, personal communication, February 23, 1998.

³⁴ See Gerald Janzen, "Prayer and/as Self-Address: The Case of Hannah," in *A God So Near*, eds., Brent Stawn and Nancy Bowen (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 113-127.

³⁵ See Heinz-Josef Fabry, "Lēb," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, 399-437.

³⁶ Nkarusel Ngiria, personal communication, June 25, 1998.

³⁷ John Nkoitiko, personal communication, September 25, 1997.

³⁸ See Alec Basson, "Metaphorical Explorations of the Heart in the Old Testament: A Few Remarks," *Scriptura* 96 (2007): 310-315.

³⁹ See Mark Smith, "The Heart and Innards in Israelite Emotional Expressions: Notes from Anthropology and Psychobiology," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 117, 3 (1998): 427-436.

⁴⁰ Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 931.

⁴¹ Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 210.

⁴² Andrew Bowling, "Lēb, Lēbāb," in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, eds. L. Harris, G. Archer, and B. Waltke (Chicago: Moody, 1980), 466-467.

⁴³ Simon Ngayami, personal communication, February 24, 1998.

⁴⁴ Jackson Ngayami, personal communication, June 16, 1998.

⁴⁵ Simon Ngayami, personal communication, February 4, 1998.

⁴⁶ See Margorie Boyle, "Broken Hearts: The Violation of Biblical Law," 731-757.

⁴⁷ As Boyle comments: "The antithesis to a heart of stone is a heart of flesh, as in Ezekiel's prophecy, 'A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. You shall dwell in the land which I gave to your fathers; and you shall be my people, and I will be your God' (36:26-28; cf. 11:19)...A heart of flesh means obedience to the legal statutes and ordinances, which results in the possession of the ancestral land," "The Law of the Heart," 426.

⁴⁸ See Heinz-Josef Fabry, "Lēb," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, 399-437.

⁴⁹ Simon Ngayami, personal communication, February 4, 1998.

⁵⁰ See I. Cohen, "The Heart in Biblical Psychology," in *Essays Presented to Chief Rabbi Israel Brodie on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday*, eds., H. Zimmes, J. Rabinowitz, and I. Finestein (London: The Soncino Press, 1967), 41-57.

⁵¹ Psalm 20:5, *May He grant you according to your heart's desire, And fulfill all your purpose* (NKJV); Psalm 21:3, *You have given to him the desire of his heart.*

⁵² See George Zemek, "Aiming the Mind: A Key to Godly Living," *Grace Theological Journal* 5, 2 (1984): 205-227.

⁵³ Joseph Ngayami, personal communication, June 17, 1998.

⁵⁴ See I. Cohen, "The Heart in Biblical Psychology," in *Essays Presented to Chief Rabbi Israel Brodie on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday*, eds., H. Zimmes, J. Rabbinowitz, and I. Finestein (London: The Soncino Press, 1967), 41-57.

⁵⁵ Nkarusel Ngiria, personal communication, June 25, 1998.

⁵⁶ Munyere Letura, personal communication, June 25, 1998.

⁵⁷ Tunda Ngayami, personal communication, August 22, 1997.

⁵⁸ Hans Wolff, *Anthropology of the Old Testament*, 54.

⁵⁹ Jer. 4:4, *Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, circumcise your hearts, you men of Judah and people of Jerusalem* (NIV).

⁶⁰ See David Bernat, *Sign of the Covenant: Circumcision in the Priestly Tradition* (SBLAIL 3, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009).

⁶¹ See Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament: Study edition*, Vol. 1, transl. and ed., M. Richardson (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

⁶² See Margorie Boyle, "The Law of the Heart: The Death of a Fool (1 Samuel 25)," 401-427.

⁶³ Thomas Nchonsoi, personal communication, June 23, 1998.

⁶⁴ Leintoi Turo-omom, personal communication, June 26, 1998.

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