

When Yahweh Himself says “please”

Our God’s politeness

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by Philip Shields

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Warm hello, everyone – from Orlando, FL. This is Philip Shields here with Light on the Rock once more. Yeshua is the Light of the world – and He is our Rock –and so that is why I call my website “Light on the Rock”. And of course the God and Father of Jesus Christ – whom I refer to as Yeshua – is God Almighty, God Most High.

I think most of us would think that if we were to meet Yeshua (Jesus), he would be very kind, polite, and courteous – though we have plenty of examples when he actually was uncomfortably frank and direct, especially to the religious leaders of 2000 years ago. But still, we know he was humble, forgiving, and concerned for people.

But would you think the same of God the Father? Or of the One who is Almighty God of the Old Testament? * The One who reigns supreme is God the Father.

But could God be all that different from the way Yeshua was?

In fact, **Hebrews 1:1-3** says Yeshua is the “express image” – the exact replica -- of the Father, so if you think Yeshua is kind and gracious, Abba – our dear heavenly daddy, *has* to also be incredibly kind and gracious as well. Otherwise how could Yeshua be the exact replica of our Father and God?

So that leads me to today’s question in today’s shorter-than-usual message:

Do you think God Most High – El Shaddai, God Almighty, Yahweh of Hosts – would ever say “please” to mere mortals? Would he?

We could argue that he wouldn’t have to – but why not? Just because Someone is all-powerful doesn’t excuse them from saying “please”, does it?

I asked various ones – adults, children – if Yahweh, God Almighty – should, or even would, say “please” to anyone. The quick answer I usually got back ran along the lines of “he wouldn’t have to” or “He is God, so why would he?”

But also stop and think: aren’t *we* supposed to be just like our Father and our Savior? And doesn’t it stand to reason then that - yes - - even God, Yahweh Elohim of the scriptures, would be* polite? Wouldn’t- - or shouldn’t -- the Almighty in fact then set us the perfect example of how a Sovereign *should* speak, should act and should be like, as a Being, or as a Person? After all, are we not also in training to be kings with Christ in the coming Millennial reign? Will *we* ever be saying “please” to those we rule and serve?

In most English versions of our Bibles, including the KJV, NKJV, NIV, etc. -- there is a word in Hebrew that gets translated as “I pray” or “we beseech”. It’s from the Hebrew word “*naa*” (pronounced *naw*), and it simply means “please”. When the context shows humans speaking with other humans, there will usually be an “I pray” or “we beseech” or in the NKJV they might even say the word “Please” – when man is talking to fellow man. (*naa* is Strong’s number 4994 if you wish to look it up)

Sometimes the Hebrew word “*naa*” (please) is also translated as “I pray” or “I beseech” or even as “please” (though rarely) in the NKJV – when man is speaking to GOD. * Well, of course. We obviously would and should say “please” or “I pray thee” – when speaking to the Almighty.

A good example of the original scripture saying “please” – but not often translated that way – is **Psalms 118:25**. In the NKJV: “Save now, I pray, O LORD (YHVH): O LORD, I pray, send now prosperity”.

In Psalm 118:25, at least we have the words “I pray” – but that comes from “*naa*”. This is MAN petitioning God – to “please save and send prosperity”.

And by the way, where KJV and NKJV and others translate “YHVH” as LORD, the Complete Jewish Bible chose to change the original YHVH to the Hebrew word “Adonai” – meaning “My Master”, or My Lord. With that said, here’s how they translate this passage – and note that “Please” is mentioned in this verse two times.

Psalms 118:25

“Please, Adonai! Save us!

Please, Adonai! Rescue us!”

But when that same Hebrew word “*naa*” is used by Yahweh when speaking to mankind, we don’t find it being translated as “please” – but changed usually to “now”. In a couple minutes I’ll give you a few examples.

So back to our question: would El Shaddai – God Almighty – ever on his own volition say “please” when speaking to a human being?

Can you think of an example?

Before we get into the Scriptures on this, we need to remember that in the early apostles’ day, there was a rising heresy called “Gnosticism”. One of the results of this heresy was the belief that the God of the Old Testament was rough, angry, unpleasant, and even mean much of the time. But then the SON of God – Yeshua – was seen as pleasant, kind, gracious and loving. Now Christ was and is indeed – pleasant, kind, gracious and loving. But was it correct to say that the God whom Abraham, Moses and David worshipped was a mean rough and tough character? NO.

Now Gnosticism had many other false teachings – but the notion that God in the Old Testament was rough and tough, survives to this day. And one of the ways it survives is the fact that you’ll find it hard to find examples of God saying “please” to humans. That just doesn’t fit the stereotype of God being all powerful and doing what he pleases when he

pleases and how he pleases – no matter what. Why would someone that powerful feel a need to say “please” to sinful man?

Though the heresy of Gnosticism was rejected by the corporate church, many of its teachings linger to this day.

So once again I ask: would God Almighty ever say “please” to mankind?

WHY does it matter?

- Because you’re going to see that we all too often **MISS the gentleness and graciousness of God Almighty** – because – get this: the word “*naa*”, meaning PLEASE – gets left out; untranslated, dozens and dozens of times, especially when Yahweh Elohim – the Eternal God – is speaking to mortal man. So I’m hoping this short message will leave you with a greater awareness of how deep is the gentleness of God Almighty most of the time. (Don’t get me wrong: God can be severe too, when he’s correcting or addressing big issues.)
- I also believe that when we “see” what our Father is like – and how he is so gracious, even to mere mortals—that we will also be kinder and more gracious with one another. Remember the Son of God says that our Father is kind even “to the unthankful and evil” – **Luke 6:39**. WOW! He sends rain and sun to everyone, to the just and unjust (**Matthew 5:45**).

So should we be surprised if we find even Yahweh Elohim saying “please”?

Some of you reading this will instinctively recoil at the suggestion that even Yahweh, God Almighty, El Shaddai – would ever “lower himself” to say “please” when talking with mere mortals. But please read on.

When God said “Please”

When I look up the places this Hebrew word “*naa*” is used, we find even Yahweh himself saying politely, “please” – in various circumstances. It’s not the harsh, cold language that we often feel when we read it in the English versions we have. This word “Please” -- is either totally left out, or sometimes the word is translated as “NOW” when GOD is the one speaking. I learned this for the first time when I heard it from a Jewish Hebrew scholar years ago. I was attending a lecture given by a Jewish scholar -- **Dr. Danny Ben-Gigi, a guest speaker** for Pastor Biltz, who has a group near Tacoma, WA. What Dr Ben-Gigi said has stayed with me all these years. He is the former director of Hebrew Programs at the University of Arizona. Dr. Ben-Gigi primarily spoke of 2 scripture passages – **Genesis 22 and Psalm 118**. Since then I continued studying it and I find the concept very heart-warming.

Here was Dr. Ben-Gigi’s first example – Genesis 22. When Yahweh tells Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, what we read today is: “take NOW your son, your only son, whom you love”. But doesn’t that sound like a harsh command in our English Bibles (Genesis 22:1-4)? There’s no sense of deep compassion for what God is asking of Abraham. But in Hebrew,

the word “now” – as in “take NOW your son...” is actually “*naa*” – or “PLEASE”. Sometimes this word is translated “I pray”, but for some reason they translate it as “NOW”, more often than not. But if God is saying to Abraham – “Please take your son” – that has a much more gentle tone to it than “Take NOW your son... right now!”

So in actual fact, we can sense, in the Hebrew, a more tender God gently saying to Abraham, instead of “take NOW your son...” ---, “*Please* take your son....”, and probably in a very gentle tone.

I remind you – I learned this from a Jewish author and expert, who is a Hebrew scholar. So if Yahweh is actually saying, “Abraham, please take your son, your only son whom you love...” – that really sounds much more gentle, does it not?

After all, we know now that Yahweh was going to use the Abraham-Isaac story to depict a far greater story of the ultimate Father who was not only willing to sacrifice His son, but went through with it. And the rest of the story is that, like Isaac, Yeshua was quite willing to be the sacrifice! *So Abraham’s story is really about the true Father of us all – Yahweh himself – sacrificing HIS one and only Son.* And for the actual fulfillment of that story, Yeshua – whom Isaac represented – had to truly be our Passover Sacrifice. But Yeshua had no ram tangled up in the bushes to rescue HIM from being slain. No, Yeshua actually died.

So surely Yahweh could feel very gentle and compassionate with Abraham – knowing what pain Yeshua and Father himself would agonize through on Calvary 2,000 or so years later.

But doesn’t that sound so much more gentle when we read it correctly translated as “Please take your son” instead of “take now your son...”?

Other examples of Yahweh’s gentleness in his speech

Since hearing of this example, I’ve looked up other verses where “*naa*” is used. Look at the time in Haggai 1 and 2 where the Almighty is not happy with the lack of progress being exerted by the returning exiles to rebuild the House of God – the temple.

It would be good for you to read the entire first chapter on your own first so you get the context for Haggai 2. This was spoken on the last – the 7th – day of the Feast of Tabernacles.

Remember what I said earlier: when “*naa*” is translated in the context of Yah speaking to mortals, the translators routinely translate it as “now” instead of “please”. In this passage in Haggai 2, in most of our English Bibles, it makes Yahweh sound like he’s ordering Haggai to correct the leaders and people, right now! Or so it seems.

Haggai 2:1-4

In the seventh month, on the twenty-first of the month, the word of YHVH came by Haggai the prophet, saying: 2 "Speak **now** [Should be: **Please speak**] to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people, saying: 3 'Who is left among you who saw this temple in its former glory? And how do you see it now? In comparison with it, is this not in your eyes as nothing?

Do you hear and feel the difference? God is polite – even as he gives his prophets some orders. Here are a few more examples of how polite and courteous even our all-powerful Creator is:

There’s a gentleness in **Zechariah 1:4** (where “NOW” should be “please”) that we miss in our English Bibles. Instead of the effect of “Hey you—right now—turn from your evil....” – what if God is actually saying, “Please, turn from your evil...” The word translated as “now” is once again “*naa*” in Hebrew and completely left out altogether from most translations. But in context, Yah is pleading with the people to turn back to him.

Zechariah 1:1-4

“In the eighth month of the second year of Darius, the word of YHVH came to Zechariah the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet, saying, 2 “YHVH has been very angry with your fathers. 3 Therefore say to them, ‘Thus says YHVH of hosts: “**Return to Me,**” says YHVH of hosts, “**and I will return to you,**” says YHVH of hosts. 4 “Do not be like your fathers, to whom the former prophets preached, saying, ‘Thus says YHVH of hosts: “Turn now (PLEASE turn) from your evil ways and your evil deeds.”’ But they did not hear nor heed Me,” says YHVH.

But I sense some of you are struggling with this. Some of you are more used to a harsh command from an Almighty God ordering us to shape up or ship out! But the original Hebrew does not always support that. And in so many cases we’re missing the more tender, gentle side of God. *For example:* when God manifested himself to Elijah, it was in a quiet whisper – instead of from a thunderstorm or tornado (**1 Kings 19:11-14**). Like Elijah, we’re all still expecting God to manifest himself in thunderous lightning or earth-shaking quakes or fires that sear mountain tops. But—Elijah found Him in the still small voice, the whisper. God? Whispering? God? Saying please? He’s certainly got all the power to do what he pleases – but our God is full of love and patience.

Even when talking with JOB – is God thundering at Job to gird up his loins like a man, or was it more gentle?

Job 38:3-4

“Gird up **now** [**Please gird up..**] thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.

4 Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding.

Micah 3:1 – is continuing a statement from Yahweh that starts in Micah 2:3. God says “PLEASE listen, heads of Jacob (Israel)...” **Again in verse 9** – “NOW hear this” is actually “Please hear this...”

The Complete Jewish Bible (CJB) has the verse saying—correctly -- “please”; but most English versions leave it out entirely.

Micah 6:1, 5 – is another instance with “*naa*” – where it should be “please” instead of “now”. That is far more gentle when we read “please” instead of “now”.

v. 1 – “PLEASE hear what the LORD (YHVH) says...”

v.5 – “O my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab counseled....”

Now contrast:

“My people, please remember what Balak king of Moab counseled...”

Ezekiel 18:25-29 – v 25 – “Hear now o house of Israel” – should be “House of Israel, please listen/hear... is it not my way that is fair, and your ways which are not fair...”

Ezekiel 18:25-29

"Yet you say, 'The way of YHVH is not fair.' Hear **now**, [**“Please** hear or listen”] O house of Israel, is it not My way which is fair, and your ways which are not fair? 26 When a righteous man turns away from his righteousness, commits iniquity, and dies in it, it is because of the iniquity which he has done that he dies. 27 Again, when a wicked man turns away from the wickedness which he committed, and does what is lawful and right, he preserves himself alive. 28 Because he considers and turns away from all the transgressions which he committed, he shall surely live; he shall not die. 29 Yet the house of Israel says, 'The way of YHVH is not fair.' O house of Israel, is it not My ways which are fair, and your ways which are not fair?

There are literally DOZENS more examples I can give. Isaiah 5:3, 5 is a good example you can look up . The word “now” in verses 3 and 5 – read that as “please” and see how it feels so much better.

I hope you’re getting the point. Our God is all powerful – but first of all, most of all, he is love, he is joy, he is peace, he is long-suffering, He is kind, he is self-controlled... he is all that and more.

Our Father, and our Redeemer and Savior –are courteous. Even when there is correction, such as to the Laodiceans in Revelation 3, what do we read? We find Yeshua knocking on their door. You and I might have rammed it open in our anger at their lukewarmness. No, our Savior is outside his own house, outside the door (HE is the Door, remember), courteously knocking. Go ponder that for a while.

Revelation 3:19-22

“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. 20 Behold, I **stand at the door and knock**. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. 21 To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

22 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.""

Now please understand: I understand the rebuke from the Master can be tough. I do. I’m just saying, He sure gives us time, opportunity to repent and starts off with pleas and knocking on the door. So none of this takes away from the scriptural fact that when God does decide “to spank” – He can spank hard. I know that. I get that. Most of you know and get that. This message is just trying to show you the “other side” of our great God.

SO as we read and study and come to know our Maker who can breathe out universes – let’s also come to know He has a very, very tender and gentle side to him. We know of his power. Let’s come to know his courtesy and politeness as well.

When we come seeking him, seeking his presence, seeking his forgiveness, wanting to change from what we’ve been to what He wants us to be – we’ll find a very kind and gentle Being. While the throng wanted to stone the adulteress in John 8 – Yeshua wrote something that made them leave. Then he gently told her ---“neither do I condemn you. GO and sin no more.”

First we start with knowing we are not condemned when we repent. In the strength of that, we can more easily fulfill the command to live a new life by HIS strength. HE is beyond awesome. He is beyond amazing.

This God we worship – yes, he is also a very polite and courteous Daddy in heaven. You knew of his power and might, and now I hope we know of his kind courteous way of living too.

The God who spans when need be – also is the God who:

- will not break a bruised reed (Isaiah 42:3).
- When He returns, He will speak comfort and encouragement to the peoples, as they respond and repent.
- He strengthens the weak hands and feeble knees (Isaiah 35:3)
- He’s the One of whom it is said is like a shepherd who will gather his lambs into his bosom (Isaiah 40:11) and gently lead those with young. The verse that comes next reminds us that the One who will do that is the One who measured heaven with a span and weighed the mountains in scales and measured the waters in the hollow of his hand (Isa 40:12).

Yes, I like knowing this side of our El Shaddai, Almighty God, too. He’s pretty awesome. What an example for us. If you’re a boss, a CEO, or a dad or mom, or whatever you are – when you have power over others – show them you can be very polite and courteous just like your heavenly father. Even to children and employees – you will say “Please” and “thank you”. Because our heavenly Father certainly does.

Ponder it: the gentler, courteous, kind God and Father that we have. And His Son is just like him. An exact replica, we’re told. Praise be to Yah – for all that HE is.