

# Living a Life of Love

## English - Love

## Hebrew - לֵב - Heart

The Hebrew word *labe* (3820) has numerous cognates in English and the Teutonic languages. It is applied in Hebrew for the center of the human life - to motives, feelings, affections, desires, the will, the aims, the principles, the thoughts, and the intellect of man. The whole of the inner man is regarded as under the influence of God. This wide application of the word is the cause of its strong influence on the Teutonic languages.

### Love-Believe-Leave

Family/Language	Indo-European Reflex(es)	Gloss
<b>English</b>		
Old English:	belēfan	to believe
	(ge)lēafa	belief
	geliefan, geliefde, geliefed	to grant; believe, trust
	lēaf	leave, permission
	lēof	lief
	lī(e)fan/lēfan/lyfan	to allow, believe
	lufu	love
Middle English:	beleave/beleeve	belief
	beleven	to believe
	leve	leave
	l(i)ef	lief
	love	love
English:	belief	state of mind
	believe	to have firm religious faith
	leave	permission
	libido	passion, sexual desire
	lief	dear, beloved
	love	affection
	love	to cherish, hold dear
<b>W-Germanic</b>		
Old Frisian:	liaf/lief	lief
Middle Dutch:	lof	permission
Dutch:	verlof	permission
Old Saxon:	gi-lōfo	belief
	liof	lief
	or-lōf	leave, permission
Old High German:	gilouben	to believe
	ki-lauba	belief
	laubo	belief
	liob/liub/lieb	lief
	lupa	love
	urlaup	leave
Middle High German:	loube	leave
German:	Glaube	belief
	lieb	lief

Brown, Driver and Briggs list the many meanings and nuances, together with illustration of Bible passages, for the Hebrew word *labe*<sup>3820</sup> = "heart."

1. The inner man in contrast with the outer: Ps 84:2, "My heart (libbee) and my flesh sing for joy to the living God."
2. Of one's own mind: In Num 16:28 Moses saying, "...I have not done them of my own mind (or heart) (milibbee)."
3. Inclinations, resolutions, and determinations of the will: Job 11:13 says, "If thou prepare thine heart (libbecha)."
4. Moral character: In Ps 17:3, "Thou has tried my heart (libbee)."
5. And as the seat of the emotions and passions, numerous passages: In Ps 37:4, "And he shall give thee the desires of thine heart (libbecha)."

As we all know, the heart is also the seat of love.

#### **Life, Origin:**

before 900; Middle English lif Old English līf; with Dutch lijf, German Leib Old Norse líf body;

#### **Live, Origin:**

before 900; Middle English liven, Old English lifian, libban; with Dutch leven, German leben, Old Norse lifa, Gothic liban

#### **Leave, Word Origin & History**

O.E. læfan "to let remain, remain, bequeath," from P.Gmc. \*laibijan O.Fris. leva leave," O.S. farlebid over"), causative of \*liban (cf. O.E. belifan, Ger. bleiben, Goth. bileiban "to remain"), from root \*laf- "remnant, what remains" (see life, live), from PIE \*lip-/\*leip-. The Gmc. root has only the sense "remain, continue," which also is in Gk. lipares "persevering, importunate." But this usually is regarded as a development from the primary PIE sense of "adhere, be sticky" (cf. Lith. lipti, O.C.S. lipet "to adhere," Gk. lipos "grease," Skt. rip-/lip- "to smear, adhere to." Seemingly contradictory meaning of "depart" (early 13c.) comes from notion of "to leave behind" (as in to leave the earth "to die;" to leave the field "retreat").

"permission," O.E. leafe, dat./acc. of leaf "permission," from W.Gmc. \*lauba, cognate with O.E. lief "dear," the original idea being "approval resulting from pleasure." See also love, believe. In military sense, it is attested from 1771.

#### **Leave Origin:**

before 900; Middle English leven, Old English lefan (causative formation from base of lāf remainder; see lave); cognate with Old High German leiban (compare German bleiben to remain), Old Norse leifa, Gothic -laibjan

#### **Lave Origin:**

before 1000; Middle English (**Scots**); Old English lāf; with Old High German leiba, Old Norse leif, Gothic laiba; to leave.

#### **From TWOT:**

Labab occurs as a denominative verb from labe ([Song 4:9](#)). Translated "ravished my heart" (KJV, RSV) and "made my heart to beat faster" (NASB). BDB suggests "encouraged." "Become intelligent" suits the single Niphal usage ([Job 11:12](#)).

labe, labab: Heart, understanding, mind (also used in idioms such as "to set the heart upon" meaning "to think about" or "to want").

	Liebe	love
	lieben	to love
<b>N-Germanic</b>		
Old Norse:	lof	praise
	lofa, lofað	to praise; allow, permit
Old Icelandic:	ljúfr	lief
Icelandic:	leyfa	to permit
	leyfi	leave
	ljúfr	lief
	or-lof	leave
<b>E-Germanic</b>		
Gothic:	ga-laubeins	belief
	ga-láubjan	to believe
	liufs/liubs	lief
<b>Italic</b>		
Latin:	libet/lubet, libēre/lubēre	to please, be lief
	libido	libido
New Latin:	libido, libidinis	passion, sexual desire
<b>Baltic</b>		
Lithuanian:	liaupsė	praising
<b>Slavic</b>		
Old Church Slavonic:	ljubiti, ljubljš, ljubiši	to love
<b>Albanian</b>		
Albanian:	laps	to wish, want
<b>Indic</b>		
Sanskrit:	lúbhyati	to feel strong desire

Concrete meanings of labe referred to the internal organ and to analogous physical locations. However, in its abstract meanings, "heart" became the richest biblical term for the totality of man's inner or immaterial nature. In biblical literature it is the most frequently used term for man's immaterial personality functions as well as the most inclusive term for them since, in the Bible, virtually every immaterial function of man is attributed to the "heart."

Very few usages of labe refer to concrete, physical meanings. The death accounts of Nabal ([1 Sam 25:37](#)) and Joram ([2 Kings 9:24](#)) likely refer to the physical organ. The physical organ defined the location of Aaron's breastplate ([Ex 28:29](#)). [Ps 38:9](#) probably refers to the beating of the physical organ. Physical "innerness" is expressed by "heart." The deeps congealed "in the heart of" the sea ([Ex 15:8](#)) and the fires of Sinai rose "to the heart of" Heaven ([Deut 4:11](#)). The usage of "heart" for a divinely given vital principle may best fit [Job 34:14-15](#) ("if he take back to himself the heart he gave," writer's paraphrase).

By far the majority of the usages of labe refer either to the inner or immaterial nature in general or to one of the three traditional personality functions of man; emotion, thought, or will.

In referring to the inner nature, labe may contrast some relatively obscure or less visible aspect of man's nature with the more public side of his being. It may be regarded as an inner reflection of the outer man ([Prov 27:19](#); RSV "mind"). Dream consciousness may be meant when the heroine's "heart" was awake though her body slept in the Song of Songs ([Song 5:2](#)). Statements such as "Why does your heart carry you away?" ([Job 15:12](#)) contrast the heart with the remainder of the person. However, in other contexts, "heart" expresses the totality of a man's nature and character, both inner and outer ([1 Kings 8:23](#); [Ps 9:1](#) [H\* 2]).

Closely related to the above is the usage of ləb as an emphatic personal term. The plagues are sent, not just upon Pharaoh, but upon Pharaoh's heart ([Ex 9:14](#)). Thus, Jacob's stealing of Laban's heart might emphasize Laban as the object of Jacob's actions rather than Jacob's subtlety ([Gen 31:20](#); cf. RSV, "Jacob outwitted Laban"). Similarly, the breastplate of judgment on Aaron's heart may emphasize Aaron as the bearer of judgment as well as a bodily location ([Ex 28:29](#)). A variation of this usage is "heart" as reflexive: "Refresh your hearts" for "Refresh yourselves" ([Gen 18:5](#)) and "strengthen your heart" for "strengthen yourself (with food)" ([Judg 19:5](#)).

The whole spectrum of emotion is attributed to the heart. Examples of positive emotions are the following: Hannah's heart rejoiced ([1 Sam 2:1](#)) as should the hearts of those who seek the Lord ([1 Chron 16:10](#)). Love may be centered in the heart, as when Delilah complained that Samson's heart was not with her ([Judg 16:15](#)). Absalom gained for himself the loyalty of the Hebrew nation by stealing their hearts ([2 Sam 15:6](#)). The joyful excitement from the news that Joseph was alive made Jacob's heart faint ([Gen 45:26](#)). Reception of comfort is seated in the heart as in the idiom "to speak to the heart" ([Gen 34:3](#); [Isa 40:2](#)) for "to comfort."

As for negative emotions, grief is "evil of heart" ([Neh 2:2](#); RSV "sadness of heart"). David's regret or bad conscience at cutting Saul's garment is expressed as "his heart struck him" ([1 Sam 24:6](#); cf. [2 Sam 24:10](#)). God's regret at creating man is centered in God's heart ([Gen 6:6](#)). The broken heart accompanies being oppressed ([Ps 34:18](#)). Contempt ([2 Sam 6:16](#)), envy ([Prov 23:17](#)), and anger ([Prov 19:3](#)) are all functions of the heart.

Idioms relating the heart to fear and bravery are so numerous as to deserve separate treatment. Fear is expressed as follows: The heart may "go out" or "leave" ([Gen 42:28](#); KJV, RSV, "fail"); it may "fall" ([1 Sam 17:32](#); RSV, "fail"). To remove courage is to hinder the heart ([Num 32:7,9](#)). Fear occurs when the heart "deserts" its owner ([Ps 40:12](#) [H\* 13]; KJV, "fails") or "melts" ([Josh 14:7](#)). Trembling of heart may represent emotions ranging from the complete demoralization of God's people under judgment ([Deut 28:65](#); cf. [1 Sam 28:5](#)) to Eli's anxiety over the welfare of the ark of God ([1 Sam 4:13](#)). On the other hand the "heart of a lion" speaks of courage ([2 Sam 17:10](#)).

Thought functions may be attributed to the heart. In such cases it is likely to be translated as "mind" or "understanding." To "set the

Liver		
Family/Language	Indo-European Reflex(es)	Gloss
<b>English</b>		
Old English:	lifer	liver
Middle English:	liver	liver
English:	liver	liver
<b>W-Germanic</b>		
Dutch:	lever	liver
Old High German:	leb(a)ra/libera/libara	liver
German:	Leber	liver
<b>N-Germanic</b>		
Old Norse:	lifr	liver
Icelandic:	lifr	liver
Danish:	lever	liver
Swedish:	lever	liver
<b>Baltic</b>		
Old Prussian:	iagno	liver
Lithuanian:	yāknoš	liver
Latvian:	akna	liver
<b>Anatolian</b>		
Hittite:	lissa-	liver

<b>Armenian</b>		
Armenian:	leard	liver

### German and Teutonic Cognates

In German *leib* means "body," "belly," and "womb," with the sense centered on the inner anatomy. Certainly, a clear and close phonetic and semantic relationship to Hebrew *labe*.

The German *leib* and *liebe* derive from the same Teutonic source as English "live," "life," "love," and "liver" = "the inner part." OHG had *lib* = "life." OHG and Gothic also had *luba* and *lubo* = "love." These related forms all come out of that Hebrew *labe*, with inflectional shifts from "b" in *lub*, to "f" in *lof*, to "v" in *love*.

Danger for life and limb: Gefahr für Leib und Leben.

More curiously, in German, with a reversal of the vowels, *liebe* means "love." As an adjective *lieb* means "dear, nice, and kind." There are numerous German inflectional variations, with additive words, for example *liebchen* = "sweetheart." *Liebhabe* = "have love," or "be fond of." A more curious form is *liebhaber* = "lover," or "beau," a "heart companion." The curiosity comes from Hebrew. *Haber*<sup>2270</sup>, known also in Assyrian as *abaru* = "friend," denotes a joining together. In Ps 94:20 *haber* is used as "to be allied with." It also means "company," "association," and "companion." It is translated as "companion" in Ps 119:63. Literally, in Hebrew *labe haber* means "heart companion." This is one of the more profound near identity between words and sounds found in German and Hebrew, true cognates.

heart to" may mean to "pay attention to" ([Ex 7:23](#)) or to "consider important" ([2 Sam 18:32](#)). Creative thought is a heart function. Wicked devices originate in the heart ([Gen 6:5](#)). The RSV translates "which came upon Solomon's heart" as "all that Solomon had planned" ([2 Chron 7:11](#)).

Wisdom and understanding are seated in the heart. The "wise heart" ([1 Kings 3:12](#); RSV, "wise mind") and "wise of heart" ([Prov 16:23](#)) are mentioned. This idiom can be so strongly felt that "heart" virtually becomes a synonym for such ideas as "mind" ([2 Chron 9:23](#); RSV) or "sense" ([Prov 11:12](#); RSV). The heart functions in perception and awareness as when Elisha's heart (i.e. Elisha's perceptive nature; RSV "spirit") went with Gehazi ([2 Kings 5:26](#)). As the seat of thought and intellect, the heart can be deluded ([Isa 44:20](#); RSV "mind").

The heart is the seat of the will. A decision may be described as "setting" the heart ([2 Chron 12:14](#)). "Not of my heart" expresses "not of my will" ([Num 16:28](#)). The "hearts" of the Shechemites inclined to follow Abimelech ([Judg 9:3](#)). Removal of the decision-making capacity is described as hardening the heart ([Ex 10:1](#); [Josh 11:20](#)). Closely connected to the preceding is the heart as the seat of moral responsibility. Righteousness is "integrity of heart" ([Gen 20:5](#)). Moral reformation is to "set one's heart aright" ([Job 11:13](#)). The heart is described as the seat of moral evil ([Jer 17:9](#)).