

Adaptable for Translation: Deuteronomy 6.5 in the Synoptic Gospels and Beyond

A. Introduction

James Sanders, at the beginning of an essay key to understanding much of his approach to Biblical interpretation, has written: “...hermeneutics must be viewed as the midterm of the axis which lies between stability and adaptability.”¹ The same thing could be said of Biblical translation. Those who have either studied Bible translation or have tried their hand at it realize sooner or later that no matter what kind of translation technique is being employed, the translator must first interpret his text before translating it. One of the more interesting places to view this double phenomenon of interpretation and adaptive translation is in the New Testament treatment of the Old Testament² via its various forms-- Hebrew Bible, Septuagint, Targums, and Midrash. Sanders has made this subject a matter of frequent research, and his fundamental approach to the matter informs what follows. The other methodological system being employed is modern translation theory, as developed by E. A. Nida and others over the last fifty years or so. The results are not so much surprising as is the fact that despite a general agreement among both Biblical and translation scholars for some time about the matters involved, their insights have yet to be applied in key cases in modern translations of the Bible into English. One such case is Deuteronomy 6.5 and its citation in the NT.

The well-known verse from Deuteronomy 6.5 is quoted in all three Synoptic Gospels, with some slight variations. These variations, I shall argue, show that the NT authors not only were aware of the OT meaning of the quote, but were also aware of subtle shifts in the semantic domains between key words of this text in Biblical Hebrew and koine Greek. The variations indicate the attempt, not altogether successful, to make the necessary adjustments in the translations from Hebrew to Greek. In understanding what the Gospel writers were trying to do, we can not only recover the meaning of the OT and NT versions of the text, but also gain an appreciation for the antiquity of at least some principles of functional equivalence translation.³ Unfortunately, modern translators into English (as well as more than a few commentators) have not followed the logical consequences of what the NT authors did, but instead render all the texts in question rather literally. This has led to a history of misinterpretation of this OT text and its translation in the NT. The result has been a sentimental or emotional understanding of Deuteronomy 6.5 and its NT citations in modern translations, rather than a focus on loyalty and obedience. The latter, I will argue, is the true force of the words in Deuteronomy as well as what the NT writers, given their own limitations in translation, were trying to preserve. The basic outlines of the problem and its resolution are not a matter of much discussion or debate in either biblical studies or translation theory. Still, readers of modern English translations at least are left with the impression that loving God with all one's heart is something more akin to romantic involvement than to loyal commitment.

¹ “Adaptable for Life,” Published in *Magnalia Dei: The Mighty Acts of God. Essays on the Bible and Archeology in Memory of G. Ernest Wright*. ed. by F. M. Cross, W. E. Lemke, and P. D. Miller (Garden City: Doubleday, 1976) 531-60.

² “Old Testament” instead of “Hebrew Bible” will be used throughout this paper, to avoid having to distinguish between Hebrew and Greek forms of the text where it is not significant to do so.

³ Cf. a similar observation about the translational strategies of the writers of the Synoptic Gospels made by P. Ellingworth in *The Bible Translator* (TBT 34/4 [1983] 401-407). Unfortunately, the suggestions for translation made in the present paper will most likely only be accepted in areas where there is no existing translation as yet, since the texts in question are otherwise so well known, and thus difficult to change, at least for now.

B. The Text of the Hebrew Bible

1. Analysis

Deuteronomy 6.5:

וְאָהַבְתָּ אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל-לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל-מְאֹדְךָ

...and you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. ⁴

This verse is interesting for interpreters in that it forms the last part of the Shema of Deuteronomy 6.4-5, and the first part of the recital of the (two) greatest commandment(s) of NT-era Judaism according to the Synoptic tradition. Thus it never really stands on its own, but must be understood against the background of the affirmation of the uniqueness of Yahweh (in Deuteronomy) on the one hand and the command to love one's neighbor (illustrated by the Parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke) on the other. Most commentators correctly note that both in the Hebrew Bible and the NT, the point of this text is holistic, not atomistic. Thus while analyzing the internal structure of the text may teach us something about the translation principles of the NT authors and redactors, we should never lose sight of the meaning of the text as a whole.⁵

The concept of loving God with all one's לֵב (and sometimes נַפֶּשׁ as well) is common enough, though this wording is restricted to Deuteronomy.⁶ A Deuteronomistic note about King Josiah in 2 Kings 23.25 almost quotes our text verbatim, but with an important change: אָהַב (love) becomes שׁוּב לֵ (turn to). Yet what is an apparent shift in meaning is entirely in accord with Deuteronomy itself, since in 10.12, 11.13, , et al. the commandment to love God and obey him occurs with that of servicing (עָבַד) him with heart and soul, and in 30.10 obedience is coupled with turning to God. Thus love and obedience seem to be nearly identical terms in these contexts, while “turn to” is of course repentance, itself a form of initial obedience. Thus it would appear that Deuteronomy, while unique in using the wording of loving God, uses אָהַב to mean “demonstrate love/commitment,” that is, loyalty or obedience.

This usage for אָהַב is backed up by ancient Near Eastern texts. Even in the rest of the Hebrew Bible, אָהַב is not uniquely an emotional word, but is used of preference (“Jacob have I loved...”) and especially in cases of treaties.⁷ Thus the meaning in 1 Kings 5.1 (5.15 in Hebrew), when the text says that Hiram loved David, is likely loyalty, and not (at least primarily) love as an emotion or sentiment. This is substantiated by the language of treaties from the ancient Near East,

⁴ Unless otherwise noted, the RSV will be used throughout this paper.

⁵ B. M. Newman and P. C. Stine (*A Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew* [New York: UBS, 1988] 716) give a succinct version of this argument. They go too far, however, in saying that “...no distinction can be drawn between the meaning of the individual terms.” The holistic thrust in both OT and NT is achieved by the bringing together of such an all-encompassing list. The terms are not synonyms elsewhere, and while it may be true that “Any one of them would have been sufficient...,” that is due to the discourse (“You shall love God with all your...”) and not to the general nature of these terms. Their suggestion for translation, however, is absolutely on the mark, except that they still use “love” instead of “commit” or “be loyal”. Cf. also among others Joseph Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke (X-XXIV)* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1981) 878-879.

⁶ Cf. *The New Jerusalem Bible* note on this verse (*The New Jerusalem Bible* [New York: Doubleday, 1985] 233).

⁷ *The NIV Study Bible*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985) 320, note on Joshua 22.5: “In the ancient Near East, love was also a political term, indicating true-hearted loyalty to one’s king.”

where the vassal is to proclaim his love for his lord in no uncertain terms, even when there can be no doubt that there is no love lost between the parties in question.⁸

Here William Moran and others have written a series of closely related articles, starting from the idea that, as noted above, אהב = loyalty in Deuteronomy. These articles make the point that the popular idea that Deuteronomy was influenced by Hosea's concept of filial love between God and humankind not only starts with God's love for humans and incorrectly extrapolates to humans' love for God, but in fact has the matter somewhat backwards from the start. It is Hosea who is influenced by the covenantal understanding of the relationship so apparent in Deuteronomy, though of course he makes it his own. The point is, for those who take this view, that this human love for God in Deuteronomy can be commanded, and thus cannot easily be understood as primarily emotional at all. For how does one command a feeling?⁹

J. Gerald Janzen has gone further, seeing אחד ("one") in the opening verse of the Shema (Deut. 6.4) as referring to the moral integrity of God, and thus his faithfulness, rather than the more common interpretations of this word as radically monotheistic or specifying Yahweh's unique character. This Janzen accomplishes by means of a chiasmic comparison of Deut. 6.4-5 with Jeremiah 32.38-41, in which the people will be given one heart (the ability to be faithful), and it is Yahweh who will do them good (that is, love them) with all his heart and all his soul.¹⁰

Since below we will critique modern interpretations of this passage (especially in relation to translation), it is only fair to recognize that at least two major commentators on Deuteronomy fundamentally agree with the above interpretation and cite it in their commentaries. A. D. H. Mayes states not only that אהב in this context means obedience, but that לב means mind and נפש represent emotions or desire (see our discussion below, which supports this as well). More recently Moshe Weinfeld equates אהב with loyalty and allegiance, לב with mind, and נפש with a willingness to die for the sake of the covenantal relationship. These are important contrary voices in what has otherwise been a reinforcement in English translation tradition of the force of the text as emotional, rather than as signifying loyalty and commitment.¹¹ This mismatch of semantic domains is due to an over-simplified equation of key terms in Hebrew, Greek and English, but the situation can no longer be accepted. In fact, the writers of the New Testament knew better.

The argument is not that אהב does not have an emotional component in many of its uses in the Hebrew Bible, or even in Deuteronomy, but rather that when speaking of people loving God, and especially with their hearts, something more like loyalty makes more sense. But the meaning of words cannot be determined in isolation. We must look at the rest of the text to see if the above meaning of אהב can be justified.

⁸ D. J. McCarthy *Treaty and Covenant* (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1978) notes that the Mesopotamian king, in dealing with Egypt, "demands love and he calls Pharaoh his brother."

⁹ W. L. Moran, "The Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy," *CBQ* 25 (1963), 77-87; N. Lohfink, "Hate and Love in Osee 9.15," *CBQ* 25 (1963), 417; D. J. McCarthy, *CBQ* 27 (1963), 144-147; S. D. McBride, "The Yoke of the Kingdom," *Interpretation* 27 (1973) 273-306; P. D. Miller, "The Way of Torah," *PSB* 8 (3, 1987), 17-27.

¹⁰ J. G. Janzen, "On the Most Important Word in the Shema" (Deuteronomy VI 4-5), *VT* 37, 3 (1987) 280-300.

¹¹ A. D. H. Mayes *Deuteronomy*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987) 156, 176; M. Weinfeld *Deuteronomy 1-11* (New York: Doubleday, 1991) 338, 351.

It is not אהב alone which creates the problem for modern interpreters, but its combination with לב. For a modern English speaker, to love with all one's heart is usually nothing other than romantic love. It is hard to imagine saying to anyone "I love you with all my heart," and meaning anything other than romantic love. In fact, this usually indicates a situation between lovers.¹² While "God" as a object necessarily changes the focus of the meaning away from romantic love, "loving God with all your heart" in English (or in a great number of other modern languages) still falls well within the domain of sentiment and feeling more than that of loyalty or commitment.

Hans Walter Wolff¹³ has documented the fact that לב ("heart") is not the seat of emotion in Hebrew as it is in English, but of intentionality. It reflects human thoughts directed towards the future, in planning, willing or wishing. What Wolff does not go on to say, but is surely an important expansion of his explication, is that לב may well never be literal (meaning the organ of the body) in the Hebrew Bible. The one possible exception is the case of Nabal in 1 Samuel 25.37, where his heart is said to have died within him, referring perhaps to a stroke or a heart attack. Yet even here there is doubt, since the next verse says that ten days later Yahweh smote Nabal, and he died. Thus the first instance could just as easily be describing deep discouragement or depression. Interestingly, the NT does not use καρδια in a literal sense either, as we shall see below.¹⁴

Furthermore, אהב and לב are never used together in Hebrew outside of the usages in Deuteronomy referring to loving God. More importantly, only rarely can one find any connection between even the concept of love and the heart in the Hebrew Bible (cf. Song of Solomon 4.9 "you have ravished my heart..."). In Deuteronomy, while the human לב can stand for emotions, unless we count the text under discussion (and related ones) those emotions are never love or compassion, but discouragement (1.28 "melt"), pride, (8.12, 17.20 "lifted up"), stubbornness (15.7 "hardened"), sadness (15.10 "grieved"), anger (19.6 "hot"), fear (20.8 "faint"), or shock/surprise (28.28 "astonish"). Yet even these texts are fewer and less significant than those which show the לב as the center of intentionality (planning, willing, wishing). In Deuteronomy alone, outside the text(s) under consideration people consider in their hearts (4.39, 8.5), say/speak/congratulate in their hearts (7.17, 8.17, 9.4, 29.19), are deceived in their hearts (11.16), ponder/memorize in their hearts (11.18), think in their hearts (15.9), and perceive in their hearts (29.4).¹⁵ The richness of idioms connected with לב, including a number of examples denoting emotions, coupled with the lack of any idioms with לב denoting love

¹² Of course this is a generalization regarding the use of heart in English, and counter-examples can be given, but only if we change the environment and thus the idiom (e.g. lack of enthusiasm - "his heart was not in it," loyalty - "true-hearted" (used in NIV note to Joshua 22.5), etc.). Cf. A. Nygren *Agape and Eros* (London: SPCK, 1953) who among others has studied the issue from a more philosophical / historical perspective. His study in general supports the thesis of this paper, though more from the point of view of explaining how it is we have derived our own modern views of love. Furthermore, he stops at the Reformation, which he considers to have solved the problem as it had existed up to that time.

¹³ H. W. Wolff *The Anthropology of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974).

¹⁴ J. Louw and E. A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: UBS, 1989) vol. I 321.

¹⁵ One never finds, for example, as in Mayan languages, that the heart "hurts" (= love), or is "delicious" (= happiness). If Janzen (above) is correct, "one" meaning moral integrity or faithfulness within a relationship is correct, it is like the Mayan "one-hearted" (= solidarity, used for trust and faith as well). After such a list, the very idea of semantic domains being applicable to productive metaphors is called into question. Nevertheless "superdomains" or ranges of meaning can still be mapped, and in the end, it is the fact that love and heart never combine in any text (unless the premise of this paper is in error) to mean emotional attachment that is significant.

(no “tender” or “delicate” or “soft” לב, for example) seem to point to a lack of connection between לב and the concept of love in general.¹⁶

2. Modern Interpreters

One could almost say that for this discussion, given the semantic domain of לב we need to understand what אהב means to define it and that given the semantic domain of אהב we need to understand what לב means to define it. Yet the rest of the context in cases of loving God (with heart/soul, usually) invariably points to commitment (“obey, serve, walk in the ways of, turn to”) rather than emotion. Samuel Terrien has translated the text accurately if not elegantly:

“...And thou shalt love Yahweh, thy Elohim, with thy whole mind,
and with thy whole drive for self-preservation,
and with the “muchness” of thy whole being”¹⁷

Terrien goes on to say (in a footnote) that the words which are usually translated “heart” (לב) “soul” (נפש), and “might” (גבורה), “...designate aspects of the human person which do not correspond exactly to English notions.”¹⁸ His translation reflects that belief, and thus it sounds strange.

Translators of modern versions intended for audiences with a history of knowledge of Scripture usually do not have the luxury of making very strange translations and then explaining them in a commentary, as much as they would like to at times. Yet Terrien makes an important point. Accuracy at times will be at odds with “naturalness,” or put another way, the harder reading is to be preferred at the beginning of the translation process, though the eventual goal should of course be a readable text in the target language. Fortunately, in this case the translator of the Hebrew text has some good natural-sounding equivalents in English. It is a matter of finishing what Terrien began.

Though נפש (usually inaccurately translated “soul” in English) is not directly a part of the problem being discussed at this point, it can serve as part of the solution.¹⁹ As is well known, it often can be best translated as “person,” or “self,”

¹⁶ Recently Rolf Knierim has taken Wolff’s analysis considerably further with regard to the key terms for our own discussion, heart and soul. Knierim’s argument, which is really about spirituality in the OT, seems at first like the traditional one, in that he does not stake out a semantic space for heart as volitional-intellectual as opposed to emotive. He goes on to describe the role of the heart as fundamentally different than heretofore understood, as he locates the central animating force within the individual as רוח, or spirit, which is given to humans (and all creation) from God, and has a specific content (e.g. “wisdom”), which acts upon or in the heart in a number of different ways. This discussion is of great value and will provide a new starting-point for any discussions involving these terms. Even so, the terms of this particular discussion are specific enough (especially with regard to translation) to remain valid even in light of Knierim’s thesis (see R. Knierim “The Spirituality of the Old Testament,” in *The Task of Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995) 269-297. More relevant to the discussion here are Knierim’s observations (in oral discussion) that the idea in Deuteronomy is that the heart is capable of love for God (“the word is near to you”), while Jeremiah, on the one hand and the NT, on the other, are much more critical of this capacity, and must solve the problem in more radical ways (“I will give you a new heart,” and “After that you will receive the Holy Spirit”). Still, “love” in these context may well be better understood as loyalty than sentimental love.

¹⁷ S. Terrien *The Elusive Presence* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978) 201.

¹⁸ Terrien, *Presence*, 223.

¹⁹ Of course it will enter into the discussion of the NT use of this text. It may be the least well translated of all the terms, given the history of “soul” in subsequent interpretation. It is of course a bit untidy for modern translators that “soul” is the center of desire both in Hebrew and Greek, and even of affection in Greek, but has not yet in either language become what “heart” is for English speakers—the center of romantic love.

depending on the context. In some contexts, including Deut. 6.5, it should probably be taken as the vital force, or the center of emotional intensity or desire. Thus it would most naturally be rendered in these cases as “heart” (or “self”) in English.²⁰ That leaves לב free to be translated as it should be, “mind.” Interestingly, the translators of the *Good News Bible* followed this course in 2 Kings 23.25 but not in Deut. 6.5, et. al..²¹ The problem for the *GNB* translators was the word “love,” which they were unwilling to change to “show loyalty to” (or some such), and thus could not bring themselves to say “love God with all your mind...” Interestingly, this is precisely what the Gospel writers did when they quoted the verse in the NT.

Therefore a possible translation would be “Be loyal to God with all your mind, heart (or self) and strength.” The last of the terms in this list, נפש, is rarely translated as a noun, as it is here (with the bound possessive pronoun), but is usually adverbial. Here it can be translated as such with a superlative force. Thus for the last part “...and do it as strongly as you can/completely” may be closer to the force intended.²² As we shall see below, at least one of the NT writers was apparently aware of this possibility as well.

But many modern commentators, and especially translators of modern versions, have been slow to make what should be by now the obvious equivalent translations of לב as “mind” and נפש as “heart” in texts such as these, much less recognizing the very possible adverbial/superlative force of נפש as “strongly/completely.” This is in spite of the fact that the covenantal (i.e. juridical/treaty) background for humankind's love of God is nearly universally recognized. A few examples will suffice.

The Jerome Biblical Commentary explicitly attributes to Deuteronomy the addition of emotional depth to “...a basically juridical expression.”²³ While this might well be so, *JBC* allows modern readers to think (as they most certainly would) that this emotional depth comes from loving God with the heart (לב), while in fact that is the juridical part, and any emotional content comes with loving God with the soul or self (נפש).

Both Peake's *Commentary* and the *Oxford Annotated Bible* on the RSV (cf. NRSV also) explain in their notes what the terms in Deut. 6.5 mean, but are in fact commenting on translations which contradict their notes.²⁴ If לב is mind and נפש

²⁰ Even so heart should not have a primarily sentimental force here. It works well only if we take heart in the sense in which it is used in the idiom “his/her heart was/was not in it.” This shows how close this meaning of “heart” is to “self,” and the argument can be made that “self” may actually be best in some of these contexts in English as well.

²¹ *Good News Bible* (New York: ABS, 1976).

²² *A Hebrew and English Lexicon*, F. Brown, et. al. eds. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1978) 547, and M. McNamara, *Targum and Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972) 125: “*Me'od*, in the sense found in the *Shema* is used only in Deut 6.5 and 2 Kgs 23.25. Elsewhere the word occurs only in adverbial phrases, with the meaning of ‘greatly.’” Cf. also G. H. Davies, “Deuteronomy” in *Peake's Commentary on the Bible* M. Black and H. H. Rowley, eds. (Hong Kong: Nelson, 1962) 273: “...**might** is a metaphor of the superlative, completely.” This would make an even more natural translation as follows: “Be completely loyal to God, with all your mind and heart.” Of course mind (heart) could be rendered as “be committed to,” and heart (soul) could be rendered “directing your feelings toward,” for the following: “Be completely loyal and committed to God, directing all your feelings toward him..” This last is the most clear, but loses all the imagery.

²³ J. Blekinsopp, “Deuteronomy” in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*. Brown, Fitzmyer, and Murphy, eds. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1968) 107.

²⁴ Davies, “Deuteronomy” 273. B. W. Anderson in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* RSV edition. H. G. May and B. Metzger, eds. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973) 223. B. W. Anderson in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* NRSV edition. B. Metzger and R. Murphy, eds. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991) 226-227.

is heart or self (emotional center) and strength is adverbial/superlative (“strongly/completely”) in English, as many commentators have recognized, the terms should be rendered thus (at least in some English translation) directly.

Gerhard Von Rad compares the love required here to that between a son and his father, and cites Deut. 8.5 and 14.1 in support. The basis of the comparison in 8.5, however, is discipline, not love, and in 14.1 “sons” should not be understood (even metaphorically) as biological, but rather as is often the case in the Hebrew Bible, as “servants, followers, disciples.”²⁵

The NIV Study Bible, in its note on Deut. 6.5, indicates that the love spoken of in this verse must be total, and in so doing follows most commentators. It does even better in its note on Joshua 22.5, where it states that אָהַב can be a political term (as we saw above). The same note, however, speaks of loving God from the heart in a way which would most naturally be understood as sentimental or emotional.²⁶

Of course there are a number who have seen it otherwise (see discussion above), but this understanding as yet is not reflected in any major translation in English, nor quite possibly in any other major modern translation either. All of this sets the background for what happens to the text in translation in the NT (though historically it may well have been the reverse for translations subsequent to the closing of the Christian canon). The argument being made here is that while the writers of the Synoptics certainly would never have discussed it in the terms of the above discussion, they knew what the semantic ranges were for the key terms in question. But perhaps unfortunately for later translators, they had somewhat limited resources for dealing with it in translation. Nevertheless, as we shall see, they did make adjustments within the parameters available to them. It is now time for modern translators of the Bible to follow through with the logical consequences of such adjustments and do the same thing for their readers.

C. The “Afterlife” of Deuteronomy 6.5 in Biblical tradition

1. The LXX

Our Deuteronomy text takes a turn in subsequent Biblical tradition when the Synoptic Gospels unanimously quote and adapt it in the NT. This adaptation turns out to be significant evidence for our present argument. Still, no discussion of the subject of Old Testament quotes in the NT is in order without a first look at the Septuagint. In looking at the LXX version of Deut. 6.5, the significant thing for our discussion is that the best textual witnesses have *διανοια* (mind) instead of *καρδια* (heart) for the first term of the list.²⁷ In fact, it has been suggested that this was the source of the subsequent

²⁵ G. Von Rad, *Deuteronomy* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1966) 63-64. This in no way is meant to deny the importance of the imagery on the father-son (or daughter) relationship with reference to God and Israel elsewhere, but those cases distinctively use the direct singular metaphor son (e.g. Ex. 4.22, Hos. 11.1) or daughter (Jer. 3.19) for Israel.

²⁶ E. S. Kalland and K. L. Barker, “Deuteronomy,” 254, and A. Lewis, “Joshua,” 320, in *The NIV Study Bible*.

²⁷ As a matter of fact, *διανοια* is generally considered to be the original LXX text of Deut. 6.5. See for e.g. J. W. Weavers *Text History of the Greek Deuteronomy* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978) 59, and *Notes on the Greek Text of Deuteronomy* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995) 115. Weavers sees the three terms in the LXX (*διανοια*, *ψυχη*, and *δυναμις*) as corresponding fairly precisely to their Hebrew counterparts (לב, נפש, and אִזְרַח) and that these are to be understood in English as mind, self and strength, respectively. See following note.

Markan (and thus the other Synoptic) insertion of “mind” into the list (see below).²⁸ Be that as it may, the LXX is significant because it uses both *καρδια* (usually) and *διανοια* (more rarely) to translate the Hebrew *לב*. Thus the NT authors were not operating in a vacuum, but already had the help of the LXX translators in understanding the force of *לב* in Hebrew.²⁹

The Greek lexicons list *καρδια* associated with love in Greek literature, but also list mind as a secondary meaning. Thus there seems to be a move away from the Hebrew semantic domain for *לב* as meaning thoughts and feelings but never love to *καρδια* (the literal equivalent of *לב* in Greek) meaning feelings and especially love and also thoughts as well.³⁰

2. New Testament Era Usage

In the NT the citations are the Synoptic cases we will deal with below, except for the usage “to be/have a place in the heart” (2 Cor 7.3; Phil. 1.7). The lexicons also list *ψυχη* (usually translated as “soul” in English, as the equivalent of *נפש*) as occurring with various Greek terms for love to mean affection both in the NT (1 Th. 2.8) and in other contemporary Greek literature.³¹ Moulton and Milligan do not list *καρδια*, but agree with the other lexicographers that *ψυχη* is the seat of feeling and desire (among other things), for the Greek-speaker of the NT era.³² All this indicates that a semantic shift has occurred in the text of Deut. 6.5 as it was translated from Hebrew to Greek, from intentionality (*לב*) and desire (in a self-preservation sense- *נפש*) to feelings and thoughts (*καρδια*), and desire and affection (*ψυχη*). This of course is what the NT authors were aware of, and most likely why they added “mind” to the quote from Deut. 6.5. In English (and other languages with similar domains for “heart”) the shift becomes even greater, and further corrections in translation are required.

At this point another table, indicating the shifts in semantic domain regarding centers of thinking and feeling in particular, is in order. “Love” (*αγαπαω*) enters into the picture only insofar as it is necessary for this argument to show that it can be used in NT Greek in the way that I have argued it is used in the text(s) in question in the Old Testament, that is, as demonstrating loyalty or commitment.

²⁸ This explanation fails to account for too much in the NT tradition, such as why *διανοια* was inserted where it was, or why Mark 12.33 uses *συνεσις* instead, or why Mark 12.33 can leave out “soul” and Matthew can leave out “strength” and Luke can follow a different order than Mark, whom he is supposedly following. Newman and Stine, *Matthew*, 716. They explain Matthew’s omission as “...a preference for the three-membered form of the Hebrew text.” This has simplicity in its favor, but lacks explanatory power. On the other hand, the Göttingen LXX prefers *dianoia* to *kardia* in Deut. 6.5, showing the strength of the textual tradition at that point. In any case, the NT authors were doubtless aware of a multiplicity of text-forms. Weinfeld recently (*Deuteronomy*) as well as P. M.-J. Lagrange earlier in *Évangile selon Saint Marc* (Paris: Gabalda, 1929) have preferred the LXX text of B with *διανοια* here.

²⁹ E. C. Blackman, “A Study of the Words “Thought,” “Mind,” and “Heart” *TBT* 4/1 (1953) 36-40; R. Bratcher and E. A. Nida, *A Translators handbook on the Gospel of Mark* (New York, UBS, 1961) 383; V. Taylor *The Gospel according to St. Mark* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1966) 486. My colleague Harold Scanlin has pointed out to me that the actual LXX *לב*-translation count is 709 for *καρδια* to 51 for *διανοια* (taken from E. C. dos Santos *An Expanded Hebrew Index for the Hatch-Redpath Concordance to the Septuagint* (Jerusalem: Dugith, 1973).

³⁰ *A Greek-English Lexicon*, H. G. Liddell, et. al. eds. (Oxford, Clarendon, 1940) 877b.

³¹ *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich, eds. (Chicago, Univ. of Chicago, 1957) 405a; 901b.

³² *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*, J. Moulton and G. Milligan, eds., (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1930) 699a.

Table 2 - Semantic Domains

	Thinking	Feeling
OT Hebrew	בֵּן	בֵּן - feelings, but not love? נפש - desire, self
NT Era ³³	διανοια	ψυχη - desire, affection
Greek	καρδια	καρδια
English	mind - thoughts	heart - love

Nida and Louw's *Greek-English Lexicon Based on Semantic Domains* attempt to go beyond the standard lexicons for the study of such matters in NT Greek,. This resource allows one to quickly check the working hypothesis represented by Table 2. Both καρδια and ψυχη are listed on the same page, as “inner self, desire,” et. al., and for “heart” a note is added, mentioning the Hebrew Bible influence on the use of this word in the NT as “mind.”³⁴ Of course, if heart in the NT really could mean mind, there would have been no need for the Synoptic translators to add διανοια, listed unambiguously by the lexicon as “mind.” More interesting is the entry for “love” (αγαπαω). Here there are two entries, the first of which is love “...based on sincere appreciation and high regard...,” and the second of which is “to demonstrate or show one's love...” It is this second meaning which fits best in the Synoptic citations of Deut. 6.5, and is in general agreement with the usage outlined for “love” as loyalty or commitment above.³⁵ If final support were needed, Luke’s use of the Parable of the Good Samaritan as the definition of the kind of love involved in both commandments (the second is “like” the first) must be this kind of commitment in spite of what could only have been feelings of pity at best for a stranger and traditional enemy.³⁶

3. The Synoptic Translations

The text on Deut. 6.5 is arguably cited four times in the Synoptic Gospels, (with some variations), twice in Mark, and once each in parallel passages in Luke and Matthew. To set the following discussion in perspective, all four quotes are displayed in tabular form, alongside the text of Deut 6.5:

³³ Since one of the points being made in the paper is that the NT authors were adjusting their OT citation in order to accurately render the sense, the comparison is not between NT Greek and OT Hebrew, but between the Greek the NT writers were accustomed to hearing and using versus OT Hebrew. NT Greek itself, as has been amply demonstrated elsewhere, was highly Semiticized.

³⁴ Louw and Nida, *Lexicon*, vol. I, 321. Here the compilers note that καρδια never has a literal meaning in the NT either (see above discussion on בֵּן in this regard).

³⁵ Louw and Nida, *Lexicon*, vol. I, 293-294.

³⁶ Cf. C. Spicq *Agape in the New Testament* (St. Louis: Herder, 1963); V. P. Furnish *The Love Command in the New Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon 1972), who both make the point of the unity of the two commandments in the Synoptics, and point out that love in this context must be something like serve or obey.

Table 1 - Texts

Deut . 6.5	Mark 12.30	Mark 12.33	Luke 10.27	Matt. 22.37
...and you shall love (יְהוָה) the LORD your God	...and you shall love (αγαπαω) the Lord your God	...and to love (αγαπαω) him	You shall love (αγαπαω) the Lord your God	You shall love (αγαπαω) the Lord your God
with all your heart (כָּל)	with all your heart (καρδια)	with all the heart (καρδια)	with all your heart (καρδια)	with all your heart (καρδια)
and with all your soul (נַפְשִׁי)	and with all your soul (ψυχη)		and with all your soul (ψυχη)	and with all your soul (ψυχη)
	and with all your mind (διανοια)	and with all the understanding (συνεσις)	and with all your strength (ισχυς)	and with all your mind (διανοια)
and with all your might (כָּחַ))	and with all your strength (ισχυς)	and with all the strength (ισχυς)...	and with all your mind (διανοια)...	

Several things should be noted about the context of the OT citations in the Synoptics. As was mentioned above, the context for the Deut. 6.5 text is as the second part of the Shema, yet only Mark preserves this context. Furthermore, all three evangelists make the text a part of another complex unit comprised of Deut. 6.5 + Leviticus 19.18, namely, a combination apparently known to the Synoptic writers as the (two) greatest commandment(s). Finally, the evangelists differ somewhat on who speaks the words. Mark has what should be considered the original form of the citation in the Synoptics, not simply because he is generally believed to have written his Gospel first, but because the forms in Matthew and Luke can best be explained as using Mark 12.30 and 33 alternately. Dependence at this point has been notoriously difficult to show, possibly due to a complex dependence in which different aspects from one or another quote in Mark are used and combined creatively by Matthew and Luke³⁷ Mark has Jesus speak the two commandments (with the first in the full Shema-form as well), and the “scribe” paraphrastically repeats what Jesus says. Luke puts something closer to what Jesus says into the mouth of his “lawyer,” while Matthew, following Mark's 12.30 text even more closely than Luke (with the exception of the deletion of “strength”), keeps the words on the lips of Jesus.³⁸

That Luke is using Mark 12.33 as much as he is 12.30 is shown not only by the fact that he has the lawyer speak the text, but by the fact that he (with Mark 12.33 and against Mark 12.30 and Matthew) collapses the two commandments into one (note the ... at the end of the quotes in the table above), while Mark 12.30 and Matthew explicitly name a first and a second commandment, listing them in separate sentences. Matthew also elaborates by saying that the second is like the

³⁷ For example, in spite of the following analysis, there is the matter of the three versus four “tones,” which would point in the opposite direction for dependence. Cf. R. H. Gundry *The use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel* (Leiden: Brill, 1975) 22-24.

³⁸ That Matthew has a “lawyer” ask Jesus the initial question is not significant for this discussion, but is interesting in its own right for the Synoptic problem, particularly in view of the questionable nature of the term text-critically. It is likely that originally Matthew and Luke went their own ways with regard to this text even with regard to the identification of the questioner. Luke would have adjusted Mark's Jewish-sounding “scribe” to “lawyer,” with Matthew interpretively assigning the speaker to the Pharisees by anaphora (“one of them”). The existence of “lawyer” in Matthew's text would then be explained by secondary textual dependence on Luke (cf. B. M. Metzger *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (London: UBS, 1975) 59. That Matthew would blame the Pharisees for something the tradition he received did not fit his redactional pattern as well, as commentators of Matthew have noted.

first. Yet it is Luke who is most aware of the internal structure of the quotation, and refuses to insert “mind” into the list, adding it instead onto the end.

The striking thing in the table is that, except for the common use of the phrase to love God, the only other term common to all the quotations is *καρδια*. Beyond this, all the Synoptic quotes/paraphrases add a term equivalent to mind.³⁹ The apparent reason is that while *καρδια* (heart) covered a good deal of the emotional sphere, the NT writers wanted to make sure that their readers understood heart (*καρδια*) in an Hebrew Bible sense and not “...as the seat of feeling and passion...” as Liddell, Scott, and Jones list it in their lexicon.⁴⁰ To be sure, in that lexicon “love” is not explicitly listed among those feelings and passions, and the meaning mind is also listed (as meaning number three, after feelings and desire), but from a simple look at the lexical entries one notes a dramatic shift in the meaning of *לב* in the Hebrew of the Hebrew Bible on the one hand and in the corresponding meaning of *καρδια* in Greek leading up to and including the NT era.

The positioning of the term for mind or understanding between *καρδια* and *ισχυς* in both Markan quotes is also noteworthy. But that is putting the matter backwards, for what is noteworthy is the preservation of last position for *ισχυς* (= *באז*). Related to this is Matthew's omission of this element. What explains both of these seemingly diverse treatments of the term *באז* is its apparent adverbial/superlative force in the original Hebrew text, and an awareness on the part of the evangelists of this fact. Thus it belongs at the end, to modify the whole list (“and do it strongly/completely”), or it is regarded as superfluous (by Matthew) after such and all-encompassing grouping of terms.⁴¹

Only Luke, who as we noted above seems to be aware of the internal structure of the quote, puts the terms in the order they occur in Deut. 6.5, and adds *διανοια* at the end. This strategy, while divergent from that of the other evangelists, supports the contention that resources for dealing with quotes in translation were limited in the NT era. What is apparent in all of the different ways of dealing with the OT citation is that there was less freedom available to the ancient translator than there is today in terms of substitution of terms, and more freedom in terms of addition or deletion of terms. Thus the evangelists all add some term for mind, rather than substituting it for *καρδια*.

³⁹ Only Mark's scribe paraphrases the term, using *συνεσις* instead. At the same time, he omits *ψυχη* altogether, (the only one in the list to do so). This supports further the idea that *καρδια* in Greek could cover the emotional sphere, leaving *ψυχη* with no work to do.

⁴⁰ Liddell, *Lexicon*, 877b.

⁴¹ The switch from the LXX's *δυναμις* to *ισχυς* does not seem to have any special meaning.

D. Conclusion

Deuteronomy 6.5 has been often misunderstood due to the failure of any modern translation to translate the various terms of this verse precisely into English:

אָדָּב as “commit/be loyal to”	rather than “love.”
לֵב as “mind”	rather than “heart.”
נַפְשׁ as “desire,” or “heart,” or “self”	rather than “soul.”
בְּאֵד as “strongly/completely”	rather than “strength.”

A possible translation would be:

“...commit your minds and whole selves (or hearts) completely to Yahweh your God.⁴²

or perhaps:

“commit yourselves whole-heartedly to Yahweh your God.

The Synoptic translators tried to keep the force of the original as commitment by means of the addition of the term “mind,” or “understanding” (διανοια or συνησις) but failed to keep their texts from being interpreted sentimentally due to further semantic shifts between Greek and English. This was not so much their fault as the fault of subsequent translators who did not take sufficient notice of the differences in the meaning of “heart” in various languages. If modern translators make the adjustments in the Deuteronomy text taking into account their own modern target language semantic domains, however, the problem in the NT largely disappears. The loss would be that the NT writer's adjustments may be obscured thereby. In translation, the quote in the Synoptics might well collapse certain terms (e.g. for “heart,” “soul,” and “mind”) in the translation of the Deuteronomy text into English, as the suggested translations above indicate. There still might be some justification for stylistic variation between Mark 12.30 and 12.33, however, and Matthew would lack “completely” or its equivalent. It should be noted again that the limitations of translation of a “famous” text are such that not many modern translations would in fact be willing to attempt the above suggestions. In any case, it should not stand unchallenged, especially since many translations remain which reflect more literally the wording of the original languages.⁴³

The interesting point for modern translators of the Bible is that within the parameters of translation methods which existed at the time, the NT translators of this OT text show an awareness of shifts in meanings of terms between Biblical Hebrew and the Greek of their day, and try to make the necessary adjustments. The kinds of adjustments NT writers made to their religious traditions have variously been described as midrashic, allegorical, typological, rhetorical, tradition-historical and more. While these labels have been at times been and continue to be useful, it is also the case that at times the NT writers were simply trying to conserve the meaning of the tradition they were using or the text they were citing in the new contexts in which they were writing. While new contexts for old texts or traditions invariably involve semantic shifts, the processes which produce new meaning may be nothing other than the application of sound translation

⁴² At the point of suggesting a translation the “you shall/thou shalt” older form of the imperative in English has been dropped in favor of the simpler (bare verb first) modern form.

⁴³ Cf. The traditional rendering of “for length of days” as “forever” at the end of Psalm 23.

principles which attempt to conserve essential source meaning through the adaptation of form to context. It is thus that the NT writers, as well as their LXX predecessors,⁴⁴ have demonstrated sensitivity to some of the basic principles of functional equivalence translation. We would do well to learn from them. In the words of James Sanders, “Adaptability and stability. That is canon.”⁴⁵ That is also translation.

⁴⁴ The LXX translators or scribes responsible for the reading "mind" (*διανοια*) for "heart" (*לב*) in Deut. 6.5 actually go further than Mark and his followers, replacing rather than simply adding terms which have shifted in meaning.

⁴⁵ Sanders, “Adaptable for Life,” 561