

True Spirituality

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B'nai Avraham

1 The Mishle of Shlomo ben Dawid, melech of Yisrael; 2 To know chochmah and discipline; to perceive the words of binah; 3 To receive the discipline of chochmah, tzedakah, and mishpat, and equity; 4 To give insight to the simple, to the young man da'at and discretion. 5 A wise man will listen, and will increase learning; and a man of binah gets wise counsel: **Mishle (Proverbs) 1:1-5**

27 Pure and undefiled service to Abba YHWH is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world¹. **Ya'akov 1:27**

Many today within the Nazarenes have a problem living up to the moral and ethical teachings found in the Torah. They are meticulous in their outward observance of the Torah *mitzvot*, but fail to understand that the inner moral teachings of the Torah must be observed just as scrupulously as the outward expressions.

- 25 Woe to you, sophrim and Prushim, hypocrites! For you make clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of extortion and unrighteousness. 26 You blind Prush, cleanse first that which is inside the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also. **Matt.23:25-26**
- 23 Woe to you, Sophrim and Prushim, hypocrites! For you pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the Torah, mishpat, rachamim, and emunah: these needed to have been done, and not to leave the others undone. **Matt. 23:23**

Spirituality is not defined by your *Halakah* of the *mitzvot*, but rather by one's behavior and character. Not everyone who says they are spiritual is so just because they dress the part on *Shabbat*. Many who claim to be spiritual are not what they think they are and many who walk humbly before their Elohim are the truly righteous.

13 Who is a wise man and endowed with training among you? Let him show a tov lifestyle with his mitzvot in meekness of chochmah. **Ya'akov 3:13**

Being Torah observant must start from the inside and work its way outside. When the *Mishkan* was built, they started with the ark and then proceeded to make the other furniture. This is the opposite of what is being taught in many congregations. Until we embrace the true message of the Torah in our heart, life, character, and morals we cannot call ourselves spiritual.

- 2 Keep my mitzvot, and live; and my Torah as the apple of your eye. 3 Bind them upon your fingers; write them upon the shulchan of your lev. **Mishle 7:2-3**
- 18 But those things that proceed out of the mouth come forth from the lev; and they defile the man. 19 For out of the lev proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, and blasphemies: **Matt.15:18-19**
- 11 Not that which goes into the mouth defiles a man; but that which comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man. **Matt.15:11**

There is a relationship between the outward expression of your faith (Torah observance) and the work of the Torah on the heart. Character is not subjective as taught in the schools of the academic world. We cannot attempt to define honor, character, respect, ethics, and morality. The Torah has already done that for us.

¹ In a Hebraic mindset, it is not merely believing that displays a man's character, but his performance of what he believes, as opposed to a mere mental assent to facts. Restoration Scriptures- notes

The ancient sages have said, “Lo *Hamidrash Halkar Eleh HaMa’aseh* (It is not the learning but the doing that counts).” Unless we learn the practical application of what we learn in our studies, we will never truly be spiritual. Learning Torah is not just about how to observe the *Shabbat, Kashrut, Taharot HaMishpacheh*, and the other *mitzvot*.

The books of the Wisdom (*chokmah*) Literature such as *Mishle* and *Kohelet* were written specifically to teach us *musar* and *midot*. It does not require in-depth commentaries and *Midrashes* to understand these books. Shlomo did not call his writings *halachot*. Shlomo used the Hebrew word *musar*. His words are not philosophical precepts but words of Divine Wisdom of the highest morals and ethics.

We can try to rationalize our actions and words but our character must be of the highest caliber and unquestionable. Anyone who claims to be religious but lacks these attributes is not spiritual at all and is a hypocrite. Being spiritual is a matter of the heart before it becomes a matter of a good report before the world. The *mitzvot* are spiritual and deal with the human character. Anyone who keeps the *Shabbat* and lacks character, discipline, honor, truthfulness, and faithfulness should not be called Torah observant, regardless of their outward appearance.

- 5 But all their mitzvot they do to be seen by men: they make large their tephillin, and lengthen their tzitziyot, **Matt.23:5**

To be called Torah observant you must embrace all that the Torah is. Torah observant means that there has been an inner transformation of the inner man more so than any external observance of the *mitzvot*.

The *mitzvot* are really easy to observe, but Scriptural *musar* dictates that we chose the hard path that at times becomes painful and requires sacrifice of self. Personal discipline must be cultivated if we are to develop strength of character and fulfill the heart of the *mitzvot*. We have to learn to face adversity and trials in order to learn the personal discipline that is required to overcome the world.

We need to learn to surrender to all the Torah and reap the benefits of living the life of inner *shalom* that the Torah offers. If we only increase our outward observance of the *mitzvot* without any inward change in order to convince ourselves and others that we are spiritual, then we are no better than the hypocrites of Yahshua’s day.

- 18 But Yahshua perceived their wickedness, and said, Why do you try Me, you hypocrites? **Matt.22:18**

Only those who overcome will stand in the day of adversity. All others will fall away because they have succumbed to their self-deception of a false spirituality.

As *talmidim* of our Master Yahshua we must hold ourselves to the higher standard of holiness demanded by the Torah. This will transform our communities and congregations. We need to learn to change ourselves before we can attempt to help others address the changes they need in their lives. When we learn to be spiritual, then we can convince others to be so as well.

- 20 For I say to you, except your tzedakah shall exceed the tzedakah of the sopherim and Pharisim, you shall in no case enter into the Malchut ha shamayim. **Matt.5:20**