

Blind Leading the Blind

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Mattithyahu 15:14 “Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit.”

Some students of the Scriptures interpret the above saying by our Master to be a reproof upon the Torah knowledge of the *P'rushim* (Pharisees). This short teaching explains that Yahshua was not expressing their lack of knowledge of the Torah and its observance, but rather He was addressing their lack of application of the *musar* (ethics) and *midot* aspects of the Torah. They had taken a hold of the Torah but had failed to allow it to bring forth the fruit of the Ruach in their Torah walk.

In the Beginning evil existed outside of Adam (mankind). It was foreign to his true nature since he was created in the image of Elohim. Adam's heart and mind were in perfect unity and he did not have the knowledge of good and evil. This total integration was lost as a result of the fall of mankind and eating of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil. Because of this shattering of the image of Elohim within the human mind and soul; it is in need of *tikkun* or rectification. This *tikkun* must be individual as well as collective since all are descendants of Adam. The healing of the collective must always begin with the healing of individuals. All mankind is stands in need of repair emotionally and psychologically due to the fall.

Tikkun of the individual means the healing of the inner Self. If we are made whole on the inside, then we can be fulfilled on the outside. Thus, true healing in the Scriptural sense is the repair of the human soul (mind and heart).

Even though we may know the Moshiach, this healing requires some effort on our part to achieve this *tikkun*. Rav Shaul called it “renewing the mind”. However, very few people are willing to make the effort or take the time to achieve this renewal. We will make every effort to heal the body of disease, but will not endure the inconvenience of achieving the renewal of our minds.

- **Romans 12:2** Don't be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what is the good, well-pleasing, and perfect will of Elohim.

This renewal requires us to regain the unity within our soul and minds that we lost when our souls were still collective Adam. We need the mind of Moshiach in order to truly know what is deadly and can damage our souls. Many still suffer from deadened emotions as a result of a lack of self-worth and a lack of inner peace. They continue to live in an exile from their true Self. The sad thing is that very few have the insight to know that something is wrong within themselves. This inner pain can only be healed by inner healing. Inner healing is only accomplished by an inner work. This inner work requires effort and self-discipline. In accordance with the effort is the reward. The Moshiach came that we might have life and experience it more fully but so few are experiencing this abundant life in their daily walk.

It is the observance of the *midot* that rectifies the inner soul and mind. *Midot* means proper character, discipline, honor, and doing the right thing. Doing what is right builds an inner strength. This is why Elohim allows trials and tribulation into our lives. These tests build inner character and help to perfect our faith (*emunah*).

- **Ya'akov (James) 1:2-4** Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you fall into various temptations, knowing that the proof of your faith produces patient endurance. And let patient endurance have *its* perfect work, that you may have reached the goal and be complete, lacking in nothing.
- **1 Kepha 1:6-7** In this you rejoice greatly, even though now for a little while, if it be necessary, you have been distressed by various temptations, that the proof of your faith, more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to *result* in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Yahshua the Messiah.

If Nazarenes hold to their Torah observance, then why do they struggle within their personal lives and so many lack character? Leadership can no longer afford to ignore this wide-spread problem any longer. What is the real cause of this moral decay within the Nazarenes?

The problem is in the education of the congregations. There has been an over emphasis on the search for knowledge at the expense of an embracing by the whole heart of the Torah teachings of *musar* and *midot* (character). Many are spending hours learning the Torah, Talmud, and even Kabbalah but are not grasping the real lessons of morality, *musar*, discipline, honor, and respect.

- Israel Salanter at first intended to tackle the problem directly in the communities. In his first letter to the Vilna community in 1849, proposing the creation of a *musar shtibl* ("a room for moral deliberation") he wrote: "The busy man does evil wherever he turns. His business doing badly, his mind and strength become confounded and subject to the fetters of care and confusion. Therefore appoint a time on the Holy Sabbath to gather together at a fixed hour... the notables of the city, whom many will follow, for the study of morals. Speak quietly and deliberately without joking or irony, estimate the good traits of man and his faults, how he should be castigated to turn away from the latter and strengthen the former. Do not decide matters at a single glance, divide the good work among you—not taking up much time, not putting on too heavy a burden. Little by little, much will be gathered... In the quiet of reflection, in reasonable deliberation, each will strengthen his fellow and cure the foolishness of his heart and eliminate his lazy habits." *Encyclopedia Judaica CD Rom*

Why are we failing? The leaders are not teaching their students the moral, ethical, and character building lessons within the Torah and the teachers themselves seldom live the Torah .Many leaders are poor role models and are lacking true character.

- **Romans 2:19-23** and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, a disciplinarian of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, having in the Torah the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth, you, therefore, who teach others, do you not teach yourself? You who proclaim that one should not steal, do you steal? You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who detest idols, do you rob temples? You who boast in the Torah, through your violation of the Torah, do you dishonor Elohim?
- **2 Kepha 1:4 -9** Through which He has granted to us His precious and greatest promises, so that through them you might become partakers of *the* divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. And for this same reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply excellence, and in excellence, knowledge; and in knowledge, self control; and in self-control, patient endurance; and in patient endurance, piety; and in piety, brotherly love; and in brotherly love, love. For if these are yours and are super-abounding, they keep you neither idle nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Master Yahshua the Messiah. For he who lacks these is blind *or* short-sighted, having forgotten *his* cleansing from his former sins.

Our heads are full of knowledge but our hearts are far away as we imitate our gentile friends and neighbors. Only when our hearts no longer have a desire for the ways of the Gentiles will it become immune to their influence. Knowledge does not stop an unrenewed mind and heart.

- **Luke 21:34** "But take heed that your hearts not be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the anxieties pertaining to *this* life, and that day come on you suddenly like a trap;
- **Mat 15:8** "THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR FROM ME.
- **1Cor. 8:1** Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up

Teachers are not preparing their students to stand against temptations and Scriptural ethics. We need to teach the commands to refrain from harming one's fellow man and to avoid doing evil to the weak is fundamental to Biblical ethics. Most of the ethical commands specified in the Scriptures belong to this category: due justice; avoidance of bribery, robbery, and oppression; defense of the widow and the orphan; compassionate behavior toward the slave; and the prohibition of gossip. Added to these were the *mitzvot* to sustain the poor, feed the hungry, and clothe the naked. The radical but logical conclusion derived from this is that man is obliged to suppress his desires and feed even his enemy, return his enemy's lost property, and help him raise his donkey which is prostrate under its burden. Biblical ethics, which cautions man to love and respect his fellow man, reaches its highest level in the commandment: "You shall not hate your kinsman in your heart, reprove your neighbor," which concludes with "Love your neighbor as yourself. I am YHWH" (**Lev. 19:17-18**).

The principle aim of this *mitzvah*, as of others, is the avoidance of unfounded hatred which destroys the life of the society or a community. The general trend of social ethics was summed up by the prophets who said: "Hate evil and love good and establish justice in the gate" (**Amos 5:15**); and similarly: "He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does YHWH require of you but to do justice and love kindness, and to walk humbly with your Elohim" (**Micah 6:8**). These passages and others not only summarize the teaching of ethics, but also place it at the center of the Yisraelite faith. A summation of all ethical teachings is contained in the well-known saying of Rabbi Hillel: "What is hateful to you do not do unto another" (***Shab. 31a Talmud***). The essence of all of these acts is the proper relationship between man and man, except for one commandment, to shun idolatry, which is solely a duty of man to Elohim.

- **Mat 22:37 -40** And He said to him, "'YOU SHALL LOVE YHWH YOUR ELOHIM WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.'" "This is the great and foremost commandment." "The second is like it: 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.'" "On these two commandments depend the whole Torah and the Prophets."

What has been said up to here applies only to social ethics, in view of the fact that in the realm of sexual morality the Scriptural outlook differs from that of other cultures. The Torah abhors any sexual perversion such as homosexuality or copulation with animals, prescribing severe punishments for offenders (**Lev. 18:22–23; 20:13, 15–16**). The adulteress sins not only against her husband, but also against Elohim (Ex. **20:14; Lev. 20:10; Mal. 3:5**). Fornication is generally frowned upon, severely condemned by Hoshea, and legally punishable by death in some cases (**Lev. 21:9; Deut. 22:21**).

- **1Cor. 6:18 -20** Flee fornication. Every *other* sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who is committing fornication sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a Temple of the Ruach Hakodesh Who is in you, Whom you have from Elohim, and that you are not your own? For you were bought with a price, so indeed glorify Elohim in your body.

We must begin to emphasize on the training of the heart and building character, respect, honor, discipline, and taking responsibility. These are basic Torah concepts that the teachers and parents need to emulate to become the role models for our youth. When others see that these qualities make one a better human being and bring inner joy, happiness, and *shalom*, then they too will seek these qualities and fruit in their lives.

- **Ivrim 12:11** All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterward it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.
- **Gal 5:22-25** But the fruit of the Ruach is: love, joy, peace, patient long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Messiah Yahshua have crucified the flesh with its passions and lusts. If we live in the Ruach, let us also walk in the Ruach.
- **Col 3:9-10** Do not lie to one another, since you have stripped off the old man with his functions, and have put on the new, who is being renewed to knowledge according to the image of the One Who created him
- **Eph 4:23-24** and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the renewed man, which, according to Elohim, has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

Woe to those blind leaders leading the blind. Who will be a real leader? Only true leaders will have the courage to address immorality and a lack of personal discipline in their congregations. Only a sincere Torah teacher will be successful because there are so many that need the daily practical Torah life-style.

- **Ya'akov 3:1** My brothers do not be many teachers, knowing that we will receive greater judgment

We need to start addressing the heart problems. When our hearts and minds are strong, then we will know intuitively right and wrong, good and evil. We will chose the good because it is the right thing to do and will know it is the best thing for us.

- **Kepha 1:13** Therefore, gird up your minds, be sober, hope perfectly on the grace to be brought to you at the revealing of Yahshua the Messiah.

