

# The Leaven of the Pharisees

*“The corruption of the best is the worst.”*

By

Rabbi Levi bar Ido / B'nai Avraham

**WARNING: DO NOT READ THIS IF YOU ARE INTO RELIGION OR EASILY OFFENDED!**

**Mat 23:2-5** saying, *‘On the seat of Moses sat down the scribes and the Pharisees; all, then, as much as they may say to you to observe, observe and do, but according to their works do not, for they say, and do not; for they bind together burdens heavy and grievous to be borne, and lay upon the shoulders of men, but with their finger they will not move them. And all their works they do to be seen by men,*

**Yeshayahu 29:13** *And YHWH said: Forasmuch as this people draw near, and with their mouth and with their lips do honor Me, but have removed their heart far from Me, and their fear of Me is a commandment of men learned by rote;*

After many years of being in the “Nazarene Yisraelite Movement” I have discovered that people affiliated with “religion” are no more loving than whom we call “unbelievers”. Some of the most loving and generous people I have known are not “Torah observant”. There exists a deep-seated predicament and contradiction within Nazarene Yisrael. This dilemma can only be solved by an authentic deep spiritual (not religious) experience through prayer, meditation, or what I call “true spirituality”. I am convinced that holding onto “religion” and external forms of expression of one’s “faith”, largely is a tool to protect the ego instead of transforming it. If Nazarenes do not go beyond first level (pashat) metaphors, rituals, and comprehension of the Scriptures, then they too will end up with an Elohim Who is always angry, bad-tempered, needy, jealous, and Who will love us only if we are “good enough” or “worthy” and of course, belong to the right group. The result is an Elohim Who is too small and lives in a box, and less merciful than the people and even pets who love us. This kind of Elohim expresses a love that is conditional and demands from us perfection. Such a system of salvation will never work nor is it rooted in the Torah of YHWH. Unless we understand that Elohim loves us unconditionally, we as followers of the Prince of Peace will never learn to do the same to others.

- **Lev 19:18** *Thou shalt not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people; but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am YHWH.*

Most people I know would never torture another human being under any circumstances or conditions. Yet, we tend to believe in an Elohim Who not only tortures, but will torture men for all eternity in an everlasting “hell”. Why would anyone want to worship such a sadistic Elohim? Why would anyone want to go on the mystical journey of life and eternal intimacy with such a Bridegroom? Why would anyone trust such an Elohim Who does not know how to express unconditional love to those who need it the most? Sometimes we end up being more loving and generous than the Elohim we profess to worship and serve. Such a “religion” is rotten to its core with hypocrisy and hatred for mankind.

Most of my friends are tolerant and accepting of different races, cultures, and yes, even other religions. They try to see good where good can be seen. But, I find it puzzling that it is not so with our Master and Elohim. The Elohim of Yisrael likes only “born-again” Americans and successful people who are “normal”, who attend my denomination on the correct day. How did we, as disciples of Yahshua, become so small and absurd in our understanding especially when Yahshua HaMoshiach spent most of His ministry affirming the wounded, unworthy, unsuccessful, sinful, or the not properly affiliated and unobservant people? His harshest criticism was saved for those who had a form of religion but lacked the weightier matters of the Torah. He does not have a preoccupation with human sinfulness or the weighing of someone’s worthiness or unworthiness (that is the preoccupation of the ego). Yahshua started with the pain of human suffering instead of man’s sinfulness. Yahshua knew that human sinfulness and hardness of heart is much more a symptom than a cause. Sin reveals the problem and He uses that for His diagnostic purposes, not for condemnation. Sin, according to the teachings of the Master, is not a set of man’s purity codes, but inner attitudes which blind and bind us inside and away from the rest of mankind and mercy.

- **Mar 2:16-17** *And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with the sinners and publicans, said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners? And when Yahshua heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.*
- **Mat 23:23-26** *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye tithe mint and anise and cummin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the law, justice, and mercy, and faith: but these ye ought to have done, and not to have left the other undone. Ye blind guides, that strain out the gnat, and swallow the camel! Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye cleanse the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full from extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first the inside of the cup and of the platter, that the outside thereof may become clean also.*

I thought religion always taught that Elohim is love? You are correct. Religion says the right words, but this Elohim we hear about is never allowed to be loving in the way we have experienced it from our family and friends. I personally have experienced love, mercy, acceptance, and tolerance from my family and friends. They have tolerated my short comings, failures, errors in judgment, and little idiosyncrasies that irritate them. They accept me as I am, and learn to love me as I am- a love which will eventually change and transform me inwardly. Grace creates gracious people. Unmerited love creates unmerited love in return.

- **Luke 7:47** *“For this reason, I say to you, her many sins have been forgiven, because she loved much. But [the one] to whom little is forgiven, loves little.”*

Unfortunately, Elohim, religion, and history seem to prefer mandates, coercion, blame, guilt, and shame to achieve a supposed change or “born from above experience” in man. This behavior is helpful in the manipulation and control of the immature. **We need to grasp the concept that Elohim does not love me if I change, but Elohim loves me SO THAT I CAN CHANGE!**

Religion’s main concern has been to preach what Elohim does not like, where He is not present, and who He does love and justifies hating others and excluding others. Religion seeks to justify our ego’s need to hate, exclude, control, and dominate others. Why else would we serve an Elohim Who always punishes and dominates? We have been told that Elohim hates one for his/her sexual preferences and that He is not present in synagogues and mosques, and that He is not concerned about the innocent lives that are considered “collateral damage” from our wars. We seek to protect the unborn because they are innocent but yet we kill and murder other “innocents” because they are not worthy to be saved. If salvation depends upon being innocent, then who can be saved? The Good News is called Good News because it teaches us that Elohim loves and defends the unworthy and non-innocent life. If that is not true, then you and I have little hope. We can justify capital punishment, torture, euthanasia, and wars against the unworthy-which is what we have done. We have become the image of the” small god” that we worship!

Religion is stingy in its attitudes and prefers a stingy “god”. Religion loves tribalism and group think. It desires to convert and control others rather than to change itself.

- **Mat 23:15** *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is become so, ye make him twofold more a son of hell than yourselves.*

Religions are notorious for excluding, expelling, and excommunicating. We fear anything that is a call to be merciful beyond our established boundaries. Any inclusiveness seems dangerous to us We fear being contaminated and fear losing some “truth” that we are protecting. Religion has created such fragile people.

YHWH is the Master of the Universe. The very people who defend the One Creator fail to defend and preserve His creation. It is a sad truth that some ecologists, humanists, and globalists end up being much more protective of Elohim’s creation than most Nazarenes.

We are called to be a Light to the nations and to teach them Torah. It is offered freely to all peoples, not just Yisrael.

- **Isa 40:5** *And the glory of YHWH shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of YHWH hath spoken it.'*

- ***Isa 56:7*** *Even them will I bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer; their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be acceptable upon Mine altar; for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.*
- ***Isa 42:6-7*** *I YHWH have called thee in righteousness, and have taken hold of thy hand, and kept thee, and set thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the nations; To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house.*

It is not moral unworthiness that keeps people away from Elohim and the Torah. Rather it is the self-righteous and self-sufficient hypocrisy of religion. Yahshua is the ultimate radical reformer of religion, and that is why religious folk oppose His teachings and His talmidim. They try to make religion from His teachings (which cannot be molded into a proper religion at all). This is what happens when you have religion without spirituality or practices without any inner experience. The best thing (spirituality) will then be twisted and turned into the worst thing. Only a fresh revelation of Elohim's Divine love will open up a new dimension for Nazarene Yisrael. Selah!