

Our culture • Our Upbringing • Our Walk with the Lord.

“Breaking out of our culture and upbringing and stepping into G-d’s will.”

By Duane D. Miller

Table of Contents

I.	INTRODUCTION.....	3
II.	OUR CREATED PURPOSE? KINGS & PRIESTS?	4
II.1	DEFINING WHAT IS G-D’S WILL.....	6
II.2	OUTLINE: A BELIEVER’S MINDSET	7
III.	WHO WE ARE AS PRIESTS AND KINGS IN YESHUA?	8
IV.	HOW DOES TORAH OBSERVANCE AFFECT A BELIEVERS LIFE IN HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH YESHUA.....	10
IV.1	BACKGROUND ON TORAH OBSERVANCE	10
IV.2	TORAH OBSERVANCE	12
V.	HOW IS YESHUA’S YOKE EASY AND HIS BURDEN LIGHT AND WHAT IS HE REFERRING TOO WITH RESPECT TO TORAH OBSERVANCE?.....	15
V.1	YESHUA’S YOKE IS EASY?	15
V.2	THE SHABBAT, WHAT IS PERMITTED AND WHAT IS NOT PERMITTED?	17
VI.	CONCLUSIONS.....	19
VI.1	SUMMARY.....	19
VI.2	CONCLUDING REMARKS.....	20
VI.3	STEPPING INTO G-D’S WILL.....	21
VI.4	THINGS YOU CAN DO TODAY.....	23
VII	ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	24

Definitions

Torah	The five books of Moses; Pentateuch; first of three parts of the Hebrew Bible (Torah, Prophets, Writings).
Tanach	The Old Testament; Hebrew Bible comprised of three parts: Torah, Prophets, and Hagiographa.
Parashat	nf. Portion (a section of verses from the Torah)
Parasha	Portion (a section of verses from the Torah)
Parashat Bo	Exodus 10:1-13:16

Parashat Ki-Tisa	Exodus 30:11-35:12
Ruach HaKodesh Yeshua	The Holy Spirit Jesus
Hamoshiach	The Messiah, anointed one

Notes

1. The English translations of the Hebrew verses are found in the footnotes of the respective page.

I. Introduction

Throughout our lives we encounter many difficulties, especially as we try to walk closer in our relationship with Yeshua Hamoshiach. We run into persecution from many areas, some find persecution from outside as a result of new found love for G-d and a desire to reach out to others. Some find persecution right from home which can be the most heartfelt and painful kinds of persecution one ever has to endure. These persecutions generally come from differences in cultural norms. Not only do people view each other by what is politically correct, culturally speaking, but we can find our own inhibitions to minister, and our desire to speak out for Yeshua, is hindered as a result of our own perceptions of what we believe others are thinking. The reason we hold back is what I would like to discuss. I feel this is something many of us have overlooked (meaning, the problem of dealing with our culture, and our upbringing and how it affects our walk with the Lord). I would go as far as saying it can even keep us from stepping into G-d's will for our lives if it is not dealt with properly.

Having faith in the one true G-d and His atoning sacrifice Yeshua, we immediately become a part of the family of G-d as a new creation spiritually speaking. As soon as this moment occurs, G-d begins to work in our lives in what is called the process of sanctification.¹ G-d begins a process where our lives are turned upside down and set sideways for the purpose of bringing our entire being more and more into the spiritual man until one day our carnal will is completely gone. What happens is G-d is trying to take our culture, and carnal parts and transform us so we can be used for His glory to further His kingdom.

There are three things I want to discuss in this article which I feel can help to analyze our culture, our upbringing, and our walk with the Lord:

- (i) Who we are as priests and kings in Yeshua
- (ii) Where does Torah observance affect a believer's life in his relationship with Yeshua
- (iii) How is Yeshua's yoke easy and His burden light and what is He referring to with respect to Torah observance?

As imperfect as we are, one of the biggest issues today deals with what we see as politically correct within our culture or ethnic group. For example, dealing with Torah observance in the messianic and non-messianic communities; the church says today the Torah has passed away, that Yeshua having fulfilled the Torah we no longer have to worry about it or desire to study the Torah. The messianic community says Torah observance is valid and every believer should be striving towards obedience as is laid out in G-d's commandments. The Ultra Orthodox community claims Torah is only for them, and not for anyone else. These issues are so big, they have caused a rift among believers today even to the point of ending long held friendships which I feel results mostly because of the naïve teaching of the church on the relevance of Torah in our lives. I would like to quantify this misunderstanding of the relevance of Torah in our lives and at

1. *Sanctification = involves more than a mere moral reformation of character, brought about by the power of the truth: it is the work of the Holy Spirit bringing the whole nature more and more under the influences of the new gracious principles implanted in the soul in regeneration. In other words, sanctification is the carrying on to perfection the work begun in regeneration, and it extends to the whole man.* 2003: Eastons Dictionary, Bible Foundation.

the same time mend the friendships that have been broken because of misconstrued motives behinds those who wish to become Torah observant. I would like to begin by discussing where we come from and how G-d is working in our lives to draw us nearer as we persevere in the faith from year to year. What are we created for?

II. Our Created Purpose? Kings & Priests?

I would like to illustrate this by an example taken from the Torah on how dangerous and difficult the culture we have grown up and are raised in can be and if not dealt with can and will keep us outside of what G-d has for us in our lives. I started writing this during the Pesach holiday I find the following sections in the Tanach to be a perfect example of the effects our culture and upbringing can have in our relationship with the Lord. The specific section of the Tanach I am referring too is Parashat Bo through Parashat Ki-Tisa.² Within these Parsha we find G-d delivering Yisrael from bondage and setting a mixed multitude free. In the context I want to look at this bit of history, let's look at the culture the children of Yisrael were exposed to during their 400 years of captivity.

The Egyptians and their pagan religion were closely intertwined in the day to day culture; everywhere one looked they saw and understood the polytheistic belief system of ancient Egypt. The deities that were worshiped sprang up along the Nile Valley had both animal and human form and were synthesized into national deities forming various cults practicing bestiality, black magic, etc. The gods of the Egyptians were not all powerful or all-knowing but were greater than humans as according to their definition in the pagan religion. The belief in the afterlife also preoccupied and permeated Egyptian religion as is shown in the surviving tombs and pyramids which still exist today. Burial near the king and the gods helped to gain passage to the netherworld which included incantations and magic spells, as well as passwords all of which can be found in the Egyptian Book of the Dead. It is within this culture the children of Yisrael were raised and exposed to pagan worship. Yisrael was not raised to be a pagan nation however, the pagan nation of Egypt had a huge influence in their lives. We can see Yisrael was not raised a pagan nation by Yisrael's miraculous deliverance out of bondage by the mighty hand of G-d, and we can also see the influence Egypt had by the subsequent Chet Haegel (sin of the golden calf). G-d performed wonders of astronomical proportions, Yisrael was taken all of the way to the holy mountain of Sinai, and shortly thereafter a large portion of the people decided to turn back to Egypt by creating for themselves one of the things they were exposed to from the Egyptian culture, a golden calf to worship as a god. The cultural impact of Egypt provided the mechanism for more easily slipping outside of G-d's will and into sin. This is why G-d commanded to destroy all the gods of the nations in the Promised Land as Yisrael conquers and takes possession of their prophesied inheritance.

The solution to the problem of cultural poisoning is obvious, the Lord needed to somehow filter out the pagan Egyptian culture and the solution was to cause Yisrael to wander in the desert for 40 years. Therefore, the children of Yisrael were raised in the desert 40 years and then allowed to enter the Promised Land. These children (the descendents of those who were delivered from Egypt) were raised in a godly way, they were raised to know Torah, to obey the Lord, and when they were older, they were given the land which was promised to their fathers. Notice how the children were raised in the knowledge of the Lord as contrasted to those who

2. Ginsburg, C.S., 1894. תנך - תורה, נביאים, כתובים. London: Trinitarian Bible Society.

were raised in the pagan nation of Egypt. G-d's solution was drastic, and in the same way we need to be drastic in our drawing near to the Lord, specially in examining ourselves how has our culture and upbringing affected our perceptions of who G-d really is, and has this caused us to step outside of G-d's will. Could this be the root cause of a lot of the problems we are encountering in our life today?

If the children of Yisrael needed to be cleansed of the cultural poisoning of Egypt, what can we say about ourselves and the culture we live in today? This leads then to questions:

- (i) "Who am I?"
- (ii) "How do I fit into my community and in the culture that I was raised in?"
- (iii) "What is the reason for life?"

For a certainty, we are not an ordered set of randomly collected primordial slime (touted by evolution); we were created for a specific purpose and goal. We were created to bring glory to G-d as kings and priests unto the Lord.

As kings we are wealthy beyond measure having a Father in Heaven as our G-d

As priests we have a duty to minister not only to others but also unto G-d

You may be asking yourself now "What is my final destiny; where am I going, where will I end up and how does this work together with G-d in my life?" In the beginning G-d is how it started, and so in the end G-d is how it will end. The decision we need to make is whether we want to spend our time with G-d or alone in our own selfishness. If you choose to spend time with the Lord, the next step is self examination.

A good starting point for self examination would be to look at what your response would be if someone were to ask you what you believe. Do you respond by what group you identify with or what group identity do you belong too? Most people will say or name some church, maybe some messianic congregation, or ultra orthodox Chabad one attends. But in the Torah, there was one group and that was Yisrael coming out of Egypt, which came out as a mixed multitude. In Yeshua Hamoshiach G-d is fulfilling prophecy by grafting the faithful into one congregation of believers, we are the children of G-d and we are grafted into Yisrael. G-d has made us one flock, one bride, one people, together via adoption in Yeshua Hamoshiach. That is what is called a new creation, you are a new man, a new woman, you have a new genealogy, you have a new Father, and you have the Torah now written upon your heart by the Living Word of G-d, the Living Torah (Yeshua Hamoshiach). In the Torah it was commanded that we bind the commands to our head, and our hands, and write them upon our hearts.^{3,4} As a believer in the living Word of G-d

³ Deut.11:18, *Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes.* , in *The Scofield Study Bible*, Oxford University Press: New York.

the living Torah is taken and written upon our hearts by G-d himself. This is how real change occurs, how our lives are changed, and how miracles occur for change. Those of us who are non-Jewish, we are partakers with Yisrael, we do not overtake Yisrael (contrary to what was thought by many professing Christians in the past), and we partake in the covenant, the inheritance, and the blessing in Yeshua Hamoshiach. What I am saying is we need to know who we are as believers in the Most High G-d and centralize our lives around the fact that we are specially created to serve the Lord in the capacity which G-d has gifted each of us to bring glory to His Name. Now these are a lot of nice things I am saying here but I ask “What is G-d’s will on these things I am talking about?”

II.1 Defining what is G-d’s Will

One way to help understand what is G-d’s will is to look at Scripture and try to draw some conclusions on G-d’s will for our lives. I found an interesting commentary in the Talmud in Rosh Hashana 3:8 which demonstrates what G-d is concerned with when Yisrael was fighting against Amalek in Exodus 17:11 and also the fiery serpent that was placed upon a pole for people to look upon so they would not die in Numbers 21:8.

Rosh Hashana 3:8

“As long as Moses held up his hands, Yisrael prevailed, but whenever he lowered his hands, Amalek prevailed” (Shmot 17:11). But could the hands of Moses really change the outcome of the battle for better or for worse? – it is, rather, to teach you that as long as the Yisraelites directed their thoughts on high and kept their hearts in subjection to their Father in heaven, they prevailed; otherwise, they suffered defeat. You could say the same about the verse, “Make yourself a fiery serpent and mount it upon a standard, and if anyone who is bitten looks at it, he will recover” (Bamidbar 21:8). But could the serpent kill, or could the serpent heal? – it is, rather, to teach you that as long as the Yisraelites directed their thoughts on high and kept their hearts in subjection to their Father in heaven, they were healed; otherwise, they wasted away.

I believe this helps us to understand that our hearts desire should be towards walking with the Lord. Look towards serving the Lord rather than serving ourselves. I think the disciples of Yeshua knew the significance of this issue which we can see in Acts 13:1-4. Our calling is to minister unto G-d in our bodies, we are called to offer ourselves as a living sacrifice unto the Lord.

⁴ Deut.6:8, *And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.*, Ibid.

מעשי השליחים 13:1-4⁵

ואנשים נביאים ומלמדים היו באנטיוכיא בקהלה אשר בה בר נבא ושמעון הנקרא ניגר ולוקיוס הקוריני ומנחם אשר גדל עם הורדוס שר הרבע ושאול: ויהי בשרתם את יהוה ובצומם ויאמר רוח הקדש הבדילו לי את בר נבא ואת שאול למלאכה אשר קראתים לה: ויצומו ויתפללו ויסמכו את ידיהם עליהם וישלחום: והמה המשלחים על ידי רוח הקדש ירדו אל סלוקיא ומשם באו באניה אל קפרוס:

If you think about it, we are invited by the mercies of G-d to enter into a personal and intimate relationship with Him; therefore, our calling as priests and kings is to minister unto G-d. The question is what does it mean to offer our bodies as living sacrifices and how do we minister unto the Lord? I will address this question later on. First, let's look at what it means to be a king and a priest unto G-d. I have outlined what I call the believer's mindset because it outlines what the Bible says about who we are as believers in Yeshua and what we should be looking at in our life and walk with the Lord.

II.2 Outline: A believer's mindset

1. Presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice
2. In what areas of our lives are we conforming to this world?
 - a. Imitating the pattern of this world
 - b. The lifestyle of this world
 - c. The priorities of this world
 - d. The fashions of this world
 - e. The mindset of this world
 - f. The desires of this world
3. Being transformed daily:
 - a. Taking our thoughts captive to obey Messiah
 - b. Renewing our minds through the Word of G-d
 - c. Having the mind of Messiah through the Spirit of G-d
4. The call to offer ourselves
 - a. Making the right choices through an act of our will
 - b. Our feelings and emotions under the control of the Ruach HaKodesh
 - c. Our understanding according to the Word of G-d
 - d. Filling our minds with what is right in His sight
5. Being able to prove what is:
 - a. Good and beneficial
 - b. Well pleasing to G-d and others
 - c. Complete in work or labor
 - d. Causes growth: - spiritually, physically, mentally, morally

⁵ Acts13:1-4, *Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.*, Ibid.

- e. Its source is from G-d - His purpose, will, determination and choice for your life

Our culture has permeated who we are by all sorts of external avenues, television, radio, news paper, our friends, and even unsaved family. I would go even as far to say that even within the church, messianic congregation or ultra orthodox Chabad we find some worldly influences which can affect our perception of who G-d is and what we really are created to be (i.e. kings and priests). The first item on the outline was to present our bodies as a living sacrifice. I feel this encompasses all that we are created to be in our service unto the Lord as believers. Because of the daily influences upon us, we need to be daily transformed by taking our thoughts captive to obey the Lord, and renewing our minds through reading Scripture on a daily basis. We have the mind of the Messiah through the Ruach Hakodesh (Holy Spirit) so we have the ability to make the right choices through an act of will. However, if we have had enough worldly influences, our choices may not be the correct ones even if we believe or feel they are correct. This is why we need to have our feelings and emotions conditioned by our understanding of the Word of G-d. This causes our minds to be filled with what is right in G-d's sight and we can as a result prove what is good and beneficial to our faith, and our life's walk. As well as what is pleasing to G-d as we interact with this world system which we are a part of and should be making a positive influence towards.

III. Who we are as priests and kings in Yeshua?

In the previous sections we have discussed why we were created, to bring glory to G-d, and what is G-d's will for our lives. Also, that by faith we are adopted into a royal priesthood. In this world system, priests and kings hold a higher office, a more prominent position. We can draw a parallel to this by looking at the high calling we have in Yeshua. We are in effect G-d's representatives here on earth. Within this kind of mindset, we need to take our position as kings and priests very seriously.

Like our jobs which we go to each day, we should take our faith and relationship with the Lord very seriously. We go to work each day to make money, so that we can provide food on the table, and a roof over our heads. In the same way realize the spiritual work we need to be doing in order to remain spiritually healthy. For example, feeding our spirit by reading the Word of G-d, and getting the right spiritual exercise.

Another way to look at this is to do so like the apostle Paul did in 1Corinthians 9:24-27 where he drew a parallel to exercising as an athlete who is preparing for competition.

הראשונה אל-הקורנתיים 9:24-27⁶

הלא ידעתם כי רצי המרוצה באסטדין רצים כלם ורק אחד מהם ישיג את שכר הנצוח ככה רוצו למען תשיגוהו: וכל העמד להאבק ינזר מכל דבר המה לקחת כתר נפסד ואנחנו לקחת

⁶ 1Cor.9:24-27, *Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.* , Ibid.

כתר אשר איננו נפסד: לכן הנני רץ לא כמו בחשכה הנני נלחם לא כהולם רוח: כי אם
אדכא את גופי ואשעבדנו פן אהיה אני הקורא לאחרים נאלח בעצמי:

The apostle Paul makes the life of a believer like that of an athlete who is training for a sports competition. An athlete would never consider entering a competition without being in perfect condition. Similarly, we should be fit in our lives for the spiritual race which is set before us. The athlete does not expect to gain in performance and conditioning without going through arduous and sometimes painful training. Why is it so many people think in their spiritual relationship with G-d, we can gain without the pain of arduously training too? According to the world, those who train for competition win; likewise according to Scripture those who train spiritually win as well. We have to workout in order to be fit for the job which we are preparing for. Athletes have to workout in the area they wish to succeed. As a student, one needs to workout by taking many classes, and arduously working towards a goal where one becomes an expert in their field of expertise.

Bodybuilders use resistance training to make their muscles stronger and bigger either for professional competition or for personal goals in fitness and toning the body. Similarly we need to not be afraid to meet with resistance against those who believe differently than we do. I have been to churches where resistance is disapproved of and great lengths are taken with which to prevent arguments and disagreements. My opinion on this is that it is better to teach what the Lord has laid upon your heart than to teach along the road of least resistance. Resistance as in the case with weight lifting will make us stronger. If someone questions you in your beliefs, it will cause you to dig deeper into the Word of G-d to gain understanding, and to help better explain what you mean to those who do disagree.

By exercising our faith, we are offering our bodies as a living sacrifice to the Lord. As an example, we can offer our bodies as living sacrifices through exercising our faith by doing the following: exercising love, exercising sharing the gospel which is the good news of Yeshua Hamoshiach, exercising forgiveness, exercising patience, exercising giving, exercising repentance, exercising joy no matter what the circumstances are in your life, and exercising hope. Each of these can be used as an example to others but we have to first offer ourselves in this kind of service to everyone. By applying these principles, this is what the apostle James meant when he said "Faith without works is Dead." Having Faith and subsequently having the Torah written upon our hearts brings these works/exercises, these physical phenomena which demonstrate the faith we have within us. We apply these basic principles by what Scripture calls "Working out" our salvation.

אל-הפילפיים⁷ 2:12

לכן חביבי כאשר שמעתם לי בכל עת כן לא לבד בהיותי עמכם כי עוד יתר עתה אשר אני
רחוק מכם תיגעו בתשועת נפשתיכם ביראה וברעדה:

In order for us to become experts in our faith as believers, we need to be exercising these basic things just like an athlete does in training for competition. Try to integrate them into your life slowly, do not exceed your level but take one step at a time. G-d has provided you with the

⁷ Phili.2:12, *Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.* , Ibid.

exercise equipment that you need, the only thing we have to do now is to use what G-d has given us.

As priests and kings we have a special calling to minister to others in this world. Not only are we to minister to our brothers and sisters in the faith and also to unbelievers in this world, we are to minister unto G-d too. Now I can easily understand why we are to minister to people here on earth and I think you can understand that too, but why and how do we minister unto G-d? I believe this brings us closer to our heart felt desire to love and obey the Lord for many of us in a new way. I believe ministering unto the Lord can be done two ways:

- (i) By prayer/in prayer
- (ii) By being Torah observant, this is to honor G-d in your body.

The Torah is not the path to salvation; it is G-d's instruction on how we should live our life. So how does Torah observance work in my life as a believer in Yeshua, some have been taught they do not need the Torah because they have Yeshua. I say we have the Torah written in our hearts because Yeshua is the living Torah, the living Word of G-d. Let's discuss this further.

IV. How does Torah observance affect a believers life in his relationship with Yeshua

IV.1 Background on Torah Observance

The Torah was given to us to show us G-d's holiness and His requirement for holy living. The Torah was never about earning justification by the Law. Justification before G-d came by faith. Abraham was counted righteous according to his faith in G-d and G-d's promises. Presently, justification comes today in the same way as it had previously, meaning by faith. (i.e. By Yeshua's sacrifice one's sins are imputed to Him, and He, as the High Priest, offers atonement on our behalf.) According to the Torah, we need faith that our sins are imputed to the sacrifice and the priest would offer atonement on our behalf. And because the Torah points towards the Messiah, the same then is found in Yeshua, by faith we believe our sins were taken by Yeshua upon the cross, and He (Yeshua) entered into the holy of holies and made atonement for us before G-d's throne in Heaven. So to seek justification by the law would clearly be in error. The ultra orthodox, however, do commit the un-Scriptural mistake of seeking justification by the Law. Upon closer examination of the Scriptures, we find that the rabbinical Judaism's system of rigid law-keeping, and merit earning towards salvation, is not what the Torah teaches.

Also note that Galatians chapter 2 does not negate the Torah. The apostle Paul is not saying the Torah is of non-effect. This simple fact can be seen because Paul uses his credentials as a Pharisee in the book of Philippians and even remained Torah observant after his faith in Yeshua as his personal savior.

Paul claimed to remain a Pharisee

אל-הפילפיים⁸ 3:1-6

ובכן אחי שמחו באדנינו הן לכתב ולשנות כזאת אליכם עלי איננו לטרח ולכם הוא לחזוק: הזהרו מן הכלבים הזהרו מן הפעלים הרעים הזהרו מן החתוך: כי אנחנו בני המילה העבדים את האלהים ברוח ומתפארים במשיח ישוע ואיננו בטחים בבשר: אף כי גם לי יש לבטח בבשר ואם יחשב איש שיוכל לבטח בבשר הנה אני יותר ממנו: אשר אני נמול בן שמונת ימים מבני ישראל משבט בנימין עברי מן העברים: לפי התורה פרוש בקנאתי רדף את העדה ולפי צדקת התורה בלי שמץ:

Paul kept the Shabbat

מעשי השליחים⁹ 17:1-2

ויהי אחרי עברם באמפוליס ובאפלוניא ויבאו אל תסלוניקי אשר שם בית כנסת היהודים: ופולוס נכנס אליהם כמשפטו ושלוש שבתות דבר עמהם בדברי הכתובים:

Paul kept the Moedim (Unleavened bread, Shavuot, and Passover)

מעשי השליחים¹⁰ 20:6

ואנחנו יצאנו מן פילפי אחרי ימי חג המצות ומקץ חמשה ימים באנו באניה אליהם אל טרואס ונשב שם שבעת ימים:

מעשי השליחים¹¹ 20:16

כי פולוס אמר לעבר מעל פני אפסוס פן יצטרך להתמהמה באסיא כי אץ לבוא אם יוכל עד חג השבועות ירושלים:

⁸ Phili.3:1-6, *Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe. Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.* , Ibid.

⁹ Acts17:1-2, *Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,* , Ibid.

¹⁰ Acts20:6, *And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days.* , Ibid.

¹¹ Acts20:16, *For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.* , Ibid.

Kept the vow according to the Torah

מעשי השליחים 21:24¹²

הנה יש אתנו ארבעה אנשים אשר נדר עליהם אתם קח לך והטהר אתם ושלם ההוצאות בעדם למען אשר יגלחו את ראשם וידעו כלם כי שמועת שוא שמעו עליך וכי אתה בעצמך מתהלך בחקות התורה:

Many more references could be shown however these few mentioned above demonstrate Paul's position on the Torah. I recommend a book written by Tim Hegg, *The letter writer*¹³, which digs deeper into the apostle Paul and what he was teaching about Torah in his epistles to the churches.

IV.2 Torah Observance

I have heard some say that if one keeps the Torah one would be sinning. With this type of mindset the person who asks this may be thinking "how well do you keep the Torah/Law?" or "Is what you keep in the Torah/Law enough to merit eternal life before G-d?" The moment one believes they are earning their salvation is the moment sin enters into Torah observance. Let me explain further about this.

In the Torah there are hundreds of commandments and statutes which G-d has revealed to us. There are ceremonial laws which help us with the sacrificial system and the atonement for sin, there are civil laws which help us to deal with society, and there are moral laws which help us to live righteously before G-d. I have found people tend to swing between two camps, essentially one of no Torah, and one of yes Torah. We can see this where only parts of the Torah are accepted and others are cast away (i.e. eating kosher, Shabbat, etc). I find this to be inconsistent with regard to G-d's commands. Now many authors have written on the topic of picking and choosing Scripture. Here I want to talk about what it means to minister unto G-d.

The Torah speaks about the priests of G-d ministering unto G-d so let's start by examining the Scriptures.

דברים 17:12¹⁴

והאיש אשר יעשה בזדון לבלתי שמע אל הכהן העמד לשרת שם את יהוה אלהיך או אל השפט ומת האיש ההוא ובערת הרע מישראל:

¹² Acts 21:24, *Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law, Ibid.*

¹³ Hegg, T., *The Letter Writer: Paul's Background and Torah Perspective*. 2002: First Fruits of Zion, Incorporated 332.

¹⁴ Deut. 17:12, *And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest that standeth to minister there before the LORD thy God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die: and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel.*, in *The Scofield Study Bible*, Oxford University Press: New York.

דברים 18:5¹⁵

כי בו בחר יהוה אלהיך מכל שבטיך לעמד לשרת בשם יהוה הוא ובניו כל הימים:

דברים 18:7¹⁶

ושרת בשם יהוה אלהיו ככל אחיו הלויים העמדים שם לפני יהוה:

דברים 21:5¹⁷

ונגשו הכהנים בני לוי כי במ בחר יהוה אלהיך לשרתו ולברך בשם יהוה ועל פיהם יהיה כל ריב וכל נגע:

But how did they perform this ministering service unto the Lord? One idea clearly is the sacrifice, offering atonement on behalf of the people. But the other way to minister before the Lord was by remaining pure and holy according to G-d's commands and in prayer. It would have been impossible to approach G-d without remaining pure according to G-d's commands. If the priest were unclean when coming into the presence of G-d, they would surely die in His presence and this actually happened in the Scriptures a few times.

We already know who we are in Yeshua Hamoshiach; we are "priests" and "kings" in Yeshua, right? As a priest and a king, how do we honor and bring glory to G-d, how do we minister before the Lord? Have you ever asked that question? We do so by honoring him with our bodies in holiness and purity. How do we know what is holiness and purity? We know by the Torah of G-d (Remember Torah is interpreted as "instruction" not "law"). The Torah explains the manner by which we are to approach G-d and what is required of His people before Him in life and deed. Now remember, since the transgression of Adam in the Garden of Eden, we all are fallen and sinful beings. We are not perfect which is why G-d gave us the Torah to begin with. G-d gave us the Torah as a guide to be more holy since we are a fallen people. G-d still requires perfect holiness which is why He also gave us the sacrificial system. We transgress the Torah, and we then have to offer a blood sacrifice for our sins because without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins (Lev.17:11). It is within this sense that the Torah ultimately points to the Messiah, the one who redeems us before the Holy G-d. Since we can not fulfill the Torah for ourselves because we are fallen beings, Yeshua did it for us. Yeshua delivered us from the inability to keep the Torah and became our atoning sacrifice upon the cross and redeemed us from the curse of the Torah.

¹⁵ Deut.18:5, *For the LORD thy God hath chosen him out of all thy tribes, to stand to minister in the name of the LORD, him and his sons for ever.* , Ibid.

¹⁶ Deut.18:7, *Then he shall minister in the name of the LORD his God, as all his brethren the Levites do, which stand there before the LORD.*, Ibid.

¹⁷ Deut.21:5, *And the priests the sons of Levi shall come near; for them the LORD thy God hath chosen to minister unto him, and to bless in the name of the LORD; and by their word shall every controversy and every stroke be tried:* , Ibid.

אל-הגלטיים 3:13-14¹⁸

המשיח פדנו מקללת התורה בהיותו לקללה בעדנו שנאמר קללת אלהים תלוי: למען אשר תבא ברכת אברהם במשיח ישוע על הגוים למען אשר נשא את הבטחת הרוח על ידי האמונה:

So with Yeshua being our atonement and Yeshua having fulfilled the Torah, what is the real issue about Torah observance? The whole issue revolves around our relationship with G-d. During fasting, we abstain from food or some activity to be able to commit ourselves to prayer and focus upon the Lord. It is a matter of choice on our behalf in order to honor G-d. Knowing we can not keep the Torah perfectly, our salvation is not based upon Torah observance. Like fasting, one observes Torah out of a heart to offer their body to honor the Lord. Eating kosher, and keeping the Shabbat, etc are a couple ways for us to do so and not only honoring G-d but also by demonstrating our faith in the authority of the word of G-d.

As with all relationships, we seek to please that special person in our lives, and the same with the lover of our souls (G-d), we desire to do things which are pleasing and would cause the Lord to say well done good and faithful servant (Matt. 25:21-23). Now each of us are at different levels in our spiritual relationship with the Lord therefore I do not expect everyone to become 100% Torah observant over night. Also remember this is not a light issue; one needs to be very careful as not to assume they are earning merit towards eternal life by keeping Torah. Each of us is different, and G-d is working a good work in our lives by forever drawing us near to him and as we draw nearer to a holy G-d, we ourselves will become more holy and I believe this is done according to the Torah.

Observing Torah is certainly not a sin except when it becomes a point of earning ones salvation.

Our relationship with G-d should be so deep and so radiant that everyone can see and literally feel the presence of G-d in our lives. I believe the whole crux of Matthew 5:16 “ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. (KJV)” would be that men can see and feel the presence of G-d and desire to have what we have. That is at least my goal, to honor G-d in my body. I am not perfect, and I fail, even in my own thought life but G-d is continuing to perfect me as time goes on, He seasons me, and makes me gentler and kinder in His love. I know He can do the same for you too.

Our relationship with G-d should be centered upon Yeshua, and rightly so, however the Torah points to the Messiah Yeshua so it also becomes an integral part of our relationship with G-d. I would go further to say that we can honor G-d in our bodies by being Torah observant but that is a decision one needs to make individually. I also want to point out something that Yeshua said in the book of Matthew:

הבשורה על-פי מתי 5:18-19¹⁹

¹⁸ Gal.3:13-14, *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.* , Ibid.

כי אמן אמר אני לכם עד כי יעברו השמים והארץ לא תעבר יוד אחת או קוץ אחד מן התורה עד אשר יעשה הכל: לכן מי אשר יפר אחת מן המצות הקטנות האלה וכן ילמד את בני האדם קטון יקרא במלכות השמים ואשר יעשה וילמד אותן הוא גדול יקרא במלכות השמים:

Notice how Yeshua said if we break the commandments, even the least of them, and teach people to do the same, we will be called the least in the kingdom of heaven, and then He contrasts that with those who “DO” and “TEACH” will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. Be careful what you teach others to do concerning the Torah, because it is a matter of displeasing G-d. Also note, those who do teach against Torah, are still G-d’s children, but they will be called the least in heaven. To me Matthew 5:19 indicates that Torah observance is a means for our honoring G-d something that is pleasing in His eyes and not something to be despised. Torah observance is one way we minister unto the Lord.

V. How is Yeshua’s yoke easy and His burden light and what is He referring too with respect to Torah observance?

V.1 Yeshua’s Yoke is Easy?

The question now arises about Torah observance making ones life very difficult and burdensome. How is Yeshua’s yoke easy and His burden light if the Torah is so burdensome to our lives (according to some people)? Strict Torah observance would mean one “Must” keep Torah. Torah observance is a condition of the heart, and part of the fruits of the spirit as a believer in Yeshua. So ask yourself, if I am not demonstrating the fruits of the spirit, am I saved? Scripture says I should have fruit, which are evident in my life that demonstrate the salvation and faith that I have in Yeshua.²⁰ This truly is a heart issue, something each of us needs to evaluate personally within ourselves and our relationship with G-d. I have heard some say if one does not keep Torah, they are not saved. I want to clarify this right now, if one doesn’t keep Torah, it does not mean they lose their salvation. Our salvation is based upon the finished work of Yeshua Hamoshiach.

Salvation is found only in Yeshua and His shed blood.

Some verses I found which help to make sense are found in Psalms 15:2, and Romans 8:1-4 shown below.

¹⁹ Matt.5:18-19, *For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven, Ibid.*

²⁰ Matt7:16, *Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?*, Ibid, Matt7:20, *Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.*, in *The Scofield Study Bible*, Oxford University Press: New York.

תהילים 15:2²¹

הולך תמים ופעל צדק ודבר אמת בלבבו:

אל-רומיים 8:1-4²²

על כן אין אשמה באלה אשר הם במשיח ישוע המתהלכים בלא כבשר כי אם לפי הרוח: כי תורת רוח החיים במשיח ישוע שחררה אתי מתורת החטא והמות: כי מה שלא יכלה התורה לעשות הנחלשה על יד הבשר עשה האלהים בשלחו את בנו בתואר בשר החטא ובעד החטא וירשיע את החטא בבשר: למען תמלא חקת התורה בנו המתהלכים בלא כבשר כי אם לפי הרוח:

In Yeshua, who kept perfectly the Torah, His righteousness now is in us, and we are justified before G-d. Now, let's contrast this a little bit with what it was like before Yeshua, in the Mosaic covenant. In order to draw near to G-d in the Mosaic covenant one needed to be ritually pure thus those things described in the law needed to be followed as best one could in order to make an offering before the Lord. That is a heavy burden indeed with 613 commandments we are incapable of keeping. Reading the B'rit Hachadashah (NT) Yeshua said take my yoke upon you, for my yoke is easy and my burden light in Matthew 11:29-30. So how does this work, how does Yeshua make the yoke of the Torah easy?

הבשורה על-פי מתי 11:29-30²³

קבלו עליכם את עלי ולמדו ממני כי ענו ושפל רוח אנכי ותמצאו מרגוע לנפשתיכם: כי עלי נעים הוא וקל משאי:

How does Yeshua make the yoke easy and the burden light? Well, by faith in Yeshua, we are given G-d's Holy Spirit; therefore we no longer have to keep ritual purity in order to draw near to G-d. I mean, these things will not prevent us from communing with G-d in prayer in the spirit. The Torah is now a condition of the heart; Torah observance is how one would walk in the way of righteousness and how one offers their body as a living sacrifice and ministers unto the Lord.

²¹ Psalms 15:2, *He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.* , in *The Scofield Study Bible*, Oxford University Press: New York.

²² Rom. 8:1-4, *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, G-d sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.* , Ibid.

²³ Matt. 11:29-30, *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.* , Ibid.

דברים 5:33²⁴

בכל הדרך אשר צוה יהוה אלהיכם אתכם תלכו למען תחיון וטוב לכם והארכתם ימים בארץ אשר תירשון:

דברים 11:22²⁵

כי אם שמר תשמרון את כל המצוה הזאת אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם לעשתה לאהבה את יהוה אלהיכם ללכת בכל דרכיו ולדבקה בו:

V.2 The Shabbat, what is permitted and what is not permitted?

With Torah observance as the topic of conversation, something that always comes up in the conversation is the topic of the Shabbat. I am not referring to whether we should keep the Shabbat; I want to ask what it is that is permitted on the Shabbat. To address this question, I would like to start by looking at some things Yeshua taught about the Shabbat (Sabbath) day. Lets first look at modern halakhah; the answer of modern halakhah (Rabbinical interpretation of the Torah) is three fold:

Rabbinical Halakhah

1. On Shabbat, healing to save life is not only permitted but a duty.
2. Caring for the seriously ill (e.g. those with a high fever or pain affecting the whole body) is allowed, within certain constraints.
3. Treating minor ailments is prohibited by g'zera (rabbinical decree) – the reason being that most treatments require grinding to prepare medicine and grinding is a prohibited form of work.

Yeshua healing a shriveled hand (Matt12:10 Mar3:1 Mar3:3 Luk6:6 Luk6:8) is neither life-threatening nor “serious” so this kind of healing violated, upon face value, rabbinical halakhah concerning the Shabbat. However, since Yeshua did not use medicine and hence no grinding was done, a case could have been made – in the halakhic environment of the first century – that no violation had taken place. The Mishnah reflects the halakhic situation among the Pharisees. It prohibits healing on the Shabbat through medical means but allows healing which comes as a byproduct of some other activity.

Talmud (Shabbat 22:6)

“They may not set a fracture. If someone’s hand or foot is dislocated, he may not pour cold water over it; but he may wash it in the usual way; if it heals it heals.”

²⁴ Deut.5:33, *Ye shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your G-d hath commanded you, that ye may live, and that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess.* , Ibid.

²⁵ Deut.11:22, *For if ye shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you, to do them, to love the LORD your G-d, to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him;* , Ibid.

In Luke 6:10 “And looking round about upon them all, he said unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so: and his hand was restored whole as the other.” (KJV) the man holds out his shriveled hand and it is restored to soundness. This is in no sense a medical cure, but clearly he held out his hand in response to Yeshua’s instruction for no other reason than to be healed, so that by logic implicit in the Mishnah the cure was not a byproduct and was therefore a violation of Shabbat.

Clearly there is a problem with rabbinical halakhah so Yeshua makes five arguments against the way in which the Pharisees used their rabbinical halakhah:

1. In the parallel passage at Matthew 12:11-12 Yeshua attaches the premise underlying the Oral Torah as understood by the Pharisees with an argument about priorities: “doing good deeds” is more important than observing the details of the Shabbat work rules. Determination of priorities is a legitimate form of halakhic ruling (see John7:22-23)
2. Yeshua strengthens His case with a kal v’chomer argument (Matthew 12:11) if it is permitted to rescue a sheep on the Shabbat, how much more it is permitted to heal a man on the Shabbat.
3. In the parallel passage in Mark he adds that “Shabbat was made for man, not man for Shabbat” – which is to say that G-d’s rules are to serve man and enable him to better glorify G-d, not to enslave man and require him to glorify the rules (see Mark 2:27).
4. At John5:17-18 Yeshua says, “My father has been working until now, and I too am working,” which his hearers correctly interpreted as Yeshua’s claim to divinity and his need and right to work on the Shabbat.
5. Finally, in John7:22-23, where Yeshua just healed a man on the Shabbat, He brings another kal v’chomer argument: if his opponents allow circumcision on the Shabbat, how much more should they allow healing.

The common thread in all of these five arguments is the rules of the Pharisees for Shabbat are generally good guides to behavior, but they must not be allowed to become oppressive – there are circumstances when one should break them in order to obey G-d’s will and be an active participant in His kingdom (see Acts4:19 and Gal2:11-20). “Breaking the rules” for the right reasons are an essential element in Messianic halakhah; more specifically, breaking the rules of rabbinical Judaism.

Now that this has been explained, I would like to look at kindling fire in the Torah on the Shabbat as it pertains to work.

שמות²⁶ 35:1-5

ויקהל משה את כל עדת בני ישראל ויאמר אלהם אלה הדברים אשר צוה יהוה לעשה אתם: ששת ימים תעשה מלאכה וביום השביעי יהיה לכם קדש שבת שבתון ליהוה כל העשה בו מלאכה יומת: לא תבערו אש בכל משבתיכם ביום השבת: ויאמר משה אל כל עדת בני ישראל לאמר זה הדבר אשר צוה יהוה לאמר: קחו מאתכם תרומה ליהוה כל נדיב לבו יביאה את תרומת יהוה זהב וכסף ונחשת:

One of the requirements which are related to the kindling of fire is in the preparation of the meals (preparing food). Food is to be prepared the day before such that on the Shabbat one does not have to devote themselves to making and preparing the meals. The reason is such that one can devote themselves to praise, worship, and prayer on the Shabbat and not get distracted plus relaxation (day of rest remember). This kind of comes back to the story where Moshe lifted his hands and Yisrael prevailed and the serpent on the staff. Our hearts should be upon the things of the Lord. As to the question about kindling fire, you also know that there are places in Yisrael during the winter months, it does get quite cold. During the winter months, it is necessary to kindle a fire in order to survive, to stay warm. This could be related to the saving of a life due to cold temperatures. I do not believe that commandment relates to kindling fire to stay warm rather that it refers specifically for preparation of food. Remember, when the Torah was given, the Yisraelites were in the desert, do you think the man gathering wood and kindling a fire was meant to keep warm?

The same goes with taking a friend who is injured to the hospital for immediate help. According to Yeshua's halakhah it would be appropriate to save life on the Shabbat; now this is in contradiction to Rabbinical Judaism as shown from the Talmud (Shabbat 22:6). So the arguments people use about kindling fire seem to be taken from a strict sense of interpretation (like the Pharisees).

VI. Conclusions

VI.1 Summary

In summary, we discussed how we encounter difficulties in our walk as believers, how our culture can have an effect upon our view of G-d, and how our culture and the way we were raised can provide a mechanism for stepping outside of G-d's will into sin. Our culture and upbringing can be overcome with G-d's help, and we can begin by looking at who we are as priests and kings in Yeshua. As priests and kings we have a high calling to minister to others, and to minister to G-d. Trying to understand what it means to minister to G-d brought us to question how we minister to the Most High. We looked at the mindset of a believer, and then

²⁶ Exo.35:1-5, *And Moses gathered all the congregation of the children of Israel together, and said unto them, These are the words which the LORD hath commanded, that ye should do them. Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day, a sabbath of rest to the LORD: whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death. Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath day. And Moses spake unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying, This is the thing which the LORD commanded, saying, Take ye from among you an offering unto the LORD: whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the LORD; gold, and silver, and brass, , Ibid.*

what the will of G-d is according to the Torah. We found out that we need to exercise our faith, feed our spirit, and draw near to the Lord all of which are parts of our offering our bodies as living sacrifices unto the Lord. We then answered the question about ministering unto the Lord in our bodies through Torah observance and prayer. There are two ways to minister to the Lord, one is through prayer, and the other is in our bodies. The whole issue of Torah observance revolves around our relationship with the Lord; we drew a parallel between that of fasting where we abstain from certain things to devote ourselves to prayer to that of being Torah observant being a matter of choice. Yeshua's yoke enables us to observe Torah to honor God rather than to earn merit towards our salvation.

VI.2 Concluding Remarks

This is why faith in Yeshua and the "life change" is so much a work of G-d and His grace and Glory. We allow G-d to work in our lives just like it is the decision of others to turn to Yeshua and trust in him. I want you to remember that Torah observance will not save but it is a work (fruit of the spirit) that is within us as a result of our faith in Yeshua. Trust in the Lord Yeshua and you will be saved. There are five conditions for the salvation of individuals that are stated in the b'rit hachadasha (NT):

Salvation plan

1. Believing that Yeshua is Lord and trusting in him (Romans 10:9)
2. Acknowledging him publicly (Luke 12:8, Romans 10:9)
3. Turning from sin to G-d (Mark 1:15, Acts 2:38)
4. Being immersed (Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38)
5. Holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.

A person who meets the first four conditions but leads an ungodly life gives public evidence that he is not saved. In Acts 16:31 here Paul names only the first condition having talked with the jailer Paul was able to sense he is ready to meet all of the conditions as soon as they are explained which Paul does in Acts 16:32.

Today in our western society we are more individualistic as compared to the first century family. In this case the jailer and his family were saved because of the tight knit connection the family had with the head of the family the father. Today however we are more independent and are less of a tight knit family. Some of these concepts may be foreign to you because of the culture you were raised within. Continue to ask the Lord in prayer to help you to grow closer to Him, and to show you the problem areas in your life that are keeping you out of His will and he will help.

Finally, I would like to discuss a little about stepping out into G-d's will and how God reveals to us the problem areas that need fixing in order to draw closer to him. As believers we really do need to consistently be evaluating and reevaluating our lives as well as the motives behind our wanting to be Torah observant. It is a condition of the heart, our hearts desire to obey the Lord or some pride wanting to be a part of a community that keeps Torah?

VI.3 Stepping into G-d's Will

I know how difficult life can be as well as our walk with G-d in the midst of persecution which comes in many forms. I want to reassure you right now that G-d did not and will not turn His back on you. I know that for a fact. I know this because the Scriptures say G-d will never leave us nor forsake us (Heb13:5).

We are given G-d's holy Spirit which is our comforter and the one which convicts us of sin when we do sin, so if you are troubled and grieved by the things you do in your life, such as swearing, and anger, or not living obediently to the commandments of the Lord, praise the Lord because that is a sign of your being saved by grace. I want you to know that if you are asking G-d in sincerity, with all your heart in humility the Lord is going to show you what needs to be changed. By asking the Lord to show you areas in your life that you need changed you are also demonstrating your desire to draw near to the Lord because you are examining your faith, and your walk as a believer and the Spirit of G-d is revealing to you the problem areas.

In contrast to this a person who does not really want to change will ask G-d and G-d will not do anything because this person does not desire to change immediately when/after they ask G-d in prayer. As believers we need to be consistently evaluating our lives as well as the motives behind why we are praying for change. Once we come with the correct heart and motive the power of the Ruach Hakodesh (the Holy Spirit) will begin to work. I mentioned the motivation behind our changing should be investigated. One question we should ask is "why do we want this change to occur." The reason we ask this is because this is something we have to actively be involved in, that is to allow the Ruach Hakodesh to work and point out all of the sins in our natural self, and then begin to work on replacing with the spiritual self. Only then will we see change in our lives. The apostle Paul said it this way:

אל-פילפיים 2:12²⁷

לכן חביבי כאשר שמעתם לי בכל עת כן לא לבד בהיותי עמכם כי עוד יתר עתה אשר אני רחוק מכם תיגעו בתשועת נפשתיכם ביראה וברעדה:

This is the process in which we walk as a believer and grow as a believer in our relationship with G-d. This is also why we need self evaluation. Now notice something, "It is the work of the Ruach Hakodesh which does the changing in our lives." So the next question is how we can get the Ruach Hakodesh to begin this work which we so much desire to occur in our lives. (i.e. those things you are having a problem with overcoming for example). Well, just like our bodies require food/nutrients to grow, the Ruach Hakodesh also needs to be fed in order to grow strong ... strong enough in fact to overcome the carnal desires that we have (the natural self). There is a major pitfall however a lot of believers fall into let me give an example.

I like to study people, their behaviors and such. I have found a problem that seems to be reoccurring in a lot of believers today. Let me explain a little bit what the problem concerns. I find believers are hungry for the word of G-d but lack a fundamental understanding on the importance of the word of G-d in their life. What a lot of people do is they look everywhere

²⁷ Phili.2:12, *Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.* , Ibid.

because of this spiritual hunger. They look online for biblical commentary, they go to church and sit in the pew listening to sermons, and they watch all of the televangelists and know every name, time, schedule and sermon that was preached. The major part that is missing here is a personal study of the Word of G-d. There is so much defeat in the body of believers today because they have allowed their own personal study of the Bible to slack and rely more upon commentary instead. Not to mention most churches today do not even teach about the Torah. I believe the Torah is of utmost importance for an understanding of G-d and His plan for our lives not to mention our own spiritual growth and walk with the Lord. The point I want to make here and to answer the question we asked about how to get the Ruach Hakodesh to start working is this: by studying the Bible daily, we feed our spirit, and it is by the spirit that our carnal self is replaced with the spiritual self. So now ask yourself, how much of the Bible are you reading on a daily basis? Are you in a Bible study class where once a week you are learning on an in depth level the deeper meanings of the Scriptures?

Furthermore, this is usually how the process goes; as soon as we start moving according to our own soul, we start moving according to our own thoughts, and then we start moving according to our own emotions rather than by the spirit. In the process, our spirit becomes weaker and weaker and weaker until finally failure. If we do not allow the Ruach Hakodesh to have complete and total control of our bodies, our mind, and our emotions we will never be free from the problems in our lives. And if we do not feed our spirit the power Ruach Hakodesh will dwindle until we fall right back into the same old lines we have always been doing. The cycle of continually falling into the carnal nature is a direct result of our thought life which bring us back to the carnal things (See Galatians 5:19-21).

In my own experience, I know that the soul and the body are very closely knit together, and when I feed the Ruach (spirit), the Ruach (spirit) becomes stronger and takes control of my body along with the problems of sin in my own life. I know this will work for you too. So what is happening in our lives when we feed the Ruach (spirit)? The Ruach Hakodesh is going deeper and deeper into our lives to root out our spiritual problems. The Lord is changing us, and working in us and all of this culminates in what is called the process of sanctification.²⁸

Also remember we may run into problems with other people; I believe this is the result of the powers of darkness taking advantage of our problems with the sins in our lives. As an example from the Scriptures, let's look at James 3:14-15:

אדרת יעקב 3:14-15²⁹

וּאִם קִנְאָה מְרָה וּמְרִיבָה בְּלִבְבְּכֶם אֶל תִּתְהַלְּלוּ וְאֵל תִּשְׁקְרוּ בְּאִמְתּוֹ: אֵין זֹאת הַחֲכָמָה הַיְרֻדָּת מִמַּעַל כִּי אִם חֲכָמַת אֲדָמָה הִיא וְחֲכָמַת הַיִּצָּר וְהַשְּׂדִים:

This, I believe, gives us an idea on how Satan is working today. Satan works on the things which come from the heart, and he is capable of also injecting thoughts into our heads via the

²⁸ Sanctification = involves more than a mere moral reformation of character, brought about by the power of the truth: it is the work of the Holy Spirit bringing the whole nature more and more under the influences of the new gracious principles implanted in the soul in regeneration. In other words, sanctification is the carrying on to perfection the work begun in regeneration, and it extends to the whole man. 2003: Eastons Dictionary, Bible Foundation.

²⁹ James 3:14-15, *But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.* , in *The Scofield Study Bible*, Oxford University Press: New York.

spiritual realm. Remember, there is a direct correlation of our thought life and the cycle of sin that we fall into. This is where prayer comes into the picture. We need continual prayer for others, for ourselves, and for our relationship with G-d to grow and the Ruach Hakodesh is how we commune with G-d during prayer time.

VI.4 Things you can do today

1. Begin feeding the your spirit today. Get on a daily reading program where you read through the Bible once a year. <http://www.Bibleinayear.org/> is a website that can help you with that by sending an email out each day.
2. Get involved in a Bible study where you begin to dig deep into the meaning of the Scriptures where you go verse by verse looking at the words and what is trying to be said and conveyed in the Scriptures. A group of believers on <http://www.inspeak.com> are Torah observant Messianic Jewish believers and are a great assembly of people who truly are a mishpocha (family) of believers. (Join the Messianic Believers group, CTOMC rooms.)
3. Pray for those who persecute you and be good to them as much as you can in G-d's grace and love.
4. Pray against the spiritual forces at work in your life that are trying to keep you in a state of defeat and depression. A good article on Satanic Attack an analysis of the nature of spiritual attack: <http://www.matsati.com/SatanicAttack.pdf> can be found at my website.
5. Get a group of friends whom you trust to pray for you continuously. Having a family of friends you can trust is very important.

Our culture, our upbringing, and our walk with the Lord are strongly dependent upon our individual commitment to the Lord. It is difficult to step outside of what we feel is right in our lives as compared to what is right in G-d's eyes. We can only do this with the help of G-d's Ruach Hakodesh. These guidelines above are a good starting place to help you begin to grow into a deeper relationship with the Lord. I want to leave you with three questions to think about.

Three Questions

1. Are you ready to offer yourself fully to G-d as He is calling you into His service?
2. Are you ready to sweep the rooms of your life clean, removing those things which are holding you back from entering into G-d's will and plan for your life?
3. Will you choose to hide or to come to Him?

In conclusion, I would like to say that to love one another is the second greatest commandment of all the Torah. More often than not I find a lack of love between brethren.

People are so quick to criticize each other and then take too much pride in the type of group they belong/ascribe to, and may snub others because one may not believe similarly on the minor doctrines. It is ridiculous and distressing to see a lack of agape love between brethren. If we do not begin to love one another that are in HaMoshiach, how do we also show God's love to the unbelievers? Again and again Yeshua reminds His disciples to continue in love one for another (John 15:12, 17). Yeshua also said the world would know we belong to him by our love toward one another.

Be Blessed in Messiah Yeshua

VII Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Sharon Tan and Sergio for their helpful review of this article. Without their help and suggestions this article would not be what it is today.

הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:

Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,
"Yeshua" King Messiah for ever and ever