



Have a Spiritual Focus

(An accompanying teaching for the Torah portion Bo for 2021)

by Moshe Schwab

Names

Kefa – Peter
Messiah – English for Mashiach; anointed one; Christ in the Greek means to be smudged
Moshe – Moses
Pesach – Passover
Shaul – Paul
Yeshua – Jesus' real name
Yĕhōvâh – God's real name forever (Ex. 3:15)
Yochanan – John

Terms

Chametz – leavened bread
Haftarah – reading from the prophets
Tanakh – Old Testament portion of Bible
Torah – 1st 5 books of the Bible
Torah portion – there are 54 portions of the Torah
Bo – the 15th Torah portion

Plant heavenly things.

The sooner we realize that we are accountable for our actions in life, the better it is for us. For some, it takes time to realize that bad decisions produce bad results. The opposite is also true. Good decisions produce good results.

I studied hard in college and it opened all kinds of doors for me. I got to work in research which is a prestigious job. I felt very blessed for that opportunity. I got a job in the robotics field which is really fun and interesting. The machines produced products so fast that the only way to count them was electronically.

Sometimes we put our lives only into worldly things because we know that will help us to succeed. There is something else though that is very important. It should take precedence over our lives, but because our lives can depend so much on our worldly abilities, we may put our priorities in the wrong place. We need to also have a spiritual focus in life.

When I worked in research, I would pray the whole way to work. By the time I got to work, I felt pretty good. I was surprised to find out that some people thought I was too at peace. You see, that is the world. It seems you are not allowed to be at peace. You must strive and be filled with discontent. My uncle used to work in nuclear research and he told me that he was miffed over some people's hard line on life.

Is it better to never be happy or feel fulfilled? Absolutely not, but make sure you are also fulfilled spiritually. Colossians 3:1-2 NKJV, Seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.”

I think that having a balanced life helped me tremendously with life. Yeshua said in Matthew

16:26-27 NKJV, "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works."

If we are just worldly focused, what kind of reward will we get from God? The word soul is the word life in the Greek. If you have everything you could have dreamed of, but lose your life, it was of no use to you. Yeshua drew them in with the obvious. There is an old expression, "You can't take it with you." Then Yeshua switches topics on them. What about your spiritual life. You will be judged by God by how you live, that you will take with you!

Since all that we acquired wouldn't profit us if we lost our lives, what was the point of all the wealth we accumulated? Exactly, what if all we've worked for doesn't include living right, how we related to God, and how we've viewed life spiritually – not having a proper viewpoint of life is worthless.

Shaul says in 1 Corinthians 3:12-14 NKJV, "Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward."

If we just live for things, our works will not endure.

Some people are all about what they look like or what they have. Some are all about what their church building looks like, but what is important? I'm not saying that we shouldn't care about taking care of ourselves. Shaul tell us in 1 Timothy 5:8 NKJV, "But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."

It is important to remember that we are accountable for our life in all aspects. All areas of our life should include a godly attitude and have godly intentions, followed by godly acts. The message of Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 is simple, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.

Stay fresh and ready.

Start the day right. Make a commitment to do what is right and if possible, start you day with prayer like I did. When I first began working in research, I had to do something about the tension I was feeling. Then I began to pray on my way to work. I think someone called Mr. Smiley. I wasn't aware of how I was coming off. I was immensely thankful to God for helping me to have peace in my life.

I was not fresh and ready when I was feeling tense. Prayer changed that for me. Another way that helps me is the gift of speaking in tongues. I committed myself to doing that and it helps me to stay relaxed and be at peace. God does something for us when we take what He

wants for us seriously. Shaul says that speaking in tongues was prophesied in the Tanakh, 1 Corinthians 14:21 NKJV, "With men of other tongues and other lips I will speak to this people; and yet, for all that, they will not hear Me;". Isaiah 28:11-12 NKJV says, "For with stammering lips and another tongue He will speak to this people, To whom He said, 'This is the rest with which You may cause the weary to rest,' And, 'This is the refreshing'; Yet they would not hear."

It's still true isn't it. I hear it all the time. People resist this gift instead of wanting to accept it. It's not possession; you can stop and start when you want. You don't have to do anything weird. Some people malign the gift because some misuse it. It is the devil that is causing God's gift to be misused. Also, it is not a natural gift, but is supernatural.

Scriptures that relate to speaking in tongues:

- * "He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself." 1 Corinthians 14:4 NKJV
- * "For he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification." 1 Corinthians 14:5 NKJV
- * "For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful." 1 Corinthians 14:14 NKJV
- * "For you indeed give thanks well, but the other is not edified." 1 Corinthians 14:17 NKJV
- * "I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all; 1 Corinthians 14:18 NKJV
- * "Let all things be done for edification." 1 Corinthians 14:26 NKJV
- * "If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord." 1 Corinthians 14:37 NKJV
- * "Desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues. Let all things be done decently and in order." 1 Corinthians 14:39-40 NKJV

The scriptures say that when someone speaks in tongues they are refreshed, they edify themselves, it is prayer, and they give thanks to God. It does not say it is for missions. We are to interpret speaking in tongues in a meeting (this is done supernaturally), meetings are supposed to be edifying, don't forbid speaking in tongues, all is to be done with order, and Shaul himself spoke in tongues a lot; and God used him a lot. Speaking in tongues demonstrates trust in God. Isaiah said that those who resist it do not want to hear.

Of course there are other things we can do to get relaxed. Doing something you enjoy that seems timeless to you can be relaxing. Exercise can be relaxing because it releases brain chemicals in our body to relax us. Sleep and rest is relaxing. Enjoying beautiful things and the beauty of nature is relaxing. Music can be relaxing. Perhaps you can think of something you do to relax.

Take the opportunity to let others know truth.

What good is all the truth we have all bottled up inside us. Let people know that God's commandments give us wisdom. Deuteronomy 4:6 NKJV says, "Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding." Let people know that God can answer prayer supernaturally. Let people know that Yeshua rose from the dead and that

is proof that He can raise us from the dead to be in His wonderful future kingdom. 1 Corinthians 15:6 NKJV says, "After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once." Isn't that great! 1 Peter 3:15-17 says, "Always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil."

The psalmist in these next verses desires truth and God's goodness. There are people out there that also want truth and you can help them to know the truth. Psalms 25:5-6 NKJV says, "Lead me in Your truth and teach me, For You are the God of my salvation; on You I wait all the day. Remember, O LORD, Your tender mercies and Your lovingkindnesses." This world is filled with all kinds of ideas and people are searching for truth. Why not try God. Some don't want to be tricked any more by people's personal opinions. They want to know truth and the God of the universe has blessed us with His word. Ephesians 4:14-15 NKJV says, "No longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things."

I have to think people are tired of the lies and half truths people make up.

Be in a place of peace; God is present powerfully when our minds are clear.

Decide you will be at peace. Clear your mind from all the junk thoughts and negatives that are pushing your peace away. This may not be easy at times. If you are having trouble, perhaps ask a wise person to help you.

Maybe you are struggling with acceptance. You don't know what others are thinking so don't torture yourself. I remember this one guy at work being rude to me and I wondered what was going on. The next day it was as if nothing happened. I worried about it for nothing. Sometimes we don't get to see people for awhile. That's probably more true these days with the virus, but don't assume anything. Perhaps they are just busy.

What are some of the things you do to protect your thoughts?

I resist negative thinking.

I will get busy being productive.

I will ask myself why I am upset in the 3rd person. "Why is Moshe upset?"

I will pray for the situation or the other person.

It says in Philippians 4:4-7 NKJV, "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and

minds through Christ Jesus." It's so important that we have joy and talk to God about what we are struggling with. He can answer prayers. I have just thought about things I needed and they just happened. God is listening.

Shaul continues on in Philippians 4:8 NKJV, "Whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy — meditate on these things." If we are all the time entertaining negative thoughts, we will not have joy. Yeshua's brother Ya'akov said in James 4:7-8 NKJV, "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you." We have to take a stand and keep our thoughts clear. God can keep your heart and mind (Philippians 4:7); you can do it with God's help.

Pharaoh thought He was in control and nothing else mattered, but he found out who was really in control. Living life without a proper spiritual focus is a big mistake. I think there is a saying that says you will end up paying for what you do. God is the almighty king and judge. Don't diminish who He is. Have a balanced life that puts God in His proper place. Stay fresh spiritually. Live the truth and share about your life in God. Stay at peace and keep your head clear, and in the right place.