

Dynamic Spiritual Martial Arts

Hanging on to the Shield of Faith

Eikev **As a Result** **Follow the King Not the Crowd**

Torah: Deut. 7:12-11:25

(1) 8:2 – the forty years was a time of testing to see whether the new generation would be willing to keep the commandments and not repeat the mistakes of the first generation. Who are you prepared to follow, the crowd or the commandments of the King?

(2) 8:17. When things go bad, some people blame G-d and when things go good, some people take all the credit. In either case, we need to acknowledge the L-rd and not push Him aside.

(3) 10:16. Circumcising our heart and not stiffening our neck is the reaction G-d is looking for – acknowledging we belong to Him and being willing to walk with Him is what life is all about, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile.

(4) 11:18 signs on your hands and frontlets for your eyes. Our focus should always be the King and His Word, as we pass through this life, because how we respond will always be more important than what actually happens to us, because we are calle3d to follow the King and not the crowd – how are your hands and eyes doing?

Haftarah: Is. 49:14-51:3

(5) 49:16. He has Israel written on His hands and the walls of Jerusalem before His eyes. He never forgets His people and wants His people (Jews and Gentile) to learn not to forget Him, no matter what is going on in our lives.

(6) 51:1. He is the rock from which we were hewn, and the cleft in the rock from which we were taken. Israel's history has been long and often painful, but it has always been about G-d – when we realize who He is and who we really are and where we really come from, we will walk with the King and not follow the crowd.

Brit Chadashah: Heb. 11:8-13

(7) 11:10. Abraham saw beyond his life – beyond this life and beheld the heavenly city, the final big picture and growing in faith means that we learn to see the same reality, because when we do, we will walk with the King and not follow the crowd.

Psalm 75

Jewish Hero: Aly Raisman (Jewish American Olympic Gold medal gymnast who gave a salute to the 11 Israeli athletes murdered in Munich in 1972)

In this series we are dealing with two parallel concepts: ***being fully equipped with our spiritual armour*** and ***also becoming skilled in its use***. Today we are dealing with the shield of faith and its ability to quench the fiery darts of the wicked.

In Roman times, the soldiers would soak their shields in water (the leather covers and straps), so that fiery arrows would be extinguished and not either burn the straps or make the shield too hot to handle.

I have two questions for you this morning. (1) ***Are the straps of your faith burning*** and (2) ***Is your faith becoming too hot to handle***

We live in a society which openly challenges the Bible and claims it is just a collection of ***primitive myths*** which science has disproved – and at the same time our politically correct society also says that everyone should just believe what they want to, because everybody is right – or that there is not right or wrong when it comes to religion. I am not going to drop my shield of faith because the Bible is less popular.

Claiming to have disproved the Bible is like ***setting your shield on fire***, claiming that truth is absolute and that not everybody is right is like making your ***shield pretty hot to handle***.

G-d built spiritual priorities into every ***language*** and ***culture*** when He divided mankind into races and nations and languages at ***Babel*** and there will always be a ***grass roots spirituality*** which He will use in order to speak to the generations and nations of mankind and bring them to Himself. So in a way, there is some truth in all religions – our better said, ***there is a hunger for truth in all religions***.

I have noticed that even in evolutionary nonsense and science fiction and other forms of secular literature and entertainment; there is a ***heart cry for truth*** – for ***meaning*** and ***purpose***, which shows the ***bad guys*** running ram shod over and which the ***good guys*** end up discovering and exploring.

I have never tried to be either offensive, or politically correct, but in the end, I believe what the Bible says and I do not believe what the latest version of the ***evolutionary myth*** pretends is true. Ask me about it sometime and we will have a fruitful discussion, because I have looked at the arguments against the Bible and have found them so flawed that they would make ***good sieves***. Ouch, is my shield heating up? I hope so.

As well, I am not threatened by people who hold ***different religious positions*** and I try and find ***common ground*** and proclaim my faith and tell them why I believe it. Not always in one conversation and sometimes this may occur over a period of years, but ***I listen as much as I talk*** and want to dialogue with them to discover ***what religious (spiritual) priorities drive their lives*** (and how G-d's Spirit is speaking to them to bring them to the Messiah).

My faith shield does heat up sometimes, but I take the time to **quench the flames** and never let it get too hot without dealing with some of those challenges (questions) which G-d allows into my life to keep me more or less honest when I encounter **secular attacks** on the Bible and other religious perspectives.

Let me outline the **five core truths** of the Bible and let you see how you measure up – if they are what your faith shield is made of (it will be both impenetrable and fireproof) – or if yours will be penetrated, burnt and knocked out of your life.

1. The Bible is the Word of G-d
2. Yeshua (Jesus) is the Son of G-d – G-d the Son
3. He was born of a virgin
4. He died on the cross for the sins of the world
5. He rose, ascended and will one day return.

Understanding these truths and encountering the **resurrected Saviour by faith** is the whole point of **meaning** and **purpose** in this life. If these elements are in your shield and if you perform regular **shield maintenance** after every fiery attack that wants you to abandon these truths, then not only will your shield hold back the attacks of those who want you to abandon them, but it will not burn or get **too hot to handle**.

However, holding onto my shield does not mean that I let myself get pulled into **heated arguments** about my faith, even when people come **knocking on my door** with their pamphlets, because faith is not about winning an argument, it is about learning about the **core truths of the Bible** which provide us with the answers we need to find **meaning** and **purpose**.

May the shield of your faith be based on the **five core truths of the Bible** and may it never become too hot to handle as you deal with all the challenges which will try and make you **drop** it or **abandon** it.

We should be willing to discuss and share our faith, with anyone at anytime, but always with **respect** and **gentle boldness**. Otherwise, when some people want to argue or give me some literature, I politely and firmly end the conversation and close the door and go back to **polishing my shield** and working on the straps.

Why? Because one aspect of the **dynamic spiritual martial arts** we are studying is avoiding **useless confrontations** and saving our time for those who want a serious talk about **meaning** and **purpose** and making sure that our grasp of the core truths of the Bible remains strong and never too hot to handle

Let's pray