

What's Wrong with Natsari Judaism Part II

Rabbi Yehudah ben Shomeyr

But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging. _ I Peter 4:7-9

The Western World has taught us to wear many masks, to put on a game face. To be civil, cordial and professional only because the situation and circumstances demands it or because that's what is expected or it is the cultural protocol or because we have something to potentially gain from such action even though our heart is not in it. Living in the Southern US for part of my life as well as having relatives from the south I have seen the gracious warm smiles and hearty handshakes, but I have also experienced what happens sometimes after you back is turned. Gossip and slander peppered with generous portions of, "Well bless his heart did you see... Did you hear..." as if that is the formula to excuse and turn juicy gossip or harsh criticism into a blessing or prayer request.

In verse 8 Kefa (Peter) is telling us not to let love for our brethren in Messiah to grow cold and become insincere because it is love that allows us to forgive and overlook faults that would offend and rattle us as an unbeliever. Kefa quotes Proverbs 10:12 and says that it is this love for each other that will allow us to overlook when people miss the mark of our expectations.

It is so bad today, if you say "God" and not "Elohim" or if you decide to trim your beard or say "Yeshua" instead of "YAHshuah" the other fellow will turn on you as if you were a blasphemous, apostate, pagan leper! This is NOT love, this hypersensitive, hypercritical, hypocritical, self-righteousness masquerading around as upholding the standard.

The Jewish culture of our faith has unintentionally conditioned us to become insincere. How many times have we greeted each other and throw around "Shalom!" and not stop and really comprehend what we are saying to each other. Shalom is NOT a simple, "Hey bro!" It implies, "The Peace and Wholeness of Messiah Yeshua be upon you."

Secondly, we live in a society that does not allow us quite time to think, let alone pray. Table fellowship is discouraged at restaurants by a blaring TV in every corner. We have sound generating machines for when we sleep. We pop in our ear buds and carry around our mp3 players so as not to chat with the guy next to us on the plane or bus. Many houses always have the TV on in the background for noise

when no one is watching it. This overstimulation of our brain deafens our spirit and makes it difficult to pray. To compound the issue, many have felt obligated to feel guilty if they do not pray from the siddur, which puts the brain and spirit on autopilot and has decreased the amount of time believers spend in spontaneous, heartfelt prayer. Kefa warns us of this in verse 7, imploring us to always keep a calm mind in order to be able to pray more effectively.

Thirdly, because of our lack of love, insincerity, and self-absorption due to the overstimulation of our mind, we fail to be what made Abraham our father so great; and that is HOSPITALITY.

Rabbi's say the Temple was destroyed and Israel carried away on account of lack of love for one another and that Sodom and Gomorrah was not only destroyed because of their sexual sin, but because also their lack of love and hospitality.

Let us love one another as Messiah loves us (John 13:34) and let us cultivate a deep, rich, genuine love and compassion for our brothers and sisters. Let us learn the hospitable ways of our forefather Abraham so we can truly be called his children and be worthy of the name.