

Apples of Gold

Zvi Kalisher's life-changing spiritual conversations

<https://www.foi.org/zvikalisher/>

HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT YOU FOLLOW THE TRUTH?

For many months I had not seen the ultra-Orthodox from the Chabad-Lubavitch movement. They try to convince people that their late leader, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson from New York, was the messiah.

I was wondering whether they had left for good, until recently when I heard a knock on my door. Several ultra-Orthodox men stood outside with one of their well-known rabbis. A few years earlier, this rabbi had argued with me on a crowded bus and shouted at me concerning my faith. He did not know upon whose door he had knocked and was greatly surprised when I answered.

"We have come to visit you," he said, trying to appear in control. With him were two young assistants whom he was instructing in how to witness to people about Rabbi Schneerson.

"What news do you bring?" I asked.

"Important news," said one of the young men. They began to speak about Rabbi Schneerson, about whom many in Israel no longer want to hear.

"Do you believe he is the true messiah?" one asked.

"You have believed a lie," I replied. "You do not know the truth about God, so you have fallen into deep sin and believe a great falsehood."

Nervously, the men looked at their rabbi. “Did you hear what he said about our holy messiah?” one asked him.

Then one asked me, “Why do you speak against such a holy one?”

“You are worshiping blindness,” I said. “And you will become spiritually blind, as your teacher has become.”

“How do you know you follow the truth?” one asked.

“Because I follow the Bible,” I replied. “I believe only in Almighty God, as is written in the Bible. Is the Bible not holy enough for you that you spend so much time reading books by rabbis instead of reading the Bible? And do you pray from the depths of your heart or from prayer books?”

“We pray from prayer books. How do you know how to pray without a prayer book?” one asked.

“I pray before the Lord, from my heart; and I am sure my prayer is received in heaven.” I showed them the important passage of Deuteronomy 6:4–6, where it is written: “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart.”

They recite these verses many times each day, but they do not understand what they say because they read so quickly.

We had a nice conversation, and I gave them each a piece of cake and a cup of coffee. This hospitality surprised them. One young man remarked, “We know you are against us. Yet you receive us warmly, as friends. Why?”

“I believe in Almighty God,” I said. “With Him there is no hatred, only love.”

Now the rabbi stirred, emerging from his calmness. “Do you know with whom you speak? He has believed in This Man!”

Then the students wanted to know how I came to believe in Jesus. So I told them! It was a great opportunity for me to explain the true way of salvation. I opened my Bible and read to them what is written about the Lord Jesus in the Old Testament, particularly Isaiah 53. They listened, reading along with me while glancing at the rabbi, waiting to see what he would do. But he did nothing. Then he said, “It would be better if we left.”

“Why?” one asked. “We are reading the Bible. Is it forbidden to read the Bible?”

But they left, telling me, “We want to see you again.” Please pray they return and that we can have another conversation about the Lord.