

# Apples of Gold

Zvi Kalisher's life-changing spiritual conversations

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## RABBI SCHNEERSON

I recently met with a group of ultra-Orthodox men to whom I have spoken many times.

“We bring you something you have never seen,” one said. Another man pulled out a picture of Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson. Rabbi Schneerson was the Hasidic leader of the ultra-Orthodox Lubavitch movement for 44 years. He lived and died in Brooklyn, New York, and he never set foot in Israel.

One man held up his picture and proclaimed, “This is the true messiah!” Underneath Rabbi Schneerson’s picture was written, “And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. Isaiah 53:6.”

Sadly, many Lubavitchers believe Schneerson is the messiah. “I know what you believe,” I told them. “But I know about whom this was written.”

“Then tell us so we also shall know,” one said.

“You are living in deep blindness,” I explained. “You have created your own messiah.”

“He is holy!” they insisted.

“As the Chosen People of God, you should be ashamed to say such a thing about a man,” I told them. “Only God Himself is holy—this One,

about whom you read in Isaiah 53. Do you want to know where else you can read about Him?"

"Show us where it is written about our holy one," one replied.

So I opened my Bible to Micah 5:2. There it is written, "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting."

After they read it, they looked at me with anger and began to shout, "You want to make us Christians!"

"Look at the book you are reading," I replied. They saw they were reading from the Hebrew Scriptures.

One asked, "How did you come to this?"

I told them I read only the Bible. I do not read rabbinical commentaries, as they do. "You have turned a mere man into a god. Even Rabbi Schneerson himself did not claim to be the messiah," I said. I could see they had no rest in their souls.

"Do you believe in this one from Bethlehem?" one asked.

"I believe in this one about whom it is written in the Bible. You should be ashamed that you venerate a man from New York City," I told them. Then I began teaching about the Holy Spirit of God. But as soon as I mentioned Him, they started shouting again.

"You speak like those Christians," one said. "Show us where it is written about the Holy Spirit in the Bible!"

“Please, open the book of Psalms and read chapter 51. Read what King David asked the Lord in his prayer, when he was in trouble.” They examined my Bible to make sure it was kosher.

As they read verse 11, they grew quiet. So I took the Bible from them and read the verse in a loud voice: “Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.”

“Was King David a Christian?” I asked.

“You are trying to brainwash us,” one said.

“How mistaken you are,” I told them. “I am trying to show you the truth in our Hebrew Scriptures. You refuse to study Isaiah 53, but then you go to people to show them that passage. I want people to believe what is written in Isaiah 53. You want them only to believe Rabbi Schneerson is the messiah.”

We parted in peace. And they told me, as they have many times in the past, “You have given us much to think about.”