

# OIM UPDATE

October 2018

Now that the Fall Feasts are complete, we enter into a three month sprint to the end of the world's Gregorian calendar year. In the Northern Hemisphere, where the majority of humanity resides, the deciduous trees and perennial foliage begin their colorful annual return to dormancy, reminding us about the inevitability of decay, and, if and when spiritually attuned, future death. Thankfully for the faithful ones, the Apostle Paul quotes from the Prophet Hosea, informing Believers about the mystery of the resurrection of the dead, and the great anticipation of receiving an imperishable body that will be immortal:

**"Now I say this, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, and what decays cannot inherit what does not decay. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last *shofar*. For the *shofar* will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruptibility, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this corruptible will have put on incorruptibility and this mortal will have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory [Isaiah 25:8].' 'Where, O Death, is your victory? Where, O Death, is your sting [Hosea 13:14]?' Now the sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the Torah. But thanks be to God, who keeps giving us the victory through our Lord Yeshua the Messiah! Therefore, my dearly loved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord—because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:50-58, TLV).**

Notice how Paul's reaffirming quote amplifies Hosea's statement about redeemed humanity's ultimate victory over death, also adheres to a fundamental Biblical truth that *only* by the testimony of multiple witnesses (in this case Paul and Hosea), is a fact confirmed:

"By the word of two or three witnesses, the one who is to die is to be put to death. No one is to be put to death by the word of one witness" (Deuteronomy 17:6, TLV).

"By the testimony of two or three witnesses shall every word be established" (2 Corinthians 13:1b, TLV).

This Scriptural truth about evidentiary standards requiring at least two witnesses, has become a pillar of jurisprudence in civilizations influenced by Biblical mores. But lamentably, given the gut wrenching U.S. Supreme Court nomina-

tion, which we have recently witnessed, the obvious deviation from Judeo-Christian moral, ethical, and judicial systems—has been replaced by a wicked display of mob rule, by an unsubstantiated and uncorroborated malicious accusation of one person.

Nevertheless, in this current season of increasing revelation and ancient prophecy fulfillment manifested right before understanding eyes that see and discerning ears that hear, the spiritual battles taking place between the competing powers and principalities vying to control the world are clearly evident:

**"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the worldly forces of this darkness, and against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places"** (Ephesians 6:12, TLV).

So as Believers in the veracity of the Holy Scriptures, which portray God's ultimate words of instruction on how humanity should fairly adjudicate between conflicting testimonies, what can and should be done to allow justice to prevail? On one hand, if a person is in a position of authority and responsibility to have direct impact on these circumstances—like senators constitutionally given the duty to offer advice and consent regarding the nomination, or the president, who chooses the nominee and presides over the Department of Justice, formed to maintain justice in the country—the actions expected are evident. They can proceed according to what they truly believe is in the absolute best interest of the country they serve, and the U.S. Constitution they swore to support and defend:

*I, (name), do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God.*

However, for the rest of us, as unelected citizens of the United States, in the constitutional republic where we reside—the most important thing we can do is pray fervently to the Holy One of Israel for His mercy and justice to pre-

vail, as we adorn the full armor of God. Believers need to understand the power of prayer and how it is incumbent upon each of us to faithfully intercede for these circumstances regarding the obvious “schemes of the Devil,” as noted in the context of the Ephesians 6:12 verse above:

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. **Put on the full armor of God, so that you are able to stand against the schemes of the devil.** For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the worldly forces of this darkness, and against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to resist when the times are evil, and after you have done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm then! Buckle the belt of truth around your waist [Isaiah 11:5], and put on the breastplate of righteousness [Isaiah 59:17]. Strap up your feet in readiness with the Good News of shalom [Isaiah 52:7]. Above all, take up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation [Isaiah 59:17] and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. **Pray in the Ruach on every occasion, with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, keep alert with perseverance and supplication for all the kedoshim [holy ones].** And pray for me when I open my mouth to make known with boldness the mystery of the Good News” (Ephesians 6:10-19, TLV).

Without being too dramatic, I believe that this country—which has been widely given the responsibility to take the good news to the world at large—is at a tipping point regarding its future direction. We need to humble ourselves and stand in the strength of Yeshua’s might, petitioning the Almighty One for justice, mercy, and compassion to prevail. We know He hears our prayers and can respond by revealing what is hidden in darkness to the light of truth, as Paul alluded to in the following statements:

“Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God’s judgment comes on the children of disobedience. **Therefore do not be partners with them. For once you were darkness, but now in union with the Lord you are light.** Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth), trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. **Take no part in the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them—for it is disgraceful even to mention the things that are done by them in secret. Yet everything exposed by the light is being made visible**” (Ephesians 5:6-13, TLV).

What a privilege to prayerfully stand in the gap and expose the children of disobedience, who secretly in the dark, proceed to conduct their nefarious activities to pervert justice in order to control the world through lies and deception. May the Holy One have mercy and may His truth and light prevail!

In fervent prayer,

Mark Huey

# IS YOUR TORAH OBSERVANCE

## *a genuine work of the Holy Spirit?*

*by J.K. McKee*

Among the people within today's broad Messianic movement, when you mention the words "Torah observant"—you can either detect a feeling of relief, a feeling of tension, or even some combination of the two. On the whole, standing in stark contrast to much of today's evangelical Protestantism, today's Messianic movement does believe in the ongoing validity and relevance of Moses' Teaching. Yeshua the Messiah Himself said, after all, "Do not think that I came to abolish the Torah or the Prophets! I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. Amen, I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or serif shall ever pass away from the Torah until all things come to pass" (Matthew 5:17-18, TLV). Our present world and universe are still here, so the Torah or Law of Moses does have some importance for men and women of faith today. At the very least, the foundational stories, accounts, and instructions seen in the Torah should inform us about the character of God, and His interactions in human history.

So why are there frequently tensions when various people make a point to label themselves as "Torah observant"? Is this because such people are reading the weekly Torah portions on a consistent basis? Is this because such people are making an effort to have a more wholistic understanding of the Bible, Genesis-Revelation? Is this because such people are sincerely trying to obey God to the best of their ability, and this requires some level of consideration for His commandments? Or, is it because in the past two to three decades, when one encounters the term "Torah observant," the likelihood of interacting with legalistic, condemning, and perhaps even merciless people has all of a sudden become quite probable?

### **Legalism in Religious History**

Both Jewish and Protestant theology demonstrate their own approaches, and difficulties, with interpreting and applying the commandments of the Torah. On the whole, the Jewish theological tradition has held to the idea that two Torahs were given to Moses at Mount Sinai: one written and one oral. The Written Torah is what comprises the five books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy; the Oral Torah comprises various explanations about how the commandments are to be kept by the Israelites, and were to be passed down by word of mouth via the successive generations of Israel's spiritual leaders. Ultimately, what the Oral Torah was

believed to compose, was transcribed by the Second Century C.E. in the form of the Mishnah, with the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds of the succeeding centuries formulating a great deal of commentary on the Mishnah. How much of what is considered to be the Oral Torah was actually communicated by God to Moses, and how much of it is human beings trying to reason with how to apply the commandments—is hard to say at times. But in Biblical Studies, it is hard to dismiss how literature like the Mishnah and Talmud does represent some useful and beneficial commentary for people who are trying to fairly examine difficult things in the Tanach. Much of the extra-Biblical literature valued by contemporary Judaism, attempts to interpret and apply Torah commandments for different settings, locations, and times—well outside of the Ancient Israelites preparing to enter into the Promised Land.

Protestant approaches to the Law of Moses, since the early days of the Reformation, are varied—but there are at least three major theological streams that affect many evangelical people today. (1) Lutheranism largely pitted God’s Law in the Tanach (OT) against God’s grace in the Apostolic Scriptures (NT). (2) Calvinism largely sub-divided the commandments of the Tanach (OT) into the moral law, civil law, and ceremonial law. What is believed to compose the moral law, remains in effect for all generations of God’s people, mainly involving statutes like the Ten Commandments, sexual code, and other inter-personal ethical regulations. (3) Wesleyanism followed suit with Calvinism in believing that the moral law of the Tanach (OT) remains in effect for all of God’s people, making the further stress that such a moral law was to be lived out via acts of goodness and mercy to those less fortunate in society.

Periods of both lawless and rebellious behavior toward God, and periods of rigid adherence and outward conformity toward God—range from the time of Ancient Israel, to Second Temple Judaism, and even to the Protestantism of the past several centuries. Seasons when various sectors of God’s people are legalistic, and are seen humanly striving to obey His Word, tend to arise because of seasons of licentiousness and His required punishment upon the disobedient. Many of the extra-Biblical traditions and customs which arose in Second Temple Judaism, were intended to help aid Jewish people faithful to the Torah, to not break it. Ancient Israel’s quantitative disobedience to the Torah caused the exile, and so it was believed that everything that could be done to prevent disobedience should be done. Yet, when so many extra-Biblical practices are enacted to prevent Torah violation, then one’s legitimate obedience of God’s word becomes stymied—as there can be a focus on smaller things, at the expense of more important

matters. Yeshua's classic word to the Pharisaical leaders of His day speaks to this: "Woe to you, Torah scholars and Pharisees, hypocrites! You tithe mint and dill and cumin, yet you have neglected the weightier matters of Torah—justice and mercy and faithfulness. It is necessary to do these things without neglecting the others" (Matthew 23:23, TLV).

While it is easy for many people to consider legalism to be a problem throughout Jewish history, Protestant groups are hardly devoid of their own legalism as well, insisting on the observance of their own extra-Biblical regulations in order for people to be considered in right standing before God. A classic trio witnessed throughout much of fundamentalist Christianity in America has been a strict prohibition on alcohol, tobacco, and dancing. Many contemporary Christian people will be judgmental of those who read certain kinds of books, listen to certain styles of music, watch certain television shows (or even have a television), and what style of education another's children are receiving. It is believed that certain restrictions must be in place, in order to prevent violation of key ethical and moral imperatives of God's Word. It is not as though some of these disciplines are always bad, but when they become a means unto themselves, then legalism will likely manifest.

## Lawlessness in the Present

I was raised in a family that was influenced greatly by the Wesleyan and Reformed theological traditions. While both differ on the role of the sovereignty of God in salvation, both are historically united in that the apparent "moral law" of the Old Testament is something to be followed by all generations of God's people. I would today consider the division of the Torah into the so-called "moral law" and "ceremonial law" to be artificial, but it cannot be denied that having a high view of the Torah's ethical statutes and imperatives, has had a positive influence on Western society. Those who believe that the Ten Commandments are to be followed (even with the Sabbath observed on Sunday), are looking to all of Scripture, to in some way inform their lives in the present. I never believed, in my previous evangelical Protestant experience, that Yeshua the Messiah completely abolished the Torah of Moses, and that it was entirely irrelevant for the lives of born again Believers.

It is a sad fact, but one of the most horrifying prophecies of the Olivet Discourse is, "Because lawlessness will multiply, the love of many will grow cold" (Matthew 24:12, TLV). **This lawlessness is a flat dismissal of all of God's Torah.** Far be it from it being dismissing some instructions as being "ceremonial," or only for a previous time period—the love and respect that human beings are to show to one another, will disappear. Matthew 24:10

preceding says it as much: “many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one other” (TLV). The stories, accounts, instructions, and directions of the Tanach (OT) Scriptures, will be unknown to people claiming faith in the God of Israel. *It will not guide any part of their conduct...*

When I entered into college as a freshman in 1999, and started getting involved, here and there, with various on campus Christian ministries—I knew as a Messianic person that Christian ignorance of the Old Testament was high. At the same time, I also knew that I would encounter many sincere people, who wanted to live their lives in accordance with the commandments of God—and this did include at least some instructions from the Tanach. I also encountered people who believed that Jesus absolutely did away with the Law, in all of its forms. But I saw a toss up of views, and was of the opinion in my college years that ultimately, if people are truly seeking the Lord, they have to come to grips with where they stand regarding the continuity of Scripture, and what role the Tanach plays in their understanding of God’s plan.

I have gone through seasons, where I have been both positive and negative, about the future of evangelical Believers and their association with things Messianic. In the past, however, when I talked about a rise in lawlessness, it was more hypothetical and speculative than realized. *Lawlessness will come...but it is not yet here in the concentration that we should expect.* But over the past few years—in particular since the legalization of homosexual marriage in the United States—something very nasty and demonic has been unleashed. Many people we know and are acquainted with, who have been claiming faith in the God of the Bible, have demonstrably shifted their emphasis away toward the need for His children to follow a code of conduct, and sin and ungodliness are *beyond* tolerated. As incomplete and underdeveloped as such a theology may be at times, I think most of us would welcome a widescale return to many Christians following the “moral law” of the Old Testament.

An important gauge as to where we are spiritually, in America at least, has manifested itself in the past year with a prominent megachurch pastor claiming that “Christians Need to Unhitch the Old Testament from Their Faith,” and later “Christians Are Not Required to Obey Any of the Commandments” from the Old Testament, including the Ten Commandments. One of America’s most popular preachers has openly taught that there is a strong discontinuity with the Tanach—as it was only a means to an end, resulting in the arrival of the Messiah. This relegates the Tanach (OT) as little more than old, dusty history describing Ancient Israel. And if this were not bad enough, not only do contemporary Christians not need to follow the

Ten Commandments—they should not oppose the removal of statues and monuments of the Ten Commandments in public places, since they are apparently not supposed to follow them anyway.

Some of the revelations that have come forth from Andy Stanley, are hardly isolated to him. For centuries there have been Protestants who have believed in a strong discontinuity between the Tanach and Apostolic Writings. There have been those who have relegated the Bible's commandments as only being applicable to Ancient Israel in the past, and not the Christian Church in the present. But while in past generations of those who believed some form of this theology, there was still a high enough regard for following the code of conduct presented by Yeshua and His Apostles as still being relevant—the talking points which will be more fervently declared in our future are that only "love" is required for God's people today, and such "love" means that we do not talk about, or even mention, others' inappropriate behavior or sin, and most especially that we impose some set of spiritual or ethical expectations onto others.

## **A Turning Toward God's Torah**

What has tended to happen in past history, when claiming Believers fall into an abyss of sin and ungodliness? While it is true that in past history, these have tended to be the seasons when significant revivals have occurred—perhaps more significantly there has been an emphasis witnessed on God's people stridently returning to the principles of the Holy Scriptures, and on living holy lives. Many of the significant spiritual movements in American Protestantism, to be sure, have involved a return to the moral and ethical principles of the Old Testament, chiefly embodied in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew chs. 5-7), and manifested in acts of goodness and mercy toward one's fellow human beings.

With the advent of today's Messianic movement, and its necessary emphasis on Jewish outreach, evangelism, and the restoration of Israel—we are at a much different point in history than any preceding movement of God. Those of us who are a part of the Messianic movement, have our attention necessarily focused on what God is doing with His Jewish people, we have a decisive burden for seeing Jewish people come to faith in Israel's Messiah, **we pay attention to the prophecies of Israel's end-time restoration**, and if we are non-Jewish we want to know what prophecies we might be involved in. Just as legitimate as Jeremiah 33:7, "I will restore Judah from exile and Israel from exile, and will rebuild them, as in former times" (TLV), is a prophecy like Isaiah 2:3, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of *ADONAI*, to the House of the God of Jacob! Then He will teach us His

ways, and we will walk in His paths. For Torah will go forth from Zion and the word of *ADONAI* from Jerusalem” (TLV). As much as we have all legitimately seen many Jewish people come to faith in Israel’s Messiah, *in fulfillment of prophecy*, so have we also seen many non-Jewish Believers want to return to a Torah foundation for their faith, *in fulfillment of prophecy*.

The reasons for such a turning to God’s Torah, on the part of those from the nations, should hardly be surprising in light of when we are in human history. **Many people who are claiming faith in the Messiah of Israel, have dismissed the Law of God and believe it has no relevance of any kind.** A majority of today’s Believers are completely uninformed about the character of God from the Torah and Tanach. Many people are completely unprepared for what is going to happen in future history, because they do not understand what has happened in past history. Aside from all of the necessary studies and reviews of different commandments and issues in the Torah and Tanach, modern evangelicalism has not at all been “empowered” by its widescale dismissal and avoidance of the Old Testament.

## **Supernatural Compulsion, Not Human Works**

Why is there, in various sectors of today’s Messianic movement, a great deal of tension that manifests, when, non-Jewish Believers in particular, label themselves as “Torah observant” or “Torah pursuant” or the like? Is it because such people have made an effort to associate themselves more tangibly with their faith heritage in Israel’s Scriptures? Is it because such people are reading the weekly Torah portions? Is it because such people are attending *Shabbat* services, rather than Sunday Church? **Most frequently, it is because such people are perceived to be legalists, and have become “Torah observant” so as to compensate for a possible lack of salvation.**

I am hardly someone who is going to discourage people from obeying God or studying Holy Scripture. And, I think that many Messianic Jewish Believers are mature enough to recognize that non-Jewish Believers eating a kosher style of diet and celebrating the appointed times of Leviticus 23, are hardly intruding onto their Jewish identity or heritage. Jewish Believers want non-Jewish Believers to join with them in common cause and fellowship in today’s Messianic congregations—but what they do not want is the Messianic movement to become something that has so many people from the nations at large entering in, that it becomes utterly overwhelmed and saturated with non-Jewish issues. A Messianic congregation is *principally* there to facilitate the mission of Jewish outreach, Jewish evangelism, and Israel solidarity. A Messianic congregation was not originally established to

avidly promote non-Jewish Torah observance, and hence seeing **the vast majority** of the issues that the congregation leadership has to address involve anything *but* reaching out to the Jewish community with the good news of Israel's Messiah. When non-Jewish Believers are indeed called by God into the Messianic movement, they will of course go through a period of acclimation to their Hebraic Roots in the Scriptures of Israel, and their Jewish Roots in the traditions and customs of Yeshua and His contemporaries. But, they will later need to contribute to the Messianic mission, and see how they can participate in the restoration and salvation of Israel.

The biggest issue present regarding the Torah observance of *any* Messianic person, is evaluating whether or not external works—specifically the “good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we would walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10, PME)—**are genuine products of the Holy Spirit**. Today's Messianic movement can often find itself getting bogged down in fruitless and tiring debates over Jewish and non-Jewish Believers, and what commandments are to be followed by which group. *Jewish and non-Jewish Believers are not exactly the same*, but our orientation to God's Torah in the post-resurrection era, has to be decisively affected by the thrust of the New Covenant power to supernaturally transcribe and compel the redeemed to obey God's commandments:

“Behold, days are coming’—it is a declaration of *ADONAI*—‘when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not like the covenant I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. For they broke My covenant, though I was a husband to them.’ it is a declaration of *ADONAI*. ‘But this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days’—it is a declaration of *ADONAI*—‘I will put My Torah within them. Yes, I will write it on their heart. I will be their God and they will be My people. No longer will each teach his neighbor or each his brother, saying: “Know *ADONAI*,” for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest.’ it is a declaration of *ADONAI*. ‘For I will forgive their iniquity, their sin I will remember no more’” (Jeremiah 31:31-34, TLV).

“Then I will sprinkle clean water on you and you will be clean from all your uncleanness and from all your idols. Moreover I will give you a new heart. I will put a new spirit within you. I will remove the stony heart from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Ruach within you. Then I will cause you to walk in My laws, so you will keep My rulings and do them” (Ezekiel 36:25-27, TLV).

To these two significant passages, can be added the great thrust of Joel

2:28(3:1), "So it will be afterward, I will pour out My Ruach on all flesh: your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions" (TLV). **The Holy Spirit is to be poured out upon all flesh or all humanity, and as such the redeemed in Messiah are to be performing good works resultant of the Holy Spirit's transformation of them.** This undeniably first includes a deeper and more cognizant remembrance of the critical commands of loving God and neighbor (Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:18; cf. Matthew 22:36-40; Mark 12:28-34; Luke 10:25-28). Knowing that good works are to be compelled by the activity of the Holy Spirit, should always get us to pause and consider whether our *external deeds* are truly produced by God's presence inside of us—*or* whether they are shallow, or even futile, products of our human flesh. Unfortunately, much of the internal conflict in today's Messianic movement, over concepts such as "Torah observance," come as a direct result of how many people who stridently consider themselves as such **are not producing good works resultant of the Holy Spirit transforming them from within.** Many, while theologically recognizing that works do not earn a person eternal salvation (Ephesians 2:8-9), spiritually speaking may demonstrate the character of someone who could be compensating for a lack of being forgiven and cleansed by God's intimate presence.

## **A Transformed Heart, A Transformed Mind**

While it is hardly an instantaneous process for most people, all mature Believers should recognize that the Holy Spirit, via the sanctification process, is to transform hearts and minds to be more like God. Psalm 139:17 declares, "How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How vast is the sum of them!" (NASU). The need for God's own to have the character of God imbued in their hearts, and the thoughts of God permeating in their minds, cannot be overstated. Today's Messianic Believers have been entirely correct to (re)emphasize how a significant part of the New Covenant—that too frequently gets lost on Bible readers—is "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances" (Ezekiel 36:27, NASU). *The Holy Spirit will compel obedience to Moses' Teaching.* Yet, this is also to take place in conjunction with our ability to love others, and demonstrate God's mercy to others, in more profound and significant ways. And, it should also cause each of us to be able to think and process Holy Scripture and spiritual matters in deeper and more significant ways as well.

Many of the controversies, and much of the division that is witnessed, among those who stridently label themselves as "Torah observant"—

manifest because there has not been a strong enough emphasis seen on the necessary work of the Holy Spirit *in transforming the character and quality* of today's Messianic Believers. Indeed, we should have little issue with any person in today's Messianic movement honoring edifying Biblical practices such as having a Sabbath rest, remembering God's salvation in the appointed times, or eating a kosher-style diet. These are all things that Yeshua Himself did! The challenge is that our salvation is predicated on His atoning sacrifice on the tree, and His resurrection from the dead; our salvation is not predicated by these activities. Too many people have their spirituality *rise and fall* on the basis of the Biblical holidays, clean and unclean meats, or more probably some other, much smaller, aspect of the Torah and/or Jewish tradition. If one's adherence to God's commandments is a genuine product of the Holy Spirit, then it will be tempered with the knowledge that human beings are not the Holy Spirit, and that the maturation of each person is determined by the pace of the Holy Spirit and not our own pace. If the Holy Spirit is to convict anyone, of a change in their behavior via your actions, make sure that you can indeed fairly balance external action with inward heart attitude.

**Many of you indeed are to be commended for being mature Believers**, who can balance things internal and external, and your attitudes and motives are becoming of those spiritually regenerated. However, you know that there is more pertaining to God's Word, and specifically the Torah or Pentateuch, which requires you to be able to think deeply and process ideas, that can be rather straining. While the Torah represents a part of Holy Scripture—which many are in the process of rediscovering in our day—it does include some difficult instructions, for Twenty-First Century people to process. Various commandments were given to Ancient Near Eastern people and their level of technology and economy, and various instructions were delivered as case law, addressing circumstances within Ancient Israel, and as such are subject to a diversity of applications. Being able to process through these, and other factors, does require a transformed mind which can have a high view of Torah as the foundation of Scripture, but with continuing revelation appearing in the Prophets, Writings, and Messianic Scriptures.

The Psalmist exclaims, "Give me understanding, that I may observe Your teaching and keep it wholeheartedly" (Psalm 119:34, NJPS). I pray that each of us who has a high view of the Torah in the lives of God's people, will take critical moments of prayer and mediation before Him, evaluating whether our actions are genuine, good works, produced by His Spirit.