

Here's What Religion Can Bring You for \$14.99

Last week, we celebrated in Israel, Lag B'Omer, or as I call it, close-the-windows-or-your-house-will-smell-like-an-ashtray Day. All over the country, there are bonfires.

Most Israelis have no idea what they are celebrating. It is simply a fun time to light fires and cook things in them.

In short, from Passover to Shavuot, we count the days, 50 in all and we call this, Counting the Omer. The "lag," stands for L and G, or in numbers, 30 and 3—in other words, the 33rd day of the Counting of the Omer. However, the day was chosen because it marks the death of a famous second century rabbi who revealed the deepest secrets of the Kabbalah. We will get back to Kabbalah in a minute.

The Graves of Dead Rabbis

In Israel, spiritual power is often sought in the strangest ways.

While as believers we have a healthy fascination with the empty tomb of Yeshua, ultra-orthodox Jews obsess over the graves of dead rabbis. All over Israel you will see a strange saying—Na, Nach, Nachma, Nachman Mi Uman—on bumper stickers, kippot (head coverings) and spray-painted all over the country.

Nachman was a famous rabbi from Uman in Ukraine. On his deathbed he called on two rabbis to witness an oath:

"If someone comes to my grave, gives a coin to charity, and says these 10 Psalms, I will pull him out of the depths of Gehinnom (hell). It makes no difference what he did until that day, but from that day on, he must take upon himself not to

return to his foolish ways.”

Thousands of Israelis flock to his grave in Ukraine in order to obtain blessing. I know two young men who paid \$500 to fly to Ukraine, get on a bus, drive several hours to Uman, pray at this grave, get back on the bus, drive to Kiev and get back on the plane bound for Israel.

They told me that by going God would bring them wives. They are both still single. Religion, in the negative sense of the word, always demands that we do weird stuff to get power.

Jewish Mysticism

Okay, back to Kabbalah, which was made world famous by Madonna. Kabbalah is Jewish mysticism, and teaches there is *hidden knowledge* within the Torah that can be obtained, often using letters and numbers. It is just another way of seeking spiritual power apart from a direct relationship with God.

Recently my wife and I led a tour here in the Land.

We visited the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. This site traditionally marks the place where Yeshua was crucified and buried. However, it is one of the most demonic places I’ve ever visited. Inside is something called the “Stone of Anointing”—supposedly where Yeshua’s body was prepared for burial.

I watched as people wept over the stone, touched it and brought clothing to touch it, assuming there was spiritual power in the rock. Others lit candles. It is merely the same thing as going to a dead rabbi’s tomb. It’s religion. And it’s racket. Several websites offer to light candles for you for a price.

For the affordable price of just \$, we will light a candle on your behalf in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and place your

prayer on the Stone of Anointing. All candles are lit on the day following your request. To commemorate the occasion, we will send you, via email, the photos of the actual candle which was lit on your behalf and the photo of the prayer being placed on the Stone of Anointing.

What About the Western Wall?

Even the Western Wall, which I love to visit (I was there teaching just yesterday) has no spiritual power. Indeed it is an amazing memorial of the History of the Jewish people. The emotion that one experiences there should be marveling over the grace of God to preserve His people—in other words, it should connect us to the person of God, not the idea that placing a written prayer in the wall has any more significance than praying in your kitchen.

Just Ask

The key to spiritual power is not in stones, graves or historical places. Lighting a candle will not bring revival. If you desire a spiritual encounter, it is far easier than flying to a dead rabbi's grave in Ukraine. You just simply need to ask.

This is one of my favorites passages:

“Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” (Luke 11:11-13)

God wants to give you His power, but it comes through a father/child relationship. As we cultivate that, we will enjoy His power. No graves or candles, but time spent in His presence, asking for the Holy Spirit. That is the key to the power of God.

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