

Letter or Spirit?

"The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" (2 Corinthians 3:6).

Until we reach inner maturity, we often live our lives based on learned and taught knowledge. But true maturity... begins with spiritual awakening.

Spiritual awakening means questioning what we know, letting go of what we have misunderstood, and rediscovering the truth.

Without the vitality and transformative power of the Spirit, it is impossible to break free from stereotypes and rigid attitudes. This is why treating sacred texts and rituals only in a formalistic way leads to inflexible practices. That is why St. Paul says, *"Do not quench the Spirit"* (1 Thessalonians 5:19).

The letter is like a shell. The shell protects the essence and allows us to benefit from it. But the shell always carries a struggle for power—a contest of dominance. The essence, however—the Spirit—always exists in a spirit of service.

A literal perspective imposes boundaries through rigid frameworks and leads to a troubled, unstable life. A spiritual perspective, on the other hand, offers a life of peace through love and understanding.

The Spirit liberates a person from all fixed patterns and enables inner transformation. It integrates morality and virtue. Thus, the letter ceases to be an external burden and becomes an inner truth of love.

The letter worships God. The Spirit encourages union with God.

The letter seeks God outside. The Spirit finds God within.

The letter sees visible and invisible differences as problems. The Spirit gives existential meaning to visible and invisible differences.

The letter perceives differing perceptions, perspectives, and beliefs in the background as problems, dividing them. The Spirit sees them as natural, uniting them.

The letter teaches fear of hell. The Spirit teaches the creation of heaven on earth.

The letter is rooted in fear and limitation. The Spirit is founded on love and freedom.

The letter makes one feel like a small drop in the ocean. The Spirit makes one feel the vast ocean within a single drop.

The letter relies on others' experiences. The Spirit relies on personal experience.

The letter is like dry soil. The Spirit is the green shoot sprouting from that soil.

The letter provides knowledge. The Spirit gives birth to meaning.

Knowledge teaches. But meaning transforms a person... And when meaning is born, so is the person.

Because a human is not only as much as they know—but as much as they comprehend.

Yusuf Beğtaş