

A D'var Torah

power to do great things...
By HaRav Ariel Bar Tzadok.
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Ask yourself this, what do you really want from a Rabbi or from a D'var Torah (Torah lesson)?

If you are honest with yourself, you most likely will answer that all you are seeking is some good intellectually interesting religious words that will keep you entertained for a short while.

Tell me this, how many words of Torah or teachings of Rabbis really touch you deep; deep enough to make you pause and wonder, about yourself, your life and your purpose? Again, if you are honest, you will most likely answer that very few if any such teachings have ever touched you so deep.

Now ask yourself; if Torah has not touched you deeply, to the very root of your soul, emotionally moving you and changing the course of direction of your consciousness, why has it not done so? Is it because you have never been exposed to such deep and moving Torah teachings, or is it that perhaps you yourself lack any personal, emotional depth into which Torah can reach?

If Torah has not touched you deeply to the essence of your soul, then the fault must lie with either the Torah you are learning or your own connection with your inner self. Perhaps it is one or the other; perhaps it is a combination of the two. Whatever the case may be, I find that those whose interests in Torah are as shallow as they themselves are usually are missing out on entire levels and dimensions of life and living that they, in their present limited mental state, cannot even possibly dream about. Maybe the old saying does ring true; "ignorance is bliss," at least for the ignorant, it is.

As a Rabbi for over a quarter century now, I have come across all types of people seeking all types of Torah learning from me. Some are merely curious, some are scholarly researchers, and yet, only the very few are the sincerely spiritual, seeking how to practically connect with and experience Heaven directly and personally.

After a quarter century, I no longer have much interest for the merely curious. I direct them to fulfill their juvenile curiosities elsewhere. I will still deal with the scholars who seek intellectual direction. For me this is my entertainment. Yet, my true work, my true devotion and dedication goes out towards those who sincerely want to learn the ways and means of connection. These few and far between souls are not so much interested in theology, philosophy, dogma and creeds. Like me, they grow tired with all the intellectual categorizations that only serve to separate one group of individuals from another. Like me, these sincere spiritual seekers are only interested in bettering themselves as human beings and to doing the best they can for themselves and for the others around them.

Torah and mitzvot have a purpose. Their purpose is not to provide one with intellectual entertainment over a Shabat table. Torah and mitzvot are guidelines to how one transforms one's very essence. Torah and mitzvot are words written in Light, not just inked words on a page. Torah and mitzvot are

experienced in the heart, deep within the soul, at the very essence of what makes us human. They are not just read words with the eyes, understood with the brain, appreciated for the moment and then discarded. This is not Torah learning. This is not Torah at all.

If you are holding your breath under water for any extended amount of time, you will shortly be desperate for air. You can contemplate the idea of air all you wish; you can even visualize the air and think about breathing all you want. Nonetheless, unless you surface and breathe real air, in short time you will be asphyxiated and drown. Only real air can stop one from dying. The same lesson is true about the Torah. It is like the air we breathe. Real Torah will fill us and keep us alive. The idea or concept of Torah, yet, lacking the real thing, will only confuse us and convince us that we already have the real thing, when in truth, we do not.

When under water you can believe all you want that you are breathing. In the end, your self deception will be the cause of your death. The same holds true with regards to Torah. Hold back from taking in the real thing, be satisfied with just the surface and not the essence, and you too will drown in a sea of intellectualisms and self centered, self serving attachments to the accoutrements of religion.

Not to many today care, they do not feel the pain of their own spiritual deaths. They are usually too busy or otherwise distracted to take notice or to care. So be it! Legend tells us that when redemption came to our ancestors in Egypt the great majority choose to ignore it and Moses. For their ignorance and detachment from reality, they met their fate. Like the Egyptians, they died in the plague of darkness, never living to see the light. Most likely, they never saw it coming; they never knew what hit them. They lived in darkness and died in it. I guess it is only fitting. Not too much different today from the past.

I share these words with you for you to ask yourself where do you fit in? Are you merely a curiosity seeker or one seeking intellectual entertainment, or are you something more than a mere shallow, surface scrounger? Please, do not bother to answer me. I do not need your answer, but you most certainly do! Who you are, where you are (spiritually) and where you are going; these should be paramount questions foremost in your mind.

Times are coming, quickly will they be upon us, when everything that we know and recognize will be forever changed in very short order. Those with depth and a sincere connection with Heaven will see it coming and move along with it in proper harmony and balance. Those who are mere surface feeders, like their counterparts in ancient Egypt will die in the darkness of their own making, the self same darkness in which they live right now.

This is intellectual honesty at its heights. I hope I have been sufficiently entertaining. You may now either ponder what I have written and learn from it, or move on to your next words of intellectual stimulation and entertainment. As always, the choice is yours.

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