

The Living Torah

By

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14 And the Word became flesh and pitched His tent among us... Yochanan 1:14

Man is also a microcosm of the entire universe; therefore, each story in the Torah also exists in man. The Maggid of Mezerich

Today many students attend a synagogue, meeting hall, or House of Study (*Beit Midrash*) in order to be taught Torah from a teacher, leader, or rabbi. This is a noble venture and we encourage everyone to become a diligent scholar of the Scriptures. However, I believe we must embrace a rather radical concept that calls for one to sit under a teacher in order to learn how to become a *Sefer Torah* (Torah scroll). Torah study is not just about acquiring knowledge, information, and data. True Torah study is about personal transformation and change (*tikkun*). It is not important as to what or how much one knows, but rather how one embodies that which he has learned. It is not enough to know the stories, commandments, and teachings of the Scriptures. We must learn how to become the teachings and to live the stories in our thoughts, feelings, words, and actions.

- *We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. 1 Corinthians 8:1b*
- *So also belief, if it does not have works, is in itself dead. 18But someone might say, “You have belief, and I have works.” Show me your belief without your works, and I shall show you my belief by my works. 19You believe that Elohim is one. You do well. The demons also believe – and shudder! 20But do you wish to know, O foolish man, that the belief without the works is dead? Ya’akov 2:17-20*

This radical approach to the Torah study is expressed in the words of Rabbi Yehudah Aryeh Leib of Ger in the Sefer Emet:

- *“All sections that tell of the patriarchs are there to show how Torah was made out of their actions...The task of humans is to make this clear, to show how every deed takes place through the life-energy of Elohim...for the human being is a partner in the act of Creation.”*

Notice the Torah narrative does not go right into the account of the giving of the Torah to the people of Yisrael at Mount Sinai. This reveals to us a secret hidden in the text of Torah .The Beginning (***Bereshith***/Genesis) begins with the stories of the lives of the patriarchs and the matriarchs. The Scriptures begin with those narratives in order for us to learn to align our lives and actions with the life-energy of the Creator and we can transform our beings into words of Torah. Our lives actually become a sacred narrative in this world.

In order for this to happen to each of us, we need to know that our lives have purpose and meaning. We must learn to live with a greater awareness of the holiness and uniqueness of every moment we live. Imagine, if you can, that every moment of your life is being written as a *parasha* or chapter of the Torah. How would it read?

It is interesting that the same interpretive tools used in Torah study (word associations, puns, free association/the juxtaposition of ideas) are used in modern psychoanalysis. Just as the Torah has a revealed (*nigleh*) and hidden or concealed (*nistar*) dimension, psychology has discovered that the unconscious mind is far more vast than the conscious mind. The rabbis teach that every word of the Torah has “seventy faces”, so too the human mind has multiply and often contradictory voices, impulses, and feelings that coexists within every person. Just as when we study the Torah we discover that we are just seeing the tip of the iceberg(the revealed part), so in psychoanalysis the doctor realizes he only sees the revealed side of the human personality and the vast majority lies hidden underneath. Just as every text holds a sacred mystery for us to discover, every person is also a wonderful mystery to be read, a complete Torah scroll in and of him or herself. Each individual is filled with purpose and potential meaning.

A person who studies the Torah is likened to a spring of living water. They are always being renewed and full of life. We can all tap into this source of every renewing life because each of us has within a spark of the infinite. This spark, which permeates all creation, is waiting to be revealed through each of us in our own personal and unique way.

- *For he shall be as a tree planted by the rivers of water, That yields its fruit in its season, And whose leaf does not wither, And whatever he does prospers. **Tehillim 1***
- *And he showed me a river of water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of Elohim and of the Lamb. 2 In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. **Revelation 22***

We learn to live our lives on many levels. We can discover and give voice to the countless dimensions within each of us. We can experience life as a sacred narrative-a living embodiment of the Torah. Life changes when we begin to look at it through the lens of the sacred. We begin to see the design and tapestry that is being weaved by our life and our interactions with others. The hidden connections begin to be revealed and understood as never before. Our personal lives and stories are no longer personal when we view them in a context where the personal reveals the collective dimensions of reality. We may find that various accounts found in the Scripture can be related to by us in the different stages of our life and growth. We begin to identify with the various characters and events found in the sacred stories throughout our spiritual journey and experiences.

As we begin to embody the Torah in our lives, we can learn to transcend the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and reach for the tree of life or unitive consciousness. We have to learn stop dividing the world into good and evil and go beyond all dualisms and divisions. Only when we embrace the Messianic vision of a unity that is born out of multiplicity will the *tikkun* (restoration of all things) or restored vessel, made up of all the broken pieces, be able to contain the Light of the Infinite One.

- *9 And YHWH shall be Sovereign over all the earth. q In that day there shall be one YHWH, and His Name one. **Zakariyah 14***

We have the capacity to shatter all the walls and veils that separate us from each other and the Creator. These walls and veils must be removed so the Light and love of the Beloved One can be revealed in all its many faces and guises.