

CHAPTER 2: TORAH STUDY □ PARAGRAPH 7

by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman

Now on to the second frame of mind we'd need to assume in order to reap the full benefit of Torah-study: being committed to bettering ourselves.

We'd have to be so committed because the only way we could ever hope to be an agent for the sublime transcendent force lying behind the Torah would be if we were fitting conduits. After all, if electricity will only pass through apt and flawless pipes, that's all the more so true of the sublime transcendent force. We'd have to be pure and righteous conduits for it -- or at least committed to being so.

Because if we're as inwardly rusty and soiled as an old pipe, we stop-up the mystical flowtide that Torah-study allows for; we sever our beings from G-d, its Source, and align ourselves with evil instead; and we make it impossible to draw upon the sublime force.

But we're assured nonetheless that we lesser souls should indeed delve into G-d's Torah despite ourselves, thanks to the following recondite principle. For we're taught that the very act of studying Torah serves to remind us of G-d's presence (thanks to the fact that He's so prevalent there and cited so often, and to the very G-dliness of the words themselves); and that it's sure to bring us close to Him.

So while we might not merit drawing from the sublime transcendent force, we will at least derive some measure of spiritual uplift if we study it assiduously. And while we'd first only bask in the barest whisper of illumination, that would be reinforced as we continue to study, and we'll become inspired to better ourselves.

But don't assume that that same principle holds true if we study Torah frivolously or for untoward, heretical motives; it doesn't. For Torah only ennobles those willing to be noble, and who delve into it earnestly.

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