Leadership of Head, Heart, & Soul

Knowledge helps, but knowledge alone is not going to help anybody. If you do not use your head and your heart and your soul, you are not going to help a single human being. Elizabeth Kübler-Ross

A person’s rebbe is defined as one who teaches wisdom, and not one who taught the Written and Oral Torah. This is Rabbi Meir’s opinion. Rabbi Yehudah taught, “Whoever has taught most of the student’s wisdom.” Rabbi Yosi says, “Even if the rebbe did no more than make the student’s eyes light up from an explanation of a single selection from the Oral Torah, that teacher is still considered to be the student’s Rebbe. Bava Metzia 33a

The Contemporary Challenge

It is true that scientific knowledge raises a person, provides wings to soar to great heights, enlightens the eyes to discover the secrets of nature and to utilize its powers, to make life more pleasant and to increase longevity; general knowledge also endows a person with spiritual powers. But all the acquisitions of general knowledge are vessels that help one to live—and are not life itself…. The goal of life is … to know the God of the universe, to walk in God’s ways, and to cling to God. Rabbi Benzion Uziel

The adornment of knowledge is wisdom Derekh Eretz Zuta 5

After Newton, everywhere men went, they listened for (and therefore heard) nothing but the hum of machinery. Modernity’s goal was to transform the world into a technological problem. One by one the tasks of governing the state, healing the sick, guiding the economy, choosing right and wrong, and understanding human nature became “sciences” — that is, governed by measurement and the desire for control.

James W. Jones, In the Middle of This Road We Call Our Life: The Courage to Search for Something More

To enrich perception isn’t necessarily to make perception more amenable to virtue, or to a particular moral code. Nor is it to make us any happier, for in heightening consciousness of what it means to be alive, poetry and art in general can overwhelm us with how brief, uncertain, and unredeemably painful life so often is.

Alan Shapiro, The Last Happy Occasion

Torah knowledge cannot be acquired from books alone. Masters are needed to teach it Collected Writings of Samson Raphael Hirsch

The Jewish Way to Transmit Wholeness and Wisdom

Rav Kahana once went in and hid under Rav’s (his rebbe’s) bed. He heard him chatting and joking [with his

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wife] and doing what he required… [Rav] said to him, “Kahana, are you here? Go out because it is rude.” He replied, “This too is Torah, and I need to learn it.” Berakhot 62a

Of all the terms for God’s instructions, none better characterizes Deuteronomy [than Torah], since it connotes both law and an instruction that must be taught, studied, and pondered, and it is expected to shape the character, attitudes, and conduct of those who do so… In later times, the term Torah was applied to the entire Pentateuch as “the Teaching” or “Instruction” par excellence.

Jeffrey H. Tigay, Deuteronomy: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation/Commentary

Not the least aspect of being a community figure was serving as a role model. His disciples wanted to see how the master lived as well as to hear his teachings. And they then told their disciples what their masters did in the most diverse human situations. Their tales speak less of the sages as essentially sober, rational types, than of quite passionate men who regularly break into tears or otherwise give vent to their joy, distress or exasperation.


It was related of Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai that he did not neglect the study of a single passage of the Torah. He also studied Scripture, Targum, Mishnah, halakhot, and aggadot. He learned everything. It was also related of him that he declared, “If all the heavens were parchment and all the trees were quills and all the seas were ink, it would still be impossible for me to write down even a small part of all that I learned from my teachers. Yet I have gained no more wisdom of the sages than a fly which dips in the Great Sea and deprives it of the tiniest drop.”

Sofrim 16:8

Once, while Moses, our Rebbe, was tending Jethro’s sheep, one of the sheep ran away. Moses ran after it until it reached a small, shaded place. There the lamb came across a pool of water and began to drink. As Moses approached the lamb he said, “I did not know you ran away because you were thirsty. You are so exhausted!” He then put the lamb on his shoulders and carried him back. The Holy Blessing One said, “Since you tend the sheep of human beings with such overwhelming love – by your life, I swear you shall be the shepherd of my sheep – Israel.

Shemot Rabbah 2:2.

The Holy Blessing One said to Moses and Aaron, “Know that My children are rebellious and troublesome. Therefore in accepting leadership over them you must be ready to listen even to their denunciations and to receive even their stones.” [This lesson should serve as a reminder to every leader and judge in Israel to exercise patience and forbearance when dealing with the people’s problems.]

Sifre, Be-Ha’alotkha 91

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