

The Road To Faith

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Faith depends upon truth. If you will only search for the truth with complete honesty you will eventually realize that you must have faith in God, in the true Tzaddikim, and in the holy Torah.

You will realize this in spite of the fact that such faith is not something that is susceptible to our rational understanding, bound as our rational faculties are by the material nature of our existence. If you think about things with uncompromising honesty you will get a glimmer of understanding that this really is the truth.

Reason will not help, here. You need faith that is strong and total. Understand this well.

–The Advice Book

Faith and truth are inextricably bound—you can't have one without the other. The Rebbe tells us that by honestly seeking the path of pure truth, we ultimately come to faith.

He asks, "How can one come to have faith in things one *must* believe in?"

The question itself rankles and riles up those raised with the ornery Western mindset—why *must* I believe in anything?

"You say I *must*? Go ahead and make my day," says our inner cowboy.

In the world today, even those sincerely searching for truth, find it easy to take a wrong turn and end up in the spiritual Eastern desert of "bliss equals nothingness", or stumble into the intricate Western jungle of philosophical dead-ends such as hedonism, humanism or nihilism.

But the Rebbe says that by pursuing the path of Torah, we will come to truth, and that truth itself will require that we take the next step up into faith (once we comprehend the limitations of our mind and recognize the wonders of Creation).

Faith enables us to open our hearts to love of God Who loves us, love of Tzaddikim, those holy Jews who live their lives to elevate others' souls, and love of Torah, which reveals the key to living life in a way most beneficial to the spiritual growth of our soul, now and in the afterlife.

Faith without truth is not really faith but superstition, a shallow belief unworthy of our minds or souls. Truth without faith is simply impossible, as the highest truth a human being can engage in is the realization that God Is One.

The Turning Point

A very (very) long time ago, I attended a workshop where the speaker, at the end of the talk, invited us to go around the

room and give our own '*drash* (interpretation or explanation) of a particular section of the Torah. "What does this story mean to you?" the speaker asked.

Being a fairly imaginative sort, I was surprised to find, when my turn came, I had no comments. I did, however, have a few questions—mostly for myself.

I asked:

Might it be perhaps more honest to approach Torah and Judaism the way I'd approach the study of any discipline, by learning what acknowledged scholars had to say before I gave a reaction based on my initial impressions?

Might it be helpful to step back and remember that the section in question, that of Joseph and Potifar's wife, was part of a larger body, of which I had little contextual knowledge?

For me, this was a turning point. I felt I had a choice to make. Did I want truth based on the emotional temperature of my inner world or a larger, possibly challenging truth? One which might change life as I knew it?

For the Rebbe, complete honesty in the search for truth is essential and its outcome, rich belief.

"If you will only search for the truth with complete honesty," says the Rebbe, "you will eventually realize that you must have faith in God, in the true Tzaddikim, and in the holy Torah."