

Wisdom is Easy. Change is Hard.

BY RABBI DAVID WOLPE

We are awash with insight. There is no shortage of books, pundits, philosophers, clergy, psychologists and psychiatrists, ethicists and counselors who offer the distilled wisdom of the ages. How much easier to seek wisdom than it is to change!

At times insight can be a trap: What we learn about ourselves too often becomes an excuse to relax into our failings rather than an engine to generate change. Rabbi Harold Schulweis wisely said, "You can blame your parents for the pain you feel, but not for the pain you cause." We are not exempt because we understand ourselves; goodness is an ongoing demand, wherever we are along the road of enlightenment.

Judaism insists that one cannot truly learn Torah without changing. Torah is not an intellectual exercise alone. True Torah is achieved with the entirety of a person's life. It is not solely about what you know, but about who you are.

A man came to the Rabbi and announced proudly that he had been through the Talmud three times. "Excellent," said the Rabbi. "But I am more interested to know how much of the Talmud has been through you."

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