

Rabbi David Wolpe's

# *Off The Pulpit*

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## **Meaning in the Marketplace**

We read the Torah on Monday and Thursday in the synagogue because in ancient times those were market days. Picture the scene: competing with the merchants hawking their wares was the voice of someone reading and explaining the stories and laws of the Torah. I imagine the Maggid stationed today in the produce section of Trader Joe's, telling of Moses' encounter before Pharaoh, or better, the delights of the Garden of Eden.

The deeper point is today's segregation of Torah from life. We hear the Torah read in synagogue; but as long as that suggests that the Torah is confined to synagogue we have failed. The Torah belongs in the market, where people buy and sell; in the intimacy of the home, where people develop and learn *derech erez* (proper conduct); everywhere in fact, if it is to mean something anywhere.

Many years ago describing the novel, D.H. Lawrence called it 'the big bright book of life.' That is a beautiful description of the Torah as well. It is bursting with life in all its glory and pain. It should walk with us not only in designated moments, but through all our days and nights.

Rabbi Wolpe's new book *David: The Divided Heart* is available now.