



# Re'eh

## Thirsty for Torah

If people are thirsty, should we take water to them, or should we wait for them to come and ask for it?

The prophet Isaiah in the Haftarah for Parshat Re'eh tells us 'Hoy kol-tzame lechu lamayim' – let everyone who is thirsty come to the water. But elsewhere, Isaiah tells us as follows: 'likrat tzame heyta u'mayim' – towards the thirsty, take the water, so Isaiah tells us both things.

What sense can we make of it?

In the Gemara Masechet Taanit Daf Zayin Amud Aleph, our sages tell us that water here equals Torah. And the dilemma here is: when people are thirsting for knowledge, should we take the knowledge to them, to make them interested in learning, or should we wait for them to come forward?

In the Gemara, Rabbi Chanina bar Pappa tells us as follows: when Isaiah tells us that we must take water to the thirsty, he's referring to those who are interested and engaged.

When Isaiah tells us that the thirsty must come to the water, he's referring to those who are not interested at all.

Now I would have thought that just the opposite should be the case, because those who are already engaged can look after themselves! And those who are not need us to inspire them, to show some interest in them.

D'VAR TORAH

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The Maharsha, a great commentator on the Gemara, gives a beautiful Perush and this is what he says: What we need to recognise is that in a world of Chinuch, of Jewish education, one of the worst things you can do is to impose knowledge on people, to try and force it down their throats.

Rather, when people are already engaged, shower knowledge upon them because they are interested, they're keen and they won't reject it, they will choose to deepen their awareness and their connectedness.

However, when people sadly are not engaged, because they don't know what they're missing out on, we need to make it appealing, we need to enable them to come forward of their own volition, so that they will engage in study.

Once they do so because they find it attractive, then there will be no looking back for the sake of their future.

In our challenging time sadly, there are so many people who are thirsty out there. Let's adopt the right approach so that ultimately, the thirst of everyone will be quenched.

Shabbat Shalom.

This is a transcript of a video, which is available to view via [chiefrabbi.org/dvar-torah](http://chiefrabbi.org/dvar-torah)