



48 Ways - 006 Seriousness

Aimah: Seriousness

One of the 48 *kinyanim* to acquire the Torah that the *Mishnah* lists, is called “*aimah*”, trepidation.

What is behind the concept of “*aimah*” when it comes to learning Torah? *Rashi* says that this means that when one is serious-minded, which is the opposite of someone who has “*kalus rosh*” (lightheadedness). So the concept of “*aimah*” is the opposite of what it means to have “*kalus rosh*”. It is to have “*koived rosh*” – to be serious-minded.

A child by nature has “*kalus rosh*” – why? A child has no obligations. He doesn’t have real problems. That is why a child is lightheaded.

What brings a person to have “*kalus rosh*”? The *Chazon Ish* writes that one who looks at everything with a carefree attitude is living a life of “*kalus rosh*”. A person has to realize what his responsibilities are, and what life is about and what it demands of him.

A doctor knows he is responsible for other people’s lives, and therefore he is naturally serious about his job. The more responsibility you feel, the more serious you are about what you do.

Even if a person learns Torah and does all the mitzvos, if he’s immature about life, he will lead a life of “*kalus rosh*”. He has no “*koived rosh*”.

When a young child begins to learn a *masechta* of Gemara, does he feel responsibility to finish even one *perek* of Gemara? Usually not. But an adult who learns a *masechta* of Gemara is supposed to feel such a responsibility.

To Know What Life Is About

There is also a *masechta* called *Chaim*, “life”. We have responsibility to understand this “*masechta*.” A person must know what life is about – from beginning until end.

True life is when a person realizes the depth of what life is about. If someone is deeply connected to Hashem in his life, he usually doesn’t have to work on developing “*koived rosh*”, because his very attitude toward life gives him an automatic “*koived rosh*”.

The *Mesillas Yesharim* said that he isn’t writing anything new, but that his words are about matters which are often forgotten. This is because people forget the truth.

If someone has ever felt true closeness to Hashem, he knows what “life” is really about.

Being Close To Hashem: The Deepest ‘Sugya’

The words here are not “*mussar*”, and it is not either a “*shmuess*”! Being close to Hashem is not an intellectual matter; you can’t know what it is unless you actually learn about what it really means to

be close to Hashem, in an in-depth way.

Being close to Hashem is not a mere intellectual knowledge, nor is it an enthusiastic feeling. It is a deep “*sugya*” to know in life, a *sugya* that has to be learned very in-depth, just you like you learn a *sugya* of Gemara in-depth.

There are “49 Gates of *Binah*” (Understanding), and only the 50th Gate was revealed to Moshe Rabbeinu. The *Ramban* says that this was the deepest knowledge possible about Hashem, and that it totally transcends the comprehension of human knowledge. The “50th Gate of *Binah*” is essentially the deepest point in one’s soul, which has a great perception of Hashem.

Knowing Hashem is, in fact, the deepest *sugya* there is. It needs to be learned about in-depth – it is the *masechta* (tractate) of “life” itself, so we can call it “*Masechta Chaim*”!

To really come to “know” Hashem, a person needs to access the deepest part of the soul. But a person can’t access this point in himself if he is full of impure desires.

Thus, “*aimah*”, which is to be “serious-minded”, is essentially for one to realize what life is about. It is to realize that life is about pursuing the knowledge of Hashem. It is to know about Hashem both in one’s mind and in one’s heart.

How Do We Get Close To Hashem...?

The words here are simple to anyone who already knows what this is, and they are very far from someone who doesn’t.

A life without closeness to Hashem is like death. As the Gemara says, “Either a friend or death.” The true ‘friend’ of a person is Hashem, as the *Chovos HaLevovos* writes.

This is *life* itself! Without it, “life” is just full of different things that bother us...and that’s it...

To *learn*, *daven* and do the *mitzvos*, we all know that it takes time. Being close to Hashem also takes time. How can we get closeness to Hashem? It takes time, and it doesn’t happen so fast.

It is hard to explain what it is. But it is a very simple matter for one who feels it already. In fact, if someone really feels what closeness to Hashem is, he is very surprised that we have to even speak about it. To him, it’s the simplest possible fact of our life.