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Water-of-Fire-of-Fire: Ascending Higher To Receive More Pleasure

With the help of Heaven, we are in the middle of discussing the element of fire. We are currently up to discussing **water**-of-fire-of-fire, which is the aspect of “pleasure” involved in spiritual growth.

We have mentioned briefly that **fire-of-fire** refers to the particular nature in fire to [cause a person to] ascend higher, and “**water**”-of-fire-of-fire is when the ascension is built upon pleasure. When that pleasure in the current level finishes, the fire then rises higher. This is **water-of-fire-of-fire**: If I lose pleasure in the current level and this causes me to want to rise to a higher level.

This is the power in the soul that enables a person to grow higher based upon how much *taanug* (pleasure) he has.

Clarifying Your Motivations of Why You Want To Achieve

This is a fundamental concept to know about for anyone who wishes to be a *ben aliyah* (a truly growing person). One must become very clear about what is personally motivating him to achieve: Is he being motivated to achieve higher because he wants more *taanug*, or is there another reason? One needs to examine himself well and clarify this with himself.

There can be four possibilities that are motivating the person: earth-of-fire-of-fire, water-of-fire-of-fire, wind-of-fire-of-fire, and fire-of-fire-of-fire. In the previous chapter, we discussed **earth-of-fire-of-fire**, which is when one grows higher because of *bittul* (nullification) of the previous level. Here in this chapter, we are dealing with another possible motivation: **water-of-fire-of-fire**, which is when one wants higher levels because he wants to experience more *taanug* (pleasure).

In the next two chapters, we will deal with another two possible motivations: **wind-of-fire-of-fire**, which is when one feels like he has used up all of his inner movements and thus he feels it is time to progress to a higher level; and **fire-of-fire-of-fire**, where a person rises to higher levels based on total destruction of the current level (a power that either be used positively, to stimulate personal growth, or a power that can become evil *gaavah*\conceit).

Here we will discuss the motivation for growth when it comes from **water-of-fire-of-fire** in the soul. If one comes to the conclusion that his need to ascend higher is based on a need to experience more pleasure, that means that when he loses pleasure in the current level, he yearns to grow even higher.

This is the constructive use of this power. A person can keep finding pleasure at any level he is currently at,^[1] and then when he loses the pleasure in the current level (either totally, or for the most part), he realizes that he has finished this level, and now he is ready for the next level.

But when this power is used in the negative sense, the need for pleasure becomes too dominant, and then the person will lose interest in wanting to grow to higher levels as soon as he loses pleasure in his current level.

This is the basic outline of the concept of **water-of-fire-of-fire**.

“Taam”: Finding A Sweet Taste In Our Yiddishkeit

It is written, *“Taamu u’reu, ki tov Hashem”* (“Taste it, and see, that Hashem is good.”). In this verse of the Torah, we see the importance of having a *“taam”* (a “taste”). In today’s generation, people involved in *kiruv* like to use this *possuk* to get people’s attention and draw in our irreligious brethren, showing them that Judaism is sweet and that it has a good *“taam”*; that it “tastes” good. The Vilna Gaon also wrote that we need to give out sweets and candies to children as they are learning Torah, so that they will develop a good taste for learning Torah and become motivated for learning.

Here we come to a subtle matter. With children, or with people that are far from Judaism, when we try to draw them close to the Torah, what is it that we are trying to show them that has a good taste? Is it to show them that “Hashem is good”, as the *possuk* says? Often, when we tell them that Torah is sweet and that *Yiddishkeit* has an enjoyable taste, they are simply pulled simply after the good “taste” of whatever we show them, but then they remain at that level, and then they aren’t that interested in seeing how “Hashem is good”. They are more interested in the good *“taam”* in it and not more than that.

When the idea of *taam* is overly emphasized, and the person whom we are trying to draw closer is given a *“taam”* in learning Torah and in *Yiddishkeit*, the problem is that it can make a person to become subservient to *taam*. He will want to pursue another *taam*, and another *taam*, and another *taam*, because all he is interested in is to have a *“taam”*.

A large part of the children growing up today are raised with the mentality in education that all of Judaism has a good *taam* to it. These children who grow up with this kind of Torah education will always want more *taam*, and more *taam*, and more *taam*, in order to enjoy Torah and *Yiddishkeit*; if there is no *taam*, they lose interest.

Why does this happen? It is because the *taam* was not seen used by them as a tool to see that “Hashem is good” as the *possuk* says, and instead, the emphasis was placed the *“taam”* is good, and not on Hashem. When they find *taam* in learning Torah and in *Yiddishkeit*, they connect to it because of the *taam* they find in it, but of that *taam* goes away, they lose their entire drive.

This concept applies to many other areas as well. For example, there were those who said that Reb Chaim Brisker’s style of learning makes a person have a *taam* in his learning at no matter what level of Torah learning he is on, and that this approach of Torah learning is saving the new generation from losing interest in learning Torah. But the problem with this is that because people are so used to a need to have a *taam* in their learning, that as soon as they lose that *taam*, their entire *Yiddishkeit* loses its fuel. There are even people who lose their *taam* in their Torah learning, and then they stop keeping the entire Torah because of this!

Sometimes this happens because their entire lives were spent *melumadah* (by rote), so they never developed feelings for *Yiddishkeit* in the first place. As long as they maintained their fear of being punished and their fear of being ashamed, they kept the Torah; eventually the person loses this fear

and he sees no reason to be observant anymore. But there is another reason why people throw off the yoke of Torah: it is because the person's entire *Yiddishkeit* was based on having a *taam* in it. Since the entire basis of his Judaism was *taam*, as soon as he loses his *taam*, the entire basis that kept him going until now has fallen away.

A child finds a *taam* in learning, let's say, because he was given sweets for every time he learns, so he is taught to have a good feeling towards learning. When he gets older, he needs a new reason to give himself true *cheishek* (enthusiasm), so he is taught how to sharpen his mind and how to come up with questions, so that his will can be active and so that he should continue to have a *taam* in learning. When he gets older, he no longer has that *taam* - and when he loses his *taam*, his entire life loses its taste.

This entire generation has been raised on the mentality of "*taam*" and is based on it. Aside for the many kinds of food available in this generation (which is another factor of why people lose their *taam* in spiritual areas, and we will not get into that here^[2]), there is another problem with *taam* in this generation: there is an attitude where people feel that they must have a *taam*, or else they are not interested. It is a generation which needs *taam*. The mentality is: If there is a *ta'am*, great; if there is no *taam*, forget about it.

This "need" for *taam* manifests both when it comes to a need for *taam* in physical pleasures of food [which makes people lose their *taam* in the spiritual], as well as the path of *Avodas Hashem* that a person takes in his life, which might very well be based on one's personal taste. Many people chose a certain path in *Avodas Hashem* only because they found a *taam* in it, not because they found *emes* (truth) in it. It is easy to find *taam* in something like *davening* with a lot of excitement and in living an exciting kind of life, because it is entirely external and thus it is easily accessible; whereas true, inner *avodah* takes a long amount of time, and it requires hard inner work and discipline, so it does not offer instant *taam*.

But we should understand that a large percentage of people are basing their *Avodas Hashem* on a need for finding a *taam* in it. These can be people who came from outside of our inner circles and they entered into the tents of Torah, or they are people found in the tents of Torah who chose to base their lives on *taam* because they weren't finding themselves, or because they were searching for deeper meaning in life.

The need for *taam* in *Avodas Hashem* does not come from a search for "true good" as the *Mesillas Yesharim* says; it does not come from a search for truth. It is not even a need to find truth on one's personal level. Rather, it is entirely emotion-based, where the person is always pulled after his feeling of *taanug* (pleasure) that is found in *taam*.

The generation today is built on *taam* and people have come to depend on it for success. When it comes to learning Torah, there is certainly a need for *taam* in it, but we have to be aware that there are two sides to the coin here.

Recently there was a meeting between certain people who are of influence to the generation when it comes to teaching Torah, where they discussed what kind of ideals a *yeshiva bochur* needs to leave *yeshiva* with. One of them said, "The point is not so that he should walk away with a lot of knowledge in Torah. The point is that he needs to feel like he has a clear method of knowing how to learn Torah." Understandably, this is certainly a valid point, but is that all there is to it?

This approach is saying that it's okay if you don't walk away with that much knowledge of Gemara after having learned so many years in *yeshiva*; and that the point is to just have a clear way of "knowing how to learn". How was this conclusion formed? It is probably because he has seen many

students lose their interest in learning after they left *yeshiva*, because they didn't feel like they had a clear path of knowing how to learn, which in turn causes the *yeshivah bochur* to lose his *taam* in learning. When there is no more *taam*, a person loses all of his aspirations to know Torah.

This mentality is also formed because we know that in today's times, the influences of the streets are strong, and that the only way to counter the allure of outside influences is through developing a *taam* in *Avodas Hashem*. But if we take such an approach, we are basically ignoring the entire way of our previous Sages until now, in order to save people from losing their *taam*.

Since this is so, *taam* is seen as the important thing, and that means that *Yiddishkeit* today is based entirely on a need for *taam*. If one merits to sit and learn Torah, he is encouraged to find *taam* in his learning, and if he doesn't merit to stay in learning and he has to go out into the world, he is told that he needs to go to the *Beis Midrash* sometimes and regain his *taam* in learning, like to join a Thursday night *shiur* and to go to three *shiurim* during *Bein HaZemanim*. This is an approach based entirely on *taam*.

In the future, we will merit to have revealed to us all the *taamei HaTorah* (the reasons of the Torah), and it will be an existence of true *taam*. But in the current dimension we live in, if we build our lives entirely based on *taam*, it is very, very dangerous (to our sense of obligation in our *Yiddishkeit*).

1) *Kabalas Ol Torah - Accepting The Responsibility To Learn Torah*

In contrast, there is a more genuine and inner way to live life. It entails for one to pass through the following three stages.

The very first stage one needs does not begin with the concept of the Vilna Gaon that one needs a *taam*. Here, we are describing the stages that are necessary in order to build oneself.

The first stage of building oneself is: *kabalas ol Torah*, "to accept upon oneself the yoke of Torah". The very first stage one must traverse must not depend on having a *taam* or not having a *taam*. One has to simply accept upon himself that he is responsible to learning Torah, viewing it as an "ol" (a yoke) upon him that he must bear.

The "ol Torah" means that one learns Torah even before he has found a *taam* in it. Expanding upon this point further, "ol Torah" means to learn Torah whether you feel a *taam* in it right now or whether you don't. In terms of the soul, it means that you are learning Torah out of *kabalas ol*, and not because of *taam*.

If one has never begun his Torah learning knowing that it must begin with *kabalas ol*, he does not know that our life is based on *yiras shomayim* (fear of Heaven) and *kabalas ol malchus shomayim* (accepting upon ourselves the yoke of Heaven), and that we exist as servants of the Creator. Such a person's entire observance of the Torah will be shaky, because he has never built for himself a solid foundation. A small little "wind" can come and knock him down, uprooting him from everything, because he was not fortified enough.

As we know, there are people who were raised fully Torah observant, and they fall prey to the *yetzer hora* very easily when they get older, simply because they are introduced to some new kind of pleasure that lures them. Their level of observance to the Torah all along had been based on finding *taam*, and as soon as they discover a new *taam* that is more alluring, they pursue that *taam*, and they will even forfeit their entire *frum* upbringing so that they can taste the new "taam" that have discovered.

Thus, it is clear that we cannot base our lives on *taam*. It must not be our beginning point of our

development. The very first stage of our personal development must be: the awareness that there is a Judge who metes out judgment, and that no action goes unnoticed by Hashem; the fact that we are subservient to Him - whether we want to or whether we don't want to.

This must be the basis of our life. Upon that, we can progress to the second stage.

2) Finding "Taam"

The second stage is where we understand that although we are subservient to Hashem's will, that doesn't mean we are not allowed to have a *taam* in it, and that we should learn Torah all day with no enjoyment in it, and that we should do the *mitzvos* with no joy.

Firstly, though, we must make sure that we realize our obligation and our subservience to Hashem, and after we strongly feel this sense of obligation - and it must be a genuine awareness that there is a Judge for all our actions, (which includes a simple fear of punishment for sin, and that we must accept His will upon us) - only after that should we then seek how to receive a "*taam*" in areas of our *Yiddishkeit*.

There is blessing over the Torah each day we recite to find sweetness in Torah learning: "*V'haarev Na.*" We must reveal a lot of "*taam*" in our Torah learning, in *tefillah*, and in our *Avodas Hashem* in general. But this is all the second stage, and it must not be the first stage. The first stage that builds our soul is to accept upon ourselves to do Hashem's will, whether we feel like it or not; and when we have genuinely acquired this awareness, we can then progress to the next stage, which is *taam*.

In this way, our soul has been built properly on a firm basis, and it is then ready to find appropriate *taam*. At that point, a person will be able to find *taam* in his *Avodas Hashem* in addition to his *kabalas ol*, so that even if he were to lose his *taam*, he still has his *kabalas ol Torah* and his *kabalas ol mitzvos* to keep him going. If a person has *kabalas ol*, he can learn Torah all day from morning until night, as much as he can, and his *taam* that he then finds in his learning can expand his Torah learning and enable him to accomplish much more.

Those are the first two stages one must traverse: first he must have a *kabalas ol* in his Torah, mitzvos, and *Avodas Hashem* [which entails a general fear of Hashem and a subservience to His will], and after that he can [and should] seek to find more *taam* in his *Yiddishkeit*.

'Taam' Without 'Kabalas Ol': A Life That Is Entirely Self-Serving

If a person's entire motivation is to find *taam* and he has never yet gone through the stage of *kabalas ol*, that means he is acting entirely *shelo lishmah* (for ulterior motivations). The *shelo lishmah* will manifest itself in all areas of his life.

When learning Torah, he will only do it for the sake of finding a *taam* in it. For example, as soon as a new *Kolel* opens up that is offering more pay, he will be of the first ten people to join, because it essentially offers a new "*taam*" to his Torah learning. This is all because his Torah learning does not stem deep down from *kabalas ol*, but because he wants *taanug* or *taam*.

One who bases his life on *taam* can easily be uprooted from his observance to Torah one day if he loses his *taam* in *Yiddishkeit*. But on a general note, even if he does not get to that point, *chas v'shalom*, his entire life is still being spent in a state of *shelo lishmah*. It will be very difficult for him to leave this kind of *shelo lishmah*, because he is so entrenched in it. By contrast, one who has first reached a *kabalas ol malchus shomayim*, a *kabalas ol Torah* and a feeling of subservience to Hashem, will be saved from a life that is totally *shelo lishmah*.

Of course, there are many levels to *shelo lishmah*, and we can always find traces of it in any person's life. But at least a person can get himself to the point where his *Yiddishkeit* does not depend entirely on *taanug\taam*, where his *shelo lishmah* does not dominate him entirely, when he has reached the point of *kabalas ol*. This is true even if his *kabalas ol* itself is *shelo lishmah*, such as if he is afraid of being punished for sins; because as long as he is not enveloped by the *shelo lishmah* of *taanug\taam*, he is for the most part saved.

This is not yet the complete rectification for his soul, but it is certainly the beginning that will save him from being entirely dependent on the *shelo lishmah* of *taanug*.

3) Constantly Deriving Pleasure From Torah

After one has reached the two steps (first *kabalas ol*, then *taam*), he can then work on a third stage, which will apply even more so the one who has a lot of **water-of-fire-of-fire** in his soul: to keep deriving pleasure from the current level he is at.

For example, when learning any *sugya* of Gemara, instead of just learning it superficially, one can try analyzing in-depth every matter he comes across, and to attempt to enjoy each part, seeing how all of it is "*Taste it, and see, that Hashem is good.*" The Sages compare learning Torah to an infant nursing from its mother, where it can keep finding a taste in the mother's milk every time it nurses.

A person can keep feeling what he is coming into contact with and to feel the pleasure contained in it. When it comes to learning Torah, one can keep feeling the words and the depth that is contained in them, constantly drawing out the pleasure contained in the words. (Understandably, this applies only to learning Gemara *b'iyun*[\[3\]](#), not *bekiyus*[\[4\]](#).)

One should of course use this idea sensibly, and not spend all of his life immersed in one page of Gemara, trying to draw out all of the pleasure that can be found in it. Analyze what you are learning, from all of its angles, take apart all of the details – this enables you to find a *taam* in it. This gets you used to an ability to derive a deep *taam* from any part of Torah you are learning, and it also deepens your possibilities for *taam* in whatever you are currently learning.

When you learn a *sugya*, and you are done seeing the words of the *Rishonim* and the *Acharonim* you were supposed to see and you know what they say, now what? The more you have developed your ability to find *taam* in whatever you are learning, you can still find a *taam* in the same words of the Gemara and the Rashba, again and again, as you review the words when you think into them. You can think again into the same old words and keep finding new *taam* in it.

When you get used to this, you will discover that there was a wealth of enjoyment contained all along in the same old words, and thus there is no rush to continue to the next part of the Gemara. You discover that you can keep extracting the good taste contained in each part of the Torah. Most people keep "tasting", but they don't know how to experience the taste. They don't know how to derive the *taam* out of what they are involved with. They take a little bite out of it and that's it – they never really get to savor the "taste" of it.

We can understand this better from the following example. When people come to a wedding and they see many kinds of food in front of them [i.e. by the smorgasbord], they go around tasting each of the foods a little bit, but because they only taste a little bit of each of the different dishes, they never really get to experience the full taste of any one dish that is there.

The idea we can take from this is that when it comes to learning Torah, one of the fundamentals is to be keep deriving an enjoyable taste from what one is currently learning about, again and again.

One who gets used to constantly extracting enjoyment from his Torah learning will be able to feel that any part in the Torah can provide him with *taam*, and he can keep connecting to it again and again. This increases the soul's power of *taanug* and it enables a person to find sweetness in Torah learning. But again, we must emphasize as we mentioned before, that all of this must only come after one has reached *kabalas ol Torah*, or else a person's entire life will be based on *taanug*, which is a detrimental way of life.

Discovering All The Flavors

An additional reason for this is because a person cannot connect to something properly unless he has experienced all of the enjoyment in it. "*V'haarev na*" is about sweetness in Torah learning, and it is rooted in the word *taaruvos*, "mixture", because *taanug* requires an experience of many different kinds of *taanug* in something. When one has not found all the many kinds of *taam* that exist in something, his connection to it will be weaker.

Herein lays the secret of connecting to the Torah. When one is initially learning the *sugya* and he has reviewed it, and he is clear about it and he has arrived at the Halachic conclusions, he might feel like he is done with the *sugya*, and he wonders what is left for him to do. But if that is the case, it shows that he only learned the Torah superficially. In order for one to truly absorb his Torah learning, he must know how to derive pleasure from any part of his learning.

Evil Pleasure-Seeking

When this ability of deriving pleasure is not used in the spiritual sense and it is instead used for physical pleasure, it translates into *taavah*, an evil lust. People who seek to extract the pleasure in everything they are involved with can become the biggest *baalei taavah* (gluttons) in the world, always looking how they can get the most sensual pleasures out of This World. This is the evil use of **water-of-fire-of-fire** that we have described here.

If someone recognized a dominance of negative water-of-fire-of-fire in himself, he should refer to the series "*Fixing Your Water*", where we explained how to fix the trait of desire. Here we were coming to explain the positive and holy way of how to use **water-of-fire-of-fire**.

Summary of The Three Stages of Spiritual Progress

To summarize, the three stages that one needs are: **(1)** *kabalas ol* (accepting upon oneself a commitment to Hashem's Torah and *mitzvos*, **(2)** *taam* (deriving pleasure from Torah learning), and **(3)** a deeper ability of *taam* where a person is able to derive a *taam* from any area he comes across [in his Torah learning].

Beyond Taanug: Practicing "Lishmah"

However, if a person remains at this stage (knowing how to always derive *taam*) and he never goes beyond this point, his *shelo lishmah* (ulterior motives) will become very dominant. This is because he is focused always on deriving a *taam* in everything he comes across, and it will increase his *taanug* so much to the point that he will still now become dependent on *taanug*.

Although he is far better off than a person who has never reached a *kabalas ol malchus shomayim*, he will still feel that he depends on *taanug*, and *taanug* will become his attitude towards life, and if there is a void of *taanug* in his life, his original *kabalas ol malchus shomayim* will weaken, *chas v'shalom*.

Thus, after one has traversed the stages of *kabalas ol*, *taam*, and deriving constant *taam* in his learning, he must now try the following: after one has learned the *sugya* and he feels that he cannot

find *taam* in it no longer, he should practice learning it purely *lishmah*. He has no *taam* right now in his learning, and even so, he should still learn Torah - *lishmah*.

If one tries to start out learning Torah *lishmah* before he has developed a *taanug* in his learning, he is usually attempting to jump levels. His *shelo lishmah* is more present in his conscious motivations, he doesn't have *taanug* yet in his learning, so he is attempting to jump right away all the way to the level of *lishmah* [which will fail]. The sensible way to use *lishmah* is to use it only after one has traversed the three stages we described.

Water-of-Fire-of-Fire: The Power To Keep Deriving Pleasure

After a person reaches the third stage, where he has learned how to keep deriving pleasure in the same words of Torah he is learning, at some point he will lose interest in the current topic he is learning about, and he will want to learn something new. The current topic feels dry to him, because he feels that he has finished, and naturally, he will want to progress.

As we began to explain in the beginning of this chapter, this is essentially stemming from **water-of-fire-of-fire** in the soul: once a person stops deriving pleasure from his current level, he wants to go the next level.

But herein is how we rectify **water-of-fire-of-fire** in the soul. When there is a lot of **water-of-fire-of-fire** in the soul, a person wants to progress to the next stage because he has already drawn the pleasure from the current level, and the current level now seems dry to him. But now is when he can really use the power of **water-of-fire-of-fire** for holiness: by continuing to draw pleasure from the current level.

Practicing "Lishmah" In Your Torah Learning

To practically apply this concept [when it comes to learning Torah], when a person has reached the end of the *sugya* and he has seen all that he has needed to see, and he also enjoyed it and he is no longer finding enjoyment in the current *sugya*, he should try going back to the beginning and learning it again anew. He should do this even if he no longer has a *taam* in this *sugya*, for this is exactly the *avodah*.

Anyone who has tried this knows that it is one of the most difficult things to do.^[5] This is because it is very hard to do something when you have no *taam* in it. But this is where the real Torah *lishmah* begins! If you learn it now even though you no longer have a *taam* in it, you are beginning to learn Torah *lishmah*.

One who tries to do this right away is trying to jump levels [which is not feasible]. But if one tries this only after having finished the *sugya* and after having derived considerable pleasure from it, he is doing this sensibly.

This is one of the meanings of "*mitoch shelo lishmah, ba lishmah*" - "ulterior motives leads to pure motives." After one has derived pleasure from a current level and he no longer finds pleasure in it, he can then be enabled to reach the level of *lishmah*.

If he has already found a *taam* in his learning, now he can learn it *lishmah*, after he no longer sees a *taam* in it. By contrast, if he never found *taam* in it in the first place, then learning the *sugya* without *taam* simply stems from a slackening off from Torah and from laziness.

Conquering The “Taanug” Mentality

To conclude, we have laid out three steps that are all within *shelo lishmah*, and a fourth stage which involves *lishmah*.

When a person has connection to all of these stages, he is somewhat connected to *lishmah*, and this will in turn prevent him from leading a life based entirely on *taanug*. It will become possible for him to deeply connect to what he does, and to thereby avoid the allures of the outside world, because he has found powerful *taam* in Torah.

And at the same time, the *taanug* in his life will not either dominate him, being that he has attained a degree of connection to *lishmah*.

The Plan For Raising Our Children Properly

In the children growing up in this generation, we can see clearly that the emphasis of their education was based entirely on *shelo lishmah*. As children, they are offered all kinds of sweets and other incentives to learn Torah, so that they will develop a *taam* for learning Torah and hopefully become strong enough to avoid the negative *taam* of outside influences, but they were never trained in to develop a *kabalas ol*.

It is no wonder, then, that they have it so hard when it comes to avoiding the negative influences. They never developed a *kabalas ol* towards their *Yiddishkeit*, and that is why they fall so easily to the influences, which offer a different *taam* than the *taam* they are experiencing, and it is very alluring to them and it pulls them in.

If these children would have been taught how to first have a *kabalas ol*, and only afterwards to get a *taam* in their *Yiddishkeit*, they would have had a lot easier of a chance avoiding the negative influences of the outside. They wouldn't be dependent on *taanug*, and they would realize that life is not all about *taanug*, so they wouldn't fall prey right away when faced with any *taanug* that pulls them in.

We must begin training in our children for *kabalas ol* already at the age when they we start *chinuch* with them, which is when they are 6 or 7 years old, and we must not wait for after that, because then the battle will be much harder, for the child will have already been exposed to what goes on in the world, long before he has even gotten the chance to develop properly and be fortified against it.

But what usually happens is that by the time the child is already 6 or 7 years old, he has already received so many sweets, candies, and various forms of *taanug* and he has almost no sense of *kabalas ol* at all. I do not mean to take away the importance of giving sweets to them, but in most cases, the child is missing *kabalas ol*, either completely or for the most part, by the time he is 6 or 7, after having been raised on a completely “*taanug*” mentality.

At that point, it will be very hard to discipline him and to teach him what we want to teach him, and then we will have no choice but to keep providing him with only *taanug*; and this leads us to the problems described earlier. Anyone who is aware of this knows that this problem has contributed to much spiritual destruction in this generation.

In contrast, the proper way of development is to first ingrain the child with a sense of *kabalas ol*. After that, we must make sure he has plenty of *taanug* in *Yiddishkeit*. Those are the two steps we can teach to young children, and there is a third step in our development which can usually be taught only to

teenagers\adolescents, who have reached some level of mature *da'as*: to train them with the ability of always being able to draw forth pleasure from their current level.

It is the third stage is where a person finds the gateway to a true life. There he realizes the meaning of "*Taste it and see that Hashem is good*", and how it not referring simply to how the "*taam*" is "good", but to how *Hashem* and *His Torah* are what we call "good"! This is the point where a person connects to truth, and at that point he is genuinely connected to Hashem.

Conclusion: Revealing A Degree of "Lishmah" In Our Life

One who traverses these three steps described is one who will reach a connection to the level of Torah *lishmah*, and then true understanding in Torah is revealed to him.

By contrast, if he doesn't reach it, he might write tens of volumes of *sefarim*, but he remains at the level of *taanug* alone. *Baruch Hashem* he has merited to learn Torah and he has become very brilliant, his mind has become very sharp and he has merited to produce many novel Torah thoughts, through discussing Torah with his teachers, friends, and students - but it is all based entirely on *taanug*.

What might happen? If his *taanug* in learning Torah would somehow be taken away from him, even for a few moments, his entire drive to learn Torah is in danger, and he might stop learning Torah altogether! Even if it seems to everyone else that it would never happen to this kind of person.

One who reaches the third step touches upon *lishmah*; he reaches "the life of truth implanted within us" - the true *d'veykus* in Hashem and in His Torah.

[1] See ***Fixing Your Fire_02_Inner Satisfaction***

[2] See ***Tefillah #036 - A Generation Of Abundance*** and ***Fixing Your Water_05***

[3] *b'iyun* - in-depth analysis of Gemara, with emphasis on arriving at comprehension

[4] *bekiyus* - a cursory reading of the Gemara

[5] This is stated as well by the Chazon Ish, in *Kovetz Igros Chazon Ish*.

Source: <http://bilvavi.net/english/fixing-your-fire-conceit-014-obligation-and-pleasure-judaism>