



48 Ways - 013 Hearing Hashem

Mikra: Hearing "Hashem's Call" - Through Our Torah Learning

One of the 48 ways to acquire the Torah is "*Mikra*". Simply, this means that we need to learn *Chumash*, as we know that our Sages say that one should split up his learning into three subjects: *Chumash*, *Mishnayos* and *Gemara*.

But the deeper definition of "*Mikra*" means "to call", as we find "*Vayikra Hashem el Moshe*" ("And Hashem called to Moshe"). In other words, Hashem calls to us so that we can heed His word.

When a person is learning Torah, he is reading about what Hashem is 'calling' him to do. It's like when you read a letter; you are reading what a person is trying to tell you through the letter.

When we learn Torah, do we have this perspective? Are we simply learning about the commandments of Hashem that we have to fulfill – or do we look at it as Hashem is *calling* to us to do something? Do we hear the 'call of Hashem' to us when we learn Torah?

The Torah is not about history of the past. It is the guide that helps us live now, in the present moment. Every *possuk* in the Torah is calling to us and telling us what Hashem wants. The Hebrew word "*possuk*" is also known as "*mikra*" – it is a message and calling from Hashem to us. But not everyone who learns Torah hears Hashem calling to him through the Torah.

For example, a person is reading in the Torah the word "*Beraishis*", that in the beginning, Hashem created the world. Does he hear Hashem calling to him something through the word *Beraishis*? Or does he just view it as something that happened once in history....

When a person learns Torah – any *possuk* in the Torah – he must hear Hashem calling to him through the *possuk*! In order for a person to hear Hashem's call through the Torah, he first has to *believe* in the first place that Hashem is indeed calling to him through the Torah.

The Oral Torah is called Torah "*sheh-baal peh*", Torah of the "mouth". The Torah is really speaking to us. When we learn with a *chavrusa*, it's clear that someone is speaking to us; but when we learn Torah, we also have to understand that we are being spoken to. Hashem speaks to us through the Torah.

Including Hashem In Our Learning

The Gemara says, "Hashem sits and learns with the person [who learns Torah]." This is the concept we are describing: because Hashem is really calling out to us in the Torah when we learn it.

If a person learns Torah but he isn't aware that Hashem speaks to him through the Torah, then he's basically learning Torah with himself. He's not learning Torah with Hashem next to him. But when a person understands that Hashem calls to him through the Torah he learns, such Torah learning is being spent with Hashem.

Hashem Is Talking To "Me"

This is a deep matter, and it is only understood if we have "*avanta d'liba*" (understanding of the heart).^[1] [1] When we learn Torah, we must feel that Hashem is speaking to us we are learning! The words of Torah we learn are how Hashem speaks to us!

Imagine if a *sefer* would come out written by Avraham Avinu, and it is about what Avraham Avinu has to tell us. We would all run to go buy it and see what it written there. Well, the *Torah* is what *Hashem* has to tell us! Why aren't people running to go hear what Hashem has to tell us...?

Usually when a person learns Torah, he learns it simply trying to understand what the commandments are. But the Torah is much more than that. It is Hashem talking to us.

This understanding greatly affects how we approach learning Torah, how we view it. It is an entirely different attitude to have towards learning Torah: *Hashem is speaking to us through the Torah*.

Hashem Is Calling To Me, Personally

Not only does Hashem speak to *us* through the Torah, in the collective sense, but He speaks to all of us on an *individual* level as well. A person has to feel as he is learning Torah that "Hashem is speaking to **me** as I am learning."

Not only does Hashem speak to all of us through the Torah, but he speaks to each person as an individual. Therefore, a person has to feel that Hashem is speaking to him – personally – through the Torah.

To illustrate what we mean, sometimes a person goes to a funeral and hears a very moving *hesped* (eulogy). He feels awakened and inspired from it. However, he doesn't always hear the *hesped* speaking to him on a personal level. Rather, he hears the inspiring words that are being delivered to the audience, and from that, he gets inspired; but he doesn't feel that the words are addressing him directly.

When a person learns Torah, it is not enough for a person to feel that Hashem is addressing the Jewish people in the general sense; rather, he has to feel that Hashem is speaking directly to him, on a *personal* level – he must feel that Hashem is speaking to "**Me**".

When we stood at Har Sinai, Hashem didn't speak to us in the general sense. He wasn't addressing an audience. Rather, He was speaking to each of us *individually*!

That is how we must approach our learning. "*Mikra*" does mean simply for one to simply fulfill the *mitzvah* of "*Shnayim Mikra V'Echad Targum*" (to review the weekly *parshah*) - rather, it is to hear the "*mikra*" of each *posuk*: to hear Hashem calling to him.

This is a whole different kind of perspective to have. We must realize that Hashem speaks to all of us individually. He speaks to **you** through the Torah - not just to the Jewish people as a whole.

The Prerequisite Before Our Requests In Davening

This concept applies as well to when we *daven* and we ask things of Hashem. When we *daven*, we talk to Hashem, but we also have to realize that Hashem talks to us. If we don't hear what Hashem is telling us, then Hashem won't hear what we are asking of Him when we *daven*. Hashem acts with us in the same way we act towards Him; He reflects how we feel about Him.

The Torah of “Life” - Hearing Hashem’s Call In Our Learning

The Torah is called *Toras Chaim*, a “Torah of life”. Many people learn Torah and don’t realize that it is a Torah of life; it is because they do not feel Hashem speaking to them through the Torah. To them, learning Torah doesn’t go beyond simply ‘learning’ Torah, and they don’t feel how Torah learning is a life-giving energy.

But learning Torah can really be a life-giving force to us - when we realize that Hashem speaks to us as we learn.

May we be *zoche* to receive the Torah, the kind of Torah that we received at Har Sinai – in which we all felt Hashem speaking to us.

[1] [2] See Rashi to *Chagigah 12b*. For more on ‘*avanta d’liba*’, see ***Bilvavi Part 9*** Chapter 1.

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