

## The Daily RYS 6/4/07 Mussar Doctrine IV

From The Mussar Movement, Volume 1, Part 2, pages 15 -16 .

R. Israel did not, however, believe that Torah scholarship was only essential for being G-d fearing because it provided practical knowledge, but also because it developed one's intellectual capacity as well, and cultivated the habit of thinking deeply. As has been stated, the Fear of Heaven is a profound scientific discipline, and only with vast knowledge and a keen intellect could one grasp and comprehend it. He once voiced his criticism of those who cover ground rapidly: "If they learn Tosafot by rushing from the question to the answer without close study and comprehension - from where will they acquire the Fear of Heaven?": Here a new note has been injected in the conception of what the Fear of Heaven entails. This was one of the essential, primary features of R. Israel's Musar system. To acquire proficiency in learning ("kennen lernen"), three conditions had to be fulfilled: " To master the primary subjects (i.e. Talmud and Codes — D.K.); proper comprehension based on keen and balanced intellectual judgment, which would allow the construction of refutable conclusions; and the ability, after thorough study and intense investigation of all the aspects [involved], to arrive at the truth." He regarded it as essential for anyone wishing "to enter the service of the L-rd," to possess extensive knowledge of the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds, "adequate knowledge of the great decisors, the Earlier and Later Authorities, and above all the knowledge acquired through the study of Tosafot." From the time of the redaction of the Talmud, the Tanach had become a closed book. For us, it constitutes, as it were, the Alef Bet from which one proceeds to the study of Talmud. To us the Talmud is what the Tanach was in the days of the Sages of the Talmud, while the works of the Earlier and Later Authorities are to us what the Mishnah was to them. Familiarity with these sources was a vital necessity for everyone; this is what is termed "attendance upon the Sages, and without this qualification one is termed an am haaretz, an ignoramus, someone completely dissociate from the service of G-d." Last of all, the intellect had to be sharpened to render one capable of reasoning from one idea to another, of comparing one fact with another, and of pursuing any topic to its proper halachic conclusion.

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