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בלבבי משכן אבנה

## BEHAR DETAILS, RULES, AND BEYOND



IN BOOKSTORES

מטרתו של ספר נפש החיים שער ד' עם פירוש בלבבי משכן אבנה הוא, לברר מהו עניינה ומותנה של התורה הקדושה, ואת יחס חיבורו של האדם לתורה הקדושה, בכל מדרגותיה. "בירור הלב והשכל ביחס למניע לעסוק בתורה

נוסוף לבאר חלק נוסף, ביחס למניע האדם לעסוק בתורה. לקמן יתבאר בכללות שלושה חלקים הצריכים להניע את האדם לעסוק בתורה: א. עסק התורה לשם התורה עצמה. ב. עסק התורה על מנת לעשות נחת רוח לקב"ה. ג. עסק התורה למען כנסת ישראל, בבחינת "תורת חסד על לשונה", וכן למען כלל כל הבריאה כולה.

מלבד שלושת החלקים הללו, ישנם מניעים נוספים שמחמתם האדם עוסק בתורה, כגון: ציוויון שציוונו לעסוק בתורה - "אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו לעסוק בדברי תורה". וכן מצד העריבות שיש בתורה - "והערב נא". או מצד קנאה תאוה וכבוד, או ח"ו לקנטר, שעליו נאמר שטוב לו שנהפכה שלייתו על פניו. כל אלו הם רק כלליות, והרי שישנם דקויות לפנים מדקויות במניעים לעסוק בתורה.

נמצא, שעל האדם לברר בירור בשורש עומק הנפש מה מניע אותו לעסוק בדברי תורה. אמנם, אם האדם לא בירר את לבבו ואת שכלו, כמו שנתבאר לעיל, הרי שהוא אינו יכול לברר לעצמו מה מניע אותו לעסוק בדברי תורה. הוא יכול לברר לעצמו מדוע צריך לעסוק בדברי תורה, אבל לא מדוע הוא עוסק בדברי תורה. הנפה"ח כותב את האמת מדוע צריך לעסוק בתורה, וכאן מתחילה עיקר עבודת הברור שהאדם מברר את שכלו ומברר את ליבו. ולכן, הגם שכל עומק צורת הלימוד של דברי הנפה"ח בתחילה בנויה על ידיעת הדברים, אולם על גבה צריך בירור שהאדם מברר את שכלו ומברר את ליבו. (עמוד טו'-טז)"

*Rashi* in the beginning of *Parshas Behar* cites from the *Pesikta*, "Why is the *parshah* of *shemittah* near Har Sinai, when all the *mitzvos* were said at Har Sinai? It is to show that just as the laws of *shemittah* were said to Moshe at Har Sinai, in all of its generalities (*kelalim*) and details (*peratim*) and nuances (*dikdukim*), so were all of the *mitzvos* said to Moshe at Har Sinai, in all of their generalities, details, and nuances". Thus, what we received at Har Sinai was all in the form of *kelalim*/generalities and *peratim*/details.<sup>1</sup>

Currently, we do not clearly see all the fine details of the Torah - we only see its generalities. As *Rashi* cites from Rav Saadya Gaon that the entire Torah is rooted in the Ten Commandments, which are the *kelalim*/generalities that serve as the basis of the rest of the *peratim*/details of the Torah.

In the way Hashem designed Creation, there are generalities and details to everything. On the first day, Hashem created everything in their potential form, and for each day of Creation, He released the potential forces

of Creation, when they all came into detail. Thus, the Creation began with a *klal*, a generality, where Hashem created everything in one day, and this extended into the rest of the details of Creation. When Hashem finished the six days of Creation and He rested on the seventh day, Shabbos, He created a generality, Shabbos, which became the root creation, for Shabbos is all-inclusive of all the creations.

Thus, there was first a generality (the first day of Creation) which included all the details, then came the details (all that was created during the six days of Creation and then came the generality that included all of the details (Shabbos). The giving of the Torah is [also] the root of Creation, for "Hashem looked into the Torah to create the world."<sup>2</sup> By the giving of the Torah, there were generalities and details told to Moshe at Har Sinai, just as the act of Creation involved generalities and details. Hashem spoke one commandment, which then extended into the Ten Commandments, a more detailed explanation of the original general expression uttered from Hashem.

### Soul's General & Detailed View

This concept, of "generalities" and "details", is also applicable to the soul. The soul may perceive either through a general view, or through a detailed view.

If one reaches a higher level of perception of the soul, he can see the generality that is above the details, as well as a generality that is all-inclusive of the details, and a generality that sees each detail separately. Those are three levels of generalities, and that is the ideal level.

1 Editor's Note: This is a particularly deep derasha of the Rav, which contains esoteric concepts. It has been attempted to present this material in English in a way that is understandable, so that those reading it can at least get the main points.

It should also be noted that the Rav in this derashah explains two main concepts - "kelalim", which is either translated as "generalities" or "rules", depending on the context, and "peratim", "details". Although there seems to be a third concept of *dikdukim*, "nuances", as is apparent from the opening statement of this derasha, it seems that the Rav included this concept in the idea of *peratim*/details.

2 Zohar Shemos 361a

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But when one hasn't yet developed one's soul, he will either see generalities without seeing the details, or he will focus on details without seeing the generalities. Either of these views is one-sided and incomplete.

To illustrate, a child will only focus on various details, without seeing the general picture of all the details. A child doesn't have the power to combine together the details and see the bigger picture. He can only see the details. If you give something to a child, either he thinks it is food or something to play with. There is nothing else in his life. To a child, one detail can be his entire world.

Even as a person gets older and becomes a mature adult, he may still have the child's perspective, by thinking that a certain detail is everything. Usually, adults can combine together details and see the bigger picture. A child does not have this power. When an adult remains with this perspective, he is in a state of total *katnus* (small-mindedness). If the adult can at least combine together details, he has left the state of total *katnus*, however he still may not have the power to combine together details through generalities.

When one grows and gains maturity and his/her true soul begins to emerge, his/her perspective may lean either towards seeing generalities, or seeing details. (Generally speaking, a man focuses on *kelalim*/generalities, and a woman tends to focus on *peratim*/details.<sup>3</sup>)

## Two Extremes

Those who focus on generalities usually have a hard time with details. A man may learn a *sugya* of Gemara, and want to know the general information of the *sugya*, but when it comes to delving into the details, he struggles. This is especially common when people learn *Daf HaYomi*. They want to know the general picture of the *sugya*, but they have a hard time when they begin to analyze all of the "nitty-gritty" details - how a certain detail makes a difference when it comes to the practical *halachah*, etc.

On the other end of the spectrum,

there are those who focus on details, but they can't see how the dots connect. A person may write a *sefer* containing *halachos*, which covers many details, but he is only viewing the various details in a *sugya* or *halachah*, without seeing what the rules are behind all of the details.

These two extremes can also be a problem when it comes to the physical world as well. There are people who can run companies and organizations, but they don't pay attention to certain details that are involved. They focus on the general picture, but they miss details which may be very important to the cause. In some cases, overlooking a detail can lead to disastrous results. Others have the opposite problem. They can remember a lot of information and all kinds of details, but they would never be able to run a company, because they can't get the bigger picture.

When it comes to spiritual matters, a person may have the problem of focusing too much on a generality, without working out the details. One may learn a *sugya* of Gemara and then think of a certain point which will serve as the entire basis for the *sugya*, but one doesn't think of how the rest of the details in the *sugya* will fit into it. He doesn't have the ability, or the will, to make sense of the various details in the *sugya*, even when they aren't fitting in with what he feels is the "main fundamental point" in the *sugya*.

Sometimes the details will prove his main point, and sometimes, they will contradict his main point. Yet, this won't faze him, and he will come up with some warped logic of why the details aren't important. He may defend his position by saying, "It depends on a certain argument in the Sages, or in the *Rishonim*, or in the *Acharonim*". As long as he feels that he has gotten to the root of a matter, he doesn't care if it works out with the rest of the details or not. To him, the main thing is that he has gotten to the root of the matter, and it's not that important for him to work out all the details.

Others have the opposite problem. When learning a *sugya*, they don't feel at ease unless they have every last detail worked out. If you ask them what the main point in the *sugya* is, their response will be that they do not feel a need for this. For them, it is enough that they are clear

about the details - they don't see a need to arrive at the root point in the *sugya*.

Those are the two different extremes: when one perceives only the general rules, without seeing details, or, the opposite - when a person only cares about details, without learning about the general rules. In contrast to the above two views, which are both incomplete, there is a higher perspective one can gain, which combines together the general view with the detailed view. Chazal state that a person should learn Torah in a manner of "*kelalim, kelalim*" - to learn the general rules; and from learning the general rules, a person can hold onto all of the *peratim*/details.

When one wants to get to know the details, it will feel like a huge burden to try and analyze and remember all of the details. Therefore, Chazal taught that a person should instead study *kelalim*, and from that general view, he can get to know the details. The idea of it is for a person to perceive the details through the general view. Through studying the general view, one can arrive at the details.

Compare this to a person who needs to travel with all his possessions from one place to another. If he tries to carry too many items with him, he will lose them. Instead, he should place his items in a sturdy container which can hold all of them. Similarly, in order to hold onto the many details of the Torah, a person needs to hold onto a *klal* which can contain all of the details.

The details of the Torah, in fact, are but a revelation of the *klal* of the Torah. The more a person studies the *klal*, the better he is at holding onto the *klal*, and in turn, the better he will hold onto the details which result from the *klal*.

Those who are familiar with the style of the Ramchal's *sefarim* (as an example, *sefer Daas Tevunos*) can see this theme. The Ramchal lays out general rules, and when one studies these rules, one can arrive at a vast amount of details that extend from these rules. Of course, one cannot grasp all of the details, because Torah is like an endless sea. But in general, one's approach towards Torah study should be a study of the *kelalim*, by which one can arrive at the details. ...

[from BILVAVI ON THE PARSHAH]

3 Editor's Note: This is explained further in the Rav's *sefer* *דע את מחשבותיך*, "Getting To Know Your Thoughts"

# SELF-RECOGNITION & SELF-ACTUALIZATION

In order to build a proper lifestyle which will be compatible to one's soul and to receive vitality and joy from it, one needs to recognize his soul and its abilities. If a person doesn't recognize himself well, how can he build his life properly?!

We can compare it to a person who is given a complicated gadget to use, and he doesn't know anything about it or how to use it. He won't be able to use the purpose of the device, or he will use it incorrectly, or he might damage it. He might even harm himself with it. So firstly, a person needs to recognize what he's been given, in order to use it properly. He should know what it's about and what its purpose is, and how to use it. Only then can he use it properly. And the better he gets to know the device, the more benefits he will reap out of it.

The lesson from this analogy is clear. The soul of a person is not merely an object or something that a person has, it is the person himself. The soul is far more complex than any device, and therefore in order to use the soul properly, one has to know the soul very well. And just like a person can't use a complicated device if he doesn't know anything about it, so it is insensible for a person to walk around in circles his whole life and try to use his potential, if he barely understands his soul and how to work with it.

Thus, the necessity to learn about the soul and understand it – in order to live properly – is as clear as the sun shining in the afternoon. We have so far explained two reasons why one needs for self-recognition: To solve one's issues, and to build a proper life that's aligned with one's soul so that he will utilize his potential.

When people engage in self-recognition because they want to solve their issues, although this is a true and necessary thing to do, it usually doesn't surface until after a person encounters many problems and then he's suffering. And, for the most part, it won't lead to an in-depth understanding about the soul, and it certainly won't help a person build a proper life. For it is only about solving the issues that one is dealing with, and as soon as one solves those issues, he relaxes and he absolves himself from the need to learn about his soul.<sup>1</sup> Also, if a person is only interested in solving his issues, he's not involved with actually building a proper life for himself. Many problems are a result of not living aligned with one's soul, so as long as one doesn't try to learn how to build a lifestyle that's aligned with his soul, he will be stalling in that situation for his whole life and he will find that there are constantly new problems being "created" in his life, and he has no idea why.

In contrast, the more ideal motivation for self-recognition is when people want to learn about it because they want to build a proper lifestyle for themselves, and not merely so that they can solve their issues. They won't be pushing off self-recognition until problems surface or they're suffering. They are not looking for "issues" to be focused on, nor is their focus on finding "solutions" for the issues. Rather, they want to understand themselves because they wish to recognize their true self, in all its depth - they

1 Of course, we cannot invalidate the need for self-recognition in order to solve one's issues. It is a proper thing to do, and we mentioned this earlier as well. And as we shall explain later, there are even situations where it's vital for a person to be focused on solving issues at hand, rather than trying to learn how to utilize his potential and live happily. In spite of that, however, one needs to become aware of these different reasons and motivations for self-recognition.

want to know they are. Such a motivation utilizes self-recognition as a way to build a proper lifestyle for oneself, a life of full of vitality and joy and fulfillment, and gradually a person can direct his life towards this purpose, using his abilities in a way that's aligned with the inner makeup of his personal soul.

Certainly a person should recognize his shortcomings - the areas of his soul which aren't balanced yet – in order to help himself. But the ideal motivation to understand ourselves is that solving our personal issues is not the entire goal. It is only a part of what we need to be doing – which is what we should want to build for ourselves a lifestyle that's aligned with our personal soul and which utilizes our personal potential. A step of that process is to recognize our faults and fix them, but that isn't all there is to the need to recognize our souls, as we have been explaining here. When a person recognizes himself well and lives in a way that's aligned with his soul, he will find that there are less new problems being created in his life, and even his existing problems will disappear, as if they were never there.

Thus, if we are engaging in self-recognition because we want to solve our issues, this is only a partial reason to engage in self-recognition and therefore the gain of it will be partial as well. But if we are engaging in self-recognition and learning about the soul because we want to know how to live properly, we will reap the most benefits from understanding ourselves, because then we will find "life" itself.

## Dealing With The Branches and Dealing With The Root

There are a number of ways to solve issues in the soul, but there is a fundamental and basic way to do it, comprised of two parts: (1) Naming the issue, by identifying which ability the person isn't making use of, or the ability that isn't balanced or repaired yet, in comparison to the person's other abilities which are more balanced. (2) Dealing with the issue ("therapy") – finding a solution to the issue, by fixing or balancing the ability that's needed.<sup>2</sup>

The abilities in the soul are arranged like a tree, with branches and a root. When we try to identify the soul's abilities, we can either identify its branches, or its roots, or both together. The more comprehensively we can identify these factors, the more precise a solution will be.

Here is an example: A person is suffering from sadness and melancholy. There are several ways of how we can identify the issue and deal with it.

Option 1 is to identify the "branches" and work with them. We can do this by seeing which areas trigger the person's sadness and what it's doing to him. We identify the areas he is sad in, and then we can work on those specific areas, to remove the factors that are triggering his sadness.

Option 2 is to identify the roots and work with them. This is by identifying the root of what causes sadness, which is when the soul has a movement where it "contracts" into itself – a soul

2 Sometimes the solution to an issue is found by dealing with the negative abilities that are getting in the way. For example, we may try to slowly minimize the issue, in small steps. And sometimes the solution is found by making use of the person's positive abilities, for example by helping the person connect to his best ability and to help him utilize it, and then the issue will be solved 'on its own', by default. Each case will be different.



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movement which comes from the element of earth in the soul [more about this will be explained later]. We can repair the issue by balancing out this movement of “contraction”, by applying the opposite movement – “expansion” [which uses the element of water] and that will bring joy to the person.

Option 3 is to have a comprehensive identification of both the roots and branches of the sadness, and we deal with both areas by improving the situations where the sadness is triggered (the branches) as well as by balancing the soul’s movement of “contraction” (the root), and with doing both of these together, there is a comprehensive solution to the issue, solving both the roots and branches of the sadness.<sup>3</sup>

When a person wants to recognize the soul in order to solve issues, he will usually have a superficial understanding of the soul that only scratches the surface. It will be a partial and limited understanding, and therefore solving the issue will also be a method that is superficial and only partial. At best, a person like this will succeed in identifying the branches of a soul faculty, but not more than that. Any therapy devised for him will be limited.<sup>4</sup> In contrast, when a person is learning about the soul because he wants to know how to live properly, he will have a more inner understanding of the soul which is more expansive and comprehensive. He will be able to identify the branches and roots of the soul’s abilities, and find the more ideal “therapy” for the issue.<sup>5</sup>

Another difference between self-recognition that’s “issue-oriented” versus self-recognition that’s “life-oriented” is, that when a person is only interested in solving his issues, he doesn’t focus on his positive strengths and instead he focuses on the problems that are bothering him. In other words, he is not focusing on what he has, but on what he doesn’t have. He won’t have resources in himself to deal with his issues, because they won’t be strong enough, and this is because he is trying to deal with his issues at a time when he isn’t yet connected to himself, and he isn’t in touch with his strong abilities. He is working from a place of deficiency, from what he doesn’t have.

3 Sometimes a person should only work with the branches, and at other times a person should only work with the roots. And sometimes, a person should work on both. Each case is different.

4 (The “4 Elements” series is based on this comprehensive recognition of the soul, in which one learns to identify the branches and roots of each ability, and finding an appropriate way of dealing with an issue based upon that knowledge. Therefore, the “4 Elements” series is helpful even for those who learn self-recognition for the sole purpose of seeking specific solutions to issues (even if they aren’t trying to build themselves up and live a soul-aligned life). Every person has issues, but the question is: Does a person  
5 feel that his problems are holding him back, or does he feel that he can put his problems aside for some time, so that he can learn about himself and self-actualize his potential, and so that ultimately he can deal with issues later, in a more complete way, after he has gained a better understanding of himself?

By contrast, if a person’s goal is to build a proper life for himself, he will usually be in a positive frame of mind. He isn’t focused on his “problems”. In his view, his situation is “not that bad”, and he feels that is interested and equipped in progressing forward, and he has a desire to a proper lifestyle for himself.<sup>6</sup>

Building a proper lifestyle is based on recognizing one’s strengths and being connected with them and actualizing one’s potential, which provides vitality and joy. Only after that can a person really deal with his issues properly and happily, from a healthy and strong place in himself. Doing any inner work with ourselves, and dealing with our issues especially, is based on having a perspective of wholeness about ourselves, having a positive attitude about ourselves, which gives us great strength. Therefore, in order to properly solve one’s issues, the best way is ultimately by recognizing our souls for the purpose of building a proper lifestyle that’s aligned with our personal soul.

## The “Instant & Easy” Generation

Even though there are so many gains of engaging in self-recognition for the purpose of creating a proper life for ourselves, the natural tendency of people is to be interested solely in solving their issues. But most of the time, this stems from the common way of thinking in our generation, which likes to have things come quickly and easily.

Many people in our generation have gotten used to living in a way where everything they want has to come immediately and in the easiest way possible to them. It has become natural for people to adapt this worldview that has become an inseparable part of living: Everything we want must come quickly and easily.

Here are some examples. A person wants a hot meal – all he has to do is press a button on the microwave. A person wants it to be cooler or warmer in the room – he presses the button of the A/C and everything is perfect. Instead of walking by foot to get from one place to another, a person can get there with electronic gadgets, with a hover-board, etc. A person can go on a diet easily without having to move.

And the most obvious example of the “quick and easy” lifestyle is the cellphone, which allows instant communication wherever you are, storing every contact so that you don’t have to remember any numbers, and which a person can do simple math on using its calculator. A person can purchase things using his cellphone. With just pushing a button – and now with just a finger swipe – a person can control and do many things.

## [מהספר הכרה עצמית והעצמת הנפש]

6 Self-recognition is the tool to serve the Creator and do the mitzvos. When self-recognition is for the purpose of building a proper lifestyle, it brings one a lot closer to serving the Creator than self-recognition for the purpose of solving issues.

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