

## PARSHAS BEHAR - DETAILS, RULES &amp; BEYOND

"THE GENERALITIES AND DETAILS  
OF TORAH WERE ALL SAID TO  
MOSHE AT SINAI"

*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, and 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 which 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 potential, 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.

THE SOUL'S GENERAL VIEW AND  
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.

But when hasn't yet developed his 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 alone. If you give something to a child, either he thinks it's food or something to play with. There is nothing else in his life. To a child, a certain 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, an adult can combine together details and see a bigger picture of the details. A child does not have this power, and when an adult as well 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*, but he still may not have the power to combine together details through generalities.

When one grows and he gains maturity, and his/her true soul begins to emerge, his/her perspective may lean either towards seeing generalities, or seeing details. Generally, a man focuses on generalities, and a woman will tend to focus on details.

TWO EXTREMES - FOCUSING ON  
GENERALITIES VS. FOCUSING ON  
DETAILS

Those who focus on generalities usually have a hard time with details. A man may learn a *sugya* of Gemara, and he wants 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, and how a certain detail makes a difference when it comes

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> Zohar parshas Shemos 361a

to the practical *halachah*, etc. On the other end of the spectrum 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 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 much information and all kinds of details, but they would never be able to run a company, because they don't have a bigger picture.

When it comes to matters of the spiritual, 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 he thinks of a certain point which will serve as the entire basis for the *sugya*, but he doesn't think of how the rest of the details in the *sugya* will fit in to 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, or the main generality, of the matter. The details don't have to work

out. 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, they do not feel a need for this. For them, it is enough that they are clear about the details, and they don't see a need to arrive at the root point in the *sugya*. They are calmed as long as they feel clear about the details they have learned about, and they don't feel a need to get to the root, underlying point behind all these many details.

Those are 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.

### THE INTEGRATED VIEW: SEEING THE DETAILS FROM STUDYING THE GENERAL VIEW

In contrast to the above two views, which are each 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 *kelalim*, the general rules; and from learning *kelalim*, a person can hold onto all of the *peratim* details.

When one wants to get to know the details, if he tries to analyze and remember all of the details, it feels like a huge burden to carry all the details at once. Therefore, Chazal said 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. Instead of focusing on the details per se, one can arrive at the details by studying the general view.

Compare this to a person who needs to travel from one place to another, who needs to take his things with him. 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 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, he 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 should approach to Torah study should be a study of the *kelalim*, by which one can arrive at the details.

### REACHING THE LEVEL OF "KLAL"

However, this approach of grasping the details of the Torah by way of studying the *kelalim* is not just a way to better understand or remember the information of the Torah.

Let us explain. The entire Creation, at its root, is a *klal*, a general, undivided unit. The Creation extends downward from the upper spheres of Heaven, becoming more and more detailed until it reaches the lowest level. For example, at first there was Avraham and Sarah, and Yitzchok and Rivkah, who bore Yaakov. From Yaakov came 12 tribes, and they had 70 descendants, and by the time the people left Egypt, there were 600,000 souls. The root was one – "Avraham Avinu was one" – and this root extended into more and more details. The inner structure of Creation is that the highest point is a *klal*, and as the highest point extends lower and lower, it breaks up into more and more details.

Therefore, we can understand deeply that studying the *kelalim* in Torah in order to arrive at *peratim* details is not simply a way of understanding or remembering the Torah better. Even though that is also true, that is not the

purpose. It is rather that the more that a person understands the details through perceiving the *kelalim*, he is arriving at the **source** of a matter, seeing the matter at its source and root, and in doing so, he becomes elevated, because he is rising higher towards the root of the information of the Torah.

When a person learns any of the other wisdoms of the world, such as math, he learns about certain rules so that he can better remember all the details that result from these rules. But when it comes to learning the holy Torah, when a person learns the *kelalim* of the Torah, such as the rules of our *emunah* and of our *hilchos de'os*, it is different. In Torah study, the roots of the information are high up, while the branching information is on a much lower plane. Therefore, one's attitude towards the general rules and details of the Torah's information is what greatly shapes his level of Torah learning and understanding.

If a person is learning the details of Torah and he thinks of these details as general rules, clearly, he still has an immature understanding about what the Torah is. If he can connect details of the Torah together, then he is at least learning the details of the Torah. If he is learning the general rules in the Torah's laws but without seeing the details, this is similar to being in a fantasy, because he is trying to skip all of the details and jump to the general rules of Torah. The *kelalim* of the Torah are above the details of the Torah, and if a person skips the details in order to get to the *klal*, he is not really found in those *kelalim* of the Torah he is learning about, even if he intellectually understands the *kelalim*. When one learns Torah correctly, he learns more and more details of the Torah, and he connects them, and slowly he enters into the *kelalim* of the Torah, and then he can arrive at greater *kelalim*, such as the "great *klal* of the Torah" which Rabbi Akiva taught: "Love your friend as yourself – this is a great rule of the Torah." When one rises from the details of the Torah to the *kelalim* of the Torah, it does not mean that he

can better understand and remember the details of the Torah because he has arrived at the *kelalim*. Rather, it means that he has truly become elevated to the spiritual level that is called "*klal*".

## LEAVING THE PRIVATE SELF – THROUGH AHAVAS YISRAEL

Let us now discuss the actual ramifications of this concept, so that we can be clearer about what it is. There are 600,000 souls in the Jewish people, parallel to the 600,000 letters of the Torah. When a person lives only his own, private individual existence, he will only be concerned about his own "I". When a person rises from the level of *prat*\detail to the level of *klal*, if this is only on an intellectual level, then "his wisdom is more than his actions" and he is still not fit to be on the level of *klal*. If he wants to rise to the level of *klal*, he must have *ahavas Yisrael*, love for the Jewish people. In this way, he joins with the collective unit of *Klal Yisrael*, which is found on the level of *klal*.

This is the depth of the concept described earlier, that the entire Creation is a structure of *kelalim*\rules which extend into details. On an intellectual level, one can either be involved with studying *kelalim*\rules or *peratim*\details, and on a soul level as well, one can either be involved at a level of *kelalim* or at a level of *peratim*.

Most people are learning Torah only on the level of *peratim*\details, meaning that they only see the details of the Torah without connecting them into one unit. There are a few people who reach the roots of the details in the Torah, but in most cases, it is only on an intellectual level, and it is not the actual spiritual level of their soul. An even smaller amount of people reaches the level that is called *klal*, where they reach the general roots that contain all of the details.

In order to get to such a level, one needs true *ahavas Yisrael* towards other Jews, so that he can join with the *klal* that contains all details. Otherwise, "his wisdom is more than his actions" and he isn't fit for this level. Even if he learns

Torah on the level of *klal* – he always makes sure to get to the root of the all the details in the Torah, so that he sees each matter at their source – he must still have true *ahavas Yisrael*, in order for his soul to maintain this level. If not, he is only intellectually connected to the level of *klal*, and it is not the actual level of his soul. How can one know if he is on this level or not? He can discern this by asking himself how much *ahavas Yisrael* he has for other Jews.

## A NEW LEVEL OF WISDOM, WHERE THE DETAILS OF TORAH ARE EASILY UNDERSTOOD

Even more so, when one is truly at the level of *klal*, new level of wisdom becomes opened to him, where he receives wisdom directly from its spiritual source, and the details will then come to him on their own, without exerting himself to understand them. He will easily understand the details, at least some of them, even though he didn't learn them yet, because this is the level of becoming a *maayan hamisgaber*, "fortified wellspring", and it is accessed through learning Torah *lishmah* (for its own sake).

Learning Torah *lishmah* is essentially the level of *klal*, whereas learning Torah *shelo lishmah* is the level of *peratim*\details.

When one learns *shelo lishmah*, he learns for his own benefit, so he is concerned only with his own individual self. When one learns Torah *lishmah* – which there are many levels of, as explained in *sefer Nefesh HaChaim* – he is not only concerned that his "Torah should be absorbed within my innards", but he learns Torah because he understands that he is part of a greater whole.

So in order to be on the level of *klal*, one needs to have *ahavas Yisrael* and to learn Torah *lishmah*, at least on some level. That all describes, in general, the level of *klal*.



## THE CONNECTION BETWEEN SHEMITTAH AND HAR SINAI

The *parshah* of *shemittah* was said near Har Sinai, to show that just as all of its *kelalim* and *peratim* were said at Sinai, so were all other *kelalim* and *peratim* of all the *mitzvos* said at Har Sinai. Now we can understand the depth of this.

In the *mitzvah* of *shemittah*, we count a cycle of seven years, just like we count down the days of *Sefiras HaOmer*, until the seventh year, which is the *shemittah* year. This is a *klal* followed by *peratim* (details) (the seven years), followed by a *klal*. It is a count of the details, one after the other, until we arrive at the *klal*.

The depth of why this *mitzvah* was said near Har Sinai was to show that the 600,000 souls of the Jewish people, the many “details” who stood at Har Sinai, were all needed, so that all of the *kelalim* of the Torah could be given. If even one soul would have been missing, the Torah wouldn’t have been given to them. Each soul was needed, so that the Torah could be said to all of them at once. The Torah revealed at Har Sinai was thus a revelation of a *klal* that included all *peratim*, and from which all *peratim* come.

Thus, the level of standing at Har Sinai was, as *Rashi* states, “as one man, with one heart”. This was the *ahavas Yisrael* which each person needed in order to be at the level of *klal*. This was the level of the giving of the Torah. At the giving of the Torah, there was not just a revelation of many details of Torah, but the *kelalim* of the Torah with all their details. Without the unified state of the Jewish people, each person would have been on his own, and

then we wouldn’t have been on the level of *klal* to receive the Torah. Even more so, the depth of the level of standing at Har Sinai was a revelation of the word of Hashem. The word of Hashem, revealed through the Ten Commandments, was a *klal* rule that not only includes all of the details of Torah, but it is the *klal* which is also above all details.

This complete revelation was when Hashem descended onto Har Sinai. This was the oneness of Hashem, “*Hashem is One and His Name is One*”, the one utterance of Hashem, which doesn’t break down into any details. This is the ultimate *klal*, which contains all details and which is also above all details. Thus, in order for a person to truly feel Hashem’s presence, he must rise to the level of *klal* which is above even the level of *klal* that includes all details.

If one knows only the details of Torah and he is unaware of the *kelalim* of Torah, he has nothing but offshoots of wisdom from the Torah, and he doesn’t have any substantial Torah learning.

If he lives on the level of *klal* and from there he sees the details of the Torah, he has reached the root, fundamental way of learning Torah, as described until now.

And, finally, if a person merits to live in the greatest *klal* of all, which is “*Ain Od Milvado*” (“There is nothing besides for Him”) – in which there is only one Reality, which is above this divided reality that we see – then he lives with the presence of the Creator in his heart, in his heart.

This is the ideal, spiritual level of the days which we are currently found in, where we prepare for receiving the Torah.

Thus, the *parshah* of the laws of *shemittah* is written near the *parshah* of Har Sinai, to show us not only the generalities, details, and nuances of the Torah, but also to show us **Who** said all of these many generalities, details, and nuances.

Thus, the depth of our *avodah* in life is to keep all the details of the Torah, but also to direct our souls to the “generality” (*klal*) that is above all of these details (*peratim*) – namely, the fact that Hashem is One.

## IN CONCLUSION

When this knowledge penetrates into the mind and heart [and we are desiring throughout learning all of the details of the Torah], to reach the One, Whom there is none other – this is like the revelation of Hashem when He descended onto Har Sinai at the giving of the Torah. It is **His Oneness** which is the greatest *klal* of all, which is the great rule that contains all possible details – and a great *klal* which is also above all of the details.

This perspective is the preparation we should make during these days we are in, for the time of the giving of the Torah. This is how we can remember and envision how we stood before Har Sinai, when we stood before the Creator. It is by directing our lives towards reaching the very root of our *emunah*, which is the fact that “Hashem is One”.

Through this great rule, one can cover all the details of the Torah, all the way down to the tiniest detail of *halachah* – but only from reaching the root of all the details: “*Hashem is One, and His Name is One.*”

## PARSHAS BECHUKOSAI HOW TO USE THIS WORLD

### UNDERSTANDING THE BLESSING OF PHYSICAL ABUNDANCE

*Parshas Bechukosai* begins with, “*If you will follow My decrees and observe My commandments and perform them, then I will provide your rains in their time.*”

When one leads a life of exertion in Torah and doing Hashem’s will, there is a guarantee from Hashem that the physical side of life is improved as well. Through the power of the holy Torah, which is rooted in the highest realms, there is *shefa* (Heavenly abundance) poured down onto

the world, which improves even the most physical needs – the rain specifically, and all physical aspects of life in general.

Let us understand what the blessing of physical *shefa* (abundance) is.

## TORAH LEARNING & PHYSICAL ENJOYMENT

The *Mishnah* in *Avos* states, “Eat bread dipped in salt and water in a cistern, and sleep on the ground, and live a life of suffering. If you do so, praiseworthy are you in This World, and it will be good for you in the Next World”. If so, why does the Torah state in *Parshas Bechukosai* that physical abundance is a blessing?

There is a dispute in the Gemara if there is a *halachah* to have physical enjoyment on the festivals, or if they should be totally spiritual enjoyment. The Gemara says that “on Atzeres (Shavuot), everyone agrees that it also requires “for you” (physical enjoyment), for it is the day when the Torah was given, so it should be halfway for Hashem, and halfway “for you”. We learn from this that when there is revelation of Torah – represented by the festival of Shavuot, when the Torah was given – it follows with physical enjoyment.

*Rashi* in the beginning of the *parshah* states that the words “If you will follow My decrees” means, “That you should exert yourselves in Torah”. This leads to the end of the verse, “*Then I will provide your rains in their time*”, which refers to physical abundance. This needs understanding: What is the connection between exerting ourselves in Torah learning, with enjoying physical abundance?

What is the proper way to go about physical enjoyment, and what is its connection to learning Torah?

## WHEN THE CONNECTION TO PHYSICALITY BECOMES HARMFUL TO THE SOUL

The root of the matter is as follows.

Man is made of body and soul. The body comes from the earth, and the soul is a “breath of life” from Hashem. When man is involved in the spiritual, he awakens the light of the soul, and he reveals it from its hidden state. When man is involved with the physical, the physical body encounters physicality, its “companion”, and its gruff physicality is increased.

Therefore, when man becomes connected to the material side of life, he becomes more materialistic. He becomes lowered from his spiritual source and he descends into a materialistic existence. His soul becomes concealed from him and it will play less of an active role in his life. But even more so, since the ‘companion’ of the physical body is the involvement with materialism, these two ‘companions’ find each other and then the physical forces become strengthened. The physical body of man then gains much greater control over man.

On one hand, our involvement with the material side of life is necessary. Hashem has created us in His wisdom to be involved with the physical. He created us with a physical body taken from the earth, and that forces us to be involved with the physical and be connected to it. But when man becomes too involved in the physical, much more than necessary, or if his intentions in using the physical are improper, that is when the connection to the physical becomes damaging, increasing the physicality of the body and covering the soul.

## HOW MUCH PHYSICALITY DO WE NEED?

It is impossible for man not to be involved in the physical, because Hashem in His wisdom has created us with a physical body that needs to be involved with the physical. If so, we are led to a deep question about the life of man: How much do we need to connect to the physical? What is the proper amount? We can’t do without it, and overdoing it is harmful to our soul. So we have a subtle work to do, and it is one of the most difficult tasks we have: How much should we connect to the physical?

Understandably, it is not the same amount with each person. When the manna fell in the desert, everyone received the same amount, whether he was a child or adult, whether he was a bigger or smaller person. The manna was Heavenly food, so it was equal for each person, but

with physical food, each person needs a different amount and different kinds of food. Even more so, all physical needs, such as a house, clothing, etc. and all other material aspects of life, are not the same amount for each person.

The *Mesillas Yesharim* states that everything that brings a person closer to Hashem should be greatly pursued, and anything that distances a person from Hashem should be avoided as if it is a fire to run away from. That tells us how much we need to use this world. But the definition is really more specific than this.

## BASIC NEEDS OF THE NEFESH HABEHAIMIS: ANIMAL SOUL

A person has many parts to the soul – the lowest part being the *nefesh habehaimis* (“animal” level of the soul), and the higher parts to the soul, starting from the *nefesh elokis* (“G-dly” aspect of the soul), then the *ruach* (a more spiritual force), and then the higher parts of the soul [which include the *neshamah*, *chayah* and *yechidah*].

There are the minimal physical needs a person has in order to sustain his body, such as how to eat, drink, etc. How much does one need to eat and drink? This can be determined by asking a nutritionist, but even the nutritionists disagree about what the proper amount is, so even figuring out our basic physical needs is difficult to know. There is some vague outline of how much food and drink one needs, but it is still unclear, and it is subject to a matter of opinion.

However, even if a person knew exactly what his body needs in order for it to be sustained, there are more parts to his existence that he needs to take care of. He has a *nefesh habehaimis*, which also has its needs for well-being.

The *nefesh habehaimis* has different needs than the body, and it demands much more needs than the body does. From a simple perspective, we can view it as entirely evil, and of this we can subtly apply the statement of Chazal, “Eat bread dipped in salt and water in a cistern, sleep on the ground, and live a life of suffering.”

However, the truer perspective is that the *nefesh habehaimis* has more needs than the body does, in order for it to be sustained and healthy. These are normal, healthy needs of the *nefesh habehaimis* - which we should make sure to give to it.

The *Mesillas Yescharim* asks the question of how much we should avoid physicality and how much we should make use of it, and he answers that it depends on how much a person needs for his *yishuv hadaas* (peace of mind). But besides for the needs of the physical body itself, there are also the needs of the *nefesh habehaimis* which need to be considered.

It is tough to know how much one needs for his *yishuv hadaas*, and it is a subtle determination; but even more so, it is even more difficult to know how much we need to give our *nefesh habehaimis* - and how much we should not give in to it.

Chazal state that “a beautiful wife, beautiful utensils, and a beautiful home” are all things that expand the mind. But how much should a person actually go about making use of these things? It is a very subtle matter.

## STAYING CENTERED BETWEEN PHYSICALITY AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH

On one hand, a person's *avodah* is to strive for self-perfection and growth, to keep growing, on the ladder that ascends to G-d. As a person grows spiritually, his connection to materialism is weakened, for his G-dly soul is awakened, and in turn, the hold of his animal soul upon him becomes less dominant. The more connected a person becomes to Hashem, to Torah learning, to his davening, to doing *chesed*, and to doing the *mitzvos* and to truly doing Hashem's will, the more inner and truthful he becomes, and his connection to the material world weakens.

But at the same time, a person must know his current level. Along with aspiring for spiritual growth, one must also accept that he isn't perfected yet and that he currently has some material needs.

So while one must always aspire for

more spiritual growth, he must also know the current level where his “animal soul” is at. If one lacks this awareness, there will be detrimental results. He will detach from materialism when he is not really ready for this level, and often, it is way above his current level to do so.

This is especially common amongst adolescents when they are idealistic, who may do extreme things in order to climb to higher spiritual levels by detaching from the physical. The results are often disastrous, and the plan backfires, making them recede far in the opposite direction. If a person doesn't know himself well – meaning, if he is unaware of the current level that his animal soul stands at, which are his current physical needs – for him, disconnecting from materialism will backfire on him. It will be too much for him to handle.

## IMAGINED NEEDS AND HABITUAL DESIRES

There is also an additional kind of desire which one needs to know how to go about using. In the current generation we live in, where so many people have become attached to materialism in a way that they have come to feel dependent on it, there are many desires that people have which are viewed of as “needs”, while in reality they are not needs, but wants.

In many cases, there are things that appear to be absolute needs for his “animal soul”, but they are not actual needs. They are simply the result of environmental and social factors, which have caused people to habitually get used to having these desires, but they are not real needs for the person, even though it may seem that way.

It appears to a person that certain things are his “needs”, such as certain ways of dress, certain acquisitions to own, etc. If we take away these things from a person, he might feel as if he needs to be supported by *tzedakah* in order to have them again, as if they are needs of his soul. But the reality is that these are not his actual needs. After he has gotten used to it, this has become his level, but he does not actually need it.

Even more so, sometimes a person would really like to uproot a desire for something that he has gotten used to, but he sees that it's acceptable in the world today to pursue this desire, as if these desires are simple needs of the soul.

When a person really seeks a true kind of life and he is in touch with his actual needs and with what he doesn't need, he is aware that he must disconnect from certain desires on this world. But without this awareness, he will come to think that many of the things he desires are his own needs, when in reality, they are not needs, but simply his desires.

## THREE KINDS OF MATERIAL DESIRE

So far, we have explained how one should view desires for materialism which are not actual needs. There are things a person has become used to habitually, which takes work in order to uproot, where one must realize that he has grown used to having these things merely out of habit, and not because these are his actual needs. In addition, we also explained that there are desires that a person has lusts for, and he thinks he needs them, when they are not really needs.

But there is also a third kind of desire, mentioned earlier: the needs of the *nefesh habehaimis* (animal level of the soul). These needs are not imagined or learned from the environment; they are rather genuine needs, depending on one's particular personality. Hashem, in His wisdom, has implanted certain needs in every person, as part of his nature. Concerning these needs, the *Mesillas Yescharim* states that a person must only make use of these desires to the point that he has *yishuv hadaas* (composure) from it [and not more than that amount].

So one must know very well if a certain desire of his is merely a habit he needs to uproot, or if it is a desire that he wants but which he doesn't really need [both of which should not be pursued], or, if it is an actual need in his *nefesh habehaimis* - which he may make use of, and which becomes refined with time as he grows spiritually.



No one is the same when it comes to this. All people have different needs. Therefore, connection to materialism is a matter that depends on each person's level.

## THE PROPER PERSPECTIVE TOWARDS THE ABUNDANCE OF MATERIALISM IN TODAY'S WORLD

So, how much does one need to make use of the physicality of this world? In this generation where people have become so attached to materialism, like a fetus dependent on its mother, it seems that this is an accepted way of living, to pursue materialism this much.

But as we draw closer to Shavuot, where the Torah was given, let us think: "Hashem looked in the Torah and created the world", which means that all *shefa* (heavenly sustenance) on this world is nothing but as a means of revelation of Torah. The entire creation is really Torah, all *shefa* comes from the Torah, which comes from Hashem; and we need to make use of all this *shefa* to the point that it upkeeps our Torah learning and service to Hashem. That is the correct perspective towards the material *shefa* available on this world. We should see all the *shefa* as being rooted in the Torah.

Hashem sends the rains in its proper time, if we have exertion in Torah, as *Rashi* states in the beginning of this week's *parshah*. This is because in the ideal state, the rains come from the Torah! All abundance of materialism is here only to enable and upkeep our Torah learning and to be able us to serve Hashem truthfully.

There is a way to behave, and a way to think, about this. So far, we have explained how one should behave, with regards to making use of the materialism of this world. One needs to know how much of this world he needs to make use of. It is not simple to know it, but it is part of our *avodah*.

All of that pertains to how much we should allow ourselves to connect to the material world. But besides for how to go about it in terms of behavior, there is also how to think about it, how to view it properly, what the correct perspective towards it should be. When one doesn't think, he lives by rote, and he pursues physicality without considering what the proper amount should be, based upon how he grew up and what his surroundings are like, as Hashem has placed him into [but he will never grow past this level, and he will remain superficial].

But the beginning of *Parshas Bechukosai* tells us that when there is exertion in Torah, there will be rains in its time, and this is not simply a guarantee that the rain will come in its time if people learn Torah. That is also true, but it is more than that. It means that exertion in Torah is the very root of all *shefa*. The "Torah of life" is what upkeeps the entire world. All *shefa* comes from Torah, and therefore, all *shefa* exists solely for the purposes of enabling learning Torah and service to Hashem! That is the proper perspective on how should view the materialism available on this world.

The *Ramchal* says that one needs physicality to the point that he has *yishuv hadaas* (peace of mind). That concerns

the amount of how much *shefa* one should pursue, but there is also a proper perspective that is needed. One should view all *shefa* as nothing but a means to enable Torah learning and more closeness to Hashem. That is what this world is here for and that is how we should use it.

If one is missing this perspective towards materialism and he has never really thought about this, he will live life by rote, indulge in materialism as much as he wants, and become entrenched in it [preventing him from spiritual growth]. This has always been true, but it is even more so in the recent generations, where there is an abundance of materialism that surrounds a person from all sides, where people are attached to it "as a dog laps up its vomit", as a fetus in its mother, enveloped in all directions by a vast amount of material abundance.

## IN CONCLUSION

If a person has the proper perspective towards *shefa*, then all of this *shefa* will become a blessing for him, as it was meant to be. If not, this intended blessing is turned into a curse, *chas v'shalom*.

With the proper perspective towards how we should make use of all the *shefa* on this world, a person can merit to become sanctified and purified from amidst this material world, and he will make use of this material world in the proper amount, and with the right perspective, with *yishuv hadaas*, and then he will have a space in his heart that is devoted to serving the Creator.

## PERSISTENCE IN DAVENING

My understanding is that when a person davens when he really wants something, he needs to add on at the end of his tefillah "Only answer my tefillah if this is for my good", because sometimes a person is davening so

long for something which is really for his own good (even though he thinks it is), and since "In the way a person wants to go in, he is led", Hashem will answer his tefillos even though it will be to his detriment. Is this true?

### ANSWER

There are some times where that is

true [where his tefillos will be answered even when it's not for his good, because he keeps davening for it], and there are other times where no matter how much a person davens, his request will not get answered.

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

## THE PURPOSE OF TEFILLAH AND HISBODEDUS

How much time should we spend on tefillah and how much on hisbodedus?

**ANSWER:**

Tefillah is our collective relationship with Hashem, whereas hisbodedus is one's personal connection with Hashem. We need both aspects of our life. Therefore, the three tefillos we daven each day are not enough, and neither is hisbodedus enough. Through tefillah we can integrate with the collective unit of the Jewish people and through that we connect to Hashem; through hisbodedus, one brings his soul to have a personal connection with Hashem.

## HUSBAND'S AVODAH WHEN WIFE IS IN LABOR

What is a husband's avodah when his wife is in labor? How can he remain calm and make her feel calm as well, and at the same time davening to Hashem? And what should he daven for during this time?

**ANSWER:**

On one hand, he should be reminding himself of the emunah that Ain Od Milvado, that nothing is in control except for Hashem (*see Nefesh HaChaim shaar III, 12*). He should also be davening that his wife should have an easy birth, and that the baby should be born healthy. At the same time, he also needs to sympathize with her pain, and he should be going back and forth between these different states: emunah in Aid Milvado, and davening for his wife and baby, and sympathizing with his wife.

**QUESTION**

What should a husband do if his wife is in pain from having contractions and she is nervous, and when she hears him davening from a siddur or Tehillim it only makes her more nervous and she yells at him to stop davening and just remain calm?

**ANSWER**

Daven from your own language without using any of the prayers of the siddur, and you can also daven mentally. Make sure to cycle back and forth between emunah, tefillah, and sympathizing with your wife, as explained in the previous answer.

**QUESTION**

Are the non-Jewish nurses and midwives in the hospital to be viewed as Hashem's messengers to help bring my baby into the world, and do they have a zechus (*merit*) in bringing a Jewish neshamah into the world?

**ANSWER**

Certainly they are messengers of Hashem, and yes, they do have a zechus because of what they are doing.

## TZADDIKIM WHO DAVEN LATE

What is the reason behind why there are Chassidish Rebbes don't try to make zman tefillah and they daven late? How can it be that there are tzaddikim who are so careful with every halachah and they are the greatest ovdei Hashem, but they daven very late, not just once in a while but as l'chatchilah, to begin with? Since we have an obligation to be dan l'kaf zechus a tzaddik, what is the way to understand their conduct?

**ANSWER:**

Any tzaddikim who daven[ed] late was because they were an "onnes", they were not obligated to daven since they didn't feel spiritually prepared or physically clean enough for davening!

The inner root behind it is because their soul root comes from Don, or, they have a "spark" (*nitztoz*) of Don in their souls, and Don's role is to "gather together all the camps", and that is why Heaven made them exempt from davening when the time came to daven, and therefore they davened later.

This is only what we can say to judge them favorably, but we are not allowed to use this reason in practice!

## TZADDIKIM ABOVE TIME & SPACE

The sefer Nefesh HaChaim explains that there are worlds above time and above the definitions of the Torah, which is a spiritual reality above our world and which does not apply to the world we live on, which is the world of action, where we must follow the Torah's rules. It seems that the spiritual worlds that are above our world are only a reality that we can know about when we learn sefer Nefesh HaChaim, but when we close the sefer we're back living on our world. My question is that there are tzaddikim, both who passed away and those who are currently living, who don't align all their actions with the defining parameters of the Torah of the 'world of action' that we live on, and these tzaddikim live beyond time and space, and they don't always keep every aspect of halachah, especially with the example of not davening during zman Tefillah. I understand that these tzaddikim are very connected to these higher worlds but I don't understand how they are able to ignore the reality of the world of action that we live on. Since they are tzaddikim, I want to understand their behavior.

**ANSWER:**

Even when one is very attached in his soul to the higher worlds that are above time and space, he is never allowed to diverge from keeping halachah. However, there are some times where the tzaddikim rely on leniencies in halachah, in cases where most Poskim do not agree to a certain view and only very few existing opinions in the Poskim permit something, and, at a time of pressure [*b'shaas d'chak*] for the necessity of the light that was needed for their souls, these tzaddikim permitted certain views for themselves even where it wasn't in accordance with the views of most opinions in the Poskim.