

## Weekly Hashkafa Shiur #134 - The Mechanism of Man's Interaction with the Divine

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### Dedication

Before I begin, I just want to say that this *shiur* should be a blessing and a merit for the health and success of the families of Regina bas Yosef Reuven, Yeshaya ben Yisrael, Benyamin Wolf ben Tzvi Hirsch, and Baruch ben Benyamin Wolf, that they should only see *mazal, bracha, and simcha*.

### Introduction

In RaMCHaL's *sefer "Derech Ha'Shem"* there is a third *chelek--portion* in which he talks about the spiritual structure of the world. It's very fascinating because the spiritual structure of the world is such because, in order to fulfill the purpose of Creation, the world must have a structure. People can go through their entire lives never realizing or understanding the spiritual structure of the world.

Therein lies the value of these *shiurim--lessons, lectures*. I will introduce you to, and bring you up to speed about, what types of phenomena are available in the world that we live in from a spiritual standpoint. What I want to talk about is what the RaMCHaL talks about, the phenomena called "*nevuah*"—*prophecy*.

### *Nevuah--Prophecy*

Most people think *nevuah* took place thousands of years ago, which is true. They consider it to be something antiquated. They could say, "It's a long time ago." Is it really what's called "*nogeia*"? Does it apply today?

The answer to that is, yes. I gave a *shiur* last week about *Shabbos* and I explained the unusual ideas behind one's ability to "experience" *Shabbos*, the technique, the structure of *nevuah*. I indicated last week that the real essence of *Shabbos* is that we are able to experience the *Ribono Shel Olam* as He will be experienced in the *elef ha'shvi--seven-thousandth year*. In order to do that, you have to have a certain spiritual apparatus called the "*neshamah yeserah*"—*additional soul*.

Most people don't realize, that's *nevuah*! They get to thinking, "Oh, *Shabbos* is *Shabbos*. Great *cholent* is on the menu, *kugel*," and all that. But, no. The essential idea of *Shabbos* is that you become what I call a "partial *navi*." In other words, you feel G-D in a diminished form as He will be experienced in the *elef ha'shvi--seven-thousandth year* which begins after the English year 2240. You don't actually see Him,

obviously, and it's a diminished form or else it would be incredible. There's that feeling that we have about *Shabbos* that many wonder about, a sense of, "What is that? I feel differently than I do on the weekdays." There's no question that there's a difference and I answered that such is the *nevuah*. That's really what you're experiencing. You are a *navi*—*prophet* though not to the degree of the early *navi'im*, obviously. It's not the capability of Moshe *Rabbeinu* and not even Shmuel *Ha'Navi*, Yeshaya, Yirmiyahu, Yechezkel, and so on, but *nevuah*—*prophecy* is what we experience every week. You can't get more relevant than that.

The second idea about *nevuah* which people have to realize is that the primary experience of *nevuah* will be during *yemos ha'mashiach*. If you want to talk to somebody, you'll communicate with them using physical means but the primary method of communication with the *shechina*—*Divine Presence* in the messianic era will be through *nevuah*. That's what is meant by "*ki malei aretz deiya es Ha'Shem*"—*the Earth will be filled with the knowledge of G-D* like the waters cover the seabed. But how? What does it mean to experience the idea of G-D? I explained what that means in a previous *shiur* "The Greatness of Torah." *Nevuah* is how you will experience that information and it will never cease.

Once the messianic era commences—with everything that has to happen before it begins—*nevuah* becomes, as they say, "part and parcel" of the equipment of a Jew. It allows him to communicate with the *shechina* whenever he wants to with Incredible ease.

Someday, I'll discuss how long it took to become a *navi* and the work that had to be done to become one. You to go to yeshiva for *nevuah*.

The primary way of communicating with G-D, experiencing spirituality, will be via *nevuah* and that will never cease. We don't even understand what that means. Could you imagine being like Moshe *Rabbeinu* and being able to tolerate the *shechina* at his level? Could you imagine being that way for the rest of eternity? The capacity to engage in *nevuah* will only increase after this world is over and we don't even know what it means in terms of *Olam Ha'Ba*—*Future World*.

*Nevuah* is not something that was only thousands of years ago. As we will see, there are aspects of *nevuah*—*prophecy* which we can experience today. I think it's a very important topic that, in many ways, rounds out the understanding of the structure of the world. That's what I want to talk about. It leads us into an area of thought and understanding of Judaism.

## **The Five Creations**

A very important idea which I had talked about and is critical relates to there being five different types of creations, of "beings"—if you want to use that word—or states of existence. It's important because this range speaks to what we are going to experience and includes what we are experiencing now. These ideas should be kept in mind because this is the scope, the panorama, of Judaism.

**Ein Sof, Ein Od Milvado:** As I've mentioned, the first type of being is *ein sof* which is G-D. G-D is unknowable but, from our perspective, G-D is a certain type of Being which we have absolutely no comprehension of. We could say that *ein sof* is the first and highest class. Actually, it's the only class of being, existentially.

Then, *Ribono Shel Olam* created a second state called *zuloso*. One of the main characteristics of *ein sof* is "*ein od milvado*"—*besides G-D there is nothing else*. I cannot even begin to explain what that means and it's literal, not figurative. The only entity, thing, that exists, even now, is G-D and nothing else. One of the ways to comprehend this is to understand that G-D doesn't have existence; He **is** existence. Apparently, the only thing that qualifies you to exist is if you **are** existence itself. Then you exist. If you have to be given existence, that existence compared to G-D Who **is** existence, is not even on the same map. So, *ein sof* is *ein od milvado*.

**Zuloso / Sefiros:** What the *Ribono Shel Olam* did, and nobody knows how, is engage in a phenomenon called "*tzimtzum*" whereby, in some way, G-D restricted Himself—whatever that means—to create a *makom*—*place* whereby something else could exist. We have no idea how that happens. In Kabbalah, it's called the "*chollo*"—*the hole* where other things can exist as whatever type of existence they manifest and that's called the *zuloso*—*other*. Of course, the being that is reflected in that "other" is that of Divine "energies," if you want to use that word, Divine forces, called "*sefiros*."

In many ways, *sefiros* are identified as part of the being of G-D. When we say "*ein sof*," it means "G-D." *Sefiros*, and there are ten of them as we know, are "appendages," if you want to use that word, of G-D. We have absolutely no idea what that is, but I will connect the *sefiros* to the being called "G-D." That, in a certain sense, is the first thing that G-D made.

**Neshama:** Besides that, the main component of that *makom*—*place* which has a capacity to accommodate an "other" is called the "*neshamah*." It is the greatest thing ever created. Not that it rivals G-D—*chas v'shalom*—but it is really the first "other" that G-D created and it's much greater than anything ever created afterwards. The *neshamah* is infinitely greater than the *malachim*—*angels*.

**Ruchni/Geshem:** After that, G-D created another reality called *ruchni*—*spiritual*. G-D is not spiritual; He is unknown. Even the *neshamah* is not the same as *ruchni*; it's far greater. Let's say that the third aspect of reality, or type of reality, is *ruchni*, the angels. All those angelic forces that exist, an almost infinite number of them, are the intermediaries between G-D and the *geshem*—*physical* world which is our world.

**Zohama:** I also mentioned that there's a fifth dimension called *zohama*. It is the world of the Satan which is in the world of *geshem/zohama*. So, those are the five ideas.

We also know that man, animals, insects, etcetera, share existence in the world of *geshem/zohama*. We understand that there are five different aspects of reality and a potentiality of transforming one world into another.

The RaMCHaL begins to stress this following idea and you have to appreciate what he's saying. Beings that inhabit any "world"—whatever world they inhabit—are composed only of that world. For instance, a *malach* is only *ruchni*—*spiritual* and nothing else. He's not a composite of that world and our world which is *geshem*, the material world. Animals are only physical. There is nothing spiritual about an animal. This may disturb dog lovers because they will not be with you together in *Olam Ha'Ba*. There's no *Olam Ha'Ba* for dogs or other creatures. Animals, insects, rodents, whatever, are only *geshem*. They're pure physicality; there is nothing spiritual about any animal.

Man is a very strange creature because what the *Ribono Shel Olam* did is very interesting. He took the *neshamah* which is of the highest level of spirituality and combined it with the physical. That's like combining water and fire as one entity which is unheard of because they contend with each other. Each one will try to destroy the other. The fire will try to evaporate the water and the water will try to douse the fire. They can't abide together. They are mutually exclusive entities. Each one attempts to eradicate the other.

The same thing with the *neshamah*. It is the complete antithesis of the physical. It cannot exist with the physical. In other words, when you take a *neshamah* and encase it in a physical body, it will immediately purify the body of its *geshem*. It will actually remove the physicality of that body and that body will then become completely translucent. It's almost as if the body doesn't exist or it might exist as a very fine form of translucent, transparent material. Its ability to be physical has been enormously diminished. That's what the soul will do to the body because they cannot exist together.

If that's the case, how is the *neshamah*—*soul* of an *adam*—*man* able to sustain itself in a physical body? And the answer to that, the RaMCHaL says, is G-D's decree, His order, that the power of the soul to completely purify the body be diminished. The soul cannot "*m'zakech*"—*purify*, cannot provide *zikuch*—*purification*. The *neshamah* is "condemned" to remain in the physical body until it has permission to leave, which means death. That's a very important idea, that the soul is anchored to the body though not permanently, but for a significant amount of time.

It's highly unusual that the *neshamah* can actually reside in a physical body. This also means that the *neshamah* is a composite of two substances. This is unheard of in all entities of Creation. There's no such thing. You are what you are based upon the dimension in which you reside. You are not something else besides that which you are a denizen of. Unique, therefore, is man as a composite being.

### **The Decree is Lifted**

We know what the ultimate objective is and we know the trigger for that, the observance of *mitzvos*—*commandments*. G-D gave what's called "*mitzvos--commandments*," the purpose for them being triggers to transform your being into a higher being. But, it doesn't transform the *neshamah*, which is interesting. It only transforms the *guf*—*body*. Not now, but ultimately, the decree that the *neshamah* cannot transform its body will be lifted and it will then begin to purify the body that it inhabits.

What will happen, ultimately, is the removal of the decree and when a person will get up from the dead, which is called *t'chias ha'meisim*—*resurrection of the dead* the stage of *zikuch*—*purification* of the body immediately begins.

What changes or transforms is not the *neshamah*. It is what it is. In fact, the *neshamah* itself cannot be degraded but it can be restricted. In other words, when you do a sin, you don't degrade the *neshamah* per se; it's too high. You do, however, create a blockage around the *neshamah* so it can no longer receive the Divine Light of the *shechina*. That's how you can degrade the *neshamah* in terms of its ability to receive.

Man will transform his physical body into that which is spiritual. That itself will occur in steps, stages, and each step takes a thousand years. The transformation of the physical to spiritual begins in the Gregorian calendar year 2240 which is the Hebrew year 6000. That's the beginning of the transformation of the physical realm.

The first thing that is transformed into a completely spiritual domain is the universe. In the year 6000, which is the Gregorian year 2240, the entire universe with all the galaxies and the stars and everything will immediately become spiritual. We don't know what that means but the *olamos*—*worlds* will become spiritual and, after each thousand years, you will become more and more spiritual. By the time you reach 9001, the entire Creation will turn into *Olam Ha'Ba*. So, it takes a couple thousand years for that to happen.

Ultimately, in the year 9000 which is the beginning of *Olam Ha'Ba*, the *neshamah* will be completely transparent. As the RaMCHaL points out, there will be a body, but that body will be the closest thing to being non-physical, completely transparent. Each *neshamah* will be able to see each other *neshamah*, totally, without any obstruction from any kind of physical entity. It will still have that nature of physicality but one which is completely pure. It's almost as if the body will become pure energy, devoid of matter. That's basically what the plan is, ultimately.

### **Soul and Body and Prophecy**

You could ask, “Why does G-D have to do that? Why doesn't G-D just make a man to be physical? Doing *mitzvos* will transform the physical into a being that is spiritual because that's what's going to happen to the body anyway, right? Why does He have to create a *neshamah* and combine it with the physical? Why do you have to have that altogether?”

The answer to that is because, conclusively speaking, the physical body itself is a detraction. They're just two different types of entities. Apparently, a physical body cannot become a Divine soul. So, what the *Ribono Shel Olam* did was create a Divine soul and combine it with a body, and the body is what changes in order to allow the *neshamah* to completely dominate.

There are reasons why the *Ribono Shel Olam* wants man, initially, to be spiritual in the sense of being completely exposed to being spiritual. First of all, if you remember, *Olam Ha'Ba* is where/when G-D, the

*ein sof*, is, and where/when the *ein sof* will connect to man. The *Ribono Shel Olam* connects to man even now and that's really what *nevuah* is.

What is *nevuah*? *Nevuah*—*prophecy* is the ability of somebody to connect or communicate with an entity that is beyond its state. Man is physical yet he wants to communicate or connect with G-D or spiritual entities but how does he do that? He lives in a physical world. The *Ribono Shel Olam* gave man, by being spiritual though a physical being too, the wherewithal to connect with, communicate with, a spiritual entity. Therefore, since he is spiritual, he will connect with a spiritual entity. That's how it works and that's why we can be prophets. It's because we are spiritual. The aspect of our spirituality is what enables us to connect with spiritual beings. Spiritual beings, as I said, is the world of *malachim*—*angels*, the world of *neshamos* and so on. Because we are spiritual, we can do that. That's the first idea. Prophecy can only happen because we are spiritual. Therefore, in due time, we can diminish some aspect of our physicality to communicate with the spiritual realms.

What I also find interesting is why the *Ribono Shel Olam* wants to communicate with man. What He could have done is to simply create a physical world, put a person down, let him live out his life and, after he dies, deal with the guy.

One of the interesting ideas which I emphasized last week was that the *Ribono Shel Olam* wants to give *Shabbos* because He loves man. In some way, He wants to communicate with man. When you love somebody, you don't want to be removed from that person and you don't want to wait to be with them. You tell a person in love, "Well, you have to wait for seventy years to be able to speak to the person you love."

"What do you mean 'seventy years'? I want to speak to that person now," whoever that person is. It's the same idea with the *Ribono Shel Olam* and His love for man. He certainly loves Jews and doesn't want to wait until a Jew dies before He speaks to him or even embraces him.

*Nevuah* enables G-D to communicate with man while he's alive without delay. Love is a very, very important motive. We know It says in the *brachos*—*blessings* of the "*Krias Shema*" prayer that the *Ribono Shel Olam* loves His people, *klal Yisrael*; "*ohev amo Yisrael*"—*He loves His people*. That love is what motivates G-D, in many ways, to do things that perhaps, ordinarily, He wouldn't do. That's an important idea about prophecy.

Also, being able to experience the *Ribono Shel Olam* incentivizes man to want to become spiritual because when you can experience the reward, it creates an enticement.

In the end, there's another reason why the *Ribono Shel Olam* has allowed man to experience prophecy. Remember what I said, that prophecy enables a person who's physical to link with the spiritual and, since he can link with the spiritual, he can communicate with the spiritual. What the *Ribono Shel Olam* wants a person to be able to do—and this is, in many ways, the essence of Judaism—to be able to **influence** the spiritual. It's more than a link.

G-D could say: *I want you to link to the spiritual in order to be able to influence the spiritual.* What does that mean? When a person does a *mitzvah*, he increases, enormously, the *shefa*—flow of the Divine energy of the *sefiros*. It's not only that a *neshamah* is linked to the *sefiros*. It could significantly increase the output of the *sefiros*, and **that output is what changes reality. The linkage is critical for the Divine purpose**; that's why the *Ribono Shel Olam* wants you to increase the output of the *sefiros*. As a result of that, eventually, the *sefiros* will re-transform the physical into a spiritual universe but you can only do that if you're linked to the spiritual.

Were man a physical being only, he would not be able to increase the output of the *sefiros* because he'd not be connected to them. Therefore, the hook-up, the ability of man to be spiritual while he's physical, connects him to the *sefiros*. His actions, whether they be thinking, speaking, or doing, influence the *sefiros* significantly. That is probably the main reason why a person is both physical and spiritual and the mechanism that can result from that is prophecy. Once you're linked to the physical, automatically you can communicate with the spiritual. That's really what happens in the end.

### **The Structure of Man, Upper and Lower Soul**

In order to interface with the spiritual, the linkage isn't simple to achieve. How is a person linked to the spiritual? What is the structure of an *adam*—*human being* in terms of its linkage to the spiritual? What we know is that he has a *neshamah*, the highest emanation of the *sefiros*. A man, therefore, is associated with the *sefiros* because that is from where he emanates. You have G-D and His Divine energies which are the ten *sefiros*, and a man is linked to the *sefiros*.

The interface itself is the *neshamah*. The soul of a person is linked to the *sefiros* which emanate from G-D. Man is currently encased in a physical body and the connection between the *neshamah* and the physical body has to go through what's called "*nefesh tachtona*."

There are two souls in man. One is the Divine soul, the *neshamah* itself. It is called the "*neshamah elyona*"—*upper soul* which is purely spiritual. Then, there's a physical *neshamah* of the most subtle type called the "*nefesh tachtona*"—*lower soul*, also called "*nefesh bahamis*"—*animal soul*. This soul, in many ways, is physical and resides in the blood. "*Ki ha'dam hu ha'nefesh—because the blood is the animal soul*" is how the Torah alludes to it in terms of the *nefesh tachtona*. Man consists, really, of two souls. One is completely spiritual, which is the real *neshamah*, and that *neshamah* is connected to the *nefesh tachtona*—*lower soul*.

What is the purpose of the lower soul? I had mentioned that it is physical but it is of very subtle physicality. You can't find it; I don't know if you could even weigh it. The *nefesh tachtona* is the life force of the body. Every single living form, whatever it is, from the one-celled animals, to trees, insects, reptiles, rodents, you name it, has a *nefesh tachtona* but not a *nefesh elyona*; that's the difference. The *nefesh tachtona*—*lower soul* is there to animate the body of whatever living form it happens to be. It's the life force of that particular entity. The body is only able to function because of that animal soul. It is

the lower soul which is the medium that enables the brain to operate. Without the *nefesh tachtona*, nothing operates.

To reiterate, we now understand that man is composed of a *nefesh elyona*—*uppermost soul* that is linked or connected to *nefesh tachtona*—*lower soul* that is connected to the body.

Each creature, whatever it is, has a unique *nefesh tachtona*. The *nefesh tachtona* of an insect is obviously vastly different from the *nefesh tachtona*, let's say, of an elephant which is vastly different from the *nefesh tachtona* of a man. A man also has *nefesh tachtona*—*lower soul* that animates his body. That *nefesh tachtona*, upon conception, enters that embryo and guides it. It's the life force of the embryo and it grows with the body. It's qualitatively different from another entity's *nefesh tachtona*. It is the most subtle physical thing that you can find. Its residence in the blood is one of the reasons why you cannot drink blood.

So, man is composed of four things. He has a *neshamah* that is connected to the *nefesh elyona*—*uppermost soul* that is connected to *nefesh tachtona*—*lower soul* that is connected to the *guf*—*body*. This is the composite structure of man.

Because the *neshamah* is connected to the *guf*, despite its completely spiritual nature, it's restricted. Evidently, something which is purely spiritual or even greater, if connected to a very low form of life, is restricted. Because of the Divine decree, the *neshama* cannot, in any way, transform the body into a subtly compelling form of physicality. Since it is connected to the body, it is possible for it to become contaminated.

I mentioned that the *neshamah* does not become contaminated but, if the body sins, then the Divine energy of the sefiros that the uppermost soul is linked to diminish their output to the person and the *neshamah elyona* will experience a diminished amount of the *ohr*—*Divine light*. In that sense, the *neshamah elyona* can be restricted.

### **The Soul and the Five Realities**

One of the things we also know is that the *neshamah* has five parts. The lowest of the *nefesh elyona* is called the "*Nefesh*" and it's connected to the liver. The next part is called the "*Ruach*" and that is connected to the heart. The third part is called "*Neshamah*" which is a collective term and is connected to the brain. Then, there's "*Chaya*" that surrounds the entire body, almost like an aura. The fifth part called "*Yechidah*" is what's connected to the *sefiros*. Although *Yechidah* is somewhat connected to the body, it doesn't have a resonance in the body at all. In any case, what we do see is that there is a connection of each of the five parts of the *neshamah* to a different aspect of the body itself.

One of the important ideas which I like to mention is the reason why there are five parts. It's because there are five realities. There's what's called "*Olam Asiyah*"—*the world of physicality or action, the world of doing* where man resides and does the *mitzvos* or sins. This world of *Asiyah* is connected to the *nefesh elyona*.



The next *olam* is “*Olam Yetzirah*” connected to the *Ruach*.

Then, we have “*Olam Briyah*” connected to the *Neshamah*.

The next *olam*, going up, is called “*Olam Atzilus*” which is connected to the “*Chaya*.”

The “*Yechidah*” is what connects us to *Olam Ha’Ba*.

Interestingly enough, because we're connected to all of this, we are able to be conscious of these five realities. What makes us unconscious of these five realities is the *Ribono Shel Olam’s* decree that the *neshamah* is restricted. Part of its restriction is that, not only can't it break out of the physical world, but it cannot even be conscious of the worlds that it is connected to. That's part of the restriction of the *neshamah*.

As we will see, there is a way to undo the resistance to consciousness of you being connected to any of the worlds. The way you can become conscious of different realities—not just the reality of the physical which is *Olam Asiyah* but, let's say, *Olam Yetzirah* which is the world of angels—is through prophecy. That’s one of the interesting things about *nevuah*. It is a phenomenon that can actually make you conscious of a different reality and, in that way, you can communicate with the residents of that reality. That's how you can actually engage with a different reality. It’s a startling idea.

I’ve covered the concepts of: different aspects of being, different aspects of reality wherein one reality transforms into another reality, and the *neshamah*, in many ways, being limited. We also have a better understanding as to why G-D made man a spiritual, as well as physical, being. It enables man to access and have influence over that which he is connected to which is the *sefiros*. As a result of that, he can empower the *sefiros* to increase their output and that's what facilitates the transformations. These are very important ideas in terms of the setup of understanding *nevuah*.

Next week, we'll be able to recognize the repercussions of this setup, the first level of prophecy that we actually experience, as well as the phenomenon of *nevuah* that happens as a result of this setup, this structure itself.