

**UNEDITED INTERNET VERSION**

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# **WEEKLY SHMUESS**

# **BEHAR**

**Details, Rules  
& Beyond**

**DRASHA FROM THE  
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## ***Parshas Behar 5778 - Details, Rules & 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

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*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.*

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

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*2 Zohar parshas Shemos 361a*

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 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.*"