



NEFESH SHIMSHON

DIVREI TORAH ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA AND HOLIDAYS FROM
THE TEACHINGS OF **RABBEINU SHIMSHON DOVID PINCUS ZT"l**

THIS PUBLICATION IS DEDICATED TO THE HATZLACHAH AND ZECHUS OF נחמה ויעקב בן רחל נחמה. MAY THEY GROW TO BE TALMIDEI CHACHAMIM AND OVDEI HASHEM.

PEARLS OF WISDOM FROM THE PARSHAH

A Born Tzaddik?

צַדִּיק תָּמִים הָיָה בְּדִרְתּוֹ (ו, ט)

He was a perfect *tzaddik* in his generations (5:32)

The Dubno Maggid¹ has an amazing explanation of this verse, and there is a lesson in it for us all.

The *Midrash* says² that whenever the word היה, “he was,” it is written about someone, this indicates that he was a *tzaddik* from beginning to end. Thus, Noah was a *tzaddik* from the day he was born.

But the *Midrash* then takes issue with this generalization, because the same word is written about Avraham³: אחד היה אברהם. And we know that Avraham was not a born *tzaddik*. He did not recognize *Hashem* until he was three years old [and maybe not until he was much older. One view says he recognized *Hashem* only when he was forty-eight].

Until then, Avraham was an idol worshipper

like the rest of his family. The *Midrash* answers by saying that when it is written היה about Avraham, this indicates that he had the innate capability to guide the whole world back to *Hashem*.

But how is this an answer? Granted, *Avraham* had great potential. But how does potential alone make him into a *tzaddik* at the time when he was still an idol worshipper?

It says further about Avraham:

בְּהַדְרֵי קִדְשׁ מִרְחֹם מִשְׁחָר לֶךְ טַל יִלְדֶּתִיךָ –

In glorious holiness from the womb, from the dawn, the dew of youth is yours.⁴

Here, too, he is called holy “from the womb.” *Chazal* comment:

Our forefather Avraham, peace be upon him, was afraid, and exclaimed,

1 *Ohalei Yaakov ad loc.*

2 *Bereishis Rabbah* 30:8.

3 *Yechezkel* 33:24.

4 *Tehillim* 110:3.

“It will be said that I bear sin, because I worshipped idols all those years.”

Therefore, *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* said to him, “The dew of youth is yours.” Just as the dew flies away [in the morning when the sun comes, leaving no trace] so your sins fly away [and leave no trace, for you are holy “from the womb”]. Just as the dew is a sign of blessing for the world, so you are a sign of blessing for the world.”⁵

Here, too, the same question arises. Why are Avraham’s early years compared to the blessed dew, if he was worshipping idols at the time?

It is written:

הוֹכַח תּוֹכִיחַ אֶת עַמִּיתְךָ – You shall surely admonish your fellow man.⁶

The phrase “your fellow man,” *עַמִּיתְךָ*, alludes to people that are in a state similar to yours.

Along these lines, *Chazal* say⁷ that Hillel’s example obligates only the poor to learn Torah assiduously, and R. Elazar ben Charsom’s example obligates only the rich to do so. This is because Hillel was very poor, yet he occupied himself with Torah study. And R. Elazar was very wealthy, yet he turned away from his property dealings in order to learn Torah.

If the wealthy R. Elazar ben Charsom would come and admonish a poor man, and try to bring him back to *Hashem*, the reply would be, “You are

rich. You have everything you could possibly need without even lifting a finger. You don’t understand my situation. I don’t have time for *avodas Hashem*; I need to eat.”

And if a poor man will admonish a rich one, the reply will be, “You have nothing to do, anyways. You have no fields and no businesses and nothing to lose. It makes sense for you to learn Torah all day. But I have so much to take care of. If I don’t keep on top of everything, I could lose millions! I don’t have time for all that *avodas Hashem*.”

A person can admonish his fellow when his fellow is in a similar situation.

This explains Avraham’s tremendous success in teaching the world to recognize their Creator. If he would have been raised in a pious, G-d-fearing family, and would have served *Hashem* meticulously from day one, he would not have seen much success in admonishing all those idol worshippers. The reply would have been, “How do you know that *avodah zarah* is wrong and a waste of time? Who told you so? Did you even try it?”

But in fact, Avraham used to be an idol worshipper just like them, so he could quip back, “For sure, I tried every *avodah zarah* you can think of. I saw for myself that only *Hashem* is G-d, and there is no other.”

This transformed his early years from bad to good. He used the very things he did back then to bring people to worship *Hashem*. Thus, those years are counted among his righteous years, and he is called holy “from the womb.”

We, too, can put our past, whatever it was, to good work. ●

5 *Bereishis Rabbah* 39:8.

6 *Vayikra* 19:17.

7 *Yoma* 35b.

לְעִילּוֹי נִשְׁמַת

מוֹהָר״ד מוֹשֶׁה בֶּן אֱלִיעֶזֶר הַמְבוֹרָגַד זצ״ל

וּמוֹהָר״ד בְּרוּךְ זָאב בֶּן נִפְתָּלִי קְרָאוּס זצ״ל

נִדְבַת נִכְדֵיהֶם ~ עֶשְׂרֵת דְּקָנִים בְּמֵי בָּנִים וְהַפְאֵרַת בָּנִים אֲבוֹתָם

וַיְהִי כָּל הָאָרֶץ שָׁפָה אֶחָת וּדְבָרִים אֶחָדִים וּגּוֹי וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִישׁ אֶל רֵעֵהוּ הֲבֵה נִלְבְּנָה לְבָנִים וְנִשְׂרָפָה לְשִׂרְפָה וַתְּהִי לָהֶם הַלְּבָנָה לְאֶבֶן וְהַחֲמֶר הָיָה לָהֶם לְחֹמֶר: וַיֹּאמְרוּ הֲבֵה נִבְנֶה לָּנוּ עִיר וּמִגְדָּל וְרֵאשׁוּ בַשָּׁמַיִם וְנַעֲשֶׂה לָּנוּ שֵׁם פֶּן נִפּוּץ עַל פְּנֵי כָּל הָאָרֶץ: וַיֵּרֶד ה' לִרְאוֹת אֶת הָעִיר וְאֶת הַמִּגְדָּל אֲשֶׁר בָּנוּ בְנֵי הָאָדָם וּגּוֹי וַיִּפֹּץ ה' אֶתֶם מִשָּׁם עַל פְּנֵי כָּל הָאָרֶץ וַיַּחֲדְלוּ לְבַנֵּת הָעִיר (יא, א-ח)

The whole world had one language and uniform words... one man said to another, “Let us make bricks and bake them.” The brick was for them in place of stone, and clay was their mortar. They said, “Let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose head is in the heavens, and we will make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the earth.” *Hashem* descended to see the city and the tower that human beings had built... *Hashem* dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. (11:1–8)

Here lies the roots of the Jewish People

The story of the Tower of Babel and mankind’s dispersion over the earth is quite mysterious. The Torah tells the events in such great brevity: the world was unified in language, they wanted to build a city and a tall tower, and when *Hashem* saw it He scattered them around the world.

Yet, this actually set the foundations for the Jewish people, for *Avraham Avinu*.

Chazal say that in heaven, the story went like this:

HaKadosh Baruch Hu called the seventy angels that surround His glorious Throne, and said to them, “Come, let us confuse the speech of the seventy nations and the seventy tongues.” At that point, they cast lots [to decide which angel would inherit which nation-to-be], as it says בְּהִנָּחַל עֲלֵיוֹן גּוֹיִם – “When the Most High gave an inheritance of the nations...”¹ The lot of *HaKadosh*

Baruch Hu fell upon Avraham and his seed, as it says יַעֲקֹב חֶבֶל נִחְלָתוֹ – “For Hashem’s portion is His people, Yaakov.”² *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* said, “The portion and lot that fell to Me is the one that My soul desired,” as it says חֶבְלִים נָפְלוּ לִי בִּנְעָמִים – “Portions fell to Me in pleasantness.”^{3,4}

How does the story continue?

Right after the final verse quoted in the Midrash above, it is written:

– אֲבָרַךְ אֶת ה' אֲשֶׁר יַעֲצֵנִי אֶף לַיְלֹת יִסְרוּנֵי כִלְיֹתַי – I will bless *Hashem* who gave me counsel; even at night my kidneys reproved me.⁵

Chazal say that the person speaking in this verse is *Avraham Avinu*. He was counseled not to join with the Tower of Babel people. His kidneys became like fountains of wisdom and advice, and

1 *Devarim* 32:8.

2 *Ibid* v. 9.

3 *Tehillim* 16:6.

4 *Yalkut Shimoni* 62.

5 *Tehillim* 16:7.

taught him Torah.⁶

Here, in the story of the Tower of Bavel, *Avraham Avinu* came to *Hashem's* portion, and *Hashem* gladly chose him. Let's try to understand what happened here.

A Dehumanizing Sin

When *Adam HaRishon* was created, he was as tall as the sky. When he sinned by eating from the *Eitz HaDaas*, *Hashem* placed His hand upon him⁷ and diminished his height.

Later, people began to sin more and more. The generation of Enosh sinned, and *Hashem* washed away a third of the world. The generation of the *Mabul* sinned, and *Hashem* destroyed everything and built a new world from Noach and his children. Then came the Tower of Bavel generation.

Their punishment was completely different.

וּמִשָּׁם הִפְצִיחַם – From there, He dispersed them.⁸

The word *הפיצם* has a root similar to *פצצה*, which means to smash into pieces. Like someone who takes an object and smashes it into countless particles, so *Hashem* took the whole generation of the Tower of Bavel and smashed them into particles that scattered everywhere. So to speak, the human race ceased to exist. It was smashed to smithereens and dispersed over the earth. Instead of destroying the world, *Hashem* destroyed man. Then a new man sprouted up: *Avraham Avinu*.

About Avraham it is written:

A man great among giants.⁹

Avraham Avinu was the new man, and we are his descendants. We are the only descendants of man, so to speak.¹⁰

6 *Bereishis Rabbah* 61:1.

7 *Tehillim* 139:5.

8 *Bereishis* 11:9.

9 *Yehoshua* 14:15.

10 See *Yevamos* 61a.

The generation of Enosh and the people of the *Mabul*, despite their grievous sins, were salvageable. They needed a major operation, so to speak, they needed to have a significant amount of their limbs and organs amputated, but there was still something left for *Hashem* to work with. It was possible to save at least part of the human race.

The Tower of Bavel generation was different. They did something that was so contrary to the essential nature of man that there was nothing left to salvage. *Hashem* had to get rid of them and build the human race anew.

The Torah tells their story because we are meant to learn from it. We need to know what they did, so we can avoid it ourselves.

Chazal offer various explanations. One of them is that the people wanted to climb up the tower to reach heaven so they could battle *Hashem*. But the *Chumash* itself does not mention any sin, nor does it mention any punishment. All it says in this regard is that *Hashem* scattered everyone around the world and made them into seventy separate nations. Until then, there was no such thing as nationality. There were no Chinese and no Americans. Now, separate nations came to be. Nowhere does it say they sinned, neither is their dispersion portrayed as a punishment.

This is astounding!

Getting by without G-d

If so, what did the Tower of Bavel generation do wrong?

The Ramban writes that they “chopped trees in the plantation.” In early Torah sources, this denotes *kefrah*, denying *Hashem*. I would explain the matter as follows.

The human race, up to and including that generation, was very lofty. It was still a reflection of the original glorious human being that *Hashem* created at the beginning of the world. They were not simple people at all; they possessed great wisdom.

Although *Chazal* offer differing explanations as

to what this generation sought to accomplish, the common thread is that the Tower of Babel people wanted to get along in life without G-d. I will explain what this means.

There are lots of problems in life: sickness, war, making a living, etc etc. But there was a certain recent event that particularly perturbed them, and that was the *Mabul*. They were concerned that something like that could happen again. So these highly intelligent people sat down to devise a plan how to guarantee their continued safety and prosperity. Now, there is nothing wrong with safety and prosperity per se. The problem was they wanted it to be independent of *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*.

Mankind's biggest drawback is disunity. When people get together, when they work as a team, they can find solutions for almost anything. If you put together all of humanity, you will be able to find the right doctor, the right engineer, etc. So the first decision they took was to unify all of humanity, and that way, most of their problems can be solved.

They succeeded magnificently in this. Exceptionally wise and capable people, true human beings as Hashem created them, sat down together and started to solve life's problems. As for the *Mabul*, they began to build supports for the heavens so they will not collapse again.

They decided to work things out on their own. Although they lived in Hashem's world, they didn't want to be dependent on Him anymore. They can figure out how to manage everything on their own.

What sin would you call this? Is it forbidden to take out "life insurance"? If a person is independently wealthy, is it a transgression? No. We can't put our finger on any specific sin that they did. But we *can* say that their general approach was thoroughly dehumanizing. That's not a human being.

When Hashem created the world, it was because He desired a dwelling place on earth. Hashem intended for man to live in this world, and He to dwell with man, so to speak. He created the world in order to bestow goodness upon man, in

order that man should live a life of perfection with Hashem, which is the greatest good.

Let's compare it to man and wife. The husband builds a house, plans everything out, and the house is finished. It is simply magnificent. Then the wife informs him that she can manage just fine on her own. She doesn't need him anymore; she can take care of the home on her own without his help. She didn't do any particular sin. She didn't commit any forbidden act. She just showed him the door, that's all. She got her house, now she doesn't need him.

This is what the Tower of Babel generation did. They "showed Hashem the door," they threw Him out of "their" world.

When Hashem saw what they were bent on, He took the human race and smashed it to smithereens because He had no need for this type of person. Human beings are meant to live life with G-d. That's their essential nature. They have no purpose otherwise.

Tefilah is the Opposite

To further explain what the Tower of Babel project was all about, I will give an example of the opposite.

It says in *Sefer HaKuzari*¹¹ that our three daily *Tefilos* are like eating three meals a day. *Shacharis* gives a person strength to keep going until the afternoon, *Minchah* gives him the strength to last until nighttime, and *Maariv* gives him strength until next morning. We live on the three *Tefilos*. That's where our strength comes from.

This is being Jewish. It's living life with Hashem in a very real way. We ask Hashem for everything we need in life, all the simple, natural needs that we may and do have, and we live with Him every moment of the day, around the clock.

And this is not just a lofty idea. It is *Halachah*.

A person should pray in a manner of pleading and entreating, like a pauper at the door gently

11 3:5.

making his request. The prayer should not appear as if it is a burden on him, which he would like to be rid of.¹²

This is coming from a teaching in *Pirkei Avos*:

When you pray, do not make your prayer fixed, but rather *rachamim* and *tachanunim* before *Hashem*.¹³

The *Biur Halachah*¹⁴ discusses back and forth how obligatory this *halachah* is, and he leans toward saying it is an absolute requirement. If someone prays merely because of the obligation to do so, if he doesn't *daven* like someone pleading for his needs, it is likely that he has not fulfilled the *mitzvah*. Simply *davening* out of obligation does not fulfill one's obligation.

Let's say a person gets up in the morning, goes to *shul*, and davens *Shacharis* (or *Minchah* or *Maariv*). He does it because that's what *Hashem* said, because it's written in *Shulchan Aruch*. Just like a Jew needs to take a *lulav* on Sukkos, and eat *matzah* on Pesach, he needs to *daven* every day. It's a *halachah*.

This sounds so normal. What's the problem, all this Jew wants is to fulfill his prayer obligation, isn't that what he is supposed to do? Yet, this is exactly what the *Biur Halachah* says *not* to do. If he *davens* this way, it is likely that he has not even fulfilled his minimum obligation, not even *bedieved*.

Davening means going to *shul* in the morning to ask for everything he needs. He needs to support his family, his children go to school and they need protection on the way, lest there be a traffic accident *chas v'shalom*, and besides that, they need success in their studies.

Like a person walks into the corner market in the morning to pick up a loaf of bread and a carton of milk, so a Jew goes into *shul* to ask *Hashem* for his needs. This is the proper way to daven *Shacharis*.

¹² *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim* 98:3

¹³ *Pirkei Avos* 2:13.

¹⁴ *Shulchan Aruch* *ibid*.

You have needs, and you come to ask for them.

How would a person feel if there is a state of emergency, or a terrible blizzard, and all the stores are closed for three days straight? This is exactly what a Jew should feel like if he wakes up late and misses the time of *Tefilah* (or of *davening* with a *minyan*). It's like he missed the opening times of the grocery store. It's like he came to the bank and it was already closed. He missed the opportunity to ask for his livelihood and his health and his wellbeing, and that of his family.

This is how a Jew's life is supposed to be. For all of life's simple, natural needs, we have Someone to turn to, and we live our lives with Him, day by day.

Being "Self-Sufficient"

The Tower of Bavel people lived just the opposite way. They sat down to plan how they can take care of themselves all on their own. The following illustrates this approach.

Let's say our eye rests on an advertisement saying that first prize in such-and-such a lottery is ten million dollars. A thought might go through our head, "It wouldn't be so bad to have ten million dollars on the side. I can give *tzedakah*; I won't have to live on such a tight budget. I don't want a life of luxury. No, that's not for me. But it sure would be nice to have enough for the upcoming wedding of my daughter without having to worry about it."

Who wouldn't want a few million dollars on the side?

But wait a minute, if it's so good to have a few million on the side, why doesn't *Hashem* give it? After all, He is our merciful Father, and He has plenty to give. What's the problem?

The answer is simple. A person wants to have a few million on the side so he can marry off his children, and so forth. And *Hashem* says back to him, so to speak, "Don't worry, I am rich enough, let *Me* marry off your daughter." But the person is not so pleased with *Hashem's* generous offer. "No, I can't rely on that, because if tomorrow I speak

a few words of *lashon hara* or who knows what, I could lose it all; You might not give me anything for my daughter's marriage. I would rather have a few million on the side, so I can take care of myself."

It is natural to feel that way, but that was exactly the sin of the Tower of Bavel people. They wanted to take care of themselves, because if they live their lives with *Hashem*, well, there are *nisyonos* in life, and temptations, and they preferred not to have their wellbeing dependent on the righteousness of their behavior. It's too risky. In short, they felt that it is not in their interest to rely on G-d. So they sought out various ways to set themselves up securely so they could be independent and self-sufficient.

Why Bricks?

The Torah says that they used bricks to build the Tower of Bavel:

הָבָה נִלְבְּנָה לְבָנִים – Let us make bricks...¹⁵

Why did they choose this construction material? Besides the fact that building stones were not readily available in their area, as Rashi explains, their choice of bricks signifies something deeper.

Stones hewed from the ground are in the same basic form as in the Six Days of Creation. They are not man-made material; they are G-d-made. Bricks are formed by man. They belong to man because man created them.

When a person looks at the walls of his house and sees stones, he is seeing a home that is *Hashem's*. In a certain sense the person is just a guest in *Hashem's* world and *Hashem's* home, and he must behave accordingly. A guest is expected to show a little respect toward the host.

The Tower of Bavel people preferred bricks. They wanted to feel that they are living in *their* home, and they can do what *they* want, and *Hashem* can

stay outside. They don't live in *Hashem's* world.

Spiritual Self-Sufficiency

Jews are just the opposite. We go to *shul* three times a day, to ask *Hashem* for breakfast, lunch and dinner, so to speak. We live our lives with *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* on a constant basis.

Indeed, *Hashem* created human beings for this very purpose. A person who wants to take care of himself and live his own life has no place in the world. He doesn't belong here.

The *Tefilos* we pray and the *mitzvos* we keep are not *Hashem's* ultimate goal. That is not why He put us here in this world.

HaKadosh Baruch Hu desired to make a partnership with the dwellers of the lower world.¹⁶

Hashem wants to live together with us, to support our children, to solve all our problems in life. He wants us to turn to Him every morning, every afternoon and every night, and He will hear our prayers. This is living as a Jew.

And not just with physical matters. With spiritual matters, too.

A person by nature wants to "do it himself." This is normal. On a spiritual level, it translates like this. Someone plans out on his own how to do his *avodas Hashem*: how he will increase his *hasmadah* in Torah learning, how he will keep a *Mussar seder*, etc. He wants to take care of his own spiritual needs, to do it all himself. It is a kind of spiritual independence and self-sufficiency. All these things are as praiseworthy as can be, of course. The problem is the attitude that "I am doing it." Nothing goes without relying on *Hashem*.

This is not the kind of life we were created for. *Hashem* didn't put us here so we can say, "I did it." He put us here so we can say לַךְ מוֹדִים אֲנַחְנוּ לָךְ – We thank You... for Your miracles that are with us every day, and for Your wonders and acts of goodness that are at every time, evening and morning and noon."

In physical and spiritual matters alike, we should

¹⁵ Bereishis 11:3.

¹⁶ Bereishis Rabbah 3:9.

constantly live with *Hashem* and be dependent on Him.

100% Learning, 100% Davening

Chazal tell us how to succeed. The question was asked:

“What should a person do in order to attain wisdom?”

He answered them, “A person should increase his learning time and decrease his business time.”

They replied, “A lot of people did that, and it didn’t help them.”

“Rather, a person should pray to the Master of wisdom.”

What does this come to teach us? That both are necessary.¹⁷

Let’s see what happened in this discussion. The *Gemara* asked a straightforward question: what should a person do in order to attain wisdom? But it did not give a straightforward answer. It did not say, “Learn and *daven*.”

At first the *Gemara* answered that one needs to sit and learn, and that’s all. Spending time in Torah study is enough. Then it admitted that Torah study is not enough, and rather said that one needs to *daven*. But also *davening* is not enough on its own.

So what’s the answer? A person needs to do both of them together. So why didn’t the *Gemara* say right at the beginning that one needs to do both together?

Because the *Gemara* wants us to understand what it means to “do both together.” We see in *Maseches Bava Basra*, which speaks at length about partnership, that being a partner doesn’t mean I have my half and you have your half. It means I have it all, and you have it all, which results in each having half. This is a different way of looking at partnership.

What does a person need to do in order to

become a *talmid chacham*? That was the question. The answer is sit and learn! 100% Torah learning, 100% of the time. Then the *Gemara* points out that for a lot of people, just learning didn’t do it. They didn’t become *talmidei chachamim* that way. The *Gemara* responds that, indeed, a person needs to devote himself to *tefilah* 100%. So why was the initial answer to sit and learn? Because a person needs 100% Torah learning *and* 100% *tefilah*. He needs to learn all the time. And also to *daven* all the time, to be constantly with Hashem.

Tefilah needs to occupy a person 100%, not 50%. At the same time, he needs to be 100% absorbed in learning.

How can a person do two different things at the same time? Because it is on two different planes. *Avodas Hashem* entails working on two different levels simultaneously. Constant absorption in learning, and constant living with *Hashem*. It’s not a contradiction.

The End is in the Beginning

The beginning and the end of any conscious act are highly similar to one another. What a person does in the end is what he planned to do in the beginning. For instance, let’s say a person builds a house. First he draws up the plans. In the blueprints, the house is 100% complete. Then he starts building it, part by part, piece by piece. Nothing is finished and nothing is complete. At the end, when the construction concludes, the house is once again complete, it looks like in the blueprint.

It is the same with the world. Its beginning is highly similar to its end. And so it is with the Jewish people, too. Let’s take a look at how the Jewish people was when it started out.

When the Israelites left Egypt and lived in the Wilderness for forty years, no one was rich. No one had everything he needed. No one even had bread for the next day. All they had was the Manna, which fell miraculously from heaven and was enough for

¹⁷ *Nidah* 70b.

that day alone. If someone lost his senses at night, and did an *aveirah*, he knew that the next morning he would have a hard time bringing home bread for the family. His Manna would fall far away, and be hard to find.

That was how the eaters of Manna lived. They sat and learned Torah. They were in *Hashem's* embrace. There were no laundries, no clothing stores and no shoe stores. The Clouds of *Hashem's* glory would clean their clothes for them, and their shoes grew with their feet. They depended totally on *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*.

Then they entered *Eretz Yisrael*. Each man settled under his own grapevine and his own fig tree. As the generations went on, their lifestyle slowly changed.

Nowadays we are at the end of the generations. We are the generation of the "footsteps of *Mashiach*," as the Chofetz Chaim called it. Regarding this generation, *Chazal* said:

We have no one to rely on other than our Father in Heaven.¹⁸

What did *Chazal* mean by this? Throughout all the generations, didn't we rely on *Hashem*? What is different now?

In previous generations there were great *tzaddikim* who gave us the feeling that we have someone to rely on. When we had *Shmuel HaNavi*, people would go and ask him who they should marry, where they should live, what *maseches* they should learn. The *Vilna Gaon* says they would ask the prophet to tell them what is appropriate for them according to the root of their *neshamah*, and

¹⁸ *Sotah* 49b.

he would answer them in detail how they should live.

About this, *Chazal* commented that a day will come when we won't have anyone we can rely on. Only our Father in Heaven, and that's all. This is the generation we live in today.

It is not just a lofty idea that a person needs to daven for *siyata d'Shmaya*, if he wants to see success. It is a practical, down-to-earth way to live, especially in our generation. We need to realize that nowadays there is no way to survive, no way to make it through life, other than living constantly with our Father in Heaven.

Today more than ever, we need to develop a real, tangible relationship and connection to *Hashem*.

We all know there are so many physical and spiritual hazards for us and our children. Does our *davening* reflect this fact?

We learn and learn but don't remember so well. We pick up a *sefer*, and instead of studying it assiduously, sometimes we even fall asleep over it.

Hashem put us in a generation that doesn't leave us any other choice. We must get back to being like the eaters of the Manna in the Wilderness, and live our daily lives with *Hashem*. *Shacharis*, *Minchah* and *Maariv* should be like a refuge for us. We should flee to *shul* and shout out, "*Hashem*, we need You!"

Hashem wants us to really, truly live our lives with Him, to get used to speaking to Him all the time, to relate to Him in a practical and actual way. Our *Tefilos* should not be like a *mitzvah* that we perform, but should rather be simple, straightforward communication with our Father in Heaven. This is living life as a true Jew. ●