

# ULTIMATE REALITY

*by Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein*

*I will give your rains in their time...*

Be'er Mayim Chaim: Shouldn't the Torah promise something a bit more spiritual as a reward for following Hashem's decrees and observing His commandments? Here, where the Torah is so effusive about its rewards and punishments, we would expect promises of Divine pay-offs to obedient human servants that bring smiles to the faces of angels. We should be told about spiritual bliss, of basking in the radiance of the Shechinah, of life eternal. Instead, we are told about rains falling according to the schedule in the Farmer's Almanac.

Many have posed the question, and many have proposed answers. Really, though, it is not much of a question. The Torah did not choose one set of goodies instead of another. There was no choice - because ultimately physical and spiritual are one and the same.

Here is why. We all agree that Hashem is an absolute Unity. He is One - in every regard, in every aspect, when examined from any perspective. We understand some of the implications of His Oneness, including the impossibility of being dependant on some external factor or being. This leads us in turn to the realization that a G-d with no limits or boundaries simply cannot be part of a physical world.

We also recognize that His Oneness evades our comprehension. We have no experience with anything in our world that resembles Him. In fact, everything that emanates from this simple Source of all being is physical and limited. While usually like produces like, this is not the case regarding the Master and the universe He created. All that emanates from, and was created by, G-d bears little resemblance to Him.

This may be a paradox; we certainly don't fully grasp how this happens. Yet we do have a model for it in the relationship between body and soul. The soul, entirely dissimilar to the body in every way, nonetheless is what fully animates the latter. When the soul is taken out of the body, it ceases to function. G-d functions the same way in regard to all creation. He is the soul that empowers all the creatures and phenomena of our world, which can be seen as the body housing the soul.

This relationship holds true even for the non-physical - even for the Torah itself. The Torah we study (and the mitzvos we practice) are holy. Yet, they too are but a body to an animating soul. The inner part of the Torah, its ultimate reality and spiritual core, is a combination of Names of Hashem.

There is a passing resemblance of sorts between body and soul, just as there is between any garb and the person who wears it. To a certain extent, clothes conform to the shape of their owner. Clothes and the person have no resemblance in their essential qualities, but the clothes still crudely say something about the person beneath them. To the masses, the man is the body they encounter. They fail to grasp that his flesh is simply the garb to the real person living within that body. No one should regard a hunk of flesh as the true person, but understand that it is the spiritual being inside.

The same is true of all phenomena in the universe. What you see is not what you get. The observable and visible are merely the garb of the spiritual essence that empowers them

We have arrived at the answer to our original question. There is nothing "physical" about rain, that we should ponder why Hashem did not promise spiritual reward rather than physical. All physical, material blessings are really spiritual at their core. Rain, as the example in our pasuk, is important to us because it sprouts all the living vegetation we need for our sustenance. At its core is something entirely spiritual - Hashem's berachah that provides and sustains life.

Chazal convey this to us quite pithily. "Great is the day of rain. Even the coin in the purse is blessed by it."<sup>2</sup> What does rain do for change in a purse? Looking beneath the surface, we come to understand that they are identical. In the heavenly worlds, a Divine light exists in a purely spiritual state. It is transformed as it descends through the different worlds, finally taking the form of rain drops in our physical one. The name of that Divine light is "rain." What we call rain is merely its levush, its outer garb. This powerful ohr, once it reaches our world, leaves berachah wherever it reaches. Even the coin in the purse is enhanced by it.

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Sources:

1. Based on Be'er Mayim Chaim, Vayikra 26:4
  2. Taanis 8B
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