

The Lecture Series With Reb T (Biweekly): *The show where we talk a topic per session with some practical lessons*, Tonight's topic is "**The Situation of Preoccupation**"  
Sources from Sefaria (unless noted otherwise); Lookout for the *Points To Carryover (PTC's)*  
All Shiurim on [shiurenjoyment.com/shiurim/shiurim-reb-t/](http://shiurenjoyment.com/shiurim/shiurim-reb-t/) -Shoutout to Jake W!  
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**-The Shiur is sponsored l'illy nishmas Yehoshua Yonasan Ben Dovid Shalom**

-The Shiur should also serve as a zechus l'illy nishams Yehuda Ben Dov Ber, the amazing Rabbi who was the pillar of our community

The Shiur should also serve as a echoes for the refuah sheleimah of Yisrael Yitzchak ben Rivka Leah, Shlomo Ben Sarah Dina, for the continued health and nachat of Livia Margalit bat Ilana Devorah to her family, and for anyone sick or needing a yeshuah or refuah

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Divided attention or "multitasking" does not exist. It is a myth and a legend, and does not work, period—in my humble opinion.

How many things are you doing at once RIGHT NOW? PAUSE. STOP. Think. I want you to focus on the sound of my voice and only the sound of my voice. How is that? Are you focused? Are you paying better attention? Why is that? What were you doing before?

Chances are if you are like me at all, in general, we are doing **too** many things at once. I bet you were scrolling through your phone looking at messages or WhatsApp, perusing the internet, spacing out, thinking of different responsibilities or things, or doing something else. Would you have known if I told you the winning lottery numbers to yesterday's winnings? Or the numbers that will win in a big raffle? I think not.

The idea of "Preoccupied" or "Preoccupation" as defined by the dictionary is when someone "is absorbed in thought or engrossed, excessively concerned with something; distracted. The state of being otherwise focused, something that engrosses the mind, or consumed the attention of the person." How true is this definition in so many aspects of our lives, and throughout so much of our days? Do we really focus? Can we just stop and be present in the moment? Don't dwell on the past or worry about the future, just be present, now. Be mindful of the moments we have right now and grab hold of them, stay with them.

The idea of "multitasking" is defined by [verywellmind.org](http://verywellmind.org) as "Performing two or more tasks simultaneously, Switching back and forth from one thing to another, and Performing a number of tasks in rapid succession". But, this, as we will see, does not really work, or happen effectively.

*Too often we are too "Preoccupied" or otherwise distracted.* If you are on your phone, you can't by definition be fully listening in to those around you. If you are talking on the phone, you can't be **fully** watching your kids. You can't be fully working on a paper, if you are looking for new

shoes. You can't have a movie night with friends if you are on your phone, distracted. You just can't focus. It just DOES NOT WORK. PERIOD.

In addition, what do we spend all our time on these days? All too often it is preoccupation with meaningless or mindless things, to the exclusion or estrangement of really important or crucial things. How many hours are spent on the smartphone, the internet, tv, or movies, to the exclusion or forgo of Torah mitvos, chessed or real meaningful endeavors?

The dinner table in secular society, and even within our own society, has crumbled with the advent of the cell phone and more recently, the internet and the smartphone. Dates and anniversaries, parties and get togethers (NON CORONA TIMES) and dinners and lunches have fallen apart with *people more interested with their "Facebook friends" than their real life friends, with their "Tweets" more than their real life hangouts, and with their "instagram posts" or "Pinterest walls" than the real life walls around them*. People photograph their food before eating them, text in front of real life people trying to talk to them, and turn away from real life customers or friends to answer phone calls, texts posts, tweets, and WhatsApp instead. What in the world has happened to us? Where did all the value of face to face interaction go? When did we lose our interaction skills and abilities. This really, Who is more important? The cyber friend or the real friend? What is more valuable, real life or online life? I hope the answer is **Crystal clear**, and WE MUST FIX THIS.

People are just too focused on their phones, everywhere they go, especially at the table.

Look at this study from [IB PSYCHOLOGY, on thematic-education.com](http://IBPSYCHOLOGY.onthematic-education.com):

*Mobile phones are everywhere and they are consuming more and more of our time. Could this be having an effect on family life? The researchers who conducted this study wanted to investigate how cell phones might influence the interactions of parents and children.*

*The researchers used a nonparticipant, covert observational method by watching a total of 55 caregivers eating with 1 or more young children in fast food restaurants in Boston. Observers wrote detailed field notes, continuously describing all aspects of mobile device use and child and caregiver behavior during the meal.*

*The sample was gathered by visiting a range of different restaurants and studying the people who were present at the time. A single researcher would buy food and sit near a family, or if no family was present they would sit at a table and wait until a family who met their inclusion criteria (one parent and at least one child) sat down to eat at the table near them. They would then take notes on what they observed. They took detailed notes on the parents and child's behaviour, especially how they interacted when the parent was using their phone. They even included in their report things like what types of activities the parents were doing on their phones (e.g. reading emails or visiting websites).*

*The field notes were qualitatively analyzed to identify common themes and the results showed that caregivers were often completely absorbed in their mobile phone use. They found that phone use decreased the caregivers' responsiveness and their conversation with their children and "highly absorbed caregivers often responded harshly to child misbehavior." They also found that*

*kids who were ignored would make increasingly demanding gestures for attention (e.g. one group of boys starting singing Jingle Bells Batman Smells in increasingly loud voices to get their Dad's attention).*

I believe this for sure would extend to family members, friends, dates, and spouses. IT would be devastating to those around us to give up previous physical time instead for water online cyber “fake” time.

[thespruce.com](http://thespruce.com) points out that even within the home, the problem comes at the dinner table all too often. The article points out that:

*The **dinner table** isn't the place for your cell **phone**. If you are dining, whether it's at home, at a friend's home, or at a restaurant, you should definitely silence your cell **phone**. Answering and holding a conversation during **dinner** or **at the dining table** is considered rude behavior.*

I would extend that to say that answering texts or whatsapps or posts tweets or the like also is just simply rude and insensitive as well at the table, or during a conversation or hangout time with family, friends, or a spouse. The importance of together time should not be interrupted to have to answer the cyber calling.

First solution—no phones at the dinner table, period (or whatever meal eating as family, especially dinner). Make it into a fun game. One idea I saw was having a dinner “box” or wicker basket to drop the phones into at dinner time, and take them out when dinner is done. Simple, easy.

(Reminds me of how I used to drop off my phone in the front during finals in YU in college and took it back after—that seemed harsh, but was for my own benefit and to ensure compliance of the rules, here it is for a great goal, and somehow I managed those few hours without crumbling without ending my phone. Often times I may leave or forget my phone and feel “liberated” without it. I person who feels bare or incomplete without their phone may actually feel to addicted or connected to their phone, to a severe level).

Common Sense Media (a website that “rates movies, TV shows, books, and more so parents can feel good about the entertainment choices they make for their kids.”) has a movement called “Device Free Dinner” From Sesame Street where they explain that “*the idea is a movement for healthy habits the whole family will love. From the Sesame Street family to yours: Try a #DeviceFreeDinner tonight! Why go device-free? Taking a break from devices is proven to have positive benefits for kids, from better nutrition and focus at home to fewer problems at school....Commit to putting devices away for those 30 minutes (or, if you have small children, the six minutes of dinner!). Turn your devices on silent. Better yet, put them somewhere where you can't see them and where a notification won't tempt you to check it. Enjoy a **device-free dinner** as part of a healthy digital lifestyle, and make the most of family time.*”

Second solution, no phones at hangout time, for spouses or families to friends, PERIOD. If you were back in the dating world how rude would it be to be texting or talking on the phone the

whole time while you're date waited. Is it any less rude to your family? To your friends? Is their time any less valuable than when you were in the dating world, for example? What do we convey to our kids or others that they give up the time of those real life people around them instead to be on the phone? What madness and ludicrousity?! Insanity?!

[aish.com](http://aish.com) points out with author Slovie Jungreis Wolf (the daughter of the famous Rebbetin Jungreis):

*...most parents agree that our children are excessively plugged in to their devices. A 2010 study cited that the "the average 8-10 year old spends nearly eight hours a day with a variety of media, and older children and teenagers spend more than 11 hours per day." Texting may become the next behavioral obsession that parents must contend with. Half of teenagers send 50 or more texts a day and 13 to 17 year olds average 3,364 texts a month. These are alarming statistics that are only increasing...*

*When adults desire uninterrupted screen time, or wish their kids to keep quiet and not bother one other, we use technology as a convenient baby sitter. But we don't stop to think about the potential harm that we are causing. Conversation ceases. Carpools, dining out and relaxed leisure time are spent in silence. Families stop sharing thoughts, interactions and laughter.*

*Dr. Stiener-Adair, in her best-selling book "The Big Disconnect: Protecting Childhood and Family Relationships in the Digital Age," recommends the following steps:*

- *Parents should think twice before using a mobile device when they're with their children*
- *Check emails and texts before interacting with children in the morning, during school hours and after kid's bed time in the evening*
- *When parents come home from work they should walk through the door unplugged. The first hour home should be used to reconnect with family. Children have said that they despise the phrase 'just checking' as parents look at their devices.*
- *Establish 'cell free zones' for both parents and kids. Critical moments like pickup from school are crucial transitional time for children to talk about their day. Parents should not be saying things like 'just a minute; I need to finish this call.' Homework should be done without phones at hand. Dinner time both at home and in a restaurant is another 'device free zone'. We nourish not only bodies but souls too when we join together at a table.*
- *Young children should not have their own cellphones or iPads in their bedrooms. As children get older be wary of devices and where they are used. Teenagers require limits and it is not too late to set them. Don't be afraid of taking charge and enforcing appropriate rules.*

- *Caretakers should also be made aware of the dangers of not paying full attention to the children in their charge. There has been a recent 20% increase in accidental injuries seen in pediatric emergency rooms attributed to caretakers' texting or talking on their phones and not properly watching children while they were in the bath or on the jungle gym...*

*Heartache comes when we realize that we have wasted years looking down and missing out on connecting with those we love who sit in front of us, waiting to look into our eyes. Our children need to feel that we value our time together. They deserve our full attention and we will never regret time spent together.*

There are therefore proven ways we can minimize the distractions, minimize the clatter and chatter of the device and technological or digital world on us and our kids, and us versus our families and friends around us. We just have to realize what we are preoccupied with, what we are distracted with, and what we are juggling or supposedly multitasking, which in and of itself does not exist.

In Judaism, Hashem already put this in motion thousands of years ago, *mandating 25 hours without phones*, without cyber fake-ness, without computers, without distractions. Just good ol' time with the fam, singing, eating, hanging out, relaxing, reading, playing, etc. DISCONNECT TO RECONNECT. UNPLUG TO RECHARGE. The best model for how to get real connection is to look to Shabbos. No phones at the table, no phones taking over time with our families, no electronic distractions, period. If we could do it for a day every week, we could do it for an hour a day at dinner, and a few hours for hangout time for others as well. Further, we should do it for ourselves EVERY DAY. Disconnect, put the phone away. Focus on ONE thing at a time.

Look at what even secular society has noticed, as touched on before, but seen further here, as [Psychology today points out \(psychologytoday.com\)](http://psychologytoday.com)

*You think you can multitask? Think again.*

*Research in neuroscience tells us that the brain doesn't really do tasks simultaneously, as we thought (hoped) it might. In fact, we just switch tasks quickly. Each time we move from hearing music, to writing a text, or talking to someone, there is a stop/start process that goes on in the brain.*

*That start/stop/start process is rough on us. Rather than saving time, it costs time (even very small micro seconds). It's less efficient, we make more mistakes, and over time, it can sap our energy.*

**TRY THIS:**

*Take a small test from a workshop about mindfulness, delivered by the Potential Project, a group based out of Denmark. Here it is: I want every to try to do this, as you listen in. Please grab a paper and a pencil.*

1. *Draw two horizontal lines on a piece of paper.*

2. Now, have someone time you if possible, otherwise try to time yourself on a watch or a timer, as you carry out the two tasks that follow:
  - On the first line, write:
    - I am a great multitasker
  - I am a great multitasker
  - On the second line, write out the numbers 1-20 sequentially, like those below:
    - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

How much time did it take to do the two tasks? Usually it's about 20 seconds.

Now, let's multitask.

Draw two more horizontal lines. This time, and again try to time it, with someone else timing you or you timing yourself, write a letter on one line, and then a number on the line below, then the next letter in the sentence on the upper line, and then the next number in the sequence, changing from line to line. In other words, you write out the sentence on one line and the number sequence on the line underneath switching letter then number underneath back and forth, so the letter "I" is on one line and then the number "1" underneath and then the letter "a" and then the number "2" and then the "m" and the number three in the two lines one under each other so on, until you complete both lines.

I a.....

1 2.....

If you did the task, and I applaud you for trying and doing it, I'd say your time is double or more what it was on the first round. You also may have made some errors and you were probably frustrated since you had to "rethink" what the next letter would be and then the next number. That's switch-tasking on something very simple, but that's exactly what happens when we attempt to do many things (often more complex) at the same time. So next time you think you're multi-tasking, stop and be aware that **you are really switch-tasking**. Then give yourself a time limit (10 minutes, 45 minutes?) and focus on just one task and see if you can't complete it better, faster, and with less energy.

The idea then that multitasking exists is really a fallacy, a lie, a myth. There's no such thing. There's only "Switch-tasking" and that's not something anyone is good at as we really can only focus on one thing at a time. So do one thing really well, and switch to the next thing.

Look at what this quote from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/242808982> **Selective attention and divided attention** which Explains that

"It seems to be impossible to maintain the brain activity on the same high level if two modalities are in the focus of interest simultaneously." —> Meaning, you really can't fully focus on two things at the same time.

The Dana foundation point out from two authors that have PHD's that

*You may barely notice that you are frequently multitasking. It may be driving to work while listening to a radio program or talking to a loved one on the phone ([putting yourself and others at risk](#)), or perusing Facebook while texting a friend, or switching back and forth between a high-level project like compiling a report and a routine chore like scheduling an appointment. **Multitasking** means trying to perform two or more tasks concurrently, which typically leads to **repeatedly switching between tasks (i.e., task switching)** or leaving one task unfinished in order to do another.*

*The scientific study of multitasking over the past few decades has revealed important principles about the operations, and processing limitations, of our minds and brains. **One critical finding to emerge is that we inflate our perceived ability to multitask: there is little correlation with our actual ability. In fact, multitasking is almost always a misnomer, as the human mind and brain lack the [architecture to perform two or more tasks simultaneously](#)**. By architecture, we mean the cognitive and neural building blocks and systems that give rise to mental functioning. We have a hard time multitasking because of the ways that our building blocks of attention and executive control inherently work. To this end, **when we attempt to multitask, we are usually switching between one task and another. The human brain has evolved to single task**.*

**Again, focus on one task at a time, one thing at a time and keep your mind and your focus on that one thing.**

[verywellmind.org](http://verywellmind.org) points out that

*Research has shown that our brains are not nearly as good at handling multiple tasks as we like to think they are. In fact, some researchers suggest that **multitasking can actually reduce productivity by as much as 40%**.*

*It might seem like you are accomplishing multiple things at the same time, but what you are really doing is quickly shifting your attention and focus from one thing to the next. **Switching from one task to another makes it difficult to tune out distractions and can cause mental blocks that can slow you down...***

*Research has demonstrated that that switching from one task to the next **takes a serious toll on productivity**. **Multitaskers have more trouble tuning out distractions than people who focus on one task at a time**. Also, doing so many different things at once can actually impair **cognitive ability**.*

*In order to determine the impact of multitasking, **psychologists** asked study participants to switch tasks and then measured how much time was lost by switching. In one study conducted by Robert Rogers and Stephen Monsell, participants were slower when they had to switch tasks than when they repeated the same task.<sup>1</sup>*

*Another study, by Joshua Rubinstein, Jeffrey Evans, and David Meyer, found that participants lost significant amounts of time as they switched between multiple tasks and lost even more time as the tasks became increasingly complex.<sup>2</sup>...*

*To avoid the possible deleterious impact of multitasking two further ideas may be to:*

- **Limit the number of things you juggle at any given time to just two tasks.**
- **Use the "20-minute rule." Instead of constantly switching between tasks, try to fully devote your attention to one task for 20 minutes before switching to the other.**

*If we didn't fully prove our point yet, let's bring one more observation from even secular new culture that realized this, as [Stanford News points out \(news.stanford.edu\)](http://news.stanford.edu) from a [Stanford psychologist](#) that*

**Well, we don't multitask. We task switch.** *The word "multitasking" implies that you can do two or more things at once, but in reality our brains only allow us to do one thing at a time and we have to switch back and forth.*

*Heavy media multitaskers have many media channels open at once and they switch between them. A heavy media multitasker might be writing an academic paper on their laptop, occasionally checking the Stanford basketball game on TV, responding to texts and Facebook messages, then getting back to writing – but then an email pops up and they check it. A light media multitasker would only be writing the academic paper or may only switch between a couple of media. They may turn off Wi-Fi, put away their phone or change their settings so they only get notified every hour. Those are some extreme examples, but they provide a sense of how people differ in their media use. Moreover, because our media landscape has continued to accelerate and change, those who are considered a heavy or light media multitasker today may not be the same as those a decade ago...*

*In about half of the studies, the heavy media multitaskers are significantly underperforming on tasks of working memory and sustained attention. ...There's not a single published paper that shows a significant positive relationship between working memory capacity and multitasking.*

**—>So we hopefully have shown that really we need to stop the craziness of multitasking and preoccupation or distraction and focus on the item at hand, the person in front of us, or the conversation we are having in the present.**

*It's interesting that thousands of years ago the Tamud, the Germa already knew this idea, especially when involved in positive, one mitvah, we can't focus or be involved in another one—we just don't have the four or ability to do so.*

*This is the famous principle we learn from The Gomerah in Sukkah*

### [Sukkah 26a](#)

We learn in a Baraita: Rabbi Chananya son of Akavya said, “Scribes of Torah scrolls, tefillin, and mezuzot, their wholesale and retail salesmen, and anyone involved in sacred work – including those who sell the bluish techeilet dye for tzitzit – are exempt from reading the Shema, from the Amidah and from wearing tefillin and from all the mitzvot of the Torah.” This fulfills the words of Rabbi Yossi the Galilean, who said, “**One who is involved in a mitzvah is exempt from doing another mitzvah.**”

The Talmud tells us elsewhere that a mourner who didn't bury his dead yet is exempt from mitzvos, as they are overwhelmed and consumed with dealing with the dead and the need to bury the dead.

L'havdil, a groom is exempt from mitzvos as he is busy with getting married and taking care of his new wife.

The talmud already knew long before secular culture or “science” how we really can only focus on one thing at a time and we need our minds to be on that one thing. Always look to Judaism and the Torah for the real answers because everything is there as Pirkei Avot teaches us “hafoch ba v'hafoch bah dkiloh bah,” everything I there if we dig deep enough in the Torah we just need to know where to look. So the next time you think you know better than the Torah, Hashem;s blueprint from mankind, or LHAVDIL you think you know better than science that you really can multitask, realize and know that you really can't, we are just not wired to do so.

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Let's look at some more sources.

### [Berakhot 35b:9ט:ב ברכות לה ב](#)

אמר להו רבא לרבנן: במטותא מינייכו, ביומי ניסן וביומי תשרי לא תתחזו קמאי, כי היכי דלא תטרדו במזונייכו כולא שתא. Similarly, **Rava said to the Sages** who would attend his study hall: **I implore you; during the months of Nisan and Tishrei, the crucial agricultural periods, do not appear before me. Engage in your agricultural work then so that you will not be preoccupied with your sustenance all year.**

### [Mishneh Torah, Prayer and the Priestly Blessing 4:15משנה תורה, הלכות תפילה וברכת כהנים](#)

**A person finds that his thoughts are confused and his mind is distracted: He may not pray till he has recovered his mental composure.**

### [Mekhilta d'Rabbi Yishmael 15:27:1'א:ז'כ"ז:ט"ו](#)

**They preoccupied themselves there with the study of the Torah which had been given to them at Marah.**

***PTC. Make sure your mind isn't distracted when learning or involved with torah and good deeds, fill your mind with doing Hashem's will and be preoccupied with how to do more good***

### [Mekhilta d'Rabbi Yishmael 18:3:1'א:ג'ח"ג:א'18:3](#)

(Moshe by bris of his son) But he **preoccupied** himself with his lodging before circumcising, wherefore the L rd sought to kill him...

[משנה ברכות ג'א:1'3 Mishnah Berakhot](#)

**One whose dead one [] is lying before him, is exempt from the recital of the Shema [being preoccupied with a mitzvah], from tefillah, and from tefillin.**

[ספרי דברים מ"א:כ"ח41:28 Sifrei Devarim](#)

Yaakov says: "and to serve Him with all your heart": **This is an exhortation to the Cohanim that their hearts not be "preoccupied" at the time of the service.**

[שבת קנ"ו ב:ה'5'156b Shabbat](#)

**She told him: In the evening a poor person came and knocked on the door, and everyone was preoccupied with the feast and nobody heard him.**

***PTC. Make sure to have your priorities straight and to be involved with good things; don't forget about others as a result of selfish preoccupation or distraction (i.e. neglecting wife or kid because watching tv show)***

[Yoma 35b](#)

§ Apropos the great wealth of [Rabbi Elazar ben Harsum](#), the Gemara cites that which **the Sages taught: A poor person, and a wealthy person, and a wicked person come to face judgment** before the Heavenly court for their conduct in this world. **To the poor** person, the members of the court say: **Why did you not engage in Torah? If he** rationalizes his conduct **and says: I was poor and preoccupied with** earning enough to pay for **my sustenance** and that is why I did not engage in Torah study, **they say to him: Were you any poorer than Hillel**, who was wretchedly poor and nevertheless attempted to study Torah? They said about [Hillel the Elder](#) that each and every day he would work and earn a half-dinar, half of which he would give to the guard of the study hall and half of which he spent for his sustenance and the sustenance of the members of his family. One time he did not find employment to earn a wage, and the guard of the study hall did not allow him to enter. He ascended to the roof, suspended himself, and sat at the edge of the skylight in order to hear the words of the Torah of the living God from the mouths of Shemaya and Avtalyon, the spiritual leaders of that generation. The Sages continued and said: **That day was Shabbat eve and it was the winter season of Tevet, and snow fell upon him from the sky. When it was dawn, Shemaya said to Avtalyon: Avtalyon, my brother, every day at this hour the study hall is already bright from the sunlight streaming through the skylight, and today it is dark; is it perhaps a cloudy day? They focused their eyes and saw the image of a man in the skylight. They ascended and found him covered with snow three cubits high. They extricated him from the snow, and they washed him and smeared oil on him, and they sat him opposite the bonfire to warm him. They said: This man is worthy for us to desecrate Shabbat for him.** Saving a life overrides Shabbat in any case; however, this great man is especially deserving. Clearly, poverty is no excuse for the failure to attempt to study Torah.

...

...And if a **wealthy** man comes before the heavenly court, the members of the court **say to him: Why did you not engage in Torah? If he says: I was wealthy and preoccupied with managing my possessions, they say to him: Were you any wealthier than Rabbi Elazar, who was exceedingly wealthy and nevertheless studied Torah?** ...One time as he passed through the villages in his estate and his servants found him, did not recognize him, and, thinking he was a resident of the town, they pressed him into service [*angarya*] for the master of the estate. He said to them: I beseech you; let me be and I will go study Torah. They said: We swear by the life of [Rabbi Elazar ben Harsum](#) that we will not let you be. The Gemara comments: And in all his days, he never went and saw all his possessions and his property; rather, he would sit and engage in the study of Torah all day and all night.

...

And if a wicked man comes to judgment, the members of the court **say to him: Why did you not engage in Torah? If he said: I was handsome and preoccupied with my evil inclination, as I had many temptations, they say to him: Were you any more handsome than Joseph, who did not neglect Torah despite his beauty?** ...

**Consequently, Hillel obligates the poor to study Torah, Rabbi Elazar ben Harsum obligates the wealthy, and Joseph obligates the wicked.** For each category of people, there is a role model who overcame his preoccupations and temptations to study Torah.

***PTC. Don't use excuses as a rationalization for not being involved with torah or mitvos—learn from Hillel, Rabbi Elazar Ben Harsum, and Yosef, among others that time or money is not an excuse to pretend to be preoccupied or distracted or multitasking with the wrong things or not the bet things***

[ספר החינוך רצ"ז:ב'297:2](#) [Sefer HaChinukh 297:2](#)

And if a man is **preoccupied** in his work, he will not be free to think about anything.

[רבנו בחיי, בראשית כ"ג:א':ג'1:3](#) [Rabbeinu Bahya, Bereshit 23:1:3](#)

The worst danger is to be **preoccupied** with physical pleasures.

[Rabbeinu Bahya, Shemot 13:19:1](#)

ויקח משה את עצמות יוסף, “Moses took the remains of Joseph, etc.” While the Israelites were still preoccupied with material concerns such as demanding silver and gold from the Egyptians, Moses was preoccupied with nobler matters, needs of the soul, by performing the commandment of seeing to it that Joseph would eventually be interred in Eretz Yisrael. This was in accordance with [Proverbs 10,8](#) quoted in [Sotah 13](#), that “he whose heart is wise accepts commands.” Joseph had acquired the merit of having brought his father Yaakov to burial in Eretz Yisrael; as a result he received the distinction of having his own remains taken out of Egypt by someone greater than him, by Moses. In return for having performed this commandment Moses himself was interred by someone greater than he himself, by the Almighty personally

[רבנו בחיי, דברים ל':י"ב:ג'30:12:3](#) [Rabbeinu Bahya, Devarim 30:12:3](#)

The Torah may be found only among people **preoccupied** with the pursuit of matters which are oriented toward heavenly concerns.

[Rabbeinu Bahya, Devarim 32:1:2](#)

...Basically, the logic in all this is that the righteous is drawn to preoccupy himself with matters of the soul, matters which are of eternal value and meaning; the wicked, on the contrary, is preoccupied with transient values, matters which sooner or later cease to exist and have meaning.

[Rabbeinu Bahya דברים, י"ג:ה' ד:ד Devarim, Chapter 13:5:4 רבנו בחיי](#)

ואותו תעבודו, "and Him you shall serve." This refers to prayer. ובו תדבקון, "and to Him you shall cleave." This means that even while you are preoccupied with matters other than Torah, matters which are your legitimate concern, such as working for a living, you shall still have G'd on your mind and not totally disassociate your mind from Him even at such times.

***PTC. Be preoccupied by the proper things, that of Torah, Mitzvos, and Chessed; focus on the spiritual, on what truly matters and is really eternal; acquire tons of spiritual merits***

[Akeidat Yitzchak 59:1:4](#)

, Rabbi Meir advises people to minimise their earthly activities, and to maximise their Torah study, since "Time" was granted for the purpose of busying oneself with Torah study. "You shall be preoccupied with it by day and by night." (Joshua 1,8.) Should one ask how it is possible to attain worldly goods, seeing that they require much toil and time to amass, the answer is "be of humble spirit before all men." (Avot ibid.) Should one spurn Torah in favour of the acquisition of transient values, one's own end will be as finite as that of the commodities to acquire which one spent so much time and effort. The reverse is true if one concentrates on the acquisition of Torah values. To counteract any possible feeling of despair arising from the monumental nature of the task, Rabbi Tarfon adds: "it is not up to you to complete the task, yet you are not free to desist from it." Should someone not feel adequately rewarded for the effort, Rabbi Tarfon adds "your employer is faithful to pay you the reward for your work, but know that the reward of the righteous will come in the hereafter."...Man worries about the loss of his money, but fails to worry about the loss of his time. His money does not really help him, whereas his time is lost irretrievably."

[Akeidat Yitzchak 69:1:4 עקידת יצחק ס"ט:א' ד:ד](#)

To the extent that material possessions free man from being totally **preoccupied** with his physical survival in this world, they afford him the opportunity to try and acquire spiritual values.

***PTC. We should realize Hashem gives us physical innovations and inventions to help us and to guide us to acquire more torah; Use physical things for good ie smartphone for torah/mitzvos***

[Shenei Luchot HaBerit, Torah Shebikhtav, Vaetchanan, Ner Mitzvah שני לוחות הברית, תורה שבכתב, ואתחנן, נר מצוה ו'](#)

Whenever a person is **preoccupied** with advancing his ego in this world in any shape or form, he does so at the expense of neglecting his love for G-d and becomes guilty of neglecting to fulfil this commandment

[שני לוחות הברית, תורה 60, Shoftim, Torah Ohr, Torah Shebikhtav, Shenei Luchot HaBerit, שבתב, שופטים, תורה אור ס'](#)

Our sages say that anyone who is **preoccupied** with Torah study at night will have a thread of G-d's kindness extended across to him from the day.

[קב הישר פ"ג ט"ט 9:83 Kav HaYashar](#)

Moreover, even if a person prays and dons tefillin and tzitzis on occasion, he prays hurriedly, giving only lip service to Hashem, while his heart is **preoccupied** with foreign thoughts.

[אור החיים על בראשית מ"ד:ג' 46:4:3 Or HaChaim on Genesis](#)

We are taught in Avot 3,6 that when ten people sit together and are **preoccupied** with Torah, the שכינה rests amongst them.

[אור החיים על ויקרא כ"ו:ג' 26:3:26 Or HaChaim on Leviticus](#)

A person **preoccupied** with Torah constantly pines for ascent to a higher world because he appreciates the value his personality will derive from sitting in the celestial regions close to G'd.

***PTC. Banish the distractions from your midst while you study and pray; allow Hashem to dwell amongst you if you banish the foolish preoccupation, distraction, or divided attention in your days***

[ל"ג:י"ח 33:18 Chapter 33:18 אור החיים על דברים Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy](#)

Even though Zevulun is preoccupied with commerce and does not spend his time in the אהל של תורה, the tent of Torah, he qualifies for the presence of the *Shechinah* no less than Issachar his partner.

[טוב הלבנון, שער שישי - שער הכניעה ד' כ"ז 4:27 Tov haLevanon, Sixth Treatise on Submission](#)

If he is only **preoccupied** with eating, drinking, and rejoicing in pleasures, it is a sign of a retribution, that he is eating the reward of his good deeds in this world to be destroyed in the next world

[קדושת לוי, בראשית, בראשית י"ד 14 Kedushat Levi, Genesis, Bereshit](#)

It is the function of the Sabbath to help man to similarly emulate G'd by using the Sabbath to retrace the physical material concerns that **preoccupied** him during the preceding six days,

[קדושת לוי, שמות, שמות ו' 6 Kedushat Levi, Exodus, Shemot](#)

”There is a general rule that when the people in the physical universe are fully **preoccupied** with their secular concerns, they will not be able to elevate themselves to true service of the Lord.

***PTC. Realize Hashem gives us a great tool to disconnect to reconnect, that of the amazing Holy Shabbos; Use Shabbos as a springboard and prototype how to banish distractions, preoccupation, and divided attention from our days—put the phones and internet away!***

[קדושת לוי, ויקרא, אמור א' 1 Kedushat Levi, Leviticus, Emor](#)

When man is constantly **preoccupied** in his heart and mind how best to serve the Lord, he is considered alive, whereas if, G'd forbid he is **preoccupied** with the opposite he is considered as "dead."

[פניני הלכה, תפילה ה'א':ה'5:1:5 Peninei Halakhah, Prayer](#)

One should not begin to pray when his mind is **preoccupied**.

[פניני הלכה, תפילה כ"ד:א':ב'2:1:2 Peninei Halakhah, Prayer](#)

At Minchah time, a person is often **preoccupied** with his affairs; therefore he must overcome his concerns and designate time to pray.

[פניני הלכה, שמחת הבית וברכתו 5:12:5 Peninei Halakhah, Simchat Habayit V'Birchato](#)  
[ה'י"ב:ה'](#)

...they are constantly **preoccupied** with making more money to buy a better car, fancier clothing, more expensive furniture, and a bigger house in a wealthier neighborhood.

***PTC. Tefillah and torah learning is a great time to connect on the "Spiritual phone" to Hashem, throw away other thoughts and focus just on Hashem, with no other things on your mind***

[Redeeming Relevance; Deuteronomy, CHAPTER 5 Kings and the Problem of Professionalization 26](#)

The king, however, was a true career man – someone we could describe as a political specialist. Sometimes, as in the case of David and Chizkiyahu, he was also a pious Jew. Other times, as in the case of Menashe, he was a rogue. But in either case he was too preoccupied with everything that goes into running a state to lead a properly focused religious life, not to mention to provide true religious leadership. In the best scenario he would need spiritual oversight. In the worst he would need to be stopped.

[אבות דרבי נתן כ"א:א'1:1 Avot D'Rabbi Natan](#)

For when a person is studying in his house, and becomes **distracted** with his children and the people in his house, he ends up wasting time he could have spent studying Torah,

[חובות הלבבות, שער חמישי - שער ייחוד 5:77 Duties of the Heart, Fifth Treatise on Devotion](#)  
[המעשה ה'ע"ז](#)

it is possible that he will do the service of G-d but be outside of it, and that his thoughts are always **distracted** in some other secular interest.

[חובות הלבבות, שער תשיעי - שער 7:5 Duties of the Heart, Ninth Treatise on Abstinence](#)  
[הפרישות ז'ה'](#)

Whenever people are occupied in secular matters, they are **distracted** from being concerned with matters of the next world.

**PTC. Set aside time to learn, to study Torah, everyday, away from distractions, even for a short while i.e. when kids are in bed, early in morning, at night...find that “special quiet time” to connect to Torah and Hashem**

[משנה תורה. הלכות תפילה וברכת כהנים 4:15](#)  
[פניני הלכה. תפילה י"ז:ט':ב'9:2](#)  
[Peninei Halakhah, Prayer 17:9:2](#)

A person finds that his thoughts are confused and his mind is **distracted**: He may not pray till he has recovered his mental composure.

[פניני הלכה. תפילה י"ז:ט':ב'9:2](#)

One reciting the Amidah must have kavanah; that is, he must focus on what he is saying, and he must try not to let his mind be **distracted** by anything else during the prayer.

**PTC. Find time to connect to Hashem personally every day with talking to Hashem in a personal relationship, even outside the parameters of the set daily tefillah parameters; Conversations with Hashem can happen any time, anywhere, make quiet peaceful time to talk to Hashem**

#### **Points To Carryover**

-Make sure your mind isn't distracted when learning or involved with torah and good deeds, fill your mind with doing Hashem's will and be preoccupied with how to do more good

-Make sure to have your priorities straight and to be involved with good things; don't forget about others as a result of selfish preoccupation or distraction (i.e. neglecting wife or kid because watching tv show)

-Don't use excuses as a rationalization for not being involved with torah or mitvos—learn from Hillel, Rabbi Elazar Ben Harsum, and Yosef, among others that time or money is not an excuse to pretend to be preoccupied or distracted or multitasking with the wrong things or not the bet things

-Be preoccupied by the proper things, that of Torah, Mitzvos, and Chessed; focus on the spiritual, on what truly matters and is really eternal; acquire tons of spiritual merits

-We should realize Hashem gives us physical innovations and inventions to help us and to guide us to acquire more torah; Use physical things for good ie smartphone for torah/mitzvos

-Banish the distractions from your midst while you study and pray; allow Hashem to dwell amongst you if you banish the foolish preoccupation, distraction, or divided attention in your days

-Realize Hashem gives us a great tool to disconnect to reconnect, that of the amazing Holy Shabbos; Use Shabbos as a springboard and prototype how to banish distractions, preoccupation, and divided attention from our days—put the phones and internet away!

-Tefillah and torah learning is a great time to connect on the “Spiritual phone” to Hashem, throw away other thoughts and focus just on Hashem, with no other things on your mind

-Set aside time to learn, to study Torah, everyday, away from distractions, even for a short while i.e. when kids are in bed, early in morning, at night...find that “special quiet time” to connect to Torah and Hashem

-Find time to connect to Hashem personally every day with talking to Hashem in a personal relationship, even outside the parameters of the set daily tefillah parameters; Conversations with Hashem can happen any time, anywhere, make quiet peaceful time to talk to Hashem