

## SUSTAINING SPIRITUAL GROWTH

### Background

Rashi is explaining the *posuk* to be teaching us the pathology of idol worship. The first step is when G-d grants you wealth, and you become seduced by it and become materialistic – too absorbed in the importance of physical pleasures. That leads to the second step: you cease studying the Torah, which leads to the third step – you come to serve idols.

#### ספר דברים פרק יא

טז) השִׁמְרוּ לָכֶם פֶּן יִפְתָּה לְבַבְכֶם וְסַרְתֶּם וְעַבַדְתֶּם אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתֶם לָהֶם:

*Guard yourselves, lest your heart be seduced and you will turn away, and you will serve foreign gods, and you will bow to them.*

#### רש"י על דברים פרק יא פסוק טז

טז) השִׁמְרוּ לָכֶם - כיון שתהיו אוכלים ושבעים השמרו לכם שלא תבעטו שאין אדם מורד בהקב"ה אלא מתוך שביעה שנאמר פן תאכל ושבעת ובקרך וצאנך ירביון מה הוא אומר אחריו ורם לבבך ושכחת

וּסַרְתֶּם - לפרוש מן התורה ומתוך כך ועבדתם אלהים אחרים שכיון שאדם פורש מן התורה הולך ומדבק בעבודת כוכבים

*Guard yourselves – When you will eat and become satisfied, guard yourselves that you shouldn't "kick," because a man doesn't rebel against HASHEM except when satisfied.*

*And you will turn away – To separate from Torah study, (see Siftei Chachmim here) and through that you will come to serve foreign gods. When a man separates from Torah study, he goes and clings to idol worship.*

### Questions

The progression between steps one and two seems logical. If you become absorbed with the pleasures of this world, you will stop focusing on the World to Come, and Torah study will no longer occupy the same level of importance to you, so you will stop learning Torah. That sequence is understandable. But why does that necessarily bring a person to the third step, that of idol worship? Why can't a person remain a Torah observant Jew, but a bit too involved in worldly pleasures? Why does being involved in materialism perforce bring a person to idolatry?