

THE CHOPP HOLDINGS EDITION  
IN MEMORY OF MRS. CLARA CHOPP A"H AND MENUCHA MARKOWITZ A"H

# TORAS AVIGDOR

AUTHENTIC TORAH THOUGHT FOR LIFE  
RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"L

CHODESH SIVAN



**PARSHAS NASO**  
**BLESS AND BE BLESSED**

Toras Avigdor extends its warmest wishes

WITH GREAT JOY TOWARD

**Daniel Saka & Orly Nakkach**

UPON THEIR WEDDING

With heartfelt Mazal Tov wishes to the parents

**Margalit and Joseph Saka | Sofie and Moshe Nakkach**

May they be zocheh to build a bayis ne'eman b'Yisrael filled with Torah, simcha, bracha, and shalom.

IN MEMORY OF CLARA CHOPP A"H

חיה ריזל בת ר' מרדכי ע"ה  
ולעילוי נשמת מנוחה חיה ע"ה בת יבל"ה הרב עמיחי שליט"א



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**TORAS AVIGDOR**  
AUTHENTIC TORAH THOUGHT FOR LIFE

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# PARSHAS NASO

WITH

RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT" L

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

## BLESS AND BE BLESSED

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## Part I. Avraham's Blessings

### Easy Money

There are very many ways of accomplishing in *avodas Hashem* in this world, all types of opportunities, and most need a great deal of effort. Let's say you want to be a Torah scholar, so **לַעֲשׂוֹת וְלִקְצוֹת** – *you have to labor in order to attain your objective* (Megillah 6b). If you want to learn the Ketzos Hachoshen, it's hard work. It's a good idea by the way. If you'll labor every day over a Ketzos, so in a hundred days you'll have a hundred Ketzos in your pocket. You're a *shtikel lamdan* already. If you learn two hundred Ketzos, you're a pretty fine *lamdan*. Some people learn all of Ketzos Hachoshen. Very good! But it requires a lot of effort.

If you want to become a big *ba'al deiah*, a *ba'al emunah*, there's work to be done; it requires very much thinking and meditation. It's not easy, the *sefer*

Chovos Halevavos; to learn it, to practice it. And *middos tovos*? In order to change your character there is training you must follow – it's constant work, constant struggles. You can take a Mesillas Yesharim and learn it from cover to cover a hundred times. That's a good start.

There are a lot of important things and they're all worth working on – each one is a very big achievement that you'll have forever – but they're not easy, and sometimes people are looking for an achievement that comes a little bit easier. I get phone calls sometimes from people, “What can I do to make progress in life, something that's not going to require too much time?” A man asked me that last week. “I'm a busy man in the office, and besides, my spare time is occupied by learning,” he says. “What can I do that will take only a minute or so and I'll be able to make headway all my life?”

### **Cadillacs for Sale**

Now, that's a big order to ask. What can you get for a minute? You're going shopping for a Cadillac and you only have nickels in your pocketbook.

So we're going to speak tonight about a subject that's easy to accomplish and it's open to everyone; it's a Cadillac that you can buy for nickels – for less than nickels. It's something that is immensely easy and the profit is immensely great. Of course, you'll have to keep it in mind and make it into a regular practice, but it's quite easy as we'll soon see.

And so we begin with a Gemara in Mesichta Chullin. If you're interested in knowing, it's *daf mem tes, amud alef*; and Rabi Akiva is dealing there with a question. The *possuk* (Bamidbar 6:23) says, **וְהָיָה אֲתֵּם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל**, *the kohanim should bless the Bnei Yisroel*, and then (*ibid.* 27), **וַאֲנִי אֲבָרְכֶם**, *Hashem will fulfill their words*: **בְּהֵיגֵם מִבְּרַכְתֵּי לְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְהִקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מְסַבֵּם עַל יְדָם** – *Hashem blesses the Bnei Yisroel because of the birchas kohanim.*

But the question is, **בְּרַכָּה לְהֵיגֵם מִנָּא לָהּ** – *how are the kohanim blessed?* So Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak says we learn it from somewhere else. Way back in the beginning of Bereishis, in *Lech Lecha*, it's stated that Hakadosh Baruch Hu declared to our father Avraham, **וְאֲבָרְכָה מְבָרְכֶיךָ**, *I will bless those who bless you* (Bereishis 12:3). And so Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak says that it's because of this promise that the *kohanim* receive their blessings from Hashem. A *kohen* gets up in a little *shtiebel* somewhere and blesses the Jews in his congregation, and now he's automatically blessed by Hashem because of that promise made to Avraham.

### **National Blessings**

It's a big *chiddush*. If it wasn't for Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak I might have thought maybe it was a promise only to Avraham; let's say Mamrei, Lot or Malkitzedek would *bentch* Avraham, so they would be blessed. But you see

from this Gemara that it's not only Avraham; it's even the *zera Avraham*, the Am Yisroel.

And it doesn't have to be *all* of *zera Avraham* either. That's what you might have imagined, that if you're good to the Jewish *nation*, you'll be blessed. Let's say America; America was tolerant and admitted Jews and gave them equal rights, so Hakadosh Baruch Hu blessed America to become the most powerful and wealthy country in the world. There was a Louisiana Purchase; it belonged to France. Spain had a big part of America; America acquired Florida from Spain. There was a Gadsden Purchase from Mexico. These were large tracts of land that belonged to other countries; why should they give up their holdings in America? But it worked out so.

And in the Civil War, the South was very strong; America could have fallen apart. But America remained united from sea to sea, full of prosperity – because they were the ones who blessed the Am Yisroel. They had a *ruach* in them, the Founding Fathers, to found a nation with equal rights even for Jews. They took them in and gave them freedom; so Hakadosh Baruch Hu said, וְאַבְרָהָהּ מְבָרְכֶיךָ.

### One Jew Under Contract

But it's not only a national promise, and it's not only a *tzibbur*, like the *kohanim* blessing the community. Tosfos (*ibid.*) comes along and tells us that even if you bless one Jew, you activate the contract that Hakadosh Baruch Hu made with the world.

Tosfos brings a story, a Yerushalmi in Mesichta Brachos (8:8). There was a *goy* who was on the road and he encountered Rabi Yishmael. So the *goy* said *shalom* to Rabi Yishmael. What did Rabi Yishmael answer? He said, “מִילְתְּךָ כְּבָר אָמוּרָה – Your word is already said.” It means, “My answer to you is already established. I don't have to say anything because your *bracha* is written in our Torah; it says, וְאַבְרָהָהּ מְבָרְכֶיךָ.”

Hashem loves the Jews so much that anybody who goes out of his way to bless a Jew, even one, so Hashem is on it right away. He'll bless that person. It's a contract written in the Torah, a covenant that Hakadosh Baruch Hu made with our nation. Not only with Avraham personally; it's a contract with Avraham's seed forever.

And so we're learning here a subject of very great benefit. By loving Jewish people and blessing them, you're invoking an especial covenant that Hakadosh Baruch Hu made with our forefather. It's a big and easy career, blessing Hashem's people: “I will bless those who bless My children.”

## Shake Off the Dirt

Now, before we begin to study this subject, we must divest ourselves of any prejudice against the principles of the Torah. Because today there's an attitude on the street of negativism, of rebellion against old ideals. Not only principles of the Torah; *lehavdil*, even maxims that wise gentiles have said that were the result of centuries of experience, today are being ridiculed. And therefore we must suspect that since we come from the street, we have its dust on ourselves.

So let's shake it off. You came here to hear Torah so let's shake off at least for a little while all of our prejudice and listen to what the Torah has to say. It's a steadfast rule, a Torah principle — וְאַבְרָהָהּ מְבָרְכֶיהָ! Those words should ring in your head always, no matter what someone else will tell you. Anybody, Jew or a gentile, man or woman, boy or girl, who takes the trouble to say words of blessing to a Jew must know that Hakadosh Baruch Hu now is mortgaged to them. And He's going to deliver.

## Superficial Blessings

Now, you have to know that even if you didn't put much into your blessing, it'll come back to you. This gentile who passed by Rabi Yishmael on the road probably said it just as a formality. Maybe there was some sincerity, I can't tell you, but I imagine he was alone on the road and a big entourage of Jews was coming his way, so he thought it would be most prudent to bless Rabi Yishmael.

And even so, that caused the contract with Avraham Avinu to go into effect. It doesn't mean that the gentile will be a *ben Olam Haba*. It doesn't mean he'll become a millionaire either. But there are a lot of blessings beneath that; blessings that we would like to get too.

## Don't Say Hello

So if you meet somebody in the street, instead of saying "hi" or "hello," which is meaningless, say, "*Shalom aleichem*." That's the old Jewish greeting. There is a *rosh yeshiva* in America, Rav Gustman, he should be well, he once heard somebody say, "Hello." "*Vus epes 'hello*," he said. Hello doesn't mean anything. Say *shalom aleichem*, a greeting! Even a mere *shalom aleichem* is a tremendous achievement if you're saying it to a person who is descended from Avraham Avinu, a member of the Am Hashem.

And even if you say it superficially, you already have done a wise thing. You made a good investment, because the plan of Hakadosh Baruch Hu is that it's going to come back to you. At minimum it will come back in the smallest manner — you'll be greeted by others. Does it ever happen that you pass people on the street and you're offended because they aren't interested in

looking at you even though they are acquaintances? And you think, “What’s wrong with these people that they don’t greet me?”

Well, maybe it’s because *you* didn’t greet *them*. It could be. And so if you greet others and make them happy, at least *that* Hakadosh Baruch Hu will bless you with: others will greet you and make you happy. Because that’s the very lowest level of compensation.

### **Adding Peirushim**

However, there’s much more opportunity available. It all depends how much you put into it. If you’re *mechaven peirush hamilos*, “*Shalom aleichem*” means much more than a superficial blessing. It means that he should be in peace, that he shouldn’t fight with his wife. They should live in harmony and have *nachas* from their children.

So now you’re adding some meaning to the words. He shouldn’t fight with his landlord. He should get along with his employer or his partner. You can think these ideas when you’re saying *shalom aleichem*; you can say some of them too. You can tell him, “You should have *bracha v’hatzlacha* in the *kollel* today,” or in the office, whatever it is.

It takes a few more seconds, a half minute? It’s worth it. Because according to what you put in, that’s what you’ll get out.

### **Kosher Exercise**

Now, what difficulty lies in this exercise of good character? It’s one of the easiest things in the world to do, to bless your fellow Jew, and you have to know you are doing something that’s a *shleimus* in you. Hakadosh Baruch Hu is going to love you for that. And it’s so easy, you can do it always; you can’t do it enough.

There’s no such thing as blessing *frum* Jews too much. And the truth is that as much as you do it, it’s very far yet from the interiority of your heart. It’s mostly *min hasafah v’lachutz*; it’s just lip work. However, by dint of constant, thoughtful repetition, we gradually become impressed by the ideal of blessing somebody. And therefore, on the contrary, the more you practice, the better.

And so if you say *gut Shabbos*, *gut yontif* or good morning to somebody — if you put a little thought into it — then it’s going to bounce back not merely with the same words, but in the words of that great prophecy of **וְאַבְרָהָהּ מְבַרְכֶיךָ**.

### **The Eternal Contract**

Now, you might ask a question, does it really help when you give people blessings? The truth is it does, but that’s not our subject yet. It doesn’t say if you bless Yisroel and as a result of your blessing they’ll become happy, therefore Hashem will bless you. No; there are no conditions attached. All you

have to do is give your blessings, show that you love His people and אין הקדוש ברוך הוא אוהב אֵלָא לְמִי שְׂאוֹהֵב אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל; *Hashem only loves those who love His people* (Mesillas Yesharim, Ch. 19). Therefore, Hakadosh Baruch Hu inscribes it in His book. וְיִזְכָּרְתָּ בְּסֵפֶר זִכְרוֹן לְפָנָיו, – *Hashem hears* – וְיִשְׁמָע – *and it's written in the book of remembrance before Him* (Malachi 3:16). He owes you something.

And He's going to repay because He already contracted with you from the beginning of our history. At the outset, Avraham went forth with that contract in his hand: וְאַבְרָהָהּ מְכַרְכֵּיךְ.

## Part II. Slabodka Blessings

### Slabodka Shkoyachs

Now, if we're going to understand this subject fully, you have to hear how it was practiced in Slabodka. So pay good attention now. Fifty-five years ago, I was sitting at a *shmuess* and the *rosh yeshiva* was speaking on this subject, and he said like this: “*Yasher koach* doesn't mean anything.” That's what they said in Slabodka, that when you get an *aliyah* and you say “*yasher koach*” to the *gabbai*, it shouldn't be a formality.

That's the usual way; you say *yasher koach* but it doesn't mean much. It means “thank you,” maybe. But suppose you translate it; you say it in Hebrew but you're thinking, “Your strength should increase.” That's what it means: *yeyasher kochacha*. You want the *gabbai* to become stronger. He gave you an *aliyah*; you want him to live longer as a result.

Imagine that! You say, “*Yeyasher kochacha*,” but you say it with *peirush hamilos*, with the meaning of the words. You're thinking, “You, Mr. Gabbai, your strength should increase. You should have bigger muscles. You should have more calcium in your bones. Your eyesight should be sharper. You should be well and live long.”

Isn't it silly to think that? It's not silly at all! It's the most intelligent thing. If you're thinking that, there's a big difference. Your words now have an entirely different power. That's what they taught in Slabodka.

### Slabodka Good Nights

And therefore, according to Slabodka, when you say “good night” to your children or to your wife, or to your *chaveirim* in the *beis knesses* after Maariv, so you should think about what “good night” means.

Good night! Oh, how many good things are included in good night! You know some people can't sleep well at night. Some people have other difficulties, things they don't say in public. “Good night” means no troubles. “Good night”

means that you want him to get up in the morning refreshed. First of all, he should get up, that's number one, and also he should be refreshed.

And therefore it's a principle to think of the meaning of the words! Don't we want good nights like that? So you should put all that into those words. Suppose you have that in mind when you say good night to your wife. It's a wonderful thing! Of course, it's exaggerated, but anybody who wants to be something has to be exaggerated. And that's how all of our greetings should be.

### **A New Kind of Noch-Bracha**

Now, in Slabodka they said another *chiddush*. You know, when you meet someone and you greet him, you might be enthusiastic. It's natural — you'd like to make a good impression: "Oh, I heard your daughter got married! *Mazel tov!* You should have *nachas*." You shake his hand warmly. You smile. Why not? There's nothing wrong with that. We should all try to make a good impression.

But suppose after you take leave of him and you walk ten steps past him; he doesn't see you anymore. And now you repeat the same words again when he's not listening. Nobody should hear you talking to yourself, but say it anyhow. "*Mazel tov*. You should have *nachas*." You can even add something. "You should get along with the new *mechutanim*." Sometimes there are *mechutanim* who complain. "Why don't you give my guests the best seats, better tables?" and so on. So you bless him he should have *shalom* with the *mechutanim*.

Oh, that's tremendous! It proves that you're not saying *mazel tov* superficially or just to flatter him. You mean business!

And it's a practice that *ovdei Hashem* can do without any effort. You pass your neighbor on the street; "Good Shabbos, my friend." And then you forget about him — you're back now to your own world, your own thoughts. It's good but there's even better. Five paces later, say "Good Shabbos" again to him. This time he doesn't hear it, but this time you mean it more.

### **A Peirush on Brachos**

And in order to make sure that you're sincere in your greeting, you add some thought and a *peirush* too. "Good Shabbos" means he should enjoy the *chulent*. He should sleep well in the afternoon. He should get *kavod* in the *beis haknesses*.

He doesn't hear you? He's already down the block? So what? Who said he has to hear?

You hear that *chiddush*? Who said he has to hear? A great man said that. The Alter of Slabodka was once walking in the morning with a disciple of his and they were passing by a house where one of the *kollel* men lived. So the Alter said to the house, "*Gut morgen*, good morning!"

The disciple asked, “Who hears that? Nobody is listening.”

So the Alter said, “He has to hear?”

Pay attention to that; it’s from a very great man. “He has to hear?” That’s *geonus*, greatness. Why does he have to hear it? He wants the man to have a good morning. Why does he have to be listening?

### Speaking to Houses

So you’re walking down the street – it’s a *frum* Jewish street, with big *mezuzos* – and you say, “Good morning to this house, good morning to that house.” Don’t wait for anyone to come out. “Good morning.”

Of course, like we said before, “good morning” means many things. It means you have a good breakfast; you want his breakfast to be digested well. He should go to the bathroom and everything should function perfectly!

He should hear good news on the telephone. No colds today. He shouldn’t miss the bus or the train and be late for work. He should find a lot of orders waiting on his desk when he comes to his place of business. That’s what “good morning” means; that’s how to bless a Jewish house.

So when you walk down the street, keep your eyes peeled for the big *mezuzos*. It’s another good reason, by the way, to live in places crowded with *frum* Jews. So many opportunities! Ah! A *bracha* on that house! **יְבִרְךָ אֱת בַּיִת יִשְׂרָאֵל**. Next house, a big *mezuzah*, another blessing. You’re taking a walk but you know what you’re doing? You’re becoming great. And you’re also blessing yourself. You’re doing a very big favor for yourself. That’s the Gemara! And it’s so sensible; you’re giving yourself *brachos* all the time if you get into this practice of blessing Yisroel.

### Blessing the Next Generation

You pass by a school of little girls playing in the yard. You see they’re good Jewish girls. They’re wearing stockings. They’re wearing sleeves. They come from *frum* families. Don’t just pass them by. *Tzon kadoshim*; it’s a holy nation. They’ll be mothers of *frum* families. How can you pass them by without a big hearty blessing from the bottom of your heart?

Does it cost money? It’s the easiest and cheapest investment for you! Bless them they should all be well and live to get a very good *shidduch*, each one of them. They should all be wealthy and have a lot of healthy, normal children. They should live long and their husbands should be big *talmidei chachamim*.

When you walk by, let’s say, Satmerer Yeshiva, Bobover Yeshiva, Mirrer Yeshiva, you see a big building; inside there are *baruch Hashem* young people, all ages, *kollel* people, *rebbe*s.

“Oh,” you say, “I have nothing against them.”

No, that's not enough. Open your mouth and bless them. Say like this: “Ribono Shel Olam, בְּרַכֵּם – Bless them, צְרַקְתֶּךָ תְּמִיד גְּמֹלָם, טַהֲרֵם וְרַחֲמֵם.” Say that. You could say that *possuk*. If you want you can say a *peirush* on it. “Ribono Shel Olam, they should all live long. They should all be well. All should have *parnassah b'revach*. All should have *nachas* from their children.”

You see a yeshiva man going in or going out, don't neglect the opportunity. “He should succeed in his learning. He should understand the Tosfos, the Maharsha. He should get along with his *chaveirim*, his *chavrusas*.”

Bless also the *rebbe*s, the *morah*s, they should get paid on time, they should teach well. Also, there are discouraged boys who can use your blessings. And the good boys, the *baalei kishron*, they need your blessings too. Sometimes even more than the weaker boys.

### **Blessings on Main Street**

Here's a man, he passes by a Jewish store. Inside is a *frum* man and he blesses him. He doesn't have to hear; he blesses him that he should have a lot of good business today, the customers should all pay on time and the merchandise that's delivered should be without any blemishes.

And he blesses him also that his daughters – his two daughters are standing in the store helping him – should get married off soon. What does he need them in the store for? He wants to get rid of his daughters. So this man walking by outside blesses him he should marry off his daughters.

It sounds crazy? It's worth being crazy. Does it cost a lot of money to do that? It's a big investment however. Ohhhh! You're going to get a lot of returns on that investment.

And so whether it's in the street or in the home or in the *beis haknesses*, it's an opportunity. You have to know Hakadosh Baruch Hu is going to listen to that and He inscribes it in His ledger that He owes you something for that.

### **Wedding Plans**

That's why I say that if you have to go to a wedding – you can't help it; your wife says you must come along with her – so you can make it a successful night. You're sitting there and you're bored. What should you do? People are sitting and eating. So you think, “Hakadosh Baruch Hu should bless this Jew.” This fellow sitting next to you; you're thinking, “Hashem should help you marry off your daughters.”

You don't have to say it – think it. The man sitting on the other side of the table, “He should make a lot of money. He should be happy.” Look at all the *frum* Jews; they're all good *frum* Jews. “Hashem should bless this one with a long life.” Oh, there's my wife's second cousin from Detroit. “He should be

blessed with *parnassah*. Hakadosh Baruch Hu should give him *nachas* from his children.”

### **The Higher, Harder Way**

Now, I said in the beginning that there are other, more difficult ways to greatness. If you take my recommendation to learn Ketzos Hachoshen, so while you're sitting there, think over a Ketzos. Oh, that's a wonderful thing! You can sit at the table and think about how you can do *pidyon haben* with a *kohen katan*. That's a wonderful Ketzos (243:4)! A *kohen katan*, can you give him *pidyon haben*? But he has no *yad* to be *koneh*. It's a question. So you're sitting there thinking it through, about *daas acheres makneh* and *tovas hanaah*. Ahh! It's a wonderful thing to think over a Ketzos at a wedding. You don't know a Ketzos? So try to say over a *blatt Gemara ba'al peh*, the *shakla v'tarya*.

Now, that's a good idea I'm telling you, to review your Torah studies by heart at the wedding. But if you want something that's very easy and very profitable, I suggest giving blessings. That's easy. That everybody can do. Give blessings, certainly. It's a wonderful career.

### **A Family Affair**

Your children too. It's good to teach your children. You'll change their lives. The family should learn this lesson of always saying blessings on people; in their presence, yes, and also when they're not around, when they don't hear. It's not a one-time thing. It's a system of life. Bless them! **יְבָרַךְ אֶת בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל!** We ask Hakadosh Baruch Hu to do that, and He's asking us to do that too.

Now all this is very silly, I must tell you. Of course it's silly. You don't want to be silly? So you'll remain a nobody. If you want to be a somebody, you have to be silly. No question about that. And so if you go outside and tell this to people and they laugh at us, who cares? We'll laugh at them. **וְהִצְחַק לְיוֹם אַחֲרָיוֹן** – We'll laugh in the end because we chose an easy path to greatness; we'll laugh our way into Olam Haba.

## **Part III. Your Blessings**

### **The Powerful Man**

Now, there's another point that rounds off this subject and that is: *blessings work*! Not only do they bounce back at you, but they help your *chaver* too. You – any human being – are so great and so important that your blessings mean something, your words are powerfully effective.

Whatever subject you're studying, it's important to keep in mind the *yesodos*, the fundamentals of Torah; whatever we say always has to refer

back to the great principles at the beginning of Torah. And one of the great principles is **נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ**, that man was made in the image of Hakadosh Baruch Hu (Bereishis 1:26). It means that man is endowed with a greatness beyond our ability to measure; the *seforim* constantly reiterate that whatever man does is of the utmost importance.

### The Powerful Tongue

Now although this is a rule that holds true concerning everything connected with the *min ha'adam* – there is *nothing* a man does that is insignificant – it is especially true of the *koach hadibur*, the power of speech. And if you don't assimilate this Torah attitude, you'll consider speech a cheap and unimportant thing; you'll disregard it and you won't utilize it.

You know when you'll realize? Someday a man will stand before the *kisei din*, the Throne of Judgment, and all the things that he said will come to him again, but now he'll see how *not* unimportant they were. He'll learn how great were the statements that he made. If he spoke unkind words to his mother or to his wife or to his *rebbe*, there will be tremendous *mazikin* that will confront him. And if he spoke kindly words, words of blessing, words of friendship, words of *chessed*, then those great words will now be great and shining *malachim* of tremendous stature.

Of course, just listening to this is not going to overcome the inertia of a lifetime of gentile ideas. The greatness of mankind must be studied until it penetrates our marrow and we understand that when we open up our mouths, a tremendous event is taking place. That's what we're learning now; what you say is of the utmost importance. The *koach hadibur* cannot be overstated!

### Little Blessings for Big People

Now, this power that all men possess is a very big subject, but for now we'll listen to a statement in Mesichta Megillah (15a). **אָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר אָמַר רַבִּי אֶל תְּהִי בְרַבַּת הַדְּיוֹט קָלָה בְּעֵינַיִךְ** – *Rabi Elazar said, a blessing given to you by an unimportant person should not be light in your eyes*. It means you should be happy when somebody gives you a blessing. And even though you might be a very great man and the blesser is a very unimportant person, nevertheless be happy that it happened.

And he brings a proof: **שְׁהָרִי שְׁנֵי גְדוּלֵי הַדּוֹר בְּרַכּוּם שְׁנֵי הַדְּיוֹטוֹת** – *There were two great men who were blessed by two ordinary people, and the blessing was fulfilled*. A blessing from an ordinary person, and it came to fruition.

Now listen who the great men were. **וְאֵלוֹ הֵן דָּוִד וְדָנִיֵּאל** – *Dovid and Daniel*.

## A Gentile Bracha

Dovid, the beloved of Hashem! Dovid who did so much in the service of Hashem! Dovid, the great benefactor of our nation! Dovid needs someone's blessing? It seems to us that nobody could add to the merits of Dovid, no matter how many blessings he showered on him – even if the greatest person blessed him. But the Gemara brings a case not of someone great. It says that Aravnah, a gentile, blessed Dovid and it was *niskayeim*.

Aravnah was a Jevusite, a Canaani who happened to own a plot of land in Yerushalayim. And when Dovid conquered Yerushalayim from the Yevusi, he wanted to build the Beis Hamikdash so he looked for a site. And he searched high and low; *al pi Hashem* he investigated with *lomdus* and with research. Finally, Hakadosh Baruch Hu helped him discover the site of the future Beis Hamikdash, on a certain mountain in Yerushalayim.

The only problem was that it was in the possession of this Aravnah. So what did Dovid do? He bought that land from him. Even though Hakadosh Baruch Hu had given Am Yisroel the right to all of Eretz Canaan and Dovid had already conquered the Yevusim, still he didn't expropriate the land. He paid Aravnah a good price for it, and so Aravnah was thankful for that. וַיֹּאמֶר אַרְוֹנָה וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל הַמֶּלֶךְ – He said to the king, ה' לֹא לְקִיָּיךָ יִרְצֶךָ – Hashem your G-d should favor you. That's the story over there in Shmuel Beis (24:20-24).

## An Important Story

The question is, is that important to tell us? So he gave a blessing, so what? Why shouldn't he give a blessing? Here is a king, a conqueror who is nice enough to pay him for the land – and you can be sure he paid him a good price too. And Aravnah was thinking, “Why should I live here anymore, among the Bnei Yisroel? It'll be uncomfortable for me. I can sell my land and move somewhere among my *landsleit*, among other Yevusim.” And so he was happy to get a customer, someone willing to pay full price, and he gave a blessing. So it's a nice story, but why does the Tanach have to tell us this?

The Tanach was written *al pi haNevi'im*. It means the Navi inscribed *al pi Hashem* that Aravnah said these words. And the Tanach is very chary, very sparse in words. Even big things, even many important episodes are not told to us. And so if something is mentioned, then it's trying to tell us something.

And it's *telling us that these words had an effect*. That's why the Navi tells us that. That's the Gemara's conclusion, that the blessings of a regular person, even a goy, help.

## The Blessing that Helped

Aravnah's words should help Dovid? It's unbelievable! Dovid was a giant. Hakadosh Baruch Hu loved him. But when a plague came and people were

dying and Dovid was *davening* to Hashem, there was something special required. And now, after Aravnah's *bracha*, when Dovid *davened*, וַיַּעֲתֶר ה' לְאַרְצֵי. Now, Hashem listened. וַתֵּעָצֵר הַמִּגְפָּה מֵעַל יִשְׂרָאֵל – And the plague was checked (*ibid.* 25). That was a result of the blessing of Aravnah.

Now, I'm not able to explain that. Without Aravnah's blessing it wouldn't have happened? So it seems. Maybe Dovid was so full of merits that he was *almost* there on his own, that his *tefillos* alone should be capable of overturning a *gezeirah* from Hashem. Almost. And Aravnah just put one more merit on the side of *zechus* and that tipped the scales. Whatever it was, we learn that it was the *bracha* that this gentile Aravnah gave to Dovid that made his *tefillah* accepted in the eyes of Hashem.

### Daniel's Davening

That's one case of a *hedyot*, an unimportant person, whose blessing accomplished a great achievement for a great man whom we would've thought didn't need his blessing.

The second instance is Daniel; וַיְבָרֵךְ דָּרְיָוֶשׁ – *Daryavesh blessed Daniel*. Now, Daryavesh was a king. But as far as we are concerned, if he's not the king now, he's one of the *areilim* of the *umos ha'olam*. He's not important to us. You have to honor the king of the country where you are, but a king who once reigned is not important to us. He doesn't even deserve a place in history, especially in the holy history of the Tanach – he's considered a *hedyot* as far as we're concerned.

Now, Daniel was one of Daryavesh's palace people, and he noticed that every day, three times a day, Daniel opened the windows wherever he was and prayed towards Yerushalayim (Daniel 6:11). He was a young fellow in a palace of gentiles but that's of no consequence. He's a Jew at all times and a Jew in all places, and so there too he continued what he had learned in his father's house.

### Daryavesh's Blessing

Once, the king came upon him and saw him praying, so he gave Daniel a blessing. Daryavesh said, וְאֵלֶיךָ דַּי אֲנִי פֹלַח לָהּ בְּתָדִירָא – “Your G-d Whom you worship always, הוּא יְשִׁיבֶךָ – He should protect you” (*ibid.* 17). That's what the *melech* said.

And this came true when Daniel was thrown into the lions. He was protected. And not only that, again and again the noblemen of the palace wanted to unseat him from his high office. They were looking to make trouble for him, but Hakadosh Baruch Hu saved him and Daniel lived to tell the story.

Again we see the fact that this is inscribed in the Tanach is not merely to tell us that the king gave him a blessing, but to tell us that this blessing

was fulfilled. It came true and it helped. Otherwise, why should this detail be inserted? The answer is it's telling us it's the *bracha* of Daryavesh that helped him!

Again, I must admit I don't know what would have been if the *melech* hadn't blessed him. It could be Hashem would have saved his life, but he might have been partially maimed. They could have thrown him into the fire. He would have gotten out alive, but he could've been a cripple for the rest of his life. I can't tell you what would happen, but whatever it was, there was an effect. The *tefillah* of Daryavesh is written because Daniel was saved by it.

So if it tells us that Dovid was blessed by Aravnah and Daniel was blessed by Daryavesh, it's for the purpose of letting us know how great it is when somebody gives you a blessing.

### **You are Great**

Now, that's a very important lesson, and so we repeat, אֵל תְּהִי בְרַבַּת הַדְּרִיּוֹט קִלָּה, בְּעֵינֶיךָ וְנִתְקַיְּמָה בְּהֶן – It means not only you can give blessings, but *you can help!* In some way, maybe more, maybe less, your *brachos* will have an effect. You're not the Satmerer Rebbe or the Lubavitcher Rebbe, you're not a *tzaddik*, but we have to go back to the foundations of Torah! Every man is tremendously great!

A human being is so great that we have no idea of the measure of the profundity and the sublimity of his words. That's a Torah principle from the beginning of time: הָבִיב אָדָם שֶׁנִּבְרָא בְצֶלֶם – *How beloved is a man because he's created in the image of Hashem* (Avos 3:14)! A man is so great that his word echoes throughout space. Not only through space; a man's words are tremendously more powerful than the sound waves they create because Hakadosh Baruch Hu has given mankind the gift of greatness. And because of that, his words are powerful; they resound forever and ever.

Whose words? Anyone's word. Even a *hedyot*. When he says something, it reverberates throughout the universe and it reaches a space way past the solar system. It reaches *kavyachol* to Hashem's Ears.

### **A Great and Easy Career**

Now that's a big doctrine. It's a tremendous principle that's hard for us to assimilate because we live with *gashmiyus* and we tend to forget the *yesodos haTorah*. But that's what we learn in Torah: the greatness of mankind and the tremendous effect that his words have.

And that's why we're sitting here together now speaking about this subject. Because it's more important than we can imagine. To bless Jews is a greatness, a remarkable way of serving Hashem. And not only are you promised that it will bounce back at you – if you love your people enough

to bless them, Hakadosh Baruch Hu will reward you with His own blessings – but your blessings have an effect. You're helping yourself and your people.

And therefore when people want to live a career of easy profit, an easy way of achieving great things in life, something that doesn't require labor – so we should run and seize the opportunity. You have to know you have done something that's a *shleimus* in you.

And Hakadosh Baruch Hu is going to love you for that. You're expressing your love for the seed of Avraham, Hashem's beloved nation, and Hashem is listening. Everyone can profit all the days of his life without any effort at all if he'll keep his mind constantly fastened on this principle of לְכַרְתָּ אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל.

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## Let's Get Practical

### Keep The Blessings Flowing

In this week's *parsha*, the *kohanim* are given the mitzvah to bless the Am Yisroel. Chazal tell us that, in turn, Hakadosh Baruch Hu blesses them. This is based on the promise that was made to Avraham, that forever and ever, Hashem would bless those who blessed Avraham's descendants.

This week, *bli neder*, at least once a day, when I pass by a Jewish school, a Jewish business, or a Jewish home, I will take advantage of the incredible *koach hadibur* imbued in man, and will make the wisest of all investments: to bless those Jews with success and happiness.

This week's booklet is based on tapes:

**250** – Gift of Speech | **554** – Giving and Getting Blessings | **730** – Ten Easy Steps to Greatness II | **E-74** – The Angels Gathered | **E-251** – In the Beginning

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## Shabbos Inspired

לע"נ שרה נטשה בת דבורה שהין דינה ברכה בת שרה נטשה דבורה מזל בת שרה נטשה

### Torah Learning on Friday and Shabbos

The following is a letter that was written by Rav Pincus during a time when chillul Shabbos in Eretz Yisrael was becoming more widespread.

BS"D

My dear brethren and friends, members of the kehillah of Ofakim, I wish you much shalom and berachah!

Allow me to speak a few words about a current topic. We live in a topsy-turvy and turbulent generation; in truth we are in a constant state of emergency. Today we see with our own eyes what was always known with perfect emunah: Torah learning has a tremendous power. Only Torah learning can break down the bastioned walls of complacent secularism that has done so much damage to our people. Hashem has sent us to help the thousands of Jews whose lives are utterly lifeless... our Torah has the power to revive the dead, to awaken the slumbering, to quench the thirsty...

At a time like this [when shopping malls in Israel are starting to open their doors on Shabbos], we cannot behave in a cool and collected way, either as individuals or as a community, as we would in a time of peace. This is a time to act and take steps we would otherwise not consider. The matter is as follows: Now that daylight savings time is here, several things have changed. One of them is that *erev Shabbos*, which is a holy time and has special potential for *kedushah* and Torah learning, has become very long. From the end of Friday morning *kollel* until sunset are more than seven hours, and "a gap in the fence calls out for a thief to come." Five months ago, candle lighting was at 4:00 P.M. *Erev Shabbos* was a full three hours less than it is now, yet we all managed to accept Shabbos on time.

If so, we should hold ourselves accountable for these three hours: where are they going? They are so precious, especially in these unstable times. Is there nothing we can do to save these hours? What are they being utilized for? The same applies to Shabbos afternoon. There are over nine hours from the end of Shacharis until sunset. These are special and wondrous hours when the *kedushah* of Shabbos is in full strength.

Let us note that daylight savings time has brought in its wake a terrible wave of *chillul Shabbos*. We live in a region plagued by war and terrorism. As we know, the nature of things is that every attack from one side draws a counterattack from the other side. If so, what will be our counterattack? Shall we allow the *yetzer ha-ra* to strike us down with complete impunity? Let us all respond by strengthening our Torah learning - specifically on Shabbos! This will illuminate all our surroundings with a great light, to drive out *chilul Shabbos* and bring *kedushah* in its place.

To you, the members of this holy kehillah, we can apply the verse from *Mishlei*, (31:29) "Many women have done valiantly, but you have surpassed them all." You are always the first ones to strengthen matters of *Yiddishkeit*, whether it be *tzedakah*, Torah learning or mending any gap in the fence of *kedushah*. You have always shown tremendous dedication, and the sound of your Torah learning during this past *bein hazemanim* pierced the heavens to bring down abundant and great blessing. May its merit grant us the ability to go from strength to strength, to undertake this difficult mission as well. Let us all join together to increase the *hasmadah* of our learning on Friday and Shabbos as befits the friends and colleagues that we are.

Our request is that from now on, any one who is able should come to learn together on Friday afternoon from 3:30 p.m. until 5:30 p.m. at least, and on Shabbos afternoon from 3:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. at least. This is despite the fact that everyone is learning at home anyway. Let us all gather together, either in the *beis midrash* of the yeshiva or in the *Kivisi Hashem* shul. Each person who participates is strengthening others as well.

May we merit great blessing and pure *yir'as Shamayim*, *nachas* and happiness, and all of Hashem's goodness, forever.

Shimshon Dovid Pincus

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Adapted by R' Y. Levy from Nefesh Shimshon, Shabbos Kodesh, Rav Shimshon Pincus, Feldheim

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# Q&A

WITH  
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## QUESTION

**If somebody eats a kosher pizza, does it deduct from his Olam Haba?**

## ANSWER

If a person eats pizza and he enjoys this world for no reason at all except for pleasure — he likes pizza — so he has the right to suspect that he's eating his Olam Haba in this world. And not only pizza; Cheerios too. Even a plain piece of bread and a cup of water, it could be he's being paid off in this world.

But if a person eats something kosher and he's thinking, "I'm eating in order to have *koach* to serve Hashem," or "I'm eating with the intention of sampling *chessed* Hashem," so it's not taken off his Olam Haba. On the contrary, it'll add to his Olam Haba.


And therefore, that's the answer: Never forget Hakadosh Baruch Hu.


There are two reasons why you eat. One is you want to have *koach* to serve Hashem. Another reason is, "I want to sample and feel the *chessed* Hashem in this world, that He's **בְּחֶסֶד חַיִּים מְכַלְכֵּל**." And you're smacking your lips. "Oh yes, He feeds me **בְּחֶן בְּחֶסֶד וּבְרַחֲמִים**."

By the way, it's a good idea whenever you sit down to a *seudah* to have these two ideas in mind beforehand and while you're eating. One, "I'm eating in order to have *koach* to serve Hashem." Then think also, "I'm doing it because I want to feel that **כִּי הוּא קֵל זֶן וּמְפָרְנֵם לְבַל וּמְכַלְכֵּל חַיִּים בְּחֶסֶד**."

If you eat that way, you don't lose anything; you enjoy it more and you get *sechar* for it in Olam Haba.

So, you should all enjoy this world and do it *l'shem Shamayim* and you'll all get great *sechar l'ad u'l'netzach netzachim*. May 2000

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