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RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"l

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PARSHAS BEREISHIS

WITH

RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT" L

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

A WORLD OF PLEASURE

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Part I. A Good World

The Missing Yetzer

When the Gemara in Sukkah (52a) wants to describe for us the *yetzer hara*, the ways and means in which he makes men into failures, it tells us that we find in the *kisvei hakodesh* that the *yetzer hara* was given seven different names. And it enumerates all of them there, the Gemara quotes different *pessukim*.

But there's a question here. Because at the very beginning of the Torah we find that Hakadosh Baruch Hu Himself gave the *yetzer hara* a name, and it's not mentioned among these seven.

In our *sedra*, when Hakadosh Baruch Hu saw that Kayin was crestfallen because his younger brother's *korban* had been accepted more than his own, so Hakadosh Baruch Hu told Kayin "Be careful now, because **לִפְתּוֹחַ חַטָּאת רוּבִּץ**

– at the doorway there's *chatas* lying in wait (Bereishis 4:7). Hakadosh Baruch Hu is talking about the yetzer hara here; He's warning Kayin that crouching in ambush at every turn is "Chatas", the evil inclination.

And so it's a *kasheh*. We see that Hakadosh Baruch Hu Himself gave a name to the yetzer; the very first name it was given in history. Why isn't that name enumerated in the list that the Gemara in Sukkah gives us? It should be first on the list.

A Cheit is Not a Sin

And the answer is that the word *chatas* has to be understood; we translate it as 'sin' but that's not accurate. Of course it's a sin, but that's not it. If you're familiar with the *kisvei hakodesh* you know that *ches tes alef* means 'lacking', 'missing'. Like it states in *sefer Shoftim* when he describes the seven hundred stone-slingers of the Shevet Binyamin, it says *קָלַע בְּאֶבֶן אֶל הַשְּׁעָרָה – they aimed at the target, וְלֹא יָחָטָא – and they never missed* (Shoftim 20:16). They would sling a stone at a hair-target—a target as thin as a hair—and they wouldn't miss. *יָחָטָא* means to miss.

Or when Batsheva the mother of Shlomo came to Dovid and reminded him that he had promised to make her son Shlomo king, and now Adoniyah, one of the other sons, is trying to usurp the throne; so she said "וְהִי־יָתִי אֲנִי וְכָנִי" – *שְׁלֹמֹה וְחָטָאִים – My son Shlomo and I will be the chata'im*" (Malachim 1: 1:21). It doesn't mean they'll be 'sinners'. Batsheva was telling Dovid, "You promised us that Shlomo will be king, and we'll be losing out on what you promised us."

And so, when we say that *cheit* means to do something wrong, actually it's more than that. The original meaning of *cheit* is when a man misses out—not so much doing something wrong, but to *not do something right*.

And that's what Hakadosh Baruch Hu was saying when He told Kayin that *chatas* is waiting to pounce.

Hashem was telling him, "Look. Here's a golden opportunity for achievement that you shouldn't miss out on. Your brother has triumphed over you; he, the younger brother, won out and now you are so downcast. It's a golden opportunity for achievement! If you'll be *mischazek*, if you'll reinforce yourself and you'll go shake hands with him and say, 'Hevel, I have to hand it to you. You won. Congratulations!', that will be your success."

Ah! That would have made Kayin better than Hevel. He would have utilized the golden opportunity—he would have fulfilled his purpose in this world; to accomplish. But to miss out on the opportunity of accomplishing something, that's the real *cheit*. That's called missing the target of life.

The Underachieving Trucker

I'll use one of my old *meshalim* that you already heard from me. Let's say you sent your worker to Los Angeles on a mission to pick up goods there and bring it back. So he took your big truck and he drove all the way there and finally he came back to Brooklyn.

You wait and wait. A few weeks pass by and finally he shows up.

"Boss, I'm back."

"*Shalom aleichem!* Good to see you. How'd it go?"

"You'll have to congratulate me," he says. "I had a very successful trip. I didn't get one traffic ticket! No accidents, no breakdowns. A perfect trip."

So you say, "Great! Let's see the merchandise."

"Ooops! I forgot to pick it up."

Every Jew on Shlichus

And so, Hakadosh Baruch Hu sent you to this world. It's a successful trip. You didn't kill anybody. You didn't even hit anybody. You didn't even speak *lashon hara* on anybody.

"Oh no," Hakadosh Baruch Hu says, "I sent you to this world merely that you shouldn't get any tickets or accidents, that you shouldn't do any sins? Not to do sins, you could have remained in the other world. I sent you to achieve! To do *mitzvos*, to learn Torah, to become wiser, to gain Torah ideology, to gain Awareness of Me, to learn *da'as* and *emunah*. To do *ma'asim tovim* in this world. That's why I sent you—to accomplish! Otherwise you lost out."

The First Cheit

Now, the list of achievements that we are in this world to accomplish is long. Torah, *mitzvos*, *maasim tovim*; it's a big job. But one of the most neglected achievements is Torah attitudes—acquiring attitudes of the mind.

It's a very big subject—it's a lifetime of achieving—but for now we'll talk about one of the biggest *chato'im*, one of the most important attitudes that people fail to achieve. And it's right away in the beginning of the Torah: וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וְהִנֵּה טוֹב מְאֹד – And Hashem saw all that He had made and 'behold, it is very good' (*ibid.* 1:31). What is He talking about? Olam Haba? No! It's talking about what it says there in the Chumash; the sky and the clouds and the wind and the water. It's talking about the soil, about plants, animals, fish, birds, and apples and plums, and everything. That's *tov me'od*. Not *tov*; not just good. It's *very good*.

Now, why did Hakadosh Baruch Hu have to say that? If He made it, of course it's good! He knew what He was doing.

The answer is, that Hakadosh Baruch Hu said those words for a purpose—He is telling us information that we should never forget. He said it because He wants us to say the same words; that all our lives, we should say *tov me'od*. “Ribono Shel Olam, we congratulate You! You did a good job! *Tov me'od!*”

An Epidemic of Blindness

Now, if people don't think about it, it's not my fault. But if you look everywhere, you'll see that it's repeated again and again that **טוב ה' לכל** – *Hashem is good to everybody* (Tehillim 145:9). Only what? It's a pity that most people don't see it *at all*.

The Chovos Halevovos says that. He says “**טוב ה' לכל וְרוּבָם בְּעוֹרִים**” – ‘Hashem is good to everyone’ but most people are blind from recognizing this.” And he wasn't talking about Reform Jews, liberals; he was talking about Jews in his days, all *frum* Jews.

And today, certainly it's true. Most *frum* Jews are blind to this great truth that it's a good world! And it's an open *possuk*: ‘*Everthing is very good*’. You can't argue with a *possuk*—that's how we're expected to see the world. And if we don't, it means we are not accomplishing this fundamental function of why we came here.

The Beggar Wants a Raise

Now I have to explain something to you, why this is so that we're blinded to the great reality.

Let's say you're a yeshiva *bachur* and you *daven* Mincha in the yeshiva; as you walk out of the *beis hamedrash* there's a poor man standing there with a cup. He's collecting *tzedaka*. And so you drop in a quarter. Every day he comes to collect and every day you give him a quarter.

After a while—let's say you've been giving him quarters every day for a year's time—so he starts complaining. “Only a quarter?” He grumbles under his breath, “Only a quarter?! What about a raise?”

So we see that even though the person is getting a benefit from you, if he keeps on getting the same benefit he gets tired of it. And he thinks it's nothing. He won't spend time congratulating himself that he gets a quarter. No! He's spending time criticizing you for not giving more than a quarter.

Bored With Happiness

So Hakadosh Baruch Hu is giving us all the good things; and we're tired of it! We don't notice it anymore. People ask, “What are You giving us already?” A yeshiva man, he takes walks with me sometimes. So he asks me, “Why should I thank Hashem? What's there to thank for?”

Now, I look at him. He's a healthy man. No crutches. He looks well fed too. He has a house where he lives. Probably a bed and a pillow too. Why should he thank Hashem?!

The answer is that he's bored of that. He doesn't think about it and so he wants excitement in the world. He wants thrills, entertainment. What he has, he doesn't appreciate and so he gets bored of it.

"Oh," Hakadosh Baruch Hu says, "That's *chatas*. You're missing out."

Missing Out on Love

Now what are you missing out on? Well, number one is you're missing out on the fun of life. You're missing out on a tremendous amount of happiness! Why should life be a bowl of sour grapes when it could be a big happy bowl of cherries? You're missing out on good times!

And even more important is, you're missing out on your service of Hashem. Because when you are happy with life, you're happy with Hashem and you love Him. All the *madreigos* of *avodah* go one on top of the other but the top of the ladder is *ahavas Hashem*, to love Hashem. And when you see the things that He gives you for pleasure, for happiness, for joy, then your love has no limits. If you're a capable, thinking, person then happiness in Olam Hazeh is the ticket to Olam Haba.

And therefore, in order that you should get the benefit of Hakadosh Baruch Hu's gifts, you must understand how great these gifts are; you have to study them—you have to investigate and appreciate the pleasures of this world.

Are you happy with your legs? Your legs are a Cadillac, providing you with twenty four hour, ever-ready transportation. They're available at all times, on a second's notice, to take you wherever you want to go. And when you arrive at your destination, you don't have to look for a parking space. Your feet tuck conveniently under you if you want to sit, and they will lock into place should you desire to remain standing. If your legs don't make you happy, you're blinded by habit. And so, we have to open our minds and throw off the trammels of habit that blind us and don't allow us to see the truth: that most of our lives are spent in happiness!

Torah Spectacles

And so, we have to learn how to put on a pair of glasses—Torah glasses. You know, when you look at the world through gloomy glasses, you'll have a gloomy world all your life. But when you look at the world through rosy glasses, you see a rosy world, a beautiful world. So the life that you're going to have depends on how you look at the world.

And Hakadosh Baruch Hu starts out from the very beginning and He gives you a pair of eyeglasses right at the beginning. He says, “וְהָיָה טוֹב מְאֹד – It’s a very good world!” It means, “I want you to get busy looking for the goodness of this world and you’ll start understanding what I meant that it’s *tov me’od*.”

Part II. A Good Shabbos

Healing the Blind

Now, because this subject is of the utmost importance for every Jew and because it’s one of the opportunities that we miss out on most, that’s why Hakadosh Baruch Hu gave us the Shabbos. Once a week we have an especial opportunity **לְהָסִיר מִפְּנֵי הַסִּכּוּלֹת** – *to remove the curtain of ignorance from our eyes* (Chovos Halevavos Shaar Avodas Hashem 3:9).

After all, what is the point of Shabbos?

“Well,” you’ll tell me, “Shabbos comes to celebrate that Hashem made the world out of nothing. **בְּרִיאַת עוֹלָם יֵשׁ מֵאֵין**.”

Certainly! That’s the first principle that Shabbos teaches us. **בְּרִיאַת עוֹלָם** And so, if you spend time on Shabbos thinking about that, it’s certainly an achievement. Very few people do that by the way. Although they say the words **זָכַר לַמַּעֲשֵׂה בְּרִיאַת עוֹלָם**, but they don’t think what they’re saying. And that’s *chatas*; they’re missing out.

Shabbos Bereishis

So next Shabbos, you’ll make it your business each *seudah*, you’re sitting down and the whole family is talking, but you’re thinking, “I have to fulfill my function of Shabbos **זָכַר לַמַּעֲשֵׂה בְּרִיאַת עוֹלָם**.”

So while they’re talking—they don’t know what’s going on in your head—you’re thinking; you’ll think that once upon a time everything was *ayin*, nothing. Then Hakadosh Baruch Hu said “*Yehi*,” and all came into existence. “Hashem made the world out of nothing! **וַיֵּשׁ מֵאֵין**!” Ah! You fulfilled one of the great purposes of Shabbos!

But that’s not the whole lesson yet. It’s still *chatas*; you’re still missing out on the point. Because yes, He made the world but the question is what kind of world? **וַיֵּרָא וַאֲלָקִים אֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וְהָיָה טוֹב מְאֹד**. *It’s a very good world!*

And so Shabbos, as it reminds us of *ma’aseh bereishis*, it’s coming to remind us of a second principle—that the whole creation is *olam chessed yibaneh*, it’s made for the purpose of causing happiness.

The Alter of Slabodka, *zichrono l'vrachah*, said that this principle is even more important than the first principle. Because the second principle tells us much more—not only Hashem made the world out of nothing, but He made it for the purpose of *chessed*, of making us happy.

It's a Fun World

Now, you *frum* Jews, maybe don't care about happiness in this world. But Hashem does! He wants you to be happy in this world. That's why the world was made for *ta'anug*! I don't care what you say, how much you'll protest—this world was made for enjoyment! *This world!*

Like the Mesillas Yesharim tells us in the beginning of that great work. He starts there by saying that it is of utmost importance to know what is the purpose of our creation, why we are in this world. And his answer is **הָאָדָם לֹא נִבְרָא אֶלָּא לְהִתְעַנֵּג עַל ה'** – *that man was created only to enjoy happiness in Hashem.*

Now, that means in the World to Come, but he explains that in order to get to that happiness you must pass through this world first. And so my great *rebbe*, *zichrono levrachah*, said you have to make a period after the word *l'hisaneg*. **הָאָדָם לֹא נִבְרָא אֶלָּא לְהִתְעַנֵּג**, period. I remember, I heard that sixty-five years ago from my *rebbe* in Slabodka. “A man was created,” he said, “only to have happiness, period.”

And that's because Hashem understands we can make most progress in this world if we live a life of happiness—happiness is the most important way of serving Hashem. Only that he adds **עַל ה'** – *to have happiness from Hashem*, because that's the greatest form of happiness. In order to make the best of the pleasure, it should be **עַל ה'**, to gain a knowledge of Hashem from your pleasure and to love Him.

Created for Oneg

And so, make no mistake about it, the world was made for pleasure! There are no two ways about it. And if anyone tells you something else, you can contradict him by the open declaration of the Mesillas Yesharim. And you can back it up by plenty of other Torah statements too. We are created only for the purpose of being happy with the greatest form of happiness that Hashem can provide.

Now, because that's such a fundamental principle of Shabbos, that's why we're told in this week's sedrah that **וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹקִים אֶת יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי**, that Shabbos was made a day of *brachah* by Hakadosh Baruch Hu (Bereishis 2:3). Because it pays for us to understand: what *brachah* does it mean? What is the biggest *brachah*, the greatest blessing that a person can get from something?

And if we'll be truthful with ourselves we'll say that the answer is happiness. Happiness! Everybody wants it. Of course, we always keep in mind

Olam Haba—we're preparing for that happiness too; they're tied together—but it's the happiness right now that is the blessing we're talking about. That's what it means that Hakadosh Baruch Hu blessed the Shabbos.

And so that's our subject today: How to make use of Shabbos the way Hakadosh Baruch Hu wanted, it should be a *bracha*; that it should give us happiness in this world—*mamesh* happiness. Because that's the point of Shabbos! To remind us that the world was made for happiness, for *ta'anug*! The world was made for enjoyment, and Shabbos is the special day set aside for this purpose.

Eliyahu Hanavi Delayed

In Mesichta Eiruvim (43b) the Gemara makes a statement about Eliyahu Hanavi. Everyone is waiting for Eliyahu Hanavi. It's an open *possuk*: הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי הַגָּדוֹל וְהַנּוֹרָא שׁוֹלֵחַ לָכֶם אֵלָיָה הַנִּבֵּיא לְפָנַי בֵּא יוֹם ה' הַגָּדוֹל וְהַנּוֹרָא. Before the *geulah* Eliyahu Hanavi has to appear and therefore we're waiting for him.

And yet, even though we're *mitzapim l'yeshuah*, we're hoping and waiting, but the Gemara makes a statement. It says that on *erev Shabbos* you should forget about it. Don't hope. He won't come. בְּכָר מוֹבְטָח לָהֶם לְיִשְׂרָאֵל – It's promised to Yisroel, שְׂאִין אֵלָיָהוּ בֵּא לֹא בְעֶרְבֵי שַׁבָּתוֹת, – that Eliyahu Hanavi will not come *erev Shabbos*. That's one day that you shouldn't expect. He won't come.

And why? The Gemara says מִפְּנֵי הַטּוֹרַח – because it will disturb us if he comes. We need the time to prepare *ta'anugim* for Shabbos and it'll interfere with our preparations if we have to greet him.

Delayed for a Better Chulent

Now that seems such a puny small explanation that it's astonishing to hear. You mean to say that the preparations for Shabbos are more important than Moshiach?

It's not talking about *keeping* Shabbos—we'll keep Shabbos anyhow. And we'll have something to eat too. But in order not to detract from the full enjoyment of the Shabbos, from all the *maadanim* that we can add by proper preparation, Eliyahu Hanavi is not able to come on that day and disturb our efforts.

It's a remarkable statement and it pays to think about that. We can't just wave it away. The Chachomim are telling us that *oneg Shabbos* is such a great ideal, that it cannot yield even for Eliyahu Hanavi—so it becomes of the vastest importance to understand the meaning of *oneg Shabbos*. Because if you don't understand it, you won't utilize the Shabbos for it.

The Terrible Cheit

Here's a man, he's so indoctrinated with the idea that this world is nothing—so as he sits down and he eats the *cholent* and the chicken, he says, "It's nothing. This world is nothing; *lo klum*."

"Ooh," Hakadosh Baruch Hu says, "That's *kulo chatas*. You're missing out." Because included in *וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי*, that He gave a *brachah* to the seventh day by making it a day of *oneg*, is that we should gain an attitude that this is a good world. Not a good world—a very good world!

"I am giving you a day of *brachah*," Hashem says, "and you should utilize it as a way of putting on *mishkofayim*—*mishkofayim* are eyeglasses[1] that give you *hashkafah*—to look at the world through this great lesson that it's *tov me'od*; it's going to change everything in your life. Not only your Shabbos will be different. Sunday will be different and Monday will be different. The whole week will be different!"

And if you don't utilize Shabbos, that's *לִפְתַּח הַטָּאָת רוֹבֵץ* – at the entranceway to a new week, you're missing out on a most important opportunity. Because a happy Shabbos is the *pesach*, the doorway to a happy week.

Practice Makes Prefect

Only that you have to practice up. When you sit down on Shabbos at the *seudah*, it's time to get to work. You're sitting at the *seudah* and on the table is *challah* and fish and all delectable dishes—that's the work you have to do on Shabbos. That's your *melachah* on Shabbos. Get busy working now, seeing how good everything is.

So you start with your piece of bread. Put the piece of *challah* in your mouth and begin to chew. That's the easy part; but you have to think too. "Ah, a piece of bread! It's so good, so sweet." I always tell you the same thing. Bread has starch in it. And in your saliva, you have an enzyme called *ptyalin* that causes the starch to turn into sugar. So the longer you chew the bread, the sweeter it becomes. And the sweeter it becomes in your mind too. And so, the Shabbos Yid, when he eats his piece of bread he enjoys it to no end. How good the *challah* is!

Shabbos Work

Now when is the best time to do this? Of course, the best thing is if you do that all week long, but Shabbos is the time when it's being demanded of us! Shabbos is the time! That's why they give you better bread on Shabbos—in order to *emphasize* the *oneg*. Bread with an exclamation point! *Challah*!

And the fish too. Fish of course is a *taanug*. That's why all Jews eat fish on Shabbos. It's part of the happiness of Shabbos which teaches the *chessed* of

Hashem. And so it's very important while you're eating fish on Shabbos you're thinking "*Olam chessed yibaneh!* How I'm enjoying this! The fish is delicious."

Same thing, the soup. And when it comes to the chicken you start all over again. You're enjoying and you're thinking of *olam chessed yibaneh*. When it comes to dessert, of course.

And don't be ashamed! Don't say, "I'm a *parush*. I'm not interested in *ta'avos* of Olam Hazei." No! It's *avodas Hashem* if you enjoy it the right way—with thought. "I thank You Hashem for all the *chessed* You're doing with the world. And I'm sampling it now so that I should appreciate Your *chessed* even more." And the more you sample and the more you think, the more you're going to appreciate it.

The Exceptional Shabbos

And it's not merely for those details, those samples alone. Because when you acquire a Shabbos mind, a mind of happiness, so you'll take that with you all week long. לַפְתָּח , at the beginning, greatness is *rovetz*. When a person utilizes the Shabbos with a little thought, he begins to see that the world is a good place. He enjoys the food. He enjoys his family. He enjoys wearing nice, freshly laundered clothing. He enjoys a little rest. He enjoys the weather. He's training himself by years and years of *oneg Shabbos* to see that Hashem is giving him a world of happiness.

Now, I'm not saying that if a person doesn't think these thoughts, that he's not fulfilling his duty as a Jew. Even if a person is a *megusham*, an ignorant person, and he sits down and eats without thinking, something seeps in in the subconscious mind. It's not wasted. Besides, it's a mitzvah and a mitzvah even without understanding the purpose of the mitzvah is also something. But still, there's no comparison to the achievement by a man who thinks a little bit and he understands why he's enjoying the Shabbos.

And therefore, to a big extent he's a failure. It's *chatas*. He hasn't lived properly. Because when you utilize the Shabbos for what it's intended, to try to gain this Torah attitude of וְיִרְאוּ אֱלֹהִים אֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה יְהוָה טוֹב מְאֹד , it changes you. Week after week, each Shabbos you're becoming more and more exceptional. And Hakadosh Baruch Hu is waiting for people who will be exceptional.

Part III. A Good Life

The Cheit of Taanugim

Now once a person begins to utilize the Shabbos in order to gain an attitude that this world is a very good world, he begins to see that he doesn't

have to run after pleasures; he won't need candies and movie theatres and pastries. Because once he's trained by means of thoughtful *oneg Shabbos*, he'll learn that *everything* is a *taanug*. He won't need ice cream to be a happy person.

Because here's a man—he says, “Rav Miller said the world was made for enjoyment, so why shouldn't we go all the way? Let's go!”

The answer is this. Let's say it's good to eat a tasty piece of *challah* and enjoy the *chessed Hashem*. So he'll eat two *challos*, three *challos* at a time? You'll commit suicide if you eat three *challos* every day. And more importantly, it'll be *ruchniyus* suicide too, because if a person lets go, he becomes a slave. And to become a slave to *taanugim*, that's not life anymore.

Life is for the purpose of being a free man, to choose between good and not good, and once you become enslaved, you're losing out on life; that's also *cheit*. And therefore even though *Shabbos* teaches us to enjoy the world, but we learn to enjoy it the right way.

Happy With Simplicity

That's what it means *פַּת בֶּמֶלַח תֹּאכַל – You can eat bread and salt, וְמִיָּם וְעַל – and you don't have much water either; just a cupful of water, וּבִתְנוּרָה אַתָּה עֹמֵל – and you sleep on the ground; no dormitory beds, וְאַשְׁרִיךְ תִּשָּׁן – and you're working in Torah too, הָבָא – and you'll be happy in this world and it'll be good for you in the Next World (Avos 6:4).*

You hear that? *אַשְׁרִיךְ בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה!* You'll be happy in this world?! What's that about? *מִימֵינָא, טוֹב לָךְ לְעוֹלָם הָבָא*, I understand; but *אַשְׁרִיךְ בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה?*

Yes. That's what they're telling you. Once you learn the secret of *Shabbos*, the secret of happiness, it'll be *אַשְׁרִיךְ בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה!* You'll become a happy person with all of the simple pleasures of life. He eats bread and he's happy because he practiced on *Shabbos* with the *challah*. He dips it in salt and he's even more happy.

How good salt is! Salt is a *ta'anug*. Did you ever think about being happy with salt? It never even entered your mind. Because wherever you go, you'll never hear these words. Only in this little place, we talk about being happy with salt.

And so, next time you take salt, just to be *yotzei*—after all, a Jewish table is like a *mizbeach* and when a Jew eats it's like a *korban l'Hashem*, an offering. So he dips it in salt and he thinks he's doing a favor to *Hakadosh Baruch Hu!* “Look how *frum* I am!”

“Oh! But what about enjoying it and thanking Me for the salt?” *Hashem* says.

So the Chovos Halevovos says, רֹבֵם כְּעֹרִים – they're blind. That's *chatas!* You're not living with a purpose! "Why did I give you the salt? Just to swallow it down and not think about it? It's for the purpose of appreciating what I gave to you."

Water Fun

And then the water. Maybe on Shabbos you practiced up with a little wine for *kiddush*, maybe a little juice by the *seudah*, but now it's a regular Wednesday and you're ready to enjoy a cup of water. It's such a happiness when a person can drink water. Ay, ay, ay! It's such a *simcha!* It's *mayim mesukim!* It's so sweet. That water is better than anything in the world!

When I came to Slabodka, you couldn't drink the water because there was always a concern of typhus from the well there. So you had to cook the water. People gave up; they didn't bother drinking. In the yeshiva, there was no water to drink. All day long, not a drop of water to drink. There was a barrel of water when you came in to wash your hands, but *chas v'shalom* to drink that water. It was a *sakanah*; they never washed out that barrel in fifty years. So all day long, not a drop of water! When you came home to your *shtanzeh*, you wanted a drink, you had to ask the *baalebuste* to cook up some water for you. So sometimes they did it.

When I came back to America, I learned to appreciate it—open up the faucet, a *mayim chayim!* What a blessing it is! Water! And you can drink it without cooking too! And so, I learned a little *seichel* when I came back to America.

Expensive Bottled Water

And so, you take the glass in your hand and look at it and say, "טוב מאד!" You don't mean it, but say it anyhow. After saying it a few times, little by little, הַחִיצוֹנִיּוֹת מַעֲרִירִת אֶת הַפְּנִימִיּוֹת – he begins to appreciate the glass of water.

Each time he drinks water—by the way, it's good to drink a lot of water—he gets into the habit of drinking water, holds the glass in his hand and looks at it, "Ah! How beautiful it is! If I had to buy water in the drug store, I should have to pay a hundred dollars for a little bottle!" You can't get along without it.

Some years ago, Macy's was selling water for two dollars a bottle. They took water from the sink and put it into Macy's bottles. So I was thinking, "It's a wonderful thing! It reminds us that it's worth money. Two dollars a bottle? It's worth a thousand dollars!" A person in the Sahara desert, he's looking for a little bit of water before he drops dead, and then you have this (*the Rov was holding the bottle of water from Macy's*). "How much is it?" he says. You can ask him for a thousand dollars. He'll give a thousand dollars! Happily!

And therefore, we have to know, every time that we drink water, we're being saved from extinction! Hakadosh Baruch Hu is saving our lives. It's happiness; for a thinking man it's a real happiness!

The Happy Porush

And so the happy *porush* eats a piece of bread and he thanks Hashem as if he's eating the most luscious of all forms of appetizing food. He eats with appreciation. He takes his piece of bread and dips it in the salt, and he chews with relish and thinks "what great happiness this is!". Then he drinks a cup of water and smacks his lips! "Ah!", he says. "It's so good." Bread, water, a little salt and some thought, and you're a happy man!

And that's the trick, how to work on happiness. Because you can't just tell a man, "Be happy." That's like saying nothing at all to him. You're not helping him a bit; happiness takes training. It's a science. I won't be able to say it all tonight because I'm going to draw this to a close in a couple of minutes but briefly: the joy of life is not one thing—it's the combination of many things, many happy details.

Drunk on Cocktails

I'll give you an example. Let's say breathing. You draw it deep into your lungs and learn to enjoy it. Air is a special mixture, a cocktail. If it was all oxygen, you'd be intoxicated; you would reel, and you'd fall down dizzily. If it was all nitrogen, then you couldn't live a minute. It's 20% oxygen, 80% nitrogen. Ah! That's exactly a good proportion for you, for happiness.

Breathing is fun! I once told you about a simple experiment, didn't I? It's an experiment anybody can carry out at home. Take a bucket full of water and put your head into it and remain there for thirty seconds. And then think how good it would be just to have one breath. Don't breathe under the water. Then you pull your head out and take one deep breath. Ahh! Isn't that delicious?

The truth is, it's always delicious, but a person who has been breathing all his life never once stopped to enjoy it. We take so many breaths, that they become unimportant to us and we become obtuse; we are spoiled because of habit and ingratitude and we become blind to the fun of breathing.

So you say, "Well everybody else is blind, so I'll also remain blind."

No. That's why you came here. To learn that Hashem doesn't want you to be blind. He wants you to train on Shabbos—that's the day set aside for it—and to take it with you during the week. On Shabbos you open up your eyes and get a pair of Shabbos eyeglasses and through the eyeglasses you look at the world and you see the truth of Hashem's *briyah*. וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי – He blessed the Shabbos in order you should see how good it is to have air in the world! Ahhhh! Breathe deeply. Most people never fill their lungs; just the top.

They're lazy. If you fill your lungs, breathe deeply so the bottom of your chest is bulging out. Ah!

And the same is with thinking. Most people think shallowly. The bottom of the brain is never used. So think deeply! Then you'll start enjoying the happiness of this world. You don't need ice cream. You don't have to go to Manhattan on *motzaei* Shabbos for movies. Right here, wherever you are, breathe deeply and thank Hakadosh Baruch Hu for this cocktail! *Baruch Hashem* it's *tov me'od*.

From Bread to Bannisters

And so, if bread and water make you happy, so two things cause you happiness. If salt and breathing make you happy so it's four. If you'll be happy with a cool breeze and the sunlight, that's already six. And your eyes! Ooh! It's a pleasure to use the two cameras you have here. And they take color pictures all the time. To have eyes is a very big *simchah*. It's a *ta'anug*, a delight. It's an ecstasy as I look around with my two cameras. Ahahaha! That's life.

Even when you're walking down the stairs and you're holding onto the banister, so you're thinking, "How lucky I am to have a banister." Imagine such a thing! A person who is happy with a banister! They'll say he's *meshuga*. It's true—he's *meshuga* with happiness.

And so if you learn fifty things, fifty things will cause you happiness. If you're wise enough to study a thousand things, then a thousand things will cause you happiness. The more subjects you study, the more phenomena you study, the more happiness you're going to get out of life. That's the recipe for happiness in this world because to live with joy means you're living with the sum total of tens of thousands of phenomena. And it's necessary to take each phenomenon separately and study it and enjoy each time you encounter it.

A Serious Shabbos

What you're hearing now is not *leitzanus*. It's most serious. And we're *nitba*—we're going to be judged for that. Hakadosh Baruch Hu says, "It's *chatas*! You're missing out in life!" The purpose of life is to see *chessed Hashem mal'ah ha'aretz*. **עוֹלָם חָסֵד יִבְנֶה**. He made the *briyah*, the whole creation, for one purpose: **מְכַלְכֵּל חַיִּים בְּחָסֵד**.

And that's why it's of the utmost necessity to understand that Shabbos is the fertile ground upon which a happy life grows. Shabbos is the day of *brachah* for that purpose, so that we should utilize it to learn how to be happy in this world. And when you're happy in the world, that's how you come to the great *madreigah* of love of Hashem, the *madreigah* that best prepares you for the World to Come.

Happiness Forever

That's what the Gemara says: כָּל הַמַּעֲנֵג אֶת הַשָּׁבֵת – If you cause *ta'anug*, pleasure on Shabbos, נִוְהָגִין לוֹ נִחְלָה בְּלִי מְצָרִים – so in the Next World they're going to give you an estate that has no boundaries. It's talking about physical pleasure on Shabbos—eating, drinking, resting, other things—and for that you'll get such a reward without limit.

Now what that means exactly I can't tell you because I don't know myself—but it's something tremendous. We can picture, *l'mashal*, you'll be sitting in your stratosphere airplane and travelling through the skies and visiting hundreds of worlds, huge worlds, that Hakadosh Baruch Hu has given to you as a gift. That's part of your estate now.

It's still a *mashal* but the *mashal* is for something that's grand, beyond our ability to understand. And it's set aside for a person who enjoys the food on Shabbos or he rested on Shabbos; the physical pleasure of Shabbos. Because that's the number one *brachah* of Shabbos—it's the day that is intended to teach you a lesson of the great happiness that awaits you in this life! And if you'll study it properly and remember always the One Who is giving you that happiness, that's how you'll merit a happy life, not only in this world, but you'll achieve also the tremendous and infinite happiness of Olam Haba.

Have a Wonderful Shabbos

Let's Get Practical

Accomplishing on Shabbos

We didn't come to this world just to coast along and avoid sin, we came to accomplish. Hashem created the world for Chessed, and he created us to enjoy that Chessed and appreciate it. This Shabbos, as I partake in the delicious Shabbos food, I will *bli neder* take some time to enjoy the pleasure of the food and feel gratitude to Hashem for all that he gives me. Shabbos will train me for the rest of the week so that each day, at least twice a day I will feel pleasure in Hashem's world and feel grateful towards Him.

This week's booklet is based on tapes:

673 – Oneg Shabbos | **E-38** – Blessings of Shabbos | **E-53** – The Gan Eden of This World | **E-101** – Oneg Shabbos II | **E-160** – Repenting in Happiness

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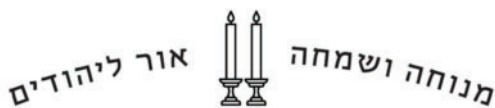


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Shabbos Inspired

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

The Innermost Neshamah of Shabbos

Chazal tell us about the special light that filled the world at the beginning of Creation. With it, Adam HaRishon could see from one end of the world to the other. But Hashem hid this wonderful light, lest the evil generations use it. It is stored away for the tzaddikim.

Torah sources say that this special light is hidden in the holidays. When a holiday comes, the light shines forth and illuminates a person's *neshamah*. That's why the holidays are called Yomim Tovim, "good days," since it is written about this light: "And God saw the light that it was good." During the rest of the year, this light is hidden in the Torah.

There are many stories about *gedolei Yisrael* who by virtue of their great Torah learning were able to see from one end of the world to the other. This is because someone who delves deeply into the Torah discovers within it the same light that enlightened the eyes of Adam HaRishon.

Each Yom Tov has its special *masechta* that speaks of its nature and Halacha. Chazal tell us that Moshe Rabbeinu enacted a special decree that the Jewish people should study the day's topics on the appropriate day. (*Megillah 4a*) The Yomim Tovim and other holy times have three parts. There's the external part – the mitzvos of the holiday – such as eating matzah, sitting in the sukkah, reading the megillah, etc. Then there's the *neshamah*, the spiritual benefit we gain from the holiday. And there is a third, deeper part: the *neshamah's neshamah*.

The *neshamah* of the holiday lies in its *tefillah*, and the *neshamah's neshamah* is in its Torah study. This includes any Torah learned that day but specifically the *masechta* devoted to the topics and halachos of the day. Simply speaking, Moshe Rabbeinu decreed the study of the day's topics on the appropriate day so we would know how to conduct ourselves on the holiday. But there's a deeper point here: The essence of the holiday is found within the *masechta* that discusses its topics and halachos.

We attain the *neshamah* of Shabbos only through *tefillah*. Some people mistakenly think Shabbos is not really a time of prayer, since on this day we don't make requests for our personal needs. But the opposite is true – Shabbos is a special time of prayer. We connect with the inner nature of Shabbos through its *tefillos*. That's how we attain the *neshamah* of Shabbos.

The Shabbos prayers are worded differently from the weekday prayers. Instead of requesting, "Selach lanu," etc., on Shabbos we request, "Sab'einu mituvecha." The latter relates to matters of Olam HaBa and is much loftier than our requests on weekdays.

And what about the *neshamah's neshamah*, the innermost soul of Shabbos Kodesh? This we attain through study, mainly of *hilchos Shabbos* and *maseches Shabbos*. Thus, on Shabbos there is special importance to Torah learning in general and to learning *maseches Shabbos* specifically.

On Shabbos Kodesh, let us strengthen our Torah learning! This study will enable us to tap into the innermost *neshamah* of Shabbos, connecting ourselves to the source of all blessing!

לעילוי נשמת יצחק בן אדל ע"ה

Mr. Ikey Yedid A"H

נלבית ל' תשרי תשס"ו

The Yedid Family

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

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QUESTION

When do you know how to enjoy this world and when do you know to be a porush from this world?

ANSWER

And the answer is whatever is good for your health you should use and enjoy it. If you like to eat bread and butter, and it's good for you, eat it with *simchah*. Why not? If you like to eat chicken, and it's good for you, then eat it with *simchah*. Don't say, "I don't like to eat." No. You have to eat with appetite. The saliva will flow and it helps you to digest. Your stomach juices flow; it helps you digest. Appetite helps you digest. Enjoy the food but at the same time ואכלת ושבעת וברכת את ה' אלוֹקֶיךָ. Thank Him. Any enjoyment you get from food or anything else, thank Hashem, thank Hashem, thank Hashem.

However, sometimes when people become enslaved to certain things—here's a man and he's enslaved to cigarettes; he enjoys cigarettes but he's a slave to it now. No; don't be a slave to anything except to Hakadosh Baruch Hu. A slave to cigarettes? No. Anybody who becomes a slave to anything, Hashem says, "You are competing with My service."

A person can become a slave even to things that are superfluous to eat; always he wants to nosh things. Don't be a slave to *noshing*; it's not healthy.

Anything that is good and healthy however, you have a right to eat and you should enjoy it and thank Hakadosh Baruch Hu for it.

April 13, 2000

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