

THE CHOPP HOLDINGS EDITION

TORAS AVIGDOR

AUTHENTIC TORAH THOUGHT FOR LIFE

RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"L

CHODESH SHEVAT

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(who quotes Rabbi Avigdor Miller, ztl in his every week's תורה)

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RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"l

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

SONG AT THE SEA

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Part I. Beautifying Him

Paying the Bill

When the Bnei Yisroel witnessed that great spectacle of the Yam Suf splitting apart, and then, after passing through the sea on dry land, they watched the waters come crashing down on their pursuing enemies, a tremendous excitement of gratitude seized them. They were so overcome by emotion, they became so elevated in their inspiration that the spirit of *nevuah* descended on the nation and they sang a song of love and dedication to Hashem. אָז יָשִׁיר מִנְּשָׁה וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת (Shemos 15:1).

Now, even though that itself was a tremendous achievement – to sing to Hashem for what He does for you is a great perfection of character – but we understand that there must have been something that the Am

Yisroel undertook on that day. Because when something big happens, when a great salvation occurs, good people make *nedarim* and they promise to try to 'repay' Hakadosh Baruch Hu for the great benefit that He bestowed upon them. Like Dovid Hamelech said, בּוֹס יְשׁוּעוֹת אָשָׂא – *When I lift up the cup of salvation*, then נִדְרֵי לַהֲשֵׁם אֲשַׁלֵּם – *I have to pay off my vows to Hashem* (Tehillim 116: 13-14).

And so when they were saved from the jaws of death, and not only that but their enemies fell into the *yam* and were drowned, both together caused such an ecstasy of joy that something should have been forthcoming. And therefore it's a valid question: As a result of this marvelous deliverance and the tremendous exuberance that they experienced at that time, what did they take upon themselves?

The Singular Oath

Now, when we examine the whole *shiras hayam* we find only one promise that they collectively undertook in return for this great *yeshuah*; only one thing. At that time they swore to Hashem an oath as follows: וְהָיָה קָלִי – “This is my Hashem,” they said, וְאֶנְהוּ – “and I am going to beautify Him” (Shemos 15:2). *Naveh* means beautiful and *v'anveihu* means ‘I will make Him beautiful.’ That's the only obligation that the nation, individually and collectively, assumed upon themselves.

Now, what that means exactly we don't know yet, but whatever it is, if that's the one thing the nation chose, if that's the one thing they promised, you must say it's a big thing. And so it pays to study that oath, to understand what it is that we promised when we stood at the shore of the Yam Suf. What does it mean that we'll make Hashem beautiful?

The Beautiful Shlumiel

So in its most simple understanding we'll say that it means to make Hakadosh Baruch Hu outstanding in our lives. “From here on in,” we said, “we will aggrandize You. Our promise to You is that we will glorify You all our lives.”

Of course we're talking about a people who lived like that anyhow. In Mitzrayim they gave pure Jewish names, names that expressed *kevod Shamayim*. שְׁלוֹמִי'אֵל! Ah, what a name! ‘Hashem is my peace.’ And his father צוּר־יִשְׁדָּי – Hashem is my rock. All the names are like that, names that made Hashem beautiful.

עַמְּהָרָם – *The people of the most high One*. His wife was יוֹכֶבֶד – Hashem is my glory. You see how a woman was named? She wasn't named after

an old great-grandmother. It was an original name, a name of raising up Hashem, of loving Hashem. עֲמִינָרְבּ – *My people volunteer to serve Hashem.* נְתַנָּאֵל – *Whatever I have, Hashem has given me.* That's a name that was invented in Mitzrayim.

So you see what type of people we're talking about – Hashem was most outstanding in their lives. But when they were saved from drowning in the yam and they saw their enemies overcome by the waves, they took it up a notch. They dedicated their lives and the lives of their children – forever and ever – to this one great task; the great function of *Hodu laHashem*, of elevating Hashem.

Elevating and Thanking

You know, people think that *hodu* means to thank or to praise, but actually those are secondary meanings. *Hodu* actually means to 'raise up on high'. Like you find in Yeshayah, וְעַל מְאוֹרֹת צִפְעוֹנֵי גְמוּל יְדוּ הָרָה, – *over the den of a poisonous viper a little child will raise up his hand in the acharis hayamim* (11:8). *Hadah* means 'he'll raise up'. Or like Yirmiyah Hanavi said וַיִּדְּרוּ אֶבֶן בִּי – *"They threw stones at me"* (Eichah 3:53). When you throw stones you don't throw horizontally. You throw in a trajectory. It goes up first.

And so *hod* means to elevate and הוֹדוּ לָהּ means elevate Hashem, lift Him up. We say it means 'Thank Hashem' or 'Praise Hashem' because how do you thank Hashem? By elevating Him. "Hashem You're the One Who gives me everything." "Hashem You're the Creator of the world." "Hashem You're doing kindness to all of us." "Hashem I love You." All that is included in the word '*Hodu*' and it's all included in our obligation of making Hashem 'beautiful'.

Morning Exercises

Now you know why הוֹדוּ לָהּ is the first proclamation of our daily davening. It's first in *nusach Ashkenaz* too only we say *Baruch She'amar* to introduce it. But that's how the prayers begin because הוֹדוּ לָהּ, that's our job in this world

So tomorrow morning practice on it. הוֹדוּ לָהּ! You're saying, "Exalt Hashem! Raise Him up on high! Make Him the most important business of your lives." Say it over and over again. *Hodu laHashem*, oy yoy yoy. *Hodu laHashem*, oy yoy yoy. Don't say Hashem's name a second time. Like this: "Hodu! Oy yoy yoy. Hodu! Hodu laHashem. Oy, I thank You Hashem!"

And then we go on: קְרָאוּ בְּשֵׁמוֹ – *Call out and proclaim in His Name.*
Let everybody know about it. הוֹדִיעוּ בְּעַמִּים עֲלִילוֹתָיו – *Make known among the nations His deeds.*

Whom To Tell?

Actually, it's a duty upon us to go out and to let the world know, but of course, like the world says, 'Charity begins at home', so first you have to let Jews know about it. And before you let other Jews know about it your business is to let this Jew (*the Rov pointed at himself*) know about it, because this Jew is usually the one who is most asleep.

So when you say *hodu*, first think that you're talking to yourself. You're saying it loud not for your neighbor in shul – it's so that it should go into your own ears. And then you'll be ready to talk to other Jews too. And the truth is if it was possible we shouldn't stop; we should let the world know about it. Only that the world is already so mixed up with falsehood, with stubborn lies, with imitations of the truth, so if you'll start telling them about Hashem they'll each trot out his own idol. He'll say, "Sure! We agree with you but *this* is the one."

So this one will say this and that one will say that; they'll introduce all types of garbage into it and they mix it all up. They'll be raising all the wrong things. So we can't; but we have to at least *feel* it's our duty. Whether we are able to carry it out or not, at least we should know, it's that important, this obligation.

It Never Ends

And it's because of this obligation of *Hodu la'Hashem*, of *v'anveiHu*, that we *daven* so much. I remember in my first shul we had a gentile neighbor, an old man, next door to us. So once we were walking into the shul to *daven* Mincha, he said to his daughter – he said it out loud so I should hear – "What is it with these Jews? All day, back and forth, back and forth, to the synagogue. Don't they ever finish praying?"

And the answer is, no, we never finish praying. You know why? Because we made a promise. We promised that we'd aggrandize Hakadosh Baruch Hu and we're a nation that fulfills its promise.

That's the importance, by the way, of coming on time for *pesukei dezimra*. *Hodu* and *Ashrei* and all the *Halelukahs*! We have a big job in the morning and you shouldn't run away from it. You know, sometimes a yeshiva boy comes to *davening* late in the morning, just before *Borchu*,

and he feels happy; “I got *Borchu* in.” He feels like he accomplished something today.

Catching Borchu

Oh no! You are unaccomplished! You missed out on the great function of **וְאָנְהוּ**. That’s what it means to miss *pesukei dezimra*!

Now, in some shuls ‘on time’ won’t help because by the time you swallow your spit they’re saying *Borchu* already. So you’ll have to come early. If you want to fulfill the oath that we made on that day you’ll find another shul or you’ll set your alarm for a few minutes early.

Now, I understand that if you’ll do it the right way you won’t finish *pesukei dezimra* anyhow, no matter how early you come. But it’s worthwhile anyhow. Because just to run through it, I don’t know. I know a man who undertakes to finish all *pesukei dezimra* and he’s very busy with that; he’s galloping through *pesukei dezimra*. Every word he says!

It’s a pity though because if you’re not elevating Hashem, if you’re just rushing through the words to get it done, I’m not sure how much it’s worth. The Tur says **טוב מעט בכונה מהרבה שלא בכונה** – a little bit with *kavanah* is better than much without *kavanah*.

Old Time Oathkeepers

And therefore, we shouldn’t begrudge the time spent in prayers, in saying Tehillim. You know, the old-time Jews who weren’t scholars used to say Tehillim all day long. They didn’t waste any time.

But not to mutter the words; just to mumble the words is a very small accomplishment. The promise we made is fulfilled only when saying Tehillim is accompanied by a certain concentration of the mind, by the intention of **וְאָנְהוּ**.

There was a man like that I saw in Europe. He was an old coachman, an old school wagon driver, and he had a Tehillim that he himself had bound in leather, in homemade binding, and he kept it on him always, under his belt. And I remember how whenever he had time he used to come into Slabodka Yeshiva wearing his boots – big boots up to his hips because he used to drive in mud – and sit in the back seat and take out his Tehillim. He pulled it out from underneath his belt and said Tehillim. And he said every word with *geshmak*; he enjoyed the honey of every word of praises of Hashem.

But it wasn’t only him. He was special but that was the old-time wagon driver. They used to say Tehillim all day long as they were driving.

And through the night too they said it by memory. It's a remarkable thing, that a nation should produce such people. Because that's the Jew; it doesn't matter if he's a wagon driver or a big businessman, together we all took that oath at the Yam Suf.

Modern Oath Keepers

But who needs the old time Jew as a proof? I know a woman who has on her refrigerator an inscription; she wrote down on a piece of paper, "Hodu la'Hashem! Let's elevate Hashem." A tremendous thing! When she goes to the refrigerator – now maybe she forgets about it, it could be she's in the habit already, but it's a good idea that she should look at it each time and remind herself about that promise we made.

And so she gets into the practice of praising Hashem in the home all the time. Let's say a mother will say to her little children, "Kinderlach, isn't it a good thing that it's raining outside? Rain is wonderful. Rain brings down good things to eat. Without rain you couldn't eat." It's raining again the next day? So she'll say it again. She's not sparing with her words; she's not stingy because it's an oath. An oath, you can't treat it so flippantly. It's serious business.

A father is sitting at the table – not on Shabbos; it's just an ordinary Tuesday – why shouldn't you say, "Children, let's together say 'We love You Hashem for giving us such a good seudah.' Hodu la'Hashem! Isn't it enjoyable to eat it? And so let's all say, 'We thank You Hashem.'

"Say it, son! Don't be ashamed. Speak up. What are you ashamed of? You should be proud. You said Az Yashir today – at least the father hopes he did – so now you can fulfill it. Make Hashem great!"

Because that's our function. It's not merely a national obligation, something you can rely on your neighbor for, on the rest of the nation. It's an oath that devolves on every individual: **וְהָאֵלֹהִים יִבְרַכְךָ** – "I'm going to beautify Him! I will beautify Him by speaking about His greatness." That's what we promised at Kriyas Yam Suf.

Part II. Beautifying Ourselves

I and He

Now, while this explanation of "This is my G-d and I will beautify Him" is true and it's the *poshut pshat*, we're going to listen now to what Abba Shaul says about this. Abba Shaul, you have to know, was an expert

in explaining the words of the Torah and he comes along and gives a twist to these words.

אָבא שאול אומר – Abba Shaul says, what does *v'anveihu* mean? And he explains like this: אָנִי וְהוּא – “I and He.” It’s like a play on words: “I and He”; it means, “I am going to be like Him.”

And he gives an example there just so we should understand what he’s saying: הָיִי דוֹמָה לוֹ – Be similar to Him in His middos; מָה הוּא חֲנוּן וְרַחוּם – Just as He is Gracious and Merciful, אַף אַתָּה לְהֵיטֵב חֲנוּן וְרַחוּם – so you also should be gracious and merciful. Chanun comes from the word *chein* or *chinam*; both are the same word. Hakadosh Baruch Hu does for nothing. Even if you don’t deserve it, Hakadosh Baruch Hu does things for you just because you have *chein* in His eyes; for *chinam*. So just as He does that, אָנִי וְהוּא, I’m going to imitate Him. That’s the oath; *Anveihu* – Ani v’Hu.

When Drush is Pshat

Now, we have to explain what Abba Shaul is doing here because most people, when they learn this Gemara they take it to mean that it’s not the real *pshat*; it’s not the real meaning of the words. They think the *pshat* says one thing, that you have to glorify Hashem, and along comes Abba Shaul with a *drash*. He’s going away from the plain meaning and he’s forcing an entirely different idea into the words: *Anveihu*, Ani v’Hu – “I’ll make myself like Him.”

But you have to know a general principle about the words of Chazal. In most cases their *drash* is actually the *omek hapshat*, a deeper look into the *poshut pshat*. And so if you analyze the plain meaning more deeply, you’ll see that it includes what Abba Shaul is telling us. He’s not forsaking the first meaning of ‘aggrandizing Hashem’; only he’s giving an insight, a more delicate insight, into the original meaning.

Imitation is Flattery

Now, we have to understand how that is so and so we’ll explain it as follows. You know, it’s a fact of human nature that when you look up to somebody, when you admire somebody, you tend to imitate that person. Don’t we see in everyday society that the poor try to ape the rich? They do whatever they can to resemble the ones they admire.

If a movie star combs his hair one way, so on the street you’ll see a hundred boys with the same hairstyle. If he wears a certain pair of pants, a certain style, so all the boys become apes; they want those same pants.

What's that about? The plain meaning of that is that anybody who looks up to a model, he emulates that model. And so people who are dumb enough to go to movies so they look up to these movie stars and try to imitate them. They'll dress like them, comb their hair like them, speak like them. That's the nature of man; he'll imitate what he admires.

Jewish Shirleys

Sometimes they'll even name their children after them. That's why fifty years ago all Jewish girls in America were named Shirley. I'm sitting by my window and all day long I hear on the street, "Shirley", "Shirley", "Shirley". It looks like everybody is named Shirley.

At that time there was an actress called Shirley – I don't want to say her last name; it's too much honor for her – and so, all over the country women came home from the theater and told their husbands that when they have their baby girl they're going to take to themselves the great honor of giving their daughter the name of that actress. It doesn't mean they particularly liked the name Shirley but they were so infatuated with Shirley, they wanted their children to be just like her. *Mah* she's a Shirley, *af ani* want to have a Shirley in my home.

Even if you walk into some synagogues, you're surprised because the rabbi looks like a film actor. Because that's his ideal; he dresses and looks like an actor because that's the rabbi's ideal. Inwardly that rabbi has more sympathy with a boxer or a radio announcer or a movie star than he has for the *gedolei Yisroel*. This is not a joke because that's where his soul is. His heart, his admiration, is in the gentile camp.

Lubavitcher Brims

Now, *lehavdil*, people who aren't so dumb, so they emulate better people. You see all the Lubavitchers wear their brim turned down. You see that, no? Why is that so? Because the Rebbe has a brim turned down. Their *rebbe* wears a hat with the brim down in front so all the *chassidim* have the same fashion.

Not only Lubavitch. All *chassidim* try to look like their *rebbe*; everywhere. That's one of the great things you find by the *chassidim*. Every *chossid* tries to look like a *talmid chacham* and a *rebbe*. That's why when the movement of *chassidus* began, all the *chassidim* when they dressed up, they looked like their *rebbe*s. It wasn't merely a matter of pretending to be what they weren't – it was because they looked up to the *rebbe*. It's a compliment to their *rebbe*. If you love your *rebbe*, you want to look like him.

Satmerer Truckdrivers

Here's a man driving a big J&J truck and he's delivering milk to the stores. He's not a *lamdan*, he's not a big *tzaddik*. He comes out of the truck and I see he looks like a *chassidishe rebbe*. You see that all the time. What's that about? A *chassidishe rebbe* driving a truck? No; it's not a *rebbe* who is a truck driver. It's a truck driver who's trying to be a *rebbe* because that's his ideal; that's who he looks up to.

And that's the biggest compliment you can give someone. If you'll find somebody who is emulating you; he's dressing like you and adopting your mannerisms, you must realize that that's a very big compliment. The fact that someone considers your ways worthy of imitation is a demonstration that he admires you. In fact, it's the biggest compliment you can give someone. When people emulate you, it's because they admire you. They're making you great.

Nation of Copycats

And so, along comes Abba Shaul and he tells us, "You want to aggrandize Hashem? You want to fulfill your promise of *v'anveihu*, of making Him beautiful and great? The best way is *ani v'Hu*! I'm going to be like Him. If you want to glorify Hashem, if you want to make Him more beautiful, then demonstrate that you like His ways and practice them in your own lives; because there is no compliment as great as the compliment of imitating somebody.

That, says Abba Shaul, is the plain *pshat* of *v'anveihu*. It still means "I'm going to beautify Him." But *how* will I do it? *How* am I going to glorify Him? I'll sing His praises? Of course. I'll come to shul on time and say *pesukei dezimra*? Absolutely. I'll talk to my family about His greatness? No question about it.

But there's one thing that is above and beyond. *Ani v'Hu* – I'll try to be like Him. If you want to really glorify Hashem then you'll demonstrate it by imitating His ways and practicing them in your own life. That's worth more than all the words in the world. By trying to be like He is, by imitating Him in all of His *middos*, all the qualities of character which describe Hakadosh Baruch Hu in the Torah, that's how I'll make Him most great, most beautiful.

Emulating Baboons

And the Jewish nation did that! Josephus testifies to that. Josephus, you should know, was not a *darshan* – he wasn't a very *frum* Jew either

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– but he had the good sense to understand this principle. “We have a G-d that’s perfect,” he writes, “and therefore our nation follows His attitudes.”

He’s speaking there about the nations of the world and he says that gods of the nations have all the vices and the worshippers adopted those vices. “The Egyptians worshiped the baboon,” he said, “and so all people in Egypt emulate the baboon. A baboon is jumping up and down in a cage and the people come and bow down; soon they begin acting like baboons.” You became like your god; it’s human nature.

He speaks there about the gods of the Greeks too. It’s a waste of time but I can tell you about Greek mythology. The gods were jealous of each other and took away each other’s wives. One of them had a male concubine, a harem of concubines. And so these gods that the Greeks worshiped, they became the model for Greek people. After all, they admired their gods and so it’s natural that they began adopting their mannerisms. So you understand already what happens when the gentiles imitate their gods.

Promises Made, Promises Kept

But the Am Yisroel, says Josephus, they have the perfect G-d, the G-d with all the exceptional qualities, the most perfect of qualities. And because they were a nation that wanted to fulfill the oath they made – even though it’s not easy; emulating perfection can’t be easy; it’s not as easy as being like a baboon or a god with a harem – but they were a nation that always tried emulate to Hashem in order to glorify Him. We’re going to make ourselves as perfect as possible because that’s how we’ll fulfill what we promised: You’re so elevated in our eyes that our biggest desire is to be like You!

Now, you have to understand what it means that Josephus made that statement. It’s a remarkable thing for a politician to say. But he said it because he’s saying what was well known and famous among the Jewish people. It was an ideal: He’s the most Perfect Being and I want as much as possible to be like Him.

Old Jews, Old News

Unfortunately, a lot of Jews today, even *frum* Jews, never heard of this. They know about good character, about *tikkun hamiddos*, but they don’t understand how important it is. But the old time Jew knew that it was an ideal to study the Ways of Hashem and try to imitate Him because that’s the best way to make Him great.

Now to our minds in this age, and in America, it's an extremely remote idea. It seems like an abstraction which seems very impractical to our Brooklyn minds or to our Los Angeles minds, or wherever you are today. Even the *frum*est people today, we're very distant from such an ideal of striving to emulate Hakadosh Baruch Hu, to resemble Him.

After all, we have such a hazy picture of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. He's a word in the *siddur*, a vague idea. Like it states in the Navi Yermiyahu, קָרוֹב אֶתָּה בְּפִיהֶם – You are near in their mouths, וְרָחוֹק מִבְּלִיּוֹתֵיהֶם – but You're far away from their insides, from their minds (12:2). Unfortunately, we have to admit that we *frum* people are quite remiss in thinking about Hakadosh Baruch Hu. You can test yourself: During the day, today, how many times did you stop to meditate on Hashem? I'm sorry to say, probably not much.

And so we have a job ahead of us because we have to live up to that ideal, that national function that our forefathers accepted upon themselves when they stood at the Yam Suf and they said together, “וְהָאֲנָחְדוּ קָלִי וְאֲנָחְדוּ” We're so full of gratitude to You Hashem that we take upon ourselves to forever make Your Name beautiful and glorious.”

Part III. Changing Ourselves

The Irishman Plus

And so we begin to understand now how vital, how urgent, is the function of transforming our personality by emulating the perfect ways of Hashem. Of course, you have to do it anyhow if you want to be successful in the world; even an Irishman must try and change his character if he wants to live successfully. An Irishman, if he doesn't want his children and his neighbors to detest him, if he wants to keep his job and keep his wife, he's going to have to find ways and means of improving his character.

But we're not talking about that now. It's that too but it's much more than that; it's a matter of *bein adam la'Makom* too. Because for the Am Yisroel perfecting our character means not only keeping a wife or a job; it's *keeping an oath* – we're fulfilling the oath we made to Hashem by *Kriyas Yam Suf*. We made a promise to You that all our lives we'll work on this project of imitating You!

And that's why the subject of transformation of character among Jews is one of the major forms of *avodas Hashem*. It's because by becoming

a *me'ein* of the *middos* of Hakadosh Baruch Hu, that's the best way, the most virtuous way, of **וְאֵנֹהוּ**; of making Hashem great and beautiful.

Synagogue Singing

So here's a man who comes to shul for Shachris to sing Hashem's praises. He's holding his *gartel* and he's saying Az Yashir, *b'kol rom*, out loud. He's shaking and he's praising Hashem: **זֶה קְלִי וְאֵנֹהוּ** – *This is my G-d and I will beautify Him.*” And he says it with a special *niggun* too. He's singing the words.

And that's how it *should* be! It doesn't say **אֲזַי שִׁיר מְשֶׁה**. Chazal say: **שִׁיר לֹא נִאֲמַר** – *It doesn't say they sang*; **אֵלֶּא יִשְׁכֵּר** – *it says "They're going to sing."* You saved us on that day from destruction and it was such an exhilarating experience that we'll never stop singing about it. **זֶה קְלִי וְאֵנֹהוּ** – *We promise we're going to sing Your praises forever.* And this man in the shul, he's doing that. Excellent!

But what happens after *davening*, that's the question. He comes home and he's frustrated. “Where's my breakfast?!” He's impatient. He's angry.

Oooh! That man is not really praising Hashem. Of course he is, but it's not enough. Because he shouldn't forget about what Abba Shaul told us. You know how you really praise Hashem? You know how you'll really aggrandize Him? When you come home from the shul and you *emulate* Him. When all day long, in all of your interactions with other people, you're trying to be like Him. That's what you were saying in shul anyhow – “This is my *Keil* and I will make Him great by means of imitating His ways.”

Imitating Patience

So this man, on the way home from shul he's thinking, “What do I know about Hashem? Well, I know He's an *Erech Apayim*.” At least that everybody remembers. Some people say those words in *Tachanun*: **אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם** – *He's long patient.*

Patience is one of the great *middos* of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. How do I know that? Because we're here. If He wasn't patient with us, we wouldn't be around here anymore. He's always giving us another chance, and another chance and another chance. “Oh!” he thinks. “That's something I can think about. He's **אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם** and that means I have to be **אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם** too. Just like Hashem is patient with people, I'll try to be patient with people too.”

Oh! That's **וְאָנְחֵהוּ** – I'm praising Him; *that's* the greatest praise of Hashem. Merely saying praises, that's cheap – could be they're just words flowing out of your mouth that don't mean anything. But imitating, that's a real praise, that's a real compliment – it's worth all the words in the world.

Patience in Marriage

So here's a man who gets married and he was expecting that she would be only sugar and spice. But now he finds out that it's not so. She's bothersome sometimes. Let's say she talks a lot. She's a woman; she wants to talk. And so he reminds himself of the One Who he's expected to resemble and he trains himself to be patient. He's quiet. He listens. He smiles.

A wife too has to be patient with her husband. Sometimes he's stubborn. She doesn't realize that all husbands are stubborn so she's looking at him and she's thinking "What am I going to do with him? He's like a stubborn bull. He's really on my nerves."

And then she reminds herself, "**Ani v'Hu** – I'm going to be like Hashem. I'll bite my tongue. I'm going to keep my mouth closed and be patient. And I'll cook him a tasty supper anyhow."

Patience All Around

It's a big job. You'll practice being patient with everybody. If you're a *rebbe* of *talmidim* and one *talmid* is fresh and you have a *yetzer hara*, you want to throw him out; no, be patient. If you have a tough customer in the store – he's coming in the door and you know he's a crabby fellow – you remind yourself, "Didn't Rabbi Miller say something about this, about emulating Hashem by practicing patience." And then do it. Do it.

You know, people always call me up about children. A child refuses to listen. So a parent loses patience and sometimes he breaks off his influence on the child. I say to them, "Practice being patient. You also don't listen sometimes and Hashem is patient with you. So be like Him. Don't give up. Keep on talking to the child. He's a human being. It makes an impression on him. Persist and sooner or later, there are going to be some results. Even the toughest customer, talk to him again and again. Give him a caress on his face while you'll talk to him. He'll listen a little bit to you. Maybe the next time something more will get in and sooner or later, your words will penetrate into his heart."

Thirteen Big Mesichtos

Now, I said *Erech Apayim*, but that's just one example. It's a big subject, to study the Ways of Hashem. And you have to study it because without learning you won't know. You can't emulate just from your own imagination without knowing what they are. If you don't look at the Torah, then you wouldn't know.

You remember when Moshe Rabbeinu asked Hashem, הֲרָאִי נָא אֶת דְּרָכֶיךָ – Please show me Your Ways, and Hashem passed by and He called out thirteen attributes. Thirteen attributes Hakadosh Baruch Hu announced. *Erech apayim*, that's the fourth one on the list, but there's more there. Hashem, Keil, Rachum, Chanun, Rav Chesed, and so on.

So now you say it's written in the Chumash; so it's a simple matter to go ahead and do it. Well, in the Chumash it's written in one place וְזָבַחְתָּ כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִיךָ – you should slaughter like I commanded you. Could you be a *shochet* on the stance of knowing that *passuk*? Of course not. There's a whole perek in Mesichta Chullin, *hakol shochtin*, you have to study. And even if you know Mesichta Chullin, you can't be a *shochet* by any means. You have to know also Yoreh Deah. You have to know *hilchos shechitah*.

And so if there are thirteen *middos* – and there's more in other places – so there's a lot to study to emulate the Ways of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. When I was in Slabodka so Rav Avraham Grodzinski who was the *menahel* there spoke an entire winter on the thirteen *middos* and he spoke an hour and a half each session. And don't think he exhausted the subject. It was just so we should get a *musag*, some idea, but actually it's thirteen *mesichtos*.

The AnveiHu Curriculum

And once you begin seeing His Ways you must have a plan; how am I going to put them into practice, when and how to apply them. There are *eitzos*. There are schemes. There are strategies. There are tricks to make it easier. You might have to find teachers. There are many *seforim* – in English too – that will teach you. Tomer Devorah, Cheshbon Hanefesh, Orchos Tzaddikim; so many.

I remember in Slabodka Yeshiva we learned these *seforim*. In the Mirrer Yeshiva in Europe, many learned these *seforim*. Every day there was a half hour of *mussar* in those yeshivas. And the *mussar seforim* were put on the table and each student chose one according to his interest. And among those *seforim* was a Tomer Devorah, a *sefer* that deals with this subject in detail. Generations and generations of young idealistic

men studied these *seforim* and to some extent they profited; some more, some less, but they all profited.

And today they have them in English too. There's no question everybody would profit if this was incorporated in the curriculum of yeshivas and Bais Yaakovs today. No question about it. And if you already left the yeshiva surely you have to incorporate this study into your life. That's what our *shevuah* requires us to become. It takes some time, some practice and effort, but that's included in what we undertook to fulfill.

Benjamin's Biography

It's a good idea if you'll make a plan, a schedule for this program, so it shouldn't be haphazard. You know, there was a certain gentile, Benjamin Franklin, who did that. Now, Benjamin Franklin wasn't a *tzaddik*, no; make no mistake about it. I know his biography; he was an immoral person. But in a certain area of his life, we can use him as an example because he spent a great deal of time thinking about himself – at least he claims he did. He made a calendar and on the calendar he put certain attitudes that he wanted to work on. Patience, humility, guarding his speech, other things.

Now, Benjamin Franklin wasn't trying to emulate Hashem; no, he wasn't thinking about that. Only that he wanted to live successfully and so he identified thirteen virtues that he thought would help him succeed as a statesman, to be popular. And so he set up a system of working on one per week – he had a calendar worked out according to the year and four times a year he repeated it. By the end of the year he repeated all thirteen qualities of character four times. It was the thirteen virtues; thirteen weeks, and he repeated it four times each year, thinking and trying to train himself in these virtues.

So you see there were sensible people, even *goyim*, *lehavdil*, who worked on themselves and they gained prudence; they gained an attitude of how to deal with people successfully.

Better Than Benjamin

But that's nothing yet. If you hear a story like that *al achas kamah v'kamah* it obligates you a thousand times more because a Torah Jew stands to gain much more than Benjamin Franklin if he puts time away for such a project. A Jew who follows this way in life will grow infinitely greater than even the best gentile because he's not merely preparing for living successfully in this world, for getting along with others. He's doing infinitely more than that because he's fulfilling this great *shevuah* that

our forefathers made at Har Sinai, of **זֶה קְלִי וְאֶנְהוּ** – *this is my Hashem and I'm going to glorify Him*.

It's a very important oath and the Jewish people throughout their history attempt to fulfill it. "We're alive only because of You Hashem and we promise that we'll spend our days making You great in this world." And so we'll sing Your praises all the time! **הוֹדוּ לַיהוָה קְרָאוּ בְשִׁמּוֹ הוֹדִיעוּ בְּעַמִּים עֲלִילוֹתָיו** – We try to advertise Hashem to ourselves and to everybody. We teach Hashem to our little children. Children should know Hashem is giving them bread. He's giving them ice cream. He's giving them candy. "Hashem gave you the candy," we tell our children. We have to tell ourselves too!

But most importantly, we can never lose sight of what Abba Shaul taught us. We swore on that day, "*Ani v'Hu!* We are going to resemble You!" That's the greatest praise of Hashem! That we'll try, as much as humanly possible, to imitate His perfect qualities and be like Him.

Have A Wonderful Shabbos

Let's Get Practical

Fulfilling The Oath of Salvation

When our people were saved from certain ruination at Yam Suf, we sang enthusiastically. And we accepted an oath of "*Anveihu* – I shall glorify Him." We glorify Him by praising Him at all times to everyone who will listen, but especially to ourselves. This week I will choose one piece of *pesukei dezimrah* to say it slowly, with the intention of fulfilling this oath.

And because the highest form of *v'anveihu* is to imitate Hashem's Ways, this week I will *bli neder* dedicate two minutes each day to studying about one of Hashem's Ways and thinking and planning how I can emulate Him in my life.

This week's booklet is based on tapes:

234 – Emulating Him | **389** – Perfection in Marriage, Emulating Hashem
453 – Song At the Sea | **504** – Pesach XIII | **656** – Middos: Emulating Hashem



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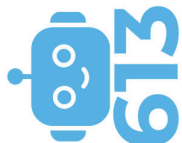
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QUESTION

**What is the Jewish view on clairvoyance
and the psychic healers such as –**

ANSWER

Don't say any names. What the Jewish view is, I don't know if it matters because today the Jews don't have any views that are worth talking about. If you're talking about the Torah view, all I can say is that we suspect all of them of being frauds. That's all. They're nothing but imposters. We don't believe today that they're clairvoyant.

Whether clairvoyance existed a long time ago among gentiles, I'm not able to tell you. It could be that in very ancient times, Hakadosh Baruch Hu carried on a parallel: the Jewish nation had prophecy so in order to deceive the nations, it could be He gave them some clairvoyance in order to serve as a temptation to mislead them. Because we find that Hakodosh Boruch Hu did that. But that's something that's beyond my ken.

But today, it's probable that they're all frauds.

June 1975

This week's Q&A sponsored by:

In honor of our dear father R' Moshe Klein.

**We feel so lucky we were zoche to grow up
in a house filled with Rav Miller's torah.**

**May you be zoche to see much nachas from us
Ad me'ah vesrim shana**

**With much love,
Gavriel and Yocheved Klein**