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AUTHENTIC TORAH THOUGHT FOR LIFE

RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT" L

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לעילוי נשמות

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GAINING A GOOD NAME

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PARSHAS EMOR

WITH

RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"l

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

GAINING A GOOD NAME

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Part I. Make His Name Great

A Matter of Life and Death

One of the many important *pessukim* that we come across in this week's *sedrah* is וְנִקְדַּשְׁתִּי בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל – I should be sanctified amidst the sons of Yisroel (Emor 22:32); we know it as the mitzvah of 'kiddush Hashem' and it's an obligation on all of us. That's what the Rambam says in *Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah* (Perek 5): כָּל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל מְצֻוִּים עַל קְדוּשַׁת הַשֵּׁם – Everyone who belongs to the family of Yisroel is commanded to glorify the name of Hashem. "The whole house of Yisroel," the Rambam says and that means it's something we all have to keep in mind.

Now, if you'll take a look in the Rambam over there, you'll see that this mitzvah of making Hashem's name great is so important that

sometimes it requires a Jew to even give up his life; sometimes a man must be prepared to be killed for this mitzvah.

Let's say for example, that the gentiles want to force you to bow down to *avodah zarah*. So you have to say, "Nothing doing! You'll have to kill me before I do such a thing." Or if they want to force you to commit immorality. You tell them you won't do it but they don't care what you say and they threaten you, "We'll kill you if you don't submit." Like the wife of Potifar said to Yosef Hatzaddik, "I'll kill you if you don't listen to me." *Vayima'ein – And Yosef refused!* Sometimes a Jew has to be ready to give away his life for the glory of Hashem.

Our Glorious History

And it's because of this mitzvah that Jews have always provided scenes of the greatest heroism throughout history. Today, a good portion of the Jewish nation has already lost its backbone, but up till recently, a Jew would let himself be skinned alive rather than bow down to the cross. And don't think that it was easy once the decision was made. It hurts terribly to be skinned alive! The loyal Jew would be screaming from pain, and yet he wouldn't budge.

But forget about bowing down – even to *speak* against the Torah! Josephus describes how at the *churban* Beis Hamikdash thousands of Jews gave their lives rather than to say one word against the Torah. And they were plain ordinary *amei ha'aretz*. The *amei ha'aretz* were *moser nefesh* for *kiddush Hashem*! No other nation was so loyal. Josephus tells us that among the Greeks there is not one who would suffer the least pain for such a thing. If you would threaten a Greek that he'd better curse Homer or else you're going to take a quarter out of his pocket, he wouldn't give it a second thought – he'd curse Homer to save a quarter! But the loyal Jew was willing to give up his life! He suffered terribly and then went to his death for this mitzvah.

In Europe there were many times that our forefathers were being besieged by the Crusaders who wanted to force them to accept the cross. The enraged mob was battering at the gates of the synagogue and our grandparents knew that soon the walls would come down, and the "peace loving", "turn the other cheek" Christians would come in with their axes to force the Jews to choose between the baptismal font and death.

Glorious Deaths

And so what happened? The Jews of the city gathered together in the big shul, locked the doors, and they stood with knives ready to slaughter themselves. And not only the *tzaddikim*! The ordinary Jews, the mothers and the fathers, were prepared to fulfill this mitzvah of *v'nikdashti*! The little children they couldn't trust, so first they slaughtered the little boys and girls. Sometimes the children saw what was happening and they ran under the benches for refuge and so the mothers pulled them out by their little feet and slit their necks.

And then after all the youth were dead, the adults killed themselves – the mothers and the fathers, the *chosson* and the *kallah*, the *talmid chochom* and the shoemaker. Everyone died *al kiddush Hashem* – and finally when the Crusaders burst into the synagogue, they found a holy congregation lying in their own blood. There was nobody left to force to the baptism waters because they were facing a nation of loyal servants who understood what it meant to fulfill the *possuk* of וְנִקְדַּשְׁתִּי בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל.

And it didn't happen once. It happened again and again and again throughout our history, from the earliest of times. How do we know? We don't have to rely on our sources because the gentiles themselves have made these statements again and again. Josephus quotes ancient Greek writers – a whole list of them – who describe how the ordinary Jews went to death by torture rather than say one word against their Torah. And so we can look back proudly at a long and glorious history of forefathers who died for Hashem and brought the greatest glory to His name in their final moments.

Life of Kiddush Hashem

But it's important for us to understand that this is not the *mitzvah* in its entirety – there's much more to the mitzvah of וְנִקְדַּשְׁתִּי בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל than being tortured to death. Of course, if it happens that someone will confront you *chas v'shalom* with a crucifix and he'll say bow down to this or else, so you won't have a choice – you'll have to grow a spine and give up your life – but we're going to speak now of an aspect of the mitzvah that is much more frequent and yet no less important. We're going to study now, not the subject of dying *al kiddush Hashem*, but of living for *kiddush Hashem*.

At the end of this chapter, in *halachah yud alef*, the Rambam adds the following important and useful information. He says there that a Jew who learns Torah, and he behaves properly with those he comes in contact with, **הָרִיזָה קִידּוּשׁ אֶת הַשֵּׁם** – *he brings glory to the name of Hashem*. Simply by means of living decently he fulfills the mitzvah of our parsha.

You're on Display

People see you with a black hat, maybe you're even wearing a beard, so they know you're a Jew. Today *meshugaim* also wear beards but sometimes your face alone tells the story. Maybe you have your *tzitzis* out or at least a *yarmulke* you're wearing – that's already enough to identify you with the Orthodox. And a woman? Her hair is covered, she's wearing a dress. Even the girls – today you can spot a Bais Yaakov girl or a Bais Rochel girl a mile away.

So people see you're a Jew! And that means that unless you're a hermit hiding away in the caves in the mountains, you have a big career ahead of you. I'm not saying it's easy, but anybody who belongs to the Orthodox camp has endless opportunities to fulfill the mitzvah of our parsha.

Getting People to Like You

How do you do it? You're careful to greet others with a pleasant cast of countenance and you're always polite and considerate of others. You speak gently to people and you always try to agree with them. As long as there's no sacrifice of principles, you're always saying, "You're right," in order to make people feel happy. You go out of your way to honor everyone – Jew and gentile alike – even those who don't honor you. No matter what, you're always honest in your business dealings and you don't retaliate when put to shame.

Every 'ordinary' Jew who is careful with these things, **הָרִיזָה קִידּוּשׁ אֶת הַשֵּׁם** – he's bringing glory to Hashem. Because people say, "Look at that person, that *frum* Jew. Look at his behavior. Isn't he a fine man?" And if people say that about you, you know you've succeeded. If you'll behave in such a manner that people approve of you, that people like you, you're serving Hashem!

Guarding Your Every Step

It's a big responsibility because it means that a *shomer mitzvos* has to be on guard always not to make a misstep. Here's a yeshiva boy

sitting on the bus and there's an empty seat on this side and an empty seat on this side and now two women get on the bus; they look like they're together. They're talking and they want to sit down. So you'll sit there like a dumb statue and act like you don't know anything and now they have to sit separately? Why not remember this *possuk* in Parshas Emor and be nice enough to say, "Here; please take a seat." They might say thank you. They might not. But at least you already have propagandized for Hashem.

And when you're getting off the bus and there's somebody getting off behind you so when you hold the door open, instead of holding it with your back towards the person, turn with your face toward the person and hold the door open. That's a courteous act that will be counted on your record as a *kiddush Hashem*. And if there's a gentile man getting off before you and he holds open the door for you, you have to say thank you if you're wearing a *yarmulke*. Of course you have to say thank you anyhow, but if you are recognized as Orthodox, it's already an entirely different story – it's part of your career of *kiddush Hashem*.

Gentile Charity

When you're waiting in line at the post office and a gentile woman comes by – she's knocking her *pushka* for veterans or cancer or some other gentile cause – so it's good to always have a quarter ready. Drop in a quarter and she'll give you a big thank you. And you've done what is required of you because by means of that the name of Hashem becomes hallowed in the world.

Sometimes you're sitting in the subway and a faker comes in with a tin cup and he's tapping the floor with his stick, peeking through his smoked glasses looking for customers – he wants to see who's going to give the first donation to the 'blind' fellow. Nobody budes. So what do you do? You whisper to yourself, "*Hineni muchan u'mezuman* to fulfill the *mitzvah* of making Hashem's name great," and you fish out a coin from your pocket. It could be the smallest coin, a penny – nobody will see what you have there – and drop it into his tin can with the most resounding bang you can. And then lean back and bask in the admiration of the entire subway car. Only that you should remember one thing – as you lean back virtuously to enjoy the admiring gazes of your fellow passengers, remember that you did it for Hashem!

Living For Him

“Oh,” says Hashem, “that’s My servant. That’s the man I love.” The Rambam tells us that: **עָלִיו הִכְתוּב אוֹמֵר** – *About this person the possuk says, וַיֹּאמֶר לִי* – *Hashem said to me, עֲבָדִי אַתָּה* – “You are My servant.” It means that’s your form of serving Me; not by how you die but by how you live. On the bus, in the street, in the store, **הָרִי זֶה קִידֵּשׁ אֶת הַשֵּׁם** – you are bringing glory to My name.

Because *kiddush Hashem* doesn't require only that a person lay down his life, to go up on the scaffold and sacrifice himself for the glory of Hashem's name; it requires also that we live our lives in a way that brings glory to the name of Hashem! And it's a program that every *frum* Jew can think about during the day in his interactions with everyone. He's not letting himself be killed for *kiddush Hashem* but because he keeps Hashem in mind always and he knows he's obligated to bring glory to His name, so he is living for *kiddush Hashem*. And about him Hakadosh Baruch Hu says, **עֲבָדִי אַתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר בָּךְ אֶתְפָּאֵר** – *By means of you, Yisroel, I become glorified* (Yeshaya 49:3); and because you live with the intention of bringing honor to Me, that's why I call you, “My servant.”

Part II. Make Your Name Great

Crowning Achievements

In Pirkei Avos (4:17) there's a *mishnah* as follows: **שְׁלֹשָׁה כְּתָרִים הֵם** – *There are three crowns that a person can wear*; it means three crowns that will bring him glory. A crown is something that makes you taller – you put it on your head and it makes you taller than anybody else; it distinguishes you from others.

What are the three kinds of crowns?

Number one is *kesser kehunah*, the crown of priesthood. If your name is Cohen, Kaplan, Kahan, Kahana, other names that designate a family as *kohanim*, be proud of it. Don't say, “I can't be proud. I did nothing to earn it – I was born that way.” Don't be humble now! Be proud that Hakadosh Baruch Hu has placed this crown on your head. Don't talk about democracy or chauvinism. Forget about that garbage. Hashem has spoken and His word is not to be revoked from now until the end of time: He has bestowed the *kesser kehunah* on the head of Aharon Hakohen and his seed forever and ever!

The second crown, the *mishnah* says, is called *kesser malchus*, the crown of royalty. Only the House of Dovid has been granted this privilege, no one else. It was given away forever to Dovid and his family, and so, no matter how good you'll be, no matter how many votes you'll get, nothing will help – the *kesser malchus* is not for everybody.

The Available Crown

But there's another crown in that list that is **מוֹנֵחַ וְעוֹמֵד וּמוֹכָן לְכָל יִשְׂרָאֵל** – it's available for *anybody* to take (Rambam Hilchos Talmud Torah 3:1). That's the *kesser Torah*, the crown of Torah. That's a crown that anybody can get. Anybody! Just start a career learning one line of Gemara a day and reviewing it. One line a day! Soon you'll know ten lines and then twenty lines and then a whole page you'll know. A whole *daf*! That's already a crown on your head! Of course, there are all types of Torah crowns. There are big crowns and there are small crowns, but a little crown is also something.

Of course you have to aspire to the *kesser Torah* – if you're not interested in it, you won't get it. But if you start and keep going, there's no question you're going to gain a crown of Torah; I guarantee it.

And so, these are three great crowns that Pirkei Avos tells us about – the crown of Priesthood, the crown of Royalty and the crown of Torah. And if you put them side by side, you'll see how important they are – they stand as three great distinctions and it doesn't seem like anything could rival such crowns.

The Crown of a Good Name

But along comes the *mishnah* and says a big *chiddush*. Rabbi Shimon says there's a crown greater than all of these, and that's the crown of the *shem tov*: **וְכֶתֶר שֵׁם טוֹב עוֹלָה עַל גְּבִינָהֶם** – *The crown of a good name rises above all of them*.

That's our subject tonight, the *kesser shem tov*. But first a little grammar, some syntax. What does the word *shem* mean? It's from the word *shamo'a*, to hear. Here's a man named Chaim. You don't know him but the first thing you hear about him is his name. That's *shem*; the *sheima*, the first report about him, is Chaim. So *shem* is what you hear about a man – a name means what people say about you, the impression that you give off.

And so we understand that when it says that the crown of a good name is bigger than anything else, it means that you should try to get people to say good things about you. And if you do, then you have achieved a success which is *oleh al gabeiheim*, which is bigger than all forms of success – bigger than the *kesser kehuna*, bigger than the *kesser malchus* and even bigger than the *kesser torah*. Achieving a good name is the crown of all crowns!

What's In a Name?!

Now a big question arises. Because actually it doesn't make sense. After all, how do you achieve the crown of a *shem tov*? By means of good character and good deeds; by means of being polite and considerate and treating everyone with respect. And so why shouldn't we call it rather the "crown of good character" or the "crown of *maasim tovim*," something like that. That's what it is after all. The "good name" is only what is created by a man's behavior, so let's go straight to the source and say a "crown of *middos tovos*." That's what counts anyhow.

And so we must say: the answer is that *it's not talking about good character here!* It's a good name that we're talking about! Of course it's a very great thing to have good character and it's worth spending your life working to acquire that. There are places where people do that. In the Novardoker Yeshiva everybody worked on their character. Every day a certain amount of time was set aside for what they called the '*burjza*'. *Burjza* means the exchange, the stock market, only they were taking stock of something more important.

They used to come together and talk to each other and criticize each other; they would offer suggestions on how to improve. They gathered in the *beis medrash*, in groups, and they discussed their problems; how to control anger, how to guard their tongue, how to learn to be more tolerant and charitable. The *burjza* – it was a remarkable thing that the *Am Yisroel* once possessed.

And so it's certainly a great thing – good character is a tremendous crown. But that's not what the *mishnah* is speaking about here. We're speaking here about creating a good name for yourself, getting people to think well of you, that's all. That's the crown that rises up above them all. It doesn't say you have to *be* good. It doesn't say the *kesser* of being a *tzaddik*, the *kesser* of being a righteous man. A crown of *shem tov* means that people *think* you're good. That's what's important because

that's how you'll bring glory to Hashem. What you are really, that's not the intention here – your mark of success when it comes to the *mitzvah* of *kiddush Hashem* is what people will think about you.

Don't Be Natural

So you can't say, "I don't care about what people think; I just want to find favor in the eyes of Hashem." Oh no! Hashem says, "If you don't care about people I don't care about you either." כָּל שָׂרֵי הַבְּרִיּוֹת נֹחָה הֵימָּנוּ – If people are satisfied with you, רִנָּה הַמָּקוֹם נֹחָה הֵימָּנוּ – then Hashem is satisfied with you (Avos 3:10). You hear that? A tremendous statement! Hakadosh Baruch Hu is actually insisting that you have to exert yourself that people should like you – even though you're not so likeable. Hashem Himself knows you're not likeable but He wants people to like you anyhow.

And so your job is to be a cunning fellow and not follow your nature. You have to be artificial all the time. You hear that word? *Artificial*. Not to be natural. Natural means you get down on hands and feet and you'll eat from a plate on the floor – why bother to sit at a table? And you don't need a spoon. You'll put your face into the plate and you'll lick it up. That's natural.

Natural means you'll sit in public and put your fingernail into your ear or your nose and then take it out and inspect the results of your mining expedition. Many years ago I was saying a *shiur* in the yeshivah and I saw a young man do that, so I decided that being natural is not the way to go.

Deceive Everyone

A person has to be *unnatural* if he's going to succeed at living a life of *kiddush Hashem*. No matter what he's feeling, he continues to maintain the proprieties, the *derech eretz*, that cause people to think well of him. He knows that he's always on display and that he's making a show for Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

Now, I understand that there were falsifiers who popularized theories about natural behavior. There was a man Jean-Jacques Rousseau – I have a special grudge against him because he was an anti-Semite but most people don't know that and therefore they're taken in. They're bamboozled by his theory of naturalism. Now it could be some aspects of his teachings had practical value – right now I'm not ready

to say that, but still it could be – but the general attitude that people gathered from his words was that what's natural is the criterion of proper behavior; and the plain truth is that it's a big lie!

It's *sheker v'chazav*! We are not born in this world to live a natural life. We're here to live an unnatural life. The Torah wants you to deceive everybody else into thinking you're better than you are and therefore no matter what you actually are, you have to put on an act and pretend that you're somebody very good.

Aim for Praise

Now, we have to pay good attention to the words of the Rambam because the Rambam's language is always precise. The Rambam says there that a man should continue going in these good ways **עד ש'ימצא עד הכל מקלסים אותו** – *until the result is that everybody praises him*. You hear that *chiddush*? If you'll read these words carefully it means you must behave in such a way that will lead people eventually to praise you. That's your goal here – that people should speak well of you even if you know that you're not so deserving of praise. The mitzvah of *kiddush Hashem* means that you're working hard to get people to think well of you; that you're living in such a way that you're gaining the crown of a good name.

And you must know it's not a small achievement; it's a crown of glory on your head. And not just any crown – here you are standing next to the *kohanim* with their crowns and next to the *beis Dovid* wearing their crowns and next to the *gedolei haTorah* with their crowns *and your crown is taller!*

Now it doesn't mean you're a great Torah scholar. No, it doesn't say that. Just like you're not a *kohen* and you're not a *melech*, you're also not a Torah scholar. And still the crown of a good name ascends higher above all of those crowns together. Your crown, the crown of a good name, is *oleh al gabeiheim* because you're a living display that brings glory to Hashem.

The Big Condition

Now all this needs one condition; whatever we're saying here should always be done under one condition. You're doing it because it's the will of Hashem. Otherwise, you'll just be like one of the students of Dale Carnegie. Dale Carnegie wrote a book – an interesting book by the

way – called *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. He's a goy and it's nothing but *gashmiyus* in that book. It's good advice, but it's only *gashmiyus*. So if you're doing it just because of that, so your *rebbe* is Dale Carnegie – it's a waste of your career, a waste of life.

And so you have to add just one condition and then this *avodah* becomes *avodas Hashem*. “I’m doing all this for the sake of creating a good Name for Hashem.” That’s the Name that you really care about. You know that you’re no good! But you’re trying to make a hit because Hashem wants you to do it for the sake of His Name. You know you’re a nobody, but as far as the world is concerned you’re a *frum* Jew and people will praise Hashem and His Torah if you create a *shem tov*. And by doing so you earn a very great crown for yourself.

Part III. Become Great

One Penny At A Time

Now, a crown like that is valuable property – it’s real wealth. And like wealth, it takes time to build up this bank account of *shem tov*. You know, you don’t start becoming a millionaire overnight. First you start making a few dollars here and a few dollars there and you build up your wealth little by little. Genuine wealth starts with small steps, with work.

So you might have thought that *shem tov* is when everybody let’s say in Crown Heights is praising you. Maybe everybody in the big Satmerer *beis hamedrash* in Williamsburg is praising you. All of Lakewood Yeshivah is praising you. All of Meah Shearim is praising you too – maybe that’s the *kesser shem tov* we’re talking about. No, no, it doesn’t mean that. Even though nobody is praising you except a few people in your neighborhood that’s already a *shem tov*; that’s already a crown of glory that you can proudly wear. When you gain a reputation with one person that’s already a few dollars. Another person, that’s a few more dollars. That’s how you start building your wealth.

This I learned from a great man. He told me. “Make a hit with one person in your life,” he said. “Go all out to win over that person; after you succeed with him, it will start overflowing. Once you make a *shem tov* with him, it will overflow to others too.”

New People, New Opportunities

The best opportunity for this is when one is about to enter a new situation. I once did this. Many years ago when I was in Slabodka I was away for one month at the seashore – in those times the seashore was a kosher seashore – and I was staying with a family. In those days I worked on *mussar*. Ah! The good old days in Slabodka! And so I decided I would make a hit with the family I was staying with. I would take a walk every day and come up with plans how I would make a hit with them. And it worked – I fooled them.

So let's say you're getting married now – that's the time to think about this most seriously. It's a great opportunity and it should not be wasted. In the home where you grew up, it's not as easy – they knew you when you were two and when you were three so you have a *chazakah* already that you're no good; and so with them maybe you're discouraged. Of course, even at home it pays to try. It's a good idea to try to make a hit with your parents. It could be that by this time it's a little late, but it's still possible every day to start all over again.

They'll be surprised at first but they'll fall for it. Make a hit with your father and your mother. You could make a hit with an older brother too; with a brother you can make a hit. You should try that – start a campaign in the house to get a good name, to make people like you.

The Kallah's Family

But when you're entering into a new life, that's a special incentive. Your *kallah* does not know you at all yet, and your *kallah's* parents also don't know you. You're gaining a whole new environment; in-laws, a whole new family, a new set of relatives. Maybe you're moving into a new neighborhood too. Here is your opportunity to turn over a new leaf and to hoodwink everybody.

If you are the bride, then you must make it your business to get a good name with your *chosson*. It's of paramount importance that he should never discover who you really are. All your life you should put on a face of pleasantness and cooperation – all your life! Smart women do that; smart women create the impression that they are not natural, that they are sugar and spice and everything nice.

Easier Tests

Now sometimes that's too difficult because it's too long and grueling of a test. Sometimes he's a failure with his *kallah*; she discovers who he is. And sometimes he's a failure with his father-in-law and his mother-in-law. It happens sometimes. So choose one of your wife's relatives and try to make a hit with him. I mean it seriously. A cousin is visiting from Denver or from Chicago? Make up your mind that with this cousin I'm going to make a hit.

You'll see him very rarely so it's easy to deceive him. Plaster a smile onto your face and go over to him; "Hi Jake, it's so good to see you – I haven't seen you for a long time! You're looking fine, Jake." He'll appreciate that, and now at least one person thinks well of you; it means that you have already some money in your *shem tov* bank account.

Now you can build up on that – you can continue making deposits. Let's say you're going next week, Lag Ba'omer, to a wedding and at the wedding you'll meet some new people. Now you can't make a hit with everybody so before you walk into the hall say, "I'm going to choose one person tonight and I'm going to deceive him into thinking I'm a fine fellow." And work on it. Now don't waste his time too much. Don't be a bore. Don't talk too much. Say a few kind words and then get away from him. Let him alone. You have won another fan, another admirer. That's what Hashem wants you to do.

Just One Person

You can even start with a child. Let's say your wife has a cousin and you're going to his *bar mitzvah*. Speak well of him, encourage him, shake his hand cordially; show him you're interested in him. So you'll say, "A little boy?! It's important that a little boy should think well of me?!" Absolutely. Walk over to the boy, press his hand warmly and give him a *brachah* he should become a *gadol b'Yisroel*. Now, he's waiting for the envelope with the check but the words are also important. A nice smile, encouraging words – you have to know that you've done something valuable. That boy, all his life, will think good about you. That's already a *shem tov*.

If you're working in an office, don't do it all at once. First say, "I'm going to captivate this one fellow." Now, the women forget about – the less you captivate women, the better off you are. But this one fellow – a

gentile, a Jew, it doesn't matter – start working on him. Now don't be too much of a nuisance. Don't be a poodle. You'll slobber over him and you'll lick his toes? No. But be friendly and let him learn that this fellow is a nice guy. He's a nice Jew, that fellow over there. And then once you won him over, it's easier – once you made a good impression, it doesn't take as much effort now to grease the wheels of achieving a *shem tov* with him and so now you can try with somebody else. And go from one to the other. It's a program, even if it's artificial. That's your success in life.

Add Many People

Of course, out on the street you can make a hit with everyone – people you'll be seeing only once in a while, sometimes only once in a lifetime, that's your chance to make a hit for Hashem. If you make a hit with two people today or three people, even better. After a while you have many fans. You have a grandstand of fans who are cheering you, and if they cheer you then Hakadosh Baruch Hu will cheer you even more.

Of course, you'll make it a project to expand your horizons because the size of your crown depends on how many people think good of you. Suppose you're able to cause very, very many people to think well of you then you have a big golden crown on your head and it's taller than all the other crowns. The more people that you have captivated by your personality, the wealthier you are – you've built up a very big bank account already.

The Secret Bank Account

I want to tell you a secret however; there's a big secret here because the benefit of developing a good name is actually twofold. While you're building up that wealth of a good name, you're building up a second account that's just as important.

The Mesillas Yescharim tells us an important principle: **הַיְצוּנִיּוּת מְעוֹרְרֵת אֶת הַפְּנִימִיּוּת** – *The exteriority begins to stir the interiority*. And that means that the second purpose of pretending to be better than you actually are is the great principle that has been mentioned a number of times here that the outwardliness stirs up the inwardliness. By doing things in a certain way you actually become what you're doing.

That's why it's good to be a rabbi. I really mean it. It's good to be a rabbi because you have to put up a good front all the time; after all

you're being watched, examined, and so you must play the part. And if you *act* a certain way, sooner or later you *become* that way.

And therefore the man who is deceiving others is really deceiving himself. Behave as if you are good and little by little you'll become what you are pretending to be. And so, the *kesser shem tov* doesn't remain merely a crown on your head, an externality. It actually affects a change in your head – you become a better person.

Fake Chassidim

I always repeat what the old Lubavitcher Rebbe once said. They came to the Lubavitcher Rebbe, I think it was the previous one, Rav Yosef Yitzchak *zichrono levrachah*, and they told him, “Your *talmidim* are deceiving the world. They're putting up a front. They're acting very *frum* but they're not really that *frum*!”

So what did the Rebbe say? He said they should keep on deceiving the world until they deceive themselves too. He quoted the Gemara (Kesuvos 68a) that if someone deceives the public in order to get charity, *הַמַּצְבֵּה אֶת בִּטְנוֹ* – *if he acts like he has a swollen belly* (it means from hunger), *וְהַמִּקְפֵּחַ אֶת שׁוּקוֹ* – *or he acts like his foot is chopped off* (he bends his knee up), *אֵינוֹ נִפְטָר מִן הָעוֹלָם עַד שְׂיָבוֹא לִיְדֵי כֶּךָ* – *the end will be that's how it will turn out*. If you pretend, then what you pretend to be will happen. “That's what's going to be with my *chassidim* too – they'll pretend and pretend and pretend, and they'll become better and better just because of that; the *frummer* they act, the *frummer* they'll become.”

A Successful Career

That's our secret here. Keep on deceiving others and making a *kiddush Hashem* until you deceive yourself and you become that way. That's also a glory for the name of Hashem – when you become an *eved Hashem* on the inside too. So a *shem tov*, although we started out saying how great is the effect of the achievement that the world should think well of you, nevertheless you should know it's *lo yashuv reikam*; it doesn't go without having an effect on your character too.

And so, the Jew who wants to spend his days living a life of *kiddush Hashem* is always on guard – wherever he goes, whatever he does, he's always thinking about bringing glory to the name of Hashem by means of his relations with the world around him. And he becomes a display of the greatness of Hashem to the world – his every step in the world

becomes *avodas Hashem*. And as he does that, he's changing himself too – not only is he bringing glory to Hashem but he's achieving glory for himself. And so, by means of his behavior he'll bask in the glory of this world, and then when the time finally comes, because he changed himself too, he'll bask in the glory of the Next World forever and ever.

Have A Wonderful Shabbos

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Let's Get Practical

The Mitzvah of Kiddush Hashem

A career of making Hashem's Name great is one of the most important *mitzvos* in the Torah and this week I will try to accomplish that. I will choose two minutes each day when I'm out in public to keep in mind that I am a representative of Hashem and I will guard every step to make sure that I am bringing glory to the name of Hashem.

I will also follow Rabbi Miller's example and choose one person upon whom I will do everything possible to make an especially good impression. I will dedicate some time each day to think of how I can earn a good name with that person.

By starting this program I hope to take my first steps towards a lifetime of living for *kiddush Hashem* and little by little even changing myself on the inside as well.

This week's booklet is based on tapes:

266 – Gateway to Greatness | **370** – Shmoneh Esrei 7 | **785** – Gaining a Good Name | **867** – Shaping the Soul by Acts and Thoughts | **879** – Gaining Approval

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QUESTION

How can one talk himself out of his despair in knowing the Torah?

ANSWER

I suppose it means that he thinks that it's too much for him to do and he gives up hope; he gives up hope of succeeding in knowing Torah.

And so we'll take an analogy. As you walk on Kings Highway, you see big establishments. There are some big businesses there, successful stores. But on one street corner, there's a man with a peanut stand. It's a simple cart; two wheels, that's all, and there's a little stove that's heating the peanuts. And this man is standing there and waiting for customers.

Now, they're not standing in line for him. Customers are few and far between. And sometimes it's cold too. Does he give up? No. Why doesn't he give up? Because he wants as much as he can earn. He can earn three dollars a day, five dollars a day, he's satisfied. Of course, he'd like to earn five thousand dollars a day but when it comes to money, however, you earn as much as you're able. And he's quite happy if he takes home five dollars at the end of the day.

When it comes to learning, all of a sudden nobody wants to learn for peanuts. Everybody wants to be a millionaire. "If I cannot be a *gadol hador*, then I don't want to learn." He gives up. I had a case like that. He said, "I can't become a *gadol* so what's the use?"

No! If you can learn one line a day it's a success! You learn two lines? A bigger success! Learn whatever you can and that's a great achievement.

It's only the *yetzer hara* that tells you either you learn for the highest stakes or don't learn at all. It's a deception and many people allow themselves to be persuaded by that. It's remarkable how much people can accomplish if they learn little by little. In the course of time, it adds up to a great amount of wealth!

March 20, 1980