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הגאון ר' אביגדור מיללער זצ"ל

Rav Avigdor Miller on the Parsha
Adapted from his Tapes, Sforim and Writings of Talmidim

פרשת חקת

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Rav Avigdor Miller ztz"l on

פרשת חקת

THE MYSTERIOUS PARAH ADUMAH

The *taharah* process of the *parah adumah* with which this week's parsha begins, has been forever one of the most mysterious procedures found in the Torah. Even Shlomo Hamelech, the wisest of all men, said about it: והיא רחוקה, אמרתי אחכמה, - "I thought to understand it, but it is too far away" (Koheles 7:23).

Everyone knows that the *parah adumah* comes to purify the *Am Yisroel* from *tumas meis*. Now, there are many different ways for a *Yisroel* to become *tamei*; but it's only *tumas meis* that requires the exceptional procedure of the *parah adumah*. A dead body, we all know, is the *avi avos hatumah* - the father of the fathers of all forms of spiritual defilement - there's nothing more *tamei* than the lifeless body of a Jew. Even more than a *metzorah*, more than a *zav* and a *neveilah*, more strict than any other *tumah* in the world, is the *tumah* that Hashem has decreed upon the dead body. And the only way to be cleansed of this severest of all *tumahs* is by way of the *parah adumah*. And that's mysterious as well. What is it about a dead body that its *tumah* should be so severe? And it's so severe that nothing besides the ashes of the *parah adumah* can purify it!

WHY DOES THE BODY ROT?

And besides for the *tumah*, we are also commanded to bury the dead body as soon as possible. Everyone knows of the mitzvah of *לֹא תִלֵּין אֶת נַבְלָתוֹ*. It's *ossur* to allow a dead body to remain without burial, even overnight. And not only is this a commandment, but the burial of the dead body is encouraged by nature itself. Hashem has decreed that the lifeless body must putrefy. *Chazal* tell us (*Pesachim* 54b) that one of the things that Hashem set into nature during the *sheishes yimei bereishis* is *עַל הַמָּת שִׁסְרִיחַ*, that a dead body has to decompose. The body, once it is devoid of life, begins to rot away.

Now, you might ask, what's the *chiddush* about a *meis* putrefying; everything rots away. An apple also rots. A cat rots away as well when it dies. However, the human body, once it dies, it deteriorates and rots more rapidly and in a more disgusting fashion than anything else. An apple when it rots is not so disgusting. Even a cat when it dies is not so repulsive. But a human has the most vile possible odor; when a human body putrefies it has the most offensive of all odors. And it wouldn't be unreasonable of us to wonder about the reason for that. Why did Hashem do that to a human body?

BURYING THE BAD ODOR

Now, maybe you never thought about this question, but our *chachomim* did. Our *chachomim* thought about everything! And the answer, we are told, is that Hashem made that phenomenon, He decreed it, *in order to encourage people to bury the dead body as soon as possible*. Hakodosh Boruch Hu made a dead body to be most offensive, its sight and its odor, in order that we should be in a hurry to bury it and put it out of sight.

Now the question is, what's the hurry? Would it be so bad if we could keep the *zeideh* around a little longer? You could leave him in his rocking chair, his eyes closed, and continue to enjoy his company. The family would keep him around! Rashi (*Pesachim* 54b) says that! So what's the rush? And after a week or two, or a

month, let's say, so then you could bury him. Now pay attention because there's a very great lesson here.

OUT OF SIGHT, OUT OF MIND

There is a very big peril in letting a dead body lie around. You know what that peril is? A dead body is a testimony against *hashar'as ha'nefesh*. The sight of a dead body, a body that had just moments before been full of life, seems to be a contradiction to the principle that man lives on after death. Just think about it. What's the first thing that you think about when there's a *meis*? You think it's the end. Death deceives the mind to think that this is the *sof kol adam*, that this is the end. And that's that's a very big *sheker*. You should never see it, because death is like a *pirchah*, a refutation of the the *ikar ha'emunah* - the foundation of all foundations, belief in the World to Come.

When a person is walking around, and he's functioning; he's eating three meals a day and he has money in his pocket, so it's easy to talk about the World to Come. Sure, why not! In addition to this world, he wants the Next World too. Why not?

But when you see a dead body, it becomes very difficult to believe in the Afterlife. Because no matter how much your *seichel* tells you that the *neshama* lives forever, when you look at that dead body it hits you between the eyes: "Look, he's dead now. It's over, finished." All the *ani ma'amins* that you rattled off after *shachris* for so many years, come crashing down into a heap of rubble, at the sight of a lifeless body.

MISAH DOESN'T MEAN TO DIE

There was once a man in the *shul* by us, a *frum* man, whose father died. So I went to be *minachem avel*, *nishtheintgedacht*. He broke down weeping as I was speaking to him. And he told me that it hurt him so much, he was pained so much, because at the time when his father died, he looked at his father's body and he saw the lifeless lump of skin and bones, and he felt that it was the end, a complete end; he's no longer. Of course, this man was a

ma'amin. But even a short moment of seeing a dead body, is a moment of weakness that counteracts the *seichel*, the Torah attitudes that you have acquired over many years.

And therefore, in order to not be weakened in our belief in the World to Come, and so that we should know that the *meis* is *not* really *meis*, Hashem wants us to get the body of sight. And Hashem encourages this by making the decomposition of the *meis* so unpleasant, so disgusting, that nobody would even venture to keep the *meis* around for longer than needed. Hashem wants the *meis* out of sight and out of mind. Because it's so important to know that this person is *not* dead. I told you many times already, that the word **מת** is related to the word **מוֹט**, to move. Because that's what *misah* is - merely moving from one place to another. And therefore, Hashem wants this dead body out of sight *in order that we should remember that he's not a body*, that he is *tzelem Elokim*. And the *tzelem Elokim* lives forever. He is not dead! The *zaideh* is still alive!

DANGER: KEEP YOUR DISTANCE

And we understand now why the most stringent of all *tumahs* is the *tumah* of a dead body. Because what is *tumah* anyway? Do you think it's a force of defilement that magically spreads through the air? The Rambam says that what *tumah* really is, is a defilement of *the mind*!

An object which is capable of contaminating your mind, by impinging on the great truth of life after death, is a most dangerous object and must be avoided.

And that's why Hashem decreed that the dead body should transmit the highest form of *tumah*, because it transmits to your mind the highest form of falsehood. That's what *tumah* is - Hashem is telling us, "Keep away."

The strictest level of *tumah* is what Hashem wants us to keep furthest away from. And the most dangerous thing in the

world is the watering down, even in the slightest, of our belief in *Olam Habah*.

OLAM HABAH IS EVERYTHING

Now, before we go on, it's important to understand that this belief in *Olam Habah* is not just an extra, a *middas chassidus*. Because when we turn to the *Mesillas Yesharim*, the textbook of *avodas Hashem*, we see that *Olam Habah* is everything! He tells us there that we must always keep in mind that the **יסוד החסידות ושורש העבודה שיתברר** - The foundation and root of *avodas Hashem* is **ויתאמת אצל האדם מה חובתו בעולמו... הוא העולם הבא** - "That a man must make clear to himself and convince himself of his obligation in this world...which is preparing for the World to Come."

Pay close attention to his words because there are two separate functions here. It must become crystal clear, **יתברר**, to you what your purpose is in this world. But it's not enough that you have pinpointed your purpose. It's not enough that you can say, "I believe in *Olam Habah*" and you're finished.

INTIMATIONS OF OLAM HABAH

Because in addition to clarifying that, there is also the function of **ויתאמת**, you must become *convinced* about *Olam Habah*. You must exert whatever effort is required to convince yourself that it's true. You have to try with all your abilities to gain a firm belief, a firm conviction in the reality of *Olam Habah*. You should be convinced of the existence, the truth, of *Olam Habah* no less than you are convinced in the truth of your fingers.

Now, because the deep conviction in *Olam Habah* is the foundation of our *avodas Hashem*, it is not enough to merely keep away from *meisim*. Not only do we need to stay away from anything that will weaken our belief in *Olam Habah* but we need to use whatever methods available to strengthen it as well. Whatever we could do to **ויתאמת**, to convince ourselves of this truth, and then to convince ourselves even more, that is our obligation. And that brings us to a very important subject, a subject that we will

call intimations of eternity, the hints of eternity that are available in this world. Hakodosh Boruch Hu made this world in a way that it supplies us with many reminders of the World to Come.

RABBI YOCHANAN'S SCHOOL TRIP

I'll tell you a little story from the *gemara* (Brachos 44a) about our *chachomim*. It's a story about how they worked on this function of *יתאמת*, of impressing the truth of *Olam Habah* more and more into their souls. I'll read it in translation. "Rabbah bar bar Chana said: When we used to follow after Rabbi Yochanan" - now, where did they follow him? To the *beis medrash*?! No; it says "When we used to follow Rabbi Yochanan *to eat the fruits of Ginosar*." Ginosar is the Kineres. And near the lake there was a place where the fruits grew most lusciously. The most delectable fruits grew there.

And Rabbi Yochanan used to go there especially for the *mitzvah* of eating fruit. Do you hear such a *mitzvah*?! And his *talmidim* followed him. How many? At least a hundred it says there. Rabbah bar bar Chana says there: "When we were a group of *a hundred*, each one of us picked ten fruit - big fat fruit - that's a thousand fruit, and we ate them."

The *gemara* there describes the scene. "Rabbi Abahu ate so much *עד דהוה שריק ליה דודבא מאפותיה* - "His forehead became so slippery that even a fly couldn't get a foothold on it; the fly would slip off his forehead." He ate so much, there was so much juice and sweetness inside him from those fruits that his forehead was exuding oils. Rabbi Abahu was packing himself with fruit. And he was just one example. Rav Ami and Rav Assi would eat *עד דנתור מזייהו*, until their hair fell out. They ate so much that their hair fell out! It means they were gorging themselves. It was an orgy of eating.

REISH LAKISH IS ARRESTED

And Reish Lakish used to eat *עד דמריד*, until he became out of control. He lost control of himself; he became wild. It says there

that Rabbi Yochanan had to call the policemen of the House of the Nasi. היה משדר ליה רבי יהודה נשיאה באלושי אבתריה - "Rabbi Yehuda Nesiah had to send a troop of men to get Reish Lakish." The police of the *Nasi* had to come and carry him home.

Now this is a remarkable story you're hearing right here. These *tzadikim* were not interested in eating for eating's sake. And so it seems to us a waste of time. Reish Lakish and Rabbi Yochanan wouldn't involve themselves in *d'varim b'teilim*. And here they left the Yeshiva, they traveled to the orchards of *Ginosar*, and they spent *hours* - it was *hours* - eating fruit!

THE MIRRER MESIVTA SCHOOL TRIP

So we see that there was something of an investment here. It wasn't just an outing like we see boys go out on *Lag B'omer* or something. There was a purpose here! What's all this about? After all, these were great men. Even if it was Purim, it could be it was Purim, but even then it's not understandable to us.

Today, if a *rosh yeshiva* would go on an outing with his boys it would be a queer thing. He might let them go out - what could he do already, he wants to keep them happy so that he can get more students. So he let's them go out to the park; but *he* wouldn't go with them! Imagine the whole Mirrer Yeshiva takes off, and they all march down Kings Highway to the big fruit store, and they all get busy eating. The *talmidim*, the *mashgiach*, the *roshei yeshiva*, are all sitting on the benches on Kings Highway and stuffing themselves with fruit. But that's exactly what happened in *Ginosar*. Only that they weren't boys, they were grown men; they were *amora'im*. And that needs an explanation.

IMAGINING OLAM HABAH

And so we'll understand it as follows: These men were working on the realization of what it means *Gan Eden*. You know that *Olam Habah* is called *Gan Eden*. And it's called that as a *mashal*, so that you should know how to imagine *Olam Habah*. And the Torah describes that the most delectable fruit grew there. כל עץ

נחמד למראה וטוב למאכל. Now, those fruits were extremely beautiful; golden yellow, bright red, pink, blue, purple; all beautiful colors and luscious tastes. That's how we are supposed to think when we imagine *Olam Habah*.

And that's why Rabbi Yochanan traveled to all the way to Ginosar. Because there, the fruits were the most beautiful, the most sweet-tasting, in *Eretz Yisroel*. They wanted to get a *tziyur*, a picture, of *Gan Eden*! Seeing is believing! And the closest that they could come to seeing *Gan Eden* was the *peiros Ginosar*.

THE AMORA'IM GO APPLE PICKING

And so they went to that place, where these orchards were, and they gloried in the sight of these *peiros*. But it wasn't enough to just look at them. They plucked the fruit off the trees and they ate. And they ate and ate and ate. And they enjoyed it so much. It was an orgy of *simcha*, an orgy of *hakarah*, of *da'as*. They gained such a *da'as*, an awareness of *Olam Habah*, and they were changed forever.

They worked on this *mashal* with all their *ko'ach*, so that *Gan Eden* would be in their minds all year round as an actual fact. They had felt it with their senses; they had seen it, they had tasted it, they gorged themselves on it! It was all in the form of a *mashal*, but the purpose was to teach themselves the awareness of *Gan Eden*. In their minds, where it matters most, they taught themselves this principle, and it became more and more real.

Of course they knew that the fruit they were eating were *nothing* compared to *Olam Habah*. In *Olam Habah* the joy is infinitely better than *peiros Ginosar*. The *gemara* says that the pleasure is so sweet, so intense, that the *neshama* can't survive. And Hakodosh Boruch Hu needs to revive the *neshama* again and again so that it can continue to partake of the pleasure of seeing the *Sh'china*. Because in *Olam Habah* the longer you look, the happier you become, and the more intense your joy becomes. It's not like eating fruit. After all, you get tired of eating after a while. How much could you eat already?! In this world all happiness

turns out to be a disappointment after a while. But at least *something* they wanted to experience, a *me'ein Olam Habah*, a picture of *Olam Habah* in their minds.

GAN EDEN IN THIS WORLD

So we see here how *tzadikim gedolim*, who wouldn't waste a minute of their lives from *talmud Torah*, spent a big part of their day in gaining an awareness of what *Gan Eden* looks like. And that should stand out as a model for us, a model that we should keep before our eyes always. You're hearing an important *chiddush* here tonight. Very important! And so, it's very necessary for those of you who now heard this, to take it to heart and begin a new career of thinking of *Olam Habah*. Wherever you make your way in this world, your mind is on the Next World, yearning for that great banquet hall all the days of your life.

Now, Hakodosh Boruch Hu supplies us in this world with intimations of *Olam Habah*. You walk in the springtime and you see a tree that burst out all in pink flowers. Don't let that go! Stop for a minute and look at it. That tree is a *mashal* for *Gan Eden*. That beautiful sight, if pondered for a moment, fills the soul with joy, with delight. The whole tree has burst out in a profusion of color, pink blossoms, beautiful flowers. Now, in this world, it won't last too long. But if you stop and let your eyes drink in this glory, it will go into your neshama as you think, "This beautiful sight is a *mashal*, a hint of *Olam Habah*." That's what it's for, and that's how you should utilize it.

THE CITY BOY MEETS AN APPLE TREE

I was forty years old the first time I saw apples growing on a tree. I was a city boy; I never saw apples hanging on a tree. For a city boy, apples "grow" in the big bins in front of the store, that's all. But I was once in a shul, I used to daven in the morning there, and I was the only *kohen*. I didn't want to monopolize all the *aliyos*, so before *kriyas hatorah* I would walk out into the yard, so that I shouldn't be called up to the Torah.

So I walked out on that first day and I saw a sight! A tree, and red apples are hanging on the tree! I was amazed! I never saw such a thing before. But I was prepared for the sight because I had already learned this Mesillas Yesharim about *יתאמת*, about convincing yourself about the reality of *Olam Habah*. I had already studied the *gemara* about *peiros* Ginosar. And so I utilized that apple tree. My mind feasted on it. And I stood there thinking about how beautiful, how pleasurable, how much joy there will be in *Olam Habah*. To this day I can't forget that beautiful picture of that tree full of red apples. I don't know if that tree is still standing, but in my head it's still there. And I'm *makir tov* to that tree because of the lesson it taught me about *Olam Habah*.

WHAT DO YOU SEE AT THE FRUIT STORE?

And so, when you pass by a fruit store on Kings Highway and outside you see a whole collection of colors, those are your "*peiros Ginosar*." Beautiful colors, in all its varieties! Red tomatoes, golden bananas, purple grapes - every form of color, every shade, and all different shapes and sizes. And the tastes - all types of delicious tastes. Now, instead of just passing by, and wasting your life like so many others, so you stop for a moment and take a look at all these beautiful colors. And you think, "All these are a *mashal* for the glorious garden of *Gan Eden*, where the best fruits grow. That's where I'm going to be someday. And it's going to be a thousand times, a million times more enjoyable!"

Now, to ears that are not accustomed, this idea does not appeal. It doesn't even find a place to take root in our thoughts because we're *Olam Haze'h'dikeh* people. We see a fruit stand and we just think of it as a place to buy fruit and that's all. So maybe you'll look at the prices, what's on sale, or you'll watch the Italian man with big biceps unload the fruits from his truck. But to look at the fruit and prepare for *Olam Habah*? You never even *thought* about such a thing! But in reality, and yes this *is* the reality, Hakodosh Boruch Hu put it there as one of the many experiences that should remind you of the happiness of the World to Come.

The fact that we see these beautiful things is to be utilized by us as a reminder about *Gan Eden*.

It's a very important function that we're learning right now. To utilize all the *meshalim* in this world to make us aware of the most important purpose of our lives; the great happiness that is awaiting us in *Olam Habah*.

CLIMBING MOUNTAINS AND TRAVELING COUNTRY ROADS

So next time you see a mountain in this world, don't waste the opportunity. It inspires within you a feeling of admiration when you see that tall mountain in the distance, and your heart yearns; you'd like to climb that mountain. Of course, if you get there, all you would find would be deep grass, and rattlesnakes. Your yearning won't be satisfied on top of that mountain. Because the reality of this world is always disappointing. But the dream, that imagination that you have, is not false. Because that mountain symbolizes something that's unattainable in this world. What you're really yearning for is a great mysterious happiness - the happiness of *Olam Habah*.

Or let's say you're standing on a country road, and you look down the road and it's winding down for miles and miles. And you're thinking, "I'd like to travel on this road, to see what's doing at the other end." That yearning is real! That yearning for travel, "I'd like to go and travel down this winding road," should be a symbol for us. Because there *is* a road, a true road to happiness. The road to *Olam Habah* is the winding road without any deceptions. Hakodosh Boruch Hu is not deceiving us. The road of your life leads somewhere. Our life is a road that leads to a much greater destination than any other road.

TRAVELING ON THE LONG ROAD

And it doesn't have to be in the country. Let's say you're standing on a highway, here in the city. And you're thinking, "Here on this side, I know all about it. Nothing interesting, just stores around here. But what's doing at the end of the highway?"

Probably something interesting. I'd like to travel there and see." Now, the truth is that it's nothing. But the imagination, the yearning was put in our hearts in order to stimulate us to think about this great road that we follow in this life, that leads to a true destination. And we utilize all these stimuli in this world, to make us more aware of the World to Come.

Here's a man standing by the seashore and he sees the horizon, where the water meets the sky. And a certain feeling wells up within him: "What's beyond the horizon?" The truth is that there's nothing there, just more water, that's all. But all of us yearn for something beyond the horizon. And that yearning is put into your heart for a purpose. Hashem put that into your hearts for the purpose of making you aware that there *is* something much greater "beyond the horizon." This world is only the beginning and the best is yet to come. Because over the horizon, and down that winding country road, is our future in *Olam Habah*.

EXPENSIVE WEDDINGS

And that's why the *chachomim* also called *Olam Habah* a *seudah*. The World to Come is a banquet. So now, let's say, you're at a wedding, a beautiful banquet, and the waiters are serving all types of delicacies and dishes. And all the guests are seated there, enjoying themselves. And you look around and you're utilizing it as a picture of the World to Come. Only that was is served there will be much more delicious than all the delicacies that are being served at the *chasuna*. It will be a great *seudah*, where they will be serving the most delicious things. And you'll never get tired of the pleasures in that world. It'll go on and on forever and ever. And it's happiness that will never come to an end. You'll be seated at the great banquet of *Olam Habah* together with all those who deserve it.

So your wealthy cousin is wasting his money on an expensive *chasuna*, and he's not getting anything out of it. And neither are the guests. Except maybe stomach aches and missing hours of sleep, so now many of the wedding guests will be

grouchy people the next day - with stomach aches. But you, because you came here tonight, you'll be the one guest who knows how to utilize the *chasuna*. All the money of the *chasuna* was for you! Because when you look at the *seudah*, when you experience such a banquet, you utilize it for thinking of *Olam Habah*.

And you don't have to wait for a *chasuna* invitation. There are an endless amount of opportunities, simple ways, whereby you can utilize the happiness of this world, to prepare for *Olam Habah*. Let's say, when you sit down to a regular meal. Breakfast, let's say, a regular weekday breakfast. You're hungry aren't you? So whatever you're having for breakfast, you certainly enjoy the food. Now, once in a while you should add the thought that this meal is a *mashal* for the very great *seudah* of the World to Come. It'll be a much greater happiness there; we'll be seated at a glorious banquet in *Olam Habah*, a great happiness that will last forever. But your breakfast can be at least a *mashal* for that great experience. And now, with some thought, your enjoyment of breakfast becomes a *mashal* for *Olam Haba*.

IS IT JUST A NIGGUN?

When you sit down at your table on Friday night is another opportunity. The candles are burning, the white tablecloth is spread on the table, two beautiful *challahs* covered with a white cloth. It's beautiful! So why let it go to waste? It doesn't matter what everyone else is doing at the table. Why don't you think about what the Gemara says, that Shabbos is מעין עולם הבא - "Shabbos is something like *Olam Habah*" (see Shabbos 57b). Why did they say this? Just for poetry?! Just to have some nice words for a *niggun*?! Is it *just* telling you to eat a piece of chocolate cake on Shabbos, take a long nap and enjoy yourself, and that's all? That's the depth of what *Chazal* meant?!

No, these words are telling you how to utilize the opportunity of Shabbos. Shabbos is *Olam Habah*, and the successful person will utilize that piece of chocolate cake to become a *ben Olam Habah*. He'll learn how to become a *ben Olam*

Habah while eating a slice of challah and piece of kugel. How's that?

YOU CAN'T EAT A RAW CHULENT

So, you're sitting now at the table and enjoying the *seudah* of Shabbos. And it's beautiful. The house was cleaned, the table is set, and the food smells delicious. You're appreciating all the work your wife put in preparing all this. And what's the first thing you think about? You're thinking how all of this good food was prepared *before* the sun went down. If your wife had been lazy, if she had slacked off and slept on the couch all Friday, there would be no Shabbos. מי שטרח בערב שבת יאכל בשבת - "One who exerts himself on *erev Shabbos*, will eat on *Shabbos*, מי שלא טרח בערב שבת - But one who neglects to prepare on *erev Shabbos*, what will he eat when Shabbos comes?" (*Avodah Zarah* 3a). Although the *mashal* is true, but the *nimshal* is even more true. Because if you don't prepare in this world, you'll have nothing at all in *Olam Habah*. In the Shabbos of this world, you can maybe find a neighbor to share some food with you, but in the *Yom She'kulo Shabbos*, you'll only have what *you* prepared.

And so you must make sure to use the opportunity of *me'ein Olam Habah*. You're sitting there and thinking that it's all a *mashal* of the World to Come. Someday you'll be seated at another table. And the candles there will be much more brilliant. That'll be the real Shabbos. There, you'll sit at a much bigger *seudah*, a banquet that will be forever and ever. And it will be a banquet of the greatest joy that you can imagine, far beyond anything you could imagine in this world.

You'll never get tired of eating there. *Olam Haba* is joy following joy, pleasure after pleasure. We have to picture *Olam Haba*, and the more that you picture it, the more your *emunah* grows in you. So as you sit at your Shabbos table enjoying the delicacies of Shabbos, think about *Olam Haba*. If you don't, and you're sitting at the table eating and singing and enjoying yourself, but you're not thinking, then it's a real waste. Nothing

will remain of the good things that you and your wife labored to prepare. At least there should be some gain - become a *ma'amin* in *Gan Eden* as a result of what you enjoy today.

SUICIDE PREVENTION

And one who lives with *Olam Habah* in his mind, enjoys this world. A life without *Olam Habah* in your mind is a hopeless life. Nowadays the youth are taught atheism, and even the good boys are taken in by the *s'vivah* around them. And *Olam Habah* never even enters their mind. So why shouldn't they kill themselves young? What difference does it make? And that's why suicide today among adolescents is more than it has ever been before.

But when a person lives with the knowledge that he is headed towards the great happiness of *Olam Habah* - he sees it already while he's standing in this world - then his entire life is transformed. It's common sense. Life becomes worth living *no matter what!* Every second of life becomes worth living because it's all a part of the road to *Olam Habah*.

THE POOR JEW LIVES HAPPILY

And that's why Jews always lived happily, even those that were poor. Because they were accomplishing what they came to this world for. They were doing *mitzvos*, learning Torah, and living Torah lives. And a loyal Jew knew that it was only a preparation for the great future. כל ישראל יש להם חלק לעולם הבא - "All of Yisroel, all of those who live as Yisroel, have a portion in the World to Come" (Sanhedrin 90a). And therefore his life was all one happy journey towards *Olam Habah*.

It's common sense that the consolation of *Olam Habah* is a necessary form of lubrication in all that we do in this life. It gives us more energy, more happiness, more eagerness, to do things. Not only because of the reward, but just the mere fact that this world is merely a hallway that leads to that great happiness in the

Next World prevents us from being discouraged. *Ashreinu mah tov chelkeinu!* How fortunate we are!

SPEAKING IS BELIEVING

And so as much as you can, you should think about your good fortune. Speak about it. Every Shabbos should leave over in our hearts some residue of the emunah in the World to Come. Talk about *Olam Haba* at your table. Now, sometimes your children won't want to listen to it; that very well might be a sign that they don't believe in it. Then you'll have to preach *Olam Haba* to them again and again. A person has to hear it a thousand times and then maybe a little *emunah* will come into his heart. But that little bit is more precious than diamonds.

And if you'll think, if you'll make use of the opportunities in this world, then this world becomes a very profitable place. Think about *Olam Habah* frequently. Use all of the hints in this world as the *mashalim* that Hashem intended them for. If you're a parent, talk about *Olam Habah* at the table. Talk about it *whenever you can*. Be a propagandist for Hakodosh Boruch Hu. Can it be that you sit with your children at the table week after week and you never mention *Olam Habah*?! You're not an Italian, you're a *Yisroel!*

THE REBBI NEEDS TO DO HIS JOB

If you're a *rebbe* in a yeshiva, talk about it to your *talmidim*. Here's a *rebbe* who never once mentioned *Olam Habah* in his classroom! Everything else he mentions, everything! But not once did he mention *Olam Habah*. Is that a *rebbe*?! Are you doing your duty? Are you raising up children *b'derech hatorah*? You're teaching them Bava Kama? Wonderful! But not one word about *Olam Habah*?! Never?! *Gevalt!* What happened to you?!

Husbands and wives also. They shouldn't be embarrassed. They should mention *Olam Habah* to each other. Don't be ashamed of saying those words whenever you can. I once mentioned *Olam Habah* in a lecture I was giving, I mentioned it a few times, and

finally this man couldn't control himself any longer, "What's this that you're mentioning *Olam Habah*, *Olam Habah*. You sound like a little girl." A *bur*, an *am ha'aretz*, he was. A little girl?! That's *all* we should be speaking about! It should be part of our lives. It should be mentioned at the table. Parents, children; boys and girls, should mention *Olam Habah* whenever they can.

The results of such a career are certainly going to be remarkably great. Because when a man is constantly reminded of *Olam Habah*, when he is always thinking of that garden of delights, then all of his deeds, all of his behavior in this world becomes different. When you live for the moment, you will say things that you will regret later; you will do things that are not so wise.

THE BELIEVER KEEPS HIS MOUTH CLOSED

So here you have a man whose wife insulted him. Or a woman whose husband said a sharp word to her. A bochur whose chaver in the Yeshiva or shul insulted him. Now, if you live only for this world, for the moment, so you might want to insult him back. Why not? But actually you've lost a glorious opportunity. Oh, what an opportunity you have lost!

But if you're a person who lives with intimations of *Olam Habah*, you're an *Olam Habah'dika mentch*, you'll make use of that moment. Because actually it *is* an opportunity. When somebody insults you and you're able to restrain yourself, you're living for the World to Come. You're living with *Olam Habah* in front of your eyes. And that's a glorious achievement.

The man who keeps quiet when his wife says something silly against him. And the woman who keeps her mouth closed when her husband gets angry and says something foolish to her. These people have trained themselves, by means of all the reminders of *Olam Habah* in this world, to utilize all of these opportunities to live for the World to Come. They are living their lives for eternity. It is when the thoughts of *Olam Habah* are

always before your mind, that's how you will reap very great profit and success in this world.

THE SECRET OF THE PARAH ADUMAH UNRAVELED

And this subject of *Olam Habah* can help us unravel at least a little bit of the mystery of the *Parah Adumah* that we began with tonight. Because even though Shlomo Hamelech said about the *parah adumah*, "I saw that wisdom is very far from me," that does not mean that we are free from gleaning some truths from it. For, if we look intently, there are *remazim* which we can learn.

ויקחו אליך פרה אדומה תמימה אשר אין בה מום - "They shall take to you a red heifer, perfect, which is without any blemish" (*Chukas* 19:2). Included in the word "perfect" is also the requirement that the color should be perfect without any hairs of a different color. This *parah adumah*, without any sort of blemish, and with a beautiful coat of red hair was a rarity. It was beautiful to look at. Simply to come see this animal would be worth the trip. And because it was so difficult to find, it was very expensive. It costs hundreds of thousands of dollars to buy a *parah adumah*. You sell one *Parah Adumah*, and you could retire into *Kollel*. You were set for life. (*Kiddushin* 31a).

IT'S AFTER DEATH THAT COUNTS

And yet, despite its striking beauty, despite its perfection and its enormous cost, *while it's alive it's worthless!* It could accomplish nothing of the purification procedure while it was still in its state of beauty. Of course, it was valuable while it was alive, but *only because* of its potential, because of what would be accomplished with it *after* its slaughter and decomposition. You have to slaughter it and burn it, and it becomes ashes. Oh! *That's* when it becomes important! Only as ashes could it achieve its true purpose, the ability to purify an *avi avos hatumah*.

This symbolizes an important parallel: To Hashem, the most precious object in the world is a *Yisroel*. Even one *Yisroel* is more valuable to Hashem than the entire Universe. "For my sake

the world was created” is what the *Yisroel* says (Sanhedrin 37a). And yet, like the *Parah Adumah*, no matter how precious he may be, no matter what he has achieved in his life, he has not reached his true purpose *while he's alive*. The destination of a *Yisroel* is the *Next World*. Only *there* does he accomplish what he came to this world for. A person while he's alive, that's not his perfection. What matters is what happens after one passes out of this world and becomes ashes. When a person is *מות*, when he moves (*מוש*) from this world to the next, that's what really counts. When you come to *Olam Habah*, that's the purpose of life. *Olam Habah* is the purpose, not *Olam HazeH*!

Of course, *we're* all thinking only about *Olam HazeH*. We plan on being here for the next ten thousand years. Only *other* people die. We shudder to think about *Olam Habah*. We'd like to be here forever. But that's a fundamental error. Because only when one dies and is interred and his body turns to dust, that's his achievement, exactly like the *Parah Adumah*. Our greatest happiness will be after we say farewell to this world and move on to the ecstasy of *Olam Habah*!

A JEW IS LIKE A PARAH ADUMAH

And now we understand why it's only the *parah adumah* which can purify the *tumah* that comes from a dead body. The *tumah* of a dead body that comes because which implies that all has ended with the last breath of this man, can only be purified through the lesson of the *Parah Adumah*. And that lesson is that this man has *not* died. “Don't be fooled by that lifeless body,” says the *kohen* as he sprinkles the ashes of the *parah adumah*. “This *parah adumah* can only achieve its purpose now, as ashes. And for this man as well, nothing has been truly achieved until this moment. Only now has he reached the pinnacle of the life he lived, as he continues to live on in *Olam Habah*.”

We are busy in this world, perfecting ourselves by accumulating *mitzvos* and Torah and *da'as*. Just like the *parah* is perfect, we aim for perfection in this world. But we must always

keep in mind the great truth of *Olam Habah*, that the ultimate and most sublime excellence of man is achieved only when he becomes dust in the earth. It is then that his *neshama*, his *tzelem Elokim*, leaves this world to rejoice in front of Hashem in *Olam Habah*. And that eternal happiness is a *simcha* that even Hakodosh Boruch Hu couldn't make any greater.

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Endnote:

During the last month
of Rabbi Miller's life
his doctor said to him:

"There is really
nothing more we
can do".

When Rabbi Miller
heard that, he
responded with a
smile, "This is what I
was preparing for my
whole life".

FREE!

TAKE ME
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תורת אביגדור

"שאל אביד ויגדד זקניד ויאמרו לך"



Q&A With Rav Avigdor Miller Ztz"l

Q:

Should I go to the Holocaust Museum in order to learn more about the Holocaust?

A:

Don't go to Holocaust museums. You can make yourself familiar with the Holocaust in many ways, but the Holocaust museums should not be one of them. There are plenty of good books - good from books - about the Holocaust. But don't go to the museums. The museums, you have to know, are all poisoned. They've been poisoned by the *resha'im* and the *apikorsim*.

Every Holocaust museum today, sets up certain exhibits and forms of mourning for the lost *resha'im* that Hitler executed. They mix together their *tum'ah* with our *kedoshim* who lost their lives. They put them in the same category.

But we're not interested in mourning for the *resha'im* that Hitler executed. It's the Am Yisroel - the Am Hashem - that we're interested in. And going to their museums will poison your mind with the opposite of *da'as Hashem*.

All the Holocaust museums have been contaminated with the bad ideas of the outside world. To have a museum dedicated to the Holocaust, and Hakodosh Boruch Hu is not mentioned even once?!? It's *apikorsis*! So keep away from them.

TAPE #E-257

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