

תורת אביגדור
הגאון ר' אביגדור מיללער זצ"ל

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

פרשת פינחס

Mishpachat Levy
Edition 

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Rav Avigdor Miller ztz"l on

פרשת פינחס

MOSHE ON THE MOUNTAIN

In this week's *parsha*, at the end of Moshe Rabeinu's life, we find him standing with the *Am Yisroel* outside the borders of Eretz Canaan. And although he was so close to the land which he had led his people for forty years, Hakodosh Boruch Hu told him that he was not going to join the *Am Yisroel* in the Promised Land. But he begged Hashem, he begged Him, **אעברה נא ואראה**, - "Please, I want to see it. At least let me pass over and *see* the land before I die."

And Hakodosh Boruch Hu did not even allow that. However, because of Moshe's burning desire to see the land, Hakodosh Boruch Hu told him: **עלה אל הר העברים הזה וראה את הארץ אשר נתתי לבני ישראל** - "Go up this Mount of *Avarim* and see the land that I have given to the *Bnei Yisroel*" (Pinchas 27:12). And so, before Hashem took Moshe Rabeinu out of this world, He brought him up to a mountain peak facing the Land of Israel allowing him a clear view of the beautiful land.

Now, it could be that we're not surprised when we read that Moshe Rabeinu wanted to see the land of *Eretz Yisroel*. For us

it seems natural; certainly he wanted to see. For so many years he had heard about this land; Hashem had constantly told him about its beauty and about how it lacked nothing: **כי השם אלוֹקֵיךָ מביאֲךָ אל ארץ טובה** - "Hashem is bringing you to a good land, **ארץ נחלי מים עינות ותהומות יוצאים בבקעה ובהר** - A land with streams of water, and of springs and underground water coming forth in the valleys and the mountains... **לֹא תחסר כל בה** - You will lack *nothing* there" (Devarim 8: 7-9). And so, of course he desired to at least *see* this beautiful land flowing with milk and honey, a land of rushing springs and falls. Who doesn't have a desire to see the Niagara Falls when he hears of their beauty?

We think it's natural. Like all human beings; they want to see. Here's a *yeshiva bochur* walking down the avenue. Now, he could be reviewing the *sugya* that he's learning, but instead his eyes are wandering, darting here and there. Because he wants to see; it's curiosity, a weakness of mankind. We want to see. And so, Moshe Rabeinu was curious as well. He wanted to see *Eretz Yisroel*.

THE ISH HA'ELOKIM IS CURIOUS?!

But really we must ask ourselves: For a great man like Moshe Rabeinu, the *ish ha'elokim*, what difference does it really make? Is that what Moshe Rabeinu was begging Hashem for, for a little excitement to placate his curiosity, a little tingling of the emotions, before leaving this world? So why did he want to *see*? And not only did he want it, he prayed for it! **אעברה נא** - Please let me pass through the borders to see the land. I want to see! Was that all it was, curiosity?!

Yes, that's exactly what it was. Moshe Rabeinu's desire to see the land *was* coming from his curiosity. But not like a man today who is curious, he wants to know what's doing in Rwanda or even in *Eretz Yisroel*. He has to know who said what to whom. He looks at the newspaper, and turns on the radio. He wants to know what's doing - what did the President say to who, and why. He's interested in the edifying details of who murdered a good for

nothing *shiktza* in the Bronx. His eyes are wandering, his thoughts are wandering, he's curious about every worthless thing.

WHAT CAUSED COLUMBUS TO DISCOVER AMERICA

However, this instinct to look, is not a flaw in a man's character. It was Hakodosh Boruch Hu who planted it in a person. We know that there is such a thing as curiosity in human nature. Everyone has a tendency to look at interesting things. People travel all over the world because of this tendency - they think that someplace else, over *there*, it's better, more interesting than here. And that's what causes all the travel agencies to make money. And that's why people have always made explorations. They could have remained home. Columbus didn't have to travel; He could have been quite comfortable had he remained in Italy or in Spain.

But what could we do already?! Hashem *did* make people curious. And He did it for a very important purpose. Only that most people are completely unaware of the purpose. And that's why their curiosity is usually directed at worthless things.

WHY MOSHE WANTED TO SEE ERETZ YISROEL

But Moshe Rabeinu was the kind of man who knew how to use his curiosity - he pointed his curiosity in the right direction. He didn't want to look at *Eretz Yisroel* just to say "Oooh" and "Aaah", and that's all. Moshe Rabeinu knew how to use his curiosity because he knew *why* he was in this world. He understood that he was here for the purpose of seeing Hashem. And he wanted to see as much of Him as is humanly possible. Because the more you can see Hashem in this world, the more you're fulfilling your purpose of life. That's the summit of achievement. You're in this world to gain an actual feeling that you're standing in the Presence of Hashem. And the more you gain that feeling, the more successful you are with your life on this world. And all of his life, that's how Moshe lived. He made his way through life yearning to see Hashem wherever and whenever he could. And that's exactly why Hashem implanted in humans

the instinct of curiosity - *in order to fulfill our life purpose of searching for Hashem in this world.*

And that's why Moshe Rabbeinu was curious, desirous, to see *Eretz Yisroel*. He wanted to see *with his own eyes* the fulfillment of Hashem's promise. Of course, he knew that when Hashem promised, He would make good on His word. There was no doubt in Moshe's mind that it was a land flowing with milk and honey, a land that was **לא תחסר כל בה** (Devarim 8:9). And yet, he wanted to *see* the goodness of the land. **ואראה את הארץ הטובה** - "I want to see it with my own eyes." (Devarim 3:25) And that's because when he would *see* it with his own two eyes, the Awareness of Hashem's kindness would go into his bones. And that's a big difference.

So Hashem said, "Oh, so you want to become more aware of Me? That's what you came into this world for! OK; So **עלה ראש** הפסגה, climb up on this mountain and I'll show you *Eretz Canaan* from a distance."

MOSHE'S CAREER: CLOUDS AND BURNING BUSHES

Now, when Moshe asked to see the land in order to intensify his awareness of Hashem, it wasn't the first time he used his curiosity for such a sublime purpose. Moshe's career of becoming more and more aware of Hashem didn't begin at the *end* of his life. When he asked Hashem, **אעברה נא ואראה**, "let me see the land" and become even more aware of You, it was actually the culmination of a lifetime career of looking for and seeing Hashem wherever he could.

Moshe Rabbeinu had already made sure to encounter Hashem from the testimony of the world. Nature speaks! **השמים** - "The heavens declare the glory of Hashem, **מספרים כבוד א-ל** - **ומעשה ידיו מגיד הרקיע** - and the firmament relates the work of His hand." Moshe Rabbeinu saw Hashem in the sky, on the earth, and in every part of nature. To us here *hashamayim misaprim k'vod Keil* and *ma'aseh yadav magid harakiya* are just words. They're beautiful words, but they're merely poetic prose. But for Moshe Rabbeinu

they were instructions for how to live, for how to live successfully. And so, when he looked up into the sky and saw the clouds he didn't waste the opportunity. He let his curiosity run wild. Not one time, but time and time again he would look at the clouds, he would watch as they would float across the sky, and he would ask himself the question: "How is it that these clouds drop sweet water on us?" You think it's a *small* thing? Where did the clouds get that water from? It comes from the ocean; the sun evaporates the water from the ocean and the water vapor rises in the air and it becomes clouds.

But there are no corn fields or wheat fields in the ocean that need the rain, so Hashem brings the winds - I say Hashem *brings* the winds; just about the winds we could sit here all night and talk, but we have to get some sleep tonight - Hashem brings the winds and blows the clouds over the continents, and then it condenses because of the cool air, and it falls down as rain. That's what Moshe Rabbeinu saw when he looked up into the sky. He didn't see clouds; He saw Hashem blowing His clouds over our heads. **הַמַּכְסֵה שָׁמַיִם בְּעֵבִים הַמְכִּינְ לָאָרֶץ מֵטֵר** - Hashem, it is You who covers the sky with clouds; it is You who makes all these preparations for watering the earth." (Tehillim 147:8)

And that's not all. Moshe asked himself: The oceans are brine, impossible to drink. Sailors die of thirst on the open seas. But that's the same water we drink all the time; it turns into rain and we drink it. That non potable water turns into the fresh water that makes *all of our food* grow. How could it be? How could water that is unfit to take into your mouth become sweet rain? Moshe was curious - he looked around him at Hashem's creations and asked these questions.

MOSHE STUDIES THE RAIN CYCLE

The process of making rain is a very complicated procedure and it needs the help of a great source of energy which is 93 million miles away - the sun. And it continues always, twenty four hours a day, to evaporate the surfaces of the oceans.

And this same marvelous system that evaporates the water, also serves as a purification plant. It leaves over all the salts, all the chemicals and dirt, in the sea. Only pure water comes up in the form of vapor.

And then a miracle happens! It's lighter than air. Lighter than air?! Yes, it rises up higher than the air. That's how you have clouds. If water vapor was any heavier, the world wouldn't be able to exist. And why shouldn't it be heavy? When water turns into ice it's certainly heavy. So why is it that when the oceans turn into vapor it's lighter than air? Because Hashem wants you to see Him in the clouds!

And the vapor goes all the way up. And when it gets to the top, the winds come. Moshe saw that the winds are not an accident. Winds are large conveyor belts. They're blowing in, inland from the sea, and they're blowing the clouds in over the continents. The winds are large belt conveyors moving billions of tons of water. Moshe studied that.

And what help is it to have clouds overhead? It doesn't do us any good; we need the water *down here*. So there's a wonderful miracle called the force of gravity - you think you understand it just because you can say the word?! The earth pulls down the rain. Why shouldn't the rain remain where it is? In outer space there's no force of gravity. When the astronauts walk out of their spaceship they don't fall down with the rain. So why down here is there gravity? You think you know all about it? You don't know the least bit about it. It's a mystery of mysteries. And because Moshe was curious about Hashem's creations, he did whatever he could to see Hashem's plan and purpose in nature.

Now, I'm not telling you this about Moshe Rabbeinu just so that you should recognize who he was. That's *also* important, but I'm telling you this so that you should have a model of how *you* should be living life.

A BURNING BUSH: HASHEM IN NATURE

You remember when Moshe Rabbeinu was pasturing his father-in-law's sheep in the wilderness: וַיִּבֶן - "And he took a look,

והנה הסנה בוער באש - And behold the bush was burning with fire” (Shemos 3:3). It happens sometimes that in the hot wilderness that fires flare up spontaneously. But Moshe was curious to see Hashem, to see Hashem in nature. He was curious, a *mivakeish*, and was always looking to see Hashem.

And so, when Moshe saw something that aroused his curiosity, his interest, he didn't let it go. “Maybe I can see over there something, another wonder of Hashem's creations that I haven't seen until now. Here's a bush burning, and it's not being consumed.” And it states וירא השם כי סר לראות - And when Hashem saw that he turned aside to see - that Moshe Rabeinu was a man who *always* turned aside to see Hashem - so Hashem said “That's My man! He's interested in using his eyes to see Me! So I'm going to let him see even *more* of Me now.”

PLEASE SHOW ME YOUR GLORY

And Moshe Rabeinu never stopped yearning to see more of Hashem. Many years later, it was after the *cheit ha'eigel*. Moshe had just succeeded in gaining forgiveness for the *Am Yisroel*. Hakodosh Boruch Hu had now demonstrated that Moshe had found favor in His eyes. So Moshe knew that it was an *eis ratzon* right now. He would be able to ask Hashem for almost anything.

So how did Moshe utilize this opportunity? He said to Hashem: הראיני נא את כבודך - “Show me Your glory” (Shemos 33:18). “Hakodosh Boruch Hu, please, I want to *see* Your glory.” What was Moshe saying here? “Show me”?! What should Hashem show him? He was with Hakodosh Boruch Hu all the time! What did he mean, “Show me Your glory, *k'vodecha*”?

THE MEANING OF KAVOD HASHEM

Now pay attention to this word *k'vodecha* because it's a very important word. If you look in the Rambam in the *Moreh Nevuchim* you'll see that he explains what it means כבוד השם. You should learn this meaning now because if you understand what

the word *kavod* means, you will have the key to unlock many *pesukim* in *Tanach*.

The Rambam says (*Moreh Nevuchim* 1:64) that **כבוד השם**, the honor of Hashem, is *when people think about Him!* That's why any manifestation of Hashem's Presence is called **כבודו**; because it is His glory when men are more aware of Him. Whatever reminds you about Hashem, whatever makes you think about Hashem, that's what is giving honor to Hashem. *Hashamayim misaprim k'vod Keil* - the sky, and everything else in this world speak out the *kavod* of Hashem, *by reminding you about Him*.

You want to honor Hashem? You're walking in the street, think about Him. *That's* an honor for Hashem! It'll make you important too. If you're thinking about Hashem while you're walking on the street, then you're a personality already; you're the most distinguished person on the street. You could very well be the most important person in the neighborhood. Do it right now. Think about Hashem - give Him some *kavod*.

IF YOU HAD ONE WISH

And that's why, of all things to ask for, of all things to request from Hashem at this *eis ratzon*, Moshe asked to see more of Hashem. He begged Hashem for more *emunah* in the form of more awareness. "Show me Yourself so that I can achieve even more awareness of You and succeed at my mission in life." Because when you have that chance to ask Hashem, you ask for what's most important.

And that's why the world is filled with the creations of Hashem. **מלא כל הארץ כבודו** - "The earth is filled with His honor." Everything that you see around you, the thousands and hundred of thousands of things you see, were all placed in front of you so that Hashem's honor would be magnified by your seeing Him.

APPLES AREN'T FOR EATING!

And you must realize that these objects around you, have been put there for that purpose. Hakodosh Boruch Hu created

these phenomena for us to study them and gain *da'as* from them. Like it says: **אלוקים עשה שיראו מלפניו** - "Hashem made everything so that we should be aware of Him" (Koheles 3:14). Hashem *didn't* make apples for you to eat. He made apples for us to eat *so that we should become aware of the One who made those remarkable fruit*. He *didn't* make clouds for bringing us water. He made clouds to bring us water so that we should think about Who is moving those clouds over land. He *didn't* make ears for us to hear. The ears were hung on the side of man's head so that you would think about Hakodosh Boruch Hu every time you're conversing with someone.

And that's the meaning of what you say every Friday night at *kiddush*. **ויכל אלוקים את כל מלאכתו אשר עשה** - And Hashem finished all His work *that He made*. Now that's queer. "All of His work"- what are the extra words "That He made"? If it's His work, why say "that He made." It's superfluous. No, the words *asher asah*, that He made, are added as the most important words. It's telling us *why* He made them. He finished all of His work that was made *for the purpose* of us seeing what was made and realizing *Who made it!* **אלוקים עשה - אשר עשה** - "That He made it!" "Why did Hashem make it?", **שיראו מלפניו** - for the purpose that we should learn from His handiwork, from the phenomena of this world that He created, we should learn Who the Creator is.

IS THERE NO BETTER NAME FOR SHABBOS?!

But it's not so easy; Hashem is not out in the open showing Himself to you. It will take effort to succeed at this most important achievement. And that's one of the great lessons of the name Shabbos. You know that the name Shabbos is really an anomaly; it's a problem: Why is it called Shabbos? Everybody knows that Shabbos is a *zeicher l'maasei bereishis*, it's a memorial for the creation of the world. So instead of Shabbos it should've been called *Briyah*, Creation. Or maybe *Assiyah*. If Shabbos is a memorial for Hashem *making* the world, why is it called Shabbos,

which means He *stopped* making the world? I think it's a very big question.

So you'll say, because He finished making the world, He stopped it, so that will remind us that He made it. But that's a roundabout way! If *we* would have given the name, we would have chosen a good name. I would have chosen *Bereishis* - that's a good name. Or *Briyah*.

ANIMALS GROWING OUT OF THE GROUND!!

And now we come to the secret of Shabbos. Shabbos was the great occasion when Hashem stopped showing His presence in the world. Had we been around in the first six days of Creation we would have seen things taking place that would have been marvelous! Hashem said "Let the earth bring forth living animals." So let's imagine we would be standing there and we'd see two horns coming out of the soil. Then we see the head of the ox coming out. We would've been dumbfounded. Our eyes would have popped out of our heads. You know, today when people are wasting their lives watching shows about a big gorilla that is walking through Manhattan picking up cars and crushing buildings, so anything is possible. You believe in this stupidity and that stupidity, so why not believe in another stupidity? But for a clear headed man to see an animal coming out of the ground, it would have been nothing but a miracle of miracles.

If Adam would've been around, let's say he had not been put to sleep when Hashem took Chava off of his body. You know, he didn't see it. If he had seen Chava being taken off his side, then he would've gone *meshugah* with shock: "How could you take a person out of my side?!" It's unthinkable! Of course, even today it's unthinkable. Here's a little girl. Her mother ate bread and potatoes and meat, and now a little girl, a Chava, is born. You think that's a small miracle?! It's a miracle of miracles! You can't explain that away. When a baby is born that's a *neis* that demonstrates Hashem in the world. Reproduction is an accident?! You have to be insane to say that. And the evolutionists *are* insane!

Only that it is a result of constant procedures; *everyone* is born today, so you forget about it. You fall asleep at the wheel and you don't notice it anymore. When you see a miracle being repeated all the time you stop noticing it.

HASHEM IS PLAYING HIDE AND SEEK

But that first time, if Adam would have seen Chava being created from him, he would've been so excited, "I just saw Hashem!" If Adam would have been present when Hashem was making creation, he would have seen Hashem openly. That's something that you can't miss. But then his life would have been a waste. Because the purpose of this world is so that we should try *with our own efforts* to discover Hashem. That's our greatness! But had it been given to us as a gift, if Hashem would've shown Himself to us, if you would see Hashem openly in the world all the time, then you wouldn't get any reward for seeing Him. Even the browns and the blacks and the whites would see Him. It would be no big deal.

But Hashem is concealed, and everything seems to be cause and effect and laws of nature and physics. And everything seems to be so simple and so self explanatory. And that makes our job in this world that much more difficult. And now, our reward will be that much greater. לפום צערה אגרא - according to the difficulty, so is the reward.

That's how we achieve in this world. But had we been present in the beginning, when everything was taking place then we'd get no credit for it. And therefore Shabbos means the great opportunity for us to begin our career of recognizing Hashem in nature. *Shavas!* He stopped creation. And from now on, you get busy. From now on *you* get busy recognizing Hashem. "I'm going into hiding now," Hashem says, "And *you* have to discover *Me*."

And therefore, you have to get busy looking for Hashem. If you're looking elsewhere, if your curiosity is being directed toward other interests besides Hashem, then it is *impossible* to fulfill your purpose in this world. If you're not going to see the Presence of

Hakodosh Boruch Hu from the wonders of nature, then למה לך חיים, for what are you living? You're worse off than a cow. A cow at least is fulfilling its function, it's giving us milk, and meat and leather. But what are you doing here?

EARS STICKING OUT OF THE HEAD!

Now, I'm not going to let you go home without any practical advice. You know that here we like to make progress. So let's listen to what *Iyov* has to say: ומבשרי אחזה אל-ה: - "From my body I see Hashem" (19:26). *Echezeh!* I see! He looked at every organ, and he studied how wonderfully complicated and efficient everything in the body is. I'll give you just a few examples of things we see everyday, hundreds of times, and nevertheless most people don't see anything. You see, but you're really blind, because you don't see Hashem.

You have to practice being curious about Hashem's creations. Did you notice that everybody you saw today had two ears sticking out from sides of their head? Isn't it comical? A nice round head, with two earphones sticking out from the side. Is it an accident? Why don't they come out at the foot? It could have happened that way; ears would come out of your feet. Or maybe on your rump; two ears on your rump. To have them right here, in the best place, right next to your brain. Earphones!

And they're made with whirls, with curves and hollows, in order to gather in the sound waves and concentrate them. So the sound waves come in and hit the eardrum with more force. You know this little lobe down here sticking out of the bottom of your ear? You know what that's for? It's soft in order to absorb the vibrations of the ear. This part over here, the middle of the ear, vibrates because it's made of a tougher material to absorb the sound. So the part down here is soft to swallow up the vibrations so that the sound should come in clear, not blurred by any of those vibrations. And inside there are bones, one connected to the other. And each bone pushes the next bone, in order to enhance, to make greater, the effect of the sound. So that finally when the

sound comes to the brain it's increased even more than the sound waves themselves are.

A VISIT TO THE DUMB ENT

Just looking at a pair of ears will tell you that there's a *Borei* in the world - *if you know how to look*. Anybody can become a *ma'amin* by looking at the ears if he's a thinking man. When I was by the ear doctor I asked him how many ears he's examined in his life. He told me more than a hundred thousand. More than a hundred thousand ears he examined! So I asked him, "So do you see Hashem now every time you look at someone's ear?" He looked at me with a blank face, like the bottom of a frying pan. And I saw there was no use with him. He was like an imbecile; no idea what I was talking about. And that's because a person has to train himself *how* to look.

You're not curious about your fingers?! Take a look at your fingers as they do a task. Watch them turn a doorknob. Or write with a pencil. It's a remarkable sight! Fingers are miraculous inventions that are an indispensable part of your life. Not one time a day, not ten times a day. Not a hundred times a day. Thousands of times a day, you are maneuvering your fingers in sophisticated and complicated ways. Do you know that your fingers are made up of many small bones that involve complicated hinges and levers? And they were created that way by Hashem to allow us to perform the myriad of tasks that we do - working effectively and swiftly, and rarely tiring.

THE MAN WITH NINE FINGERS

We had a man here in the shul who was missing a thumb - one thumb he was missing. He had his other nine fingers. And still, the simple things that we do with our fingers, became much more complicated for him. And you would know that, if you used your eyes for their true purpose - to watch your fingers in action. You'd see the thumb acting as the balance against your other fingers when performing most of your daily tasks. And if you look well you'll see the *k'vod Hashem*.

When we see these things around us, we understand that nature was created by Hashem. When you see a squirrel scurrying up the side of a tree, you're looking at the wonders of Hashem's miracles. You see that it has a furry coat, and that even in cold weather the squirrels survive. They don't die out during the winter. Next summer they'll be here again. They have ways and means of surviving - Hashem provides them with fur coats, and big bushy tails that they wrap around themselves. They find holes in trees where they can hibernate. And they have stored up food that they can nibble at during the winter time. And all these elements are part of the great plan that make us aware of the Hand of Hashem in all of nature. And they are a means for us of recognizing the Creator.

THE BUMS AND THE PEACHES

Often just by looking at the ground by your feet, you'll see Hakodosh Boruch Hu. When I walked outside in the morning, I saw a peach pit lying on the sidewalk. Last night some bums were walking here, and they were eating peaches, and they spat out the pits. They spit them out on the sidewalk. Why didn't they eat the pits? Inside the pit is a pleasant tasting seed. So why didn't they eat it? They weren't intentionally trying to be *poiresh* from the pleasures of this world, that I can guarantee you. So why didn't they eat the seed?

And the reason is because the pit is so hard that it can't be broken with their teeth. Try it, you can't do it; you'll break your teeth before you break the pit. When you eat a peach, you should be asking yourself this question: Why is the pit so hard? So we understand - it takes a little bit of thought, but you have to *think* when you're trying to see Hashem in nature - we understand that it's because Hashem made it hard with the purpose of not permitting us to eat the seed. The seed is needed to grow another peach tree.

But when you take this hard pit, that even squirrels cannot break open with their hard teeth, and you put it in the ground, the

pit opens up *by itself*. In the ground, it opens up *on its own!* It's a miracle! I'll tell you the secret. Look at a peach pit the next time you can. There's a paste there; the two halves of the pit are pasted together with a glue, a strong glue, that make it impossible to break in half. But in the ground the paste melts away, and it opens up. I say "melt away". Hakodosh Boruch Hu created bacteria in the soil that "just so happen" to need the chemical formula of the glue for themselves, and they eat it. And once the strong glue disappears the peach pit opens up on its own! Now you're beginning to see the *chochmas Hashem*. You're becoming more aware of Him.

MY OLD FRIEND, THE APPLE

That's what the fruit are made for, to look at: וְנִחְמַד הָעֵץ לְהַשְׂכִּיל - "The tree is desirable as a means to wisdom" (Bereishis 3:6). The fruit of the tree are desirable *in order* to make you wise. You're supposed to become wise from a fruit! Look at the fruit and think about it. Just look for a little bit at the wisdom of the fruit, the beauty of the fruit, the *chesed* of the fruit. You'll become greater and greater in Awareness of Hashem just from seeing a fruit.

I always come back to our old friend, the apple. Listen to me. Did you ever try putting an apple on the table and looking at it for fifteen minutes? You *never* did it in your life?! You don't know what you missed! For fifteen minutes look at an apple on the table; take a nice red apple, put it on the table and look at it. Look at the redness, the beauty of it, the shape of it. It's gorgeous. Inside is sweet, and crunchy, with just the right amount of tartness from the peel. And hiding inside are the seeds. There's so much to see in the apple even before you put it in your mouth. Take a look and you'll see is that it's wrapped in a wax wrapper, a waterproof case. Because if you take the peel off of the apple, how long will it take for the apple to begin to decay? Immediately it begins turning brown. But this apple was lying on your table perhaps for weeks and it didn't turn brown. That means that this

peel is doing such a perfect job in keeping the apple fresh for you - it's waterproof and it's sealed against the air. Do this for fifteen minutes and you'll be a different person forever.

RAV MILLER'S EXPERIENCE WITH NEVUAH

You know, as a boy, as a young man, I was a *ba'al mussar*. I came to Slobodka, and they didn't know me there. I was an American boy who came to Slobodka on my own. One day, I went outside of the town all by myself and I laid down there in the meadow. I'm sure they were spying on me, "What's this *Amerikaner* doing out there by himself?" I was lying there for an hour and a half looking at a daisy. I want to tell you, it was the greatest experience of my life. I was practicing *bechina* according to the Chovos Halevovos. I can't forget that day. I was there for an hour and a half thinking about the *niflaos haBorei* that were all around me in nature. Now, I had studied these things before. I was a *bochur*, twenty-four years old. But when I got up and walked home, I was walking on clouds. I never had in my whole life such an experience!

Now I'm sorry I didn't repeat it. That's the closest I could imagine to the experience of *nevuah* and I'm truly sorry I didn't repeat it. But at least the effect is there. And you can do the same thing. Look at the apple on the table for fifteen minutes. It's a tremendous experience if you put your mind to it. You'll see the *Borei*.

And therefore, the next time you meet some college fellow who says, "Prove to me that there's a *Borei*, a Creator", so call him over to the fruit stand on the street corner and show him a banana and tell him, "Look at this wrapper around the banana. Who do you think wrapped it?" "It was an accident" he'll tell you. So take off the wrapper and see how long the banana will last without it. So the wrapper is there for the purpose of protecting the banana from rot. Now, if something has a purpose, so Somebody with intelligence had this purpose in mind. It has to be.

THE BANANA PEEL SAVES THE DAY

And if that's not enough for him, so pay for the banana, and peel off the cover and show him that the underside of the peel has no color. Why is the banana so beautifully colored yellow outside, while on the underside there's no color at all? This, even if he would stand on his head, he wouldn't be able to answer. There is nobody in the world who could refute that proof. And it's not a matter of believing, you sign on the dotted line, "I hereby believe in a *Borei*," and your finished. No! That's only the first baby step.

If you didn't see Hashem the last time you saw a banana - it's a failure, yes, it's a failure. But Hakodosh Boruch Hu is not giving up on you. He'll try again. So when you peel an orange, that's your next opportunity to become even more aware of Hashem.

RAV MILLER'S MILLION DOLLAR OFFER

Show me a fruit that is beautifully colored on the *inside* of the peel and drab and plain on the *outside*, and I can safely offer you a million dollars. You're not going to find it. And that's because the One who made that orange knows that when people look at an orange, they look at the *outside*, they don't look *underneath* the peel. And He wants you to notice Him every time you peel an orange.

Now some of you who are regulars here have heard this before. But don't let that discourage you from thinking about it again. One man heard me talking about the apple for a second and third time, and he told me, "I don't have to come anymore; I got the *schnit*." "I got the *schnit*," he says! He didn't get anything! Because this is something you should be thinking about all your life. Every time you peel an orange, don't let that golden opportunity go. Take a good look at the underside of the peel and then take a good look at the outside. Each time you see it, each time you look, think about what you're seeing. You're fulfilling

your purpose in this world, of seeing Hashem in the world around you, and becoming more and more aware of Him.

REAL BA'AL TASHCHIS

And so we're beginning to learn now that the purpose of the apple and the orange and the banana is not like people think, that you should eat it. The purpose of fruit is so you should *see* it. That's the *main* purpose. Of course, after you took a good look and labored a little in the *avodah* of Awareness of Hashem, so you deserve to have a little refreshment too. So you make a nice *bracha* and you can eat it as well. But to eat it without looking at it, without understanding its lesson, that's a waste of an apple. If you don't utilize the fruit to see the wonders of Hakodosh Boruch Hu, to see the Hand of Hashem, to become even more convinced of a Creator, then not only did you waste the apple, but you're wasting your life here in this world.

VARIETY: DON'T FALL ASLEEP ON THE JOB

That's why there is such a variety in the world that Hashem created. When you walk down the street, you'll see that there are red roses, and yellow roses, and there are pink ones and there are white roses. So the question can be asked, why the variety? It seems overdone, not needed. But there are no accidents; it's all part of Hashem's plan.

So in *mesichta* Rosh Hashanah (31a), Rashi says that the purpose of variety is to attract our attention. It means this: If you see red roses all the time it ends up becoming monotonous and you stop thinking about them. But if they're red over here, and in another place they're white, and then right next to the white ones there are yellow ones, and on the next block they're pink, so finally the message is brought home to you that Hashem made roses for you *to notice Him!*

Rashi says, כשאדם רואה עופות ודגים משונים זה מזה - When a person sees that Hashem created so many different kinds of birds, and so many different fish that are so different one from the other,

so he begins to marvel at the One who made them. מי ברא כל אלה. If the world had only one type of fish, so we'd be lulled into inattention, and we'd be bored by the monotony and we wouldn't pay any attention to the phenomena. And if the world had only one type of bird, it would be the same.

THE BIRD'S BEAK MAKES ITS PARNASA

But now, there are all kinds of birds, so if you didn't notice the robin, so you'll notice the crow. And if you didn't notice the crow, you'll notice the parrot in the cage. Or at the bay you'll notice the seagull. In the zoo you'll notice the stork or the ostrich. And finally the message hits home. Why does the bird have a different type of mouth than the fish has? A bird has a bony mouth, a long bony beak. And it enters your mind, "Isn't that interesting? What's the purpose?" And the purpose, you'll understand - if you study a little bit - is that it can penetrate the earth and it can pull out its *parnasa*, it pulls out worms. And that beak is especially constructed for that purpose.

However, it's only after a number of times that we're being nudged; our attention is being solicited, that finally we wake up and we say, "Oh yes, look at that." Maybe sometimes you won't even wake up on your own. You'll need to hear a lecture like this one to encourage you to make something of yourself. Otherwise you might be looking at Hakodosh Boruch Hu for ten years, twenty years, thirty years, and you don't really see Him even once.

THE HELICOPTER SEED!

The same with seeds. Why do seeds have to be distributed in so many different ways? You see that there are different ways that seeds are distributed. Some trees drop their seeds. Some seeds have wings and they fly away. Some seeds spring out when you touch the plant. Some seeds are stored up in a container that builds up gas pressure, and after a while it bursts, it explodes, and the seeds scatter. There is a wide variety of ways that seeds are spread.

And Hashem could have just as well made all seeds spread in one uniform manner. The answer is *because Hakodosh Boruch Hu is trying to get you notice them, so that you'll notice Him!* So the maple seeds are scattered all across the sidewalk, and you've been treading on them all your life. And you've never once noticed that each seed has a remarkable wing attached to it. It's only if you bend over to pick it up, and you throw it into the wind, you see it whirling around like a helicopter. And then you finally think, "Oh, maybe there's something here." **אסורה נא ואראה** - "I should turn aside now and look, **את המראה הגדול הזה** - at this great sight" (Shemos 3:3).

THE APPLESEED MUSEUM

You think an apple seed is simple? It's small and it doesn't bother you so you think it's *just* an apple seed. One apple seed is such a miracle it should be in a museum. A museum for just one apple seed! An apple has in it, on its DNA molecule, at least two billion bits of information encoded on the little helix - you can't see it, it's microscopic - that tells the little seed how to make a tree when it's planted in the ground. And not only are these billions of bits of information coded there, *but the apparatus to carry it out is also in that little seed.* I keep apple seeds in my pocket, and when I'm walking down the street I take them out *all the time* to look at them. I marvel at them.

DO YOU KNOW THE NAMES OF THE OCEAN PARKWAY TREES?

And when I'm not looking at the apple seeds, I'm looking at the leaves of the linden trees, and the cottonwood trees, that line Ocean Parkway. There are two kinds of leaves. You never noticed that? How could you pass by trees and not notice the Hand of Hashem? And then people come here and ask me if they should travel ten hours to Niagara Falls to see the Hand of Hashem! When you see the Hand of Hashem on Ocean Parkway, then we can talk about Niagara Falls. There are two kinds of leaves. One is an "ordinary" leaf, and the other is a seed leaf, which is an airplane that carries three or four passengers in the

middle off that seed leaf. And the seed leaf falls down early in the season and it's carried by the wind. It carries its passengers out of the shade of the parent tree, and it falls in a place where it can grow more successfully, where it won't have to compete with the parent tree.

So when you see these parachutes of a dandelion - did you ever take a dandelion puffball and give a blow on it? It blows into the air and you see thirty parachutes, each one perfectly balanced, each one carrying passengers hanging on the bottom. And it's carried by the wind, sometimes miles away.

So this world was made for us to see the wonders of Hashem and recognize Him. If you want, you could see the *yad Hashem*, the miracles of miracles, all the time. But Hakodosh Boruch Hu wants us to use our own minds to discover Him. He wants us *to look, to see*, and by seeing Hashem everywhere you turn, you fortify your *emunah*, your awareness of Him.

THE CROWN OF OLAM HABAH

And there is nothing more important than clarity of *emunah*, nothing more important than seeing Hashem in this world. Because that's your only path to *Olam Habah*. That's what the *gemara* says: העולם הבא... צדיקים יושבים ועטרותיהם בראשיהם ונהנים מזיו השכינה - "In the Next World the *tzadikim* will be sitting with their crowns on their head enjoying the splendor of the *Shechina*" (Brachos 17a).

And you know why they will enjoy it? Because the crowns on their heads will give them the ability to enjoy the *Shechina*. And the greater the crown, the more their enjoyment is intensified. And the Rambam says (Hilchos Teshuva 8:2), you know what the *crown on the head* is? It's the דעה שידעו שמצויה עמהן - the Awareness of Hashem that you acquire in this lifetime. The more you acquire *da'as* in this lifetime, that's your success! שבגללה זכו לחיי עולם הבא - It's only the *da'as*, the Awareness of Hashem, that you acquire in this world, that allows you to enjoy the Next World. And the more you labor to use every opportunity to become more aware of

Hashem, to think about Him in terms of actual *metzius* - apples and oranges and ears and peach pits and clouds and trees and all the other millions of things that Hashem is showing of Himself in this world - then your crown of *da'as* becomes greater and greater. And that's going to be your happiness in the World to Come!

A VISIT TO THE UN

It's like when you visit the UN and all of the ambassadors from all over the world stand up by the podium to speak. So your sitting in the visitor's gallery and there's no way to understand them. Every language, every dialect, it would be impossible to know what's going on. You wouldn't know what to do with yourself. Only that they give you earphones that have everything translated into English. And you can put them on and suddenly everything makes sense. Now you understand everything. Now it's a pleasure. You're being *neheneh m'ziv ha'UN, l'havdil*.

And that's how it's going to be in the Next World when you come to be *נהנה מזוי השכינה*. It's all dependent on how much you succeeded in gaining *da'as* in this world. Because that *da'as* will be your crown, and according to the size of that crown, that's how much you're going to enjoy the happiness forever and ever in *Olam Habah*. Only the man who prepared himself in this world will be wearing the crown of *da'as*, the earphones, that will allow him to enjoy the splendor of Hakodosh Boruch Hu.

BIG BRAINS AND LITTLE BRAINS

And the bigger a man's mind becomes, the more he understands the greatness of Hashem. That's what it means *השם אלוקי גדלת מאד* - Hashem, My G-d, You have become very great." That's past tense. It doesn't say, "You *are* great." You have *become* very great. What does Dovid Hamelech mean that "You have *become* very great?" I'll tell you. You know, when you're young, or even if you're old and ignorant, and you haven't thought too much, so Hashem is still small. As far as you're concerned He occupies a very little place. Maybe somewhere in the *shul*. And

even in the shul, He's just a name in the *siddur* that pops up once in a while.

But the bigger a man's mind becomes, the more he understands the greatness of Hashem. And that's what it means גדלת מאד - You have become very great. It's what we say all day long - יתגדל ויתקדש שמייה רבה - His great name should be magnified. How do you magnify His name? You'll make Him bigger than He is?! Nobody could make Him bigger than He is! *You have to make your brains bigger!!*

If *you* become bigger, if your *da'as* grows, so Hashem becomes bigger. When one views Hakodosh Boruch Hu through an ant's eye view, through a liberal, modern Jew's view, he'll see nothing. He *thinks* he sees everything, but really he sees nothing. He's entirely blind. To him, to that man with no *da'as*, Hashem is very small.

But a man who has spent time on the subject, and his mind has expanded, so *he* can say, השם אלוקי גדלת מאד. In my mind you have become great, and it is my mind that will be my crown in *Olam Habah*. Hashem, *my G-d*, You have become great. He's *my G-d* because others cannot even fathom how big Hashem is to me.

MOSHE CLIMBS THE MOUNTAIN TO HASHEM

And so everything that we're saying here tonight, Moshe understood very well. He looked for Hashem every day of his life in the clouds, in the trees and in the peach pits and the apple seeds and in anything else he saw. And therefore, now, at the end of his life, he was more close to Hakodosh Boruch Hu than anyone before him, or than anyone later would be. His knowledge of Hashem was an immense store of wisdom. And yet he understood that not only is there no end to the greatness of Hashem, but there is no end to the greatness of Hashem *that one can see in this world*.

And therefore, Moshe Rabbeinu, even on his last day wanted to see more. אעברה נא ואראה - "Let me see *Eretz Yisroel*."

And Hashem acceded to his request and allowed Moshe Rabeinu one more glimpse of Himself. And so Hashem said to him: וראיתה אתה, I will let you *see* it, ונאספת אל עמיך, and only then will I gather you into My arms. Because it is only in this world where you can add more jewels onto your crown, I will allow you one more granule of Awareness of Me. And now, forever and ever, you can be נהנה מזיו השכינה with an even greater crown of *da'as*.

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לע"נ

רבינו אביגדור ב"ר ישראל

הכהן מיללער זצ"ל

In appreciation for
all the Torah he has
taught us and the
incredible impact he
has made on our
lives!

Anonymous

לזכות רפואה שלימה
מנוחה חיה בת דליה טובה

לזכות רפואה שלימה
חיה מלכה בת בת שבע

לזכות
אהובה בת מרים

In honor of my wife, **Temima**.
May we continue growing together,
guided by the light of Rav Miller Z"L

Dedicated by
Rabbi & Mrs. Yaakov Shapiro

לע"נ רבינו אביגדור בן ישראל זצ"ל
נדבת הרוצה בעילום שמו

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תורת אביגדור

"שאל אביך ויגדך זקניך ויאמרו לך"



Q&A With Rav Avigdor Miller Ztz"l

Q:

How can one train himself to serve Hashem *b'simcha* when he hears about the trouble other people are having?

A:

The truth is, what you're saying, it's only an excuse. Because actually, a man should be *b'simcha* when he sees that he doesn't have those troubles. We shouldn't use other people's troubles as an alibi in order to say we cannot have *simcha*. We should certainly sympathize with others, but we must be busy thanking Hakodosh Boruch Hu that it did not happen to us.

There's no question that our *simcha* is multiplied by the fact that we've been rescued from the distress that other people had to undergo. Therefore, whenever you see somebody who is in misfortune, it makes you more obligated to thank Hakodosh Boruch Hu. Because actually, you're far happier. Now, you won't want to admit it. You feel it's wrong to enjoy other people's suffering, and actually, you should not enjoy their suffering. But nobody is so built that he cannot be happy by the fact that he was saved.

Therefore, when it's raining outside, and you see people walking in the pelting rain, and you are inside under a roof, you should enjoy your circumstances, and thank Hashem for the roof over your head, even though you sympathize with those who are in the street.

TAPE #606

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