

תורת אביגדור

הגאון ר' אביגדור מיללער זצ"ל

Rav Avigdor Miller on the Parsha

Adapted from his Tapes, Seforim and Writings of Talmidim

Sefer Bamidbar

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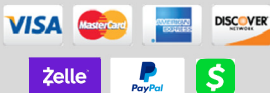
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בעזה"ש
פרשת שלח

With Rav Avigdor Miller ztz"l

Making His Name Great

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Part I. Reward for Regret

HASHEM'S GREAT THREAT

In *Parshas Shelach*, after the *meraglim* returned from their mission to spy out *Eretz Yisroel*, we read some terrifying and ominous words - a threat from Hakodosh Boruch Hu. A threat of annihilation directed at the entire nation. And if that threat had been executed, we wouldn't be sitting here tonight. No doubt there would be an Am Hashem, but it would not have been us.

When the spies came back from their venture into *Eretz Yisroel* and sowed fear among the people - so much so that many wanted to turn around and make their way back to *Mitzrayim* - so Hakodosh Boruch Hu had enough: **עַד אֵנָּה יִנְאַצְנִי הָעָם הַזֶּה** - "*How much longer will this people vex Me?! "It's too many times already that they have provoked Me,"* Hashem said, and He therefore made a proposal to Moshe Rabeinu, an opportunity for a new beginning.

אֶכְנֶה בְּדֶבֶר וְאֹרֶשְׁנֵהוּ - "*Let Me smite this nation with a plague and I'll wipe them out completely.* And how will I fulfill My promise to Avraham that his children will become a great nation? **וְאֶעֱשֶׂה אֹתְךָ** - *Through you, Moshe - I will make you a great nation.*"

AN OFFER YOU CAN'T REFUSE

Moshe was offered that the entire nation forever, would be the nation of Moshe Rabeinu. Now, I'll just make one note before we go on. This you have to know, that Hakodosh Boruch Hu *never intended* to destroy the Jewish people. He knew the outcome; He knew what would be in the end. But as far as Moshe Rabeinu was concerned, he was being given the biggest opportunity of his life - to rebuild the Am Yisroel from scratch; to create a nation for Hashem that wouldn't provoke Hashem again, a nation that would be founded by the *Ish Ha'Elokim* and on the ideals of that great man.

That's a remarkable opportunity for a man of greatness, that from his seed a new Am Yisroel would come to life. The eternal people would always look back to Moshe Rabeinu as the father of their nation and for Moshe that would be a glory unequalled - a tremendous honor forever and ever.

WHAT WILL THE GOYIM SAY?

And so let's listen in on Moshe Rabeinu's response to this great proposition. Because Moshe *didn't* accept the offer; he said no. And there's a tremendous lesson in that refusal because from Moshe Rabeinu's response to Hashem we learn one of the most important purposes of the Am Yisroel - the function of each one of us in this world.

Moshe said to Hashem: וְשָׁמְעוּ מִצְרַיִם כִּי הָעֲלִיתָ בְּכַחֲךָ אֶת הָעָם הַזֶּה... מִמְּקָרְבָּו - וְהִמַּתָּה אֶת הָעָם הַזֶּה - "*When the Egyptians from whose midst You, in Your power, brought up these people, will hear that You have now destroyed them so they will say, מִבְּלָתִי יָבִילַת הַשָּׁם לְהַבִּיא אֶת הָעָם הַזֶּה, אֶל הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לָהֶם* - it's because when they began to approach the land of *Cana'an* and Hashem saw how fortified the land was, how difficult it was to conquer all those nations, so He backed out. He saw that it was *k'viyachol* too much for Him, *chas v'shalom*, and therefore in order to be free from His promise, He destroyed His people." The name of Hashem will be blemished in the eyes of man, and therefore, said Moshe Rabeinu, the Am Yisroel must remain alive.

Moshe Rabeinu at that time proposed a principle of *kavod shamayim* - of being concerned with bringing honor to the name of

Hashem. And anything that might in any way detract from that, Moshe Rabeinu wanted no part of. It's the honor of Hashem that the *Am Yisroel* should be allowed to survive because we represent His promise in this world. וְעַתָּה יִגְדַּל נָא כְּחַד הַשֵּׁם - *Let Your power become increased now*, Moshe said. When everyone will see that despite whatever we have done, You're still willing to forgive us. By means of that, יִגְדַּל נָא כְּחַד הַשֵּׁם, there will be a greater honor for Hashem.

LIFE GRANTED; CONDITIONALLY

With these words Moshe Rabeinu established a reason for the *Am Yisroel* to exist forever. He said to Hashem, "Our function in this world is, and always will be, to bring glory to Your name. *K'vod Shomayim* - that's the purpose of the *Am Yisroel*, and therefore let us live, and forever we will dedicate our lives to making Your name great in this world."

Now, Hakodosh Boruch Hu listened to that; He took Moshe Rabeinu up on his offer: וַיֹּאמֶר הַשֵּׁם סְלַחְתִּי כְדַבְּרְךָ - "I forgive the *Am Yisroel* as you have spoken. If that will be the function of this people, to bring Me honor always, then I will let them live." And so, the most important outcome that resulted from this whole story is the principle of *kavod Hashem*, the honor of Hashem - because when Moshe Rabeinu gained a promise from Hashem to maintain us forever as His nation, it was only with the assumption that we're going to honor Him forever.

Every observant Jew must feel it's his or her obligation to cause a good name for Hakodosh Boruch Hu and to maintain His honor always. We must uphold in the minds of all those who see us the attitude of - "Yes, they are fine people." Not just that we are fine, but that we are that way because of our connection to Hakodosh Boruch Hu. יִגְדַּל נָא כְּחַד הַשֵּׁם means that in whatever we do, we do it with the intention of making Hashem great in this world.

THE HALACHOS OF KIDDUSH

Now, you should pay attention because it's a very important subject and I'm afraid it's not taken seriously enough. The Rambam in *Hilchos Yesodei Hatorah* (*perek* 5) speaks about the

subject of *kiddush Hashem*. It's a *halacha* - when a person is being offered the option of worshipping an idol or otherwise being put to death - he's being told, "Bow down to this *avodah zarah* or we'll kill you," so what should he do? He has to be willing to give his life up for Hakodosh Boruch Hu. And the Rambam there mentions other sins as well - *gilui arayos* and *shfichas damim* - where we say *וְיָהֲרֹג וְיֵעָבֵר*, a Jew say must allow himself to be killed rather than to be forced into these sins.

Now, this is a *halacha* subject with many details, and the Rambam treats it at length there. But at the end of the chapter, in *halacha yud alef*, the Rambam adds the following useful information. He says that there are other things that are included in this mitzvah of *kiddush Hashem*.

A LIFE OF GLORY FOR HASHEM

And he says like this: "If a wise man is careful with himself and he speaks gently to people, and his mind always tries to agree with people - whenever he can, if there's no sacrifice of principles, he always says, "You're right," to make people feel happy - and this man always greets people with a pleasant cast of countenance. When people embarrass him and put him to shame he doesn't retaliate. He honors everybody, even those who don't honor him. And he does business honestly, he deals with everyone honestly. He also doesn't sit long at the meals of the ignorant - that means he doesn't come to banquets and dinners and waste a lot of time there. And he's always crowned with tefillin and wrapped with tzitzis and he's always seen studying Torah in his spare time. And whatever he does, he does more than he is obligated to do, *עַד שֶׁיִּמְצְאוּ הַכָּל מִקְלָסִים אוֹתוֹ* - until the result is that everybody praises him, *וְאוֹהֲבִים אוֹתוֹ* - and everyone loves him, *וְהָרִיזָה קִדְשׁ אֶת* - and they desire to emulate his deeds, *וּמִתְאַוִּין לִמְעֶשָׂיו* - this man is fulfilling the mitzvah of *kiddush Hashem*. *וְעָלִי* - and about him the possuk says, *וַיֹּאמֶר לִי* - *And Hashem said to me*, *עַבְדִּי אַתָּה* - 'You are My servant; you are serving Me, *יִשְׂרָאֵל* - *My nation, by means of whom I am glorified.*'"

Instead of giving up his life for *kiddush Hashem*, this man is *living* in order to glorify the name of Hashem and he's thereby

fulfilling the plan of Moshe Rabeinu, the proposal that Hashem agreed to: "I'll let My people live and they will glorify My name."

So what do we learn here? That it's called *kiddush Hashem* when a frum person makes a good impression on others. An observant Jew, anybody who wears a *yarmulke*, a black hat surely, and certainly if you have a beard. Anybody associated with Hakodosh Boruch Hu is representing Him. And therefore if you belong to the Orthodox camp, and you bring glory to Hashem, then you're fulfilling the purpose for which Hashem left the Am Yisroel alive after the *cheit hamiraglim*.

ON THE BUS AND IN THE PHARMACY

Kiddush Hashem is not something that pops up once in a while when the gentile in the pharmacy gives you too much change. עד שִׁמְכֶלְסִין אוֹתוֹ means that you should live the "mundane" details of your life wanting to find ways to be *mikadeish sheim shamayim*. You should act with dignity at all times because the more *you* are praised, the more Hashem is raised in the eyes of others.

Let's say, you're wearing a yarmulke, you're an Orthodox Jew sitting on the bus. And on one side of you is an empty seat and on the other side another empty seat. Now, two people get on the bus and they're talking to each other. So what do you do? You act like you don't know anything and they should have to sit separately? No; you want to make the name of Hashem great in this world so you don't even wait for them to ask. You get up and let them sit near each other. They might say thank you, they might not, but at least you've already propagandized for Hashem.

A man with a yarmulke must watch his every step. When you get off the bus and the Italian man getting off before you holds the door open for you, so you must smile at him and say thank you. Even if you weren't wearing a yarmulke it's something you should do, but with a yarmulke on it's something very different already because you are recognized as the representative of Hashem. Your mannerisms, your speech, your behavior, should all be dedicated to bringing honor to Hashem. That's your job in this world - wherever you go, make sure that people like you; because that's *kavod shamayim*.

THE LEXICON OF DERECH ERETZ

You must live for the purpose of honoring Hashem. And therefore any Jew who looks like a *frum* Jew and in public he behaves in a manner of *derech erez* should know he's doing an extremely great *mitzvah*. *Kiddush Hashem* is very important.

The entire lexicon of *derech erez* is required. Now I'm not saying you should behave like a *goy*, in order for the *goy* to like you. No, *goyim* have many ways that we don't want to emulate. But you should always behave like a *ba'al derech erez* in order to glorify Hashem. Wherever you go, you should leave over a perfume, a fragrance, of *kavod Hashem* in that place; you should be sure that the people who saw you are saying over praises of *frum* Jews, of *bnei-Torah*, and most importantly, of Hakodosh Boruch Hu.

Here's a man who walks through the street early in the morning, going to the mikveh. A *rebbeleh* is walking with his sons. And he's speaking with a loud voice - a raspy harsh voice. The whole block could hear him! People who couldn't sleep all night because the children were up and just before daybreak they were able to get a few minutes of sleep and along comes this *tzadik* with his rough voice, and he doesn't even think about them. People will say - and if they don't say it, they're surely thinking it - "That's a *frum* Jew?! That's how the people of Hashem behave?!"

THE BUM FINISHES HIS BEER

Instead of that, you can fulfill your function of *kiddush Hashem* in this world. Always well-behaved and considerate of others. Early in the morning, you're walking home from davening on *Shavuot*, so you walk through the streets with your friends quietly, only whispering, because you're afraid to wake people up and bring dishonor to Hakodosh Boruch Hu. "Ohh, that's a fine man," Hashem says. "He's always thinking about My honor."

You have some paper to throw out? Don't throw it on the floor. Keep it and put it in the wastebasket. Even better, as you pass by and you see a bum throw an empty beer on the sidewalk, so you pick it up and you put it in the wastebasket. "Ohh," people say. "That's a fine man!"

A CRANKY, CRAZY OLD FELLOW SHOWS OFF

Now you're only doing it for show - you're doing it only to show off but it's a wonderful way to show off if your intention is to aggrandize the name of Hashem.

Here's a Jew with a beard and black hat walking down Kings Highway, and a few feet in front of him is someone walking and eating a banana, and he throws the peel onto the sidewalk. What does he care about the world? Let them slide to the hospital! So this frum Jew picks it up, or at least he shoves it into the street, into the sewer, so that nobody should get hurt.

Don't say, "He's a crank - a crazy old fellow trying to show off." No, he's doing a wonderful thing. And even though he's doing it for ostentation, just to make an impression on people, that's the best impression you can make for Hashem. That's what the Rambam is saying: עַד שֶׁמִּקְלָסִין אוֹתוֹ - "Do what it takes to get people to praise you," because when a person lives that way, he's living a life for the sake of Hashem.

THE TZADDIK AT THE POST OFFICE

I'll tell you a little incident, a true story. There was a man I used to see occasionally - a frum man, with a beard of course. Also a long *kapote*, and he carries a cane - an elderly man. I met him on the street and he was telling me of his father's righteousness, what a *tzaddik* his father was. He said that his father was such a *tzaddik* that he never walked between two women. That's what he was telling me about the greatness of his father. I was thinking, "Is there anything else?" I didn't want to ask him, but I couldn't understand - "That's it?!" I saw right away that this man did not know what it means to be an *oved Hashem*. It's something, yes, but it's not *avodas Hashem* yet.

So one day I was in the post office waiting on a long line. And this man - the son of the *tzaddik* comes in - and without standing in line he strides to the head of the line. Now, all the Russian Jews on line are looking at him as he whispers something to the man in front. The man in front didn't understand him - he's Russian, he didn't know what this frum Jew was mumbling about - so he let him take the place. It was a tremendous *chillul Hashem*. With a long *kapote* and a beard, he's advertising himself as

representing Hashem in this world! And in a place of ignorant Jews who knew nothing - and there were gentiles there too - he's taking away their rights.

He doesn't care for *yosher*! It was a *chillul Hashem* of the most open sort. Later on when I saw him in the street, I spoke to him. I said, "That's a *chillul Hashem* - you can't do that to Hashem." He said "*Chas veshalom*. I didn't mean it that way." Didn't mean it that way?! If you're living life with the intention of *עד שמקלסין אותו* then such a thing could never happen.

FASTING AND WEEPING WILL NOT HELP

If that was this man's whole concept of greatness when he praised his father - he had nothing else to tell me - and he himself practiced one of the very worst forms of *aveirah*, that means he doesn't understand the function of a Jew in this world. To be *michaleil sheim shamayim* is worse than *arayos*. People don't understand that. Because for *chillul Hashem* there's no *kapparah* in this life - there's no atonement for doing such a thing to the name of Hashem. You can fast and you can weep, and it will not help!

Now we begin to see that you must know how to be a *frum* Jew. Here's a *yeshiva* boy; I see him coming out of this *yeshivah* and he looks wild. He's dressed wildly, his shirt is hanging out, *oisgelossin* (disheveled). I didn't say he has to be a sport, but he shouldn't look like a *pera adam*. A wild man comes out of the *yeshivah*, and people look at him. They don't say anything but they're thinking that's an Orthodox Jew; a *pera adam*?

Certainly you're *mechuyav* for your appearance. You shouldn't look like a *goy*. No, you look like a *frum* Jew. You could be wearing nice long *peyos*, you could wear whatever it is. If you're a *frum* Jew, look like a *frum* Jew, but at the same time look like a person who is *mechabed* Hakadosh Baruch Hu with his behavior.

Another man comes over to talk to me and as he's talking he's coughing in my face. A *talmid chacham*. He thought he was a *talmid chacham*, but I would say he wasn't a *talmid chacham*. I couldn't dodge him. It wouldn't be *derech erez*. He was coughing in my face. That's a *ben Torah*? That's *derech erez*? It's not *kavod*

shamayim to behave like that. Why can't you cover up your mouth when you're talking? Now you might say that's already too much to expect, that everything we do should be with *kavod shamayim* in mind. But that's because we ourselves are very far away from the principle of *kavod shamayim*.

HASHEM'S PRINCES ARE NOT BEGGARS

Here's a *frum* Jew with a beard, a black hat, playing a fiddle on the street, and he puts a box down to collect money. That's a tremendous *chillul Hashem*. You're young. Why don't you learn some profession? He doesn't even think that he's a *mechalel shem shamayim*. He becomes a beggar; he stands by the door and asks *frum* Jews to give him money. That's what it means to be *frum*, to be *מְשַׁל עֲצָמוֹ עַל הַבְּרִיּוֹת* - to want the community to support you? Why don't you work? To avoid work and you're asking for money, it's a *chillul Hashem*.

I once walked into a store. Before I could say anything, the man said, "Not here! No soliciting here!" He thought I came to ask for a *nedavah*. I was embarrassed. I'm a customer; I'm not coming to ask for money. It's a terrible impression. Someone sees a man with a *kapote* and a black hat, and they think you're going to ask for a *nadavah*.

A CHILUL HASHEM RUNNING TO MINCHA

Here's a man, a healthy young man, walking rapidly down the streets with a big sign to give him *tzedakah*. I said to him, "You walk faster than I can. Why don't you take a job, a man like you? Another man runs to Mirrer Yeshiva. He's afraid he'll come late for *minchah* - because he wants to collect. He's running and carrying his crutches. He's running down my block carrying his crutches! When he gets to the corner of the yeshiva he puts them on again. That's a *chillul Hashem*.

Of course, the examples are endless. Every day you'll find opportunities to bring honor to Hashem in this world if you keep your eyes open. Our behavior must always be with the intention of *יְגַדֵּל נֹא פַח הַשֵּׁם* - the important principle of making Hashem greater and greater in this world. Moshe Rabeinu made a contract with Hashem to allow the Am Yisroel to survive, and we are

around today only with this condition - that our existence should result in an honor for Hashem.

Part II. Honoring Him Always

THE MEANING OF KEDUSHA

What we're learning tonight is that our function in this world is to make the name of Hashem great, to aggrandize Him as much as we can. But not merely to bring Him honor in the post office - not only to make His name great in the eyes of *secular Jews* and *goyim*; more important than that is to make Hashem great in our own eyes.

And that's what we proclaim every day when we say *kedusha*, נִקְדֵּשׁ אֶת שְׁמֶךָ בְּעוֹלָם - "*We are going to sanctify Your name in the world, Hashem*". What does that mean when we say *kedushah*? Just by saying words you're being *mikadeish* His name in the world? You can stand with your feet together and hop up and down but it's almost meaningless if you don't know what it's all about.

Kadosh means perfection. The Kuzari says that the three time repetition, *kadosh, kadosh, kadosh*, is a *siman* for something that is infinite - that Hashem is the *tachlis hashleimus*, perfection beyond all perfection. And so our function becomes to *see* and *proclaim* Hashem's Perfection in the world. Constantly, we have to think thoughts and say words about that - it's something we have to do without end.

THE GLORY OF HASHEM DEFINED

That's what we're saying every day: נִקְדֵּשׁ אֶת שְׁמֶךָ בְּעוֹלָם - "*We are going to make sure to make Your name great forever and ever.*" Those words are a commitment, a reminder about what our function is in the world. And how do we do it? So we look at the next words: מְלֵא כָּל הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ - "*The entire world is filled with the glory of Hashem.*"

The glory of Hashem! What does that mean? It's not something in the air, something mysterious you can't touch or

understand. The glory of Hashem is very real, very much tangible, and it's our means of making the name of Hashem great in this world.

In his Moreh Nevuchim the Rambam says that whenever you see the words "*kavod Hashem*," it means something that *reminds* a person of Hashem. When you *see* Hashem, and you advertise His greatness to the people around you, that's the glory of Hashem in this world.

"MACHEN KIDDUSH OIF DI GANTZE VELT"

Everything that we see, every natural object, on all sides, demonstrates the kindness and wisdom of Hashem. And so if we study the glory of Hashem and proclaim it to ourselves and to others, that is *kiddush Hashem*, that is how we make His name great in this world. Oooh, that's a big *chiddush*. By keeping our eyes open and seeing Hashem in the world around us, that's how we are *mikadeish sheim shamayim*.

And that's our function in this world; it's what Hashem expects of us from that day when Moshe Rabeinu made this proposal to Hashem of **וַיִּגְדַּל נָא פָנֶי הַשָּׁם**. Moshe Rabeinu promised Hashem, "Let the Am Yisroel live on; let us live and we will dedicate our lives to making You great in this world." And so, the more you speak about Hakodosh Boruch Hu the more you're fulfilling the function of the Am Yisroel.

THE LONER MAKES KIDDUSH

And in case nobody is willing to listen, so you talk to yourself. Talk to yourself all the time about Hashem's greatness - all the time! And you're being *mikadeish sheim shamayim* in the place that matters most, in your own mind - you're creating a tremendous *kavod shamayim*.

You can think about Him right now. Think about Hakodosh Boruch Hu right now. What should you think? So many things! He created the world out of nothing, *yesh mei'ayin*: **הוּא אָמַר וַיְהִי הוּא צָוָה וַיַּעֲמֵד** - *He commanded the world to come into being and that's why the world exists right now*" (Tehillim 33:9). Just think that. There's so much to think about Hashem, absolutely! And the more you think, the more you're succeeding in this world.

WHAT DO YOU NEED THE RABBONIM FOR?

So you'll say, "If it's so necessary, if it's really as important as Rabbi Miller says, why don't other *rabbanim* talk about that?" Is that a question?! What do you need the *rabbonim* for? It's everywhere. Look in the *Chovos Halevavos*. Look in the Rambam, the *Shaarei Teshuvah* and other *sifrei rishonim*. Absolutely you have to think of Hashem - there's nothing more important than that! And even though there's no practical application, just thinking about Hashem is already a great honor for Hashem, a tremendous *kavod shamayim*.

And so we'll listen to what a big expert said on this subject, and that's Dovid Hamelech. הָשֵׁם אֱלֹקֵי גִדְלָתָּ מְאֹד - Hashem, my G-d, You have become very great." (Tehillim 104:1). That's past tense - it doesn't say, "You are very great;" it says you have become very great. As long as you're young and ignorant - or even if you're an old man already, but you never think about Hashem - so Hashem is still small. As far as you're concerned, He occupies only a little bit of place.

So how do you magnify His name? You'll make Him bigger than He is?! Nobody can make Hashem bigger than He is! You have to make your brain bigger! And the bigger your mind becomes, the more you understand the greatness of Hashem - that's what it means גִּדְלָתָּ מְאֹד! "By recognizing You in this world, I have made You great."

KIDDUSH AT THE MEAL

You're sitting at the table and you're eating; it's an opportunity for *kiddush Hashem*. You say, "Look how good the bread is that Hashem made. It's a pleasure to eat the food of Hashem. And now you're eating the bread, you're enjoying the bread. "Ahh, הַמּוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ, Hashem, how kind You are. מְכַלֵּל חַיִּים בְּחֶסֶד, You supply the living with sustenance and kindness."

Why are You doing it, Hashem? בָּעֲבוּר שְׁמוֹ הַגָּדוֹל - Hashem made bread, He made food, *for the sake of His great name* (Birkas Hamazon). You hear that? Hashem is giving us to eat not just to fill our stomachs. It's so that we should be able to fill our minds with His greatness and fulfill our function in this world. So when you're enjoying your food, you say "I'm enjoying it for the sake of

His great name. I'm recognizing that You supply the world with sustenance and kindness." "Oooh," Hashem says, "Now you're talking business!"

THE ORANGE PEEL MAKES A KIDDUSH HASHEM

If you want to be a person who utilizes his time in this world, you have to get busy practicing this subject all the time - not just during *chazaras ha'shatz*. How do you practice saying *kadosh*? How are you *mikadeish Hashem* in this world? You practice it when you take an orange and you study it in order to see Hashem. You're looking at the orange and you're thinking, "Why is the orange peel so beautifully colored, whereas the underside of the skin has no color at all?"

And the answer is because it's unnecessary; you don't need the color underneath. The outside of the orange is supposed to catch your eye, there's no reason to waste color on the inside. But the flesh of the orange, the orange itself, is a beautiful color so that it should be more interesting, more attractive and enjoyable for the eater. The more color the more pleasure.

So now you start thinking: Where did this color come from? Did the orange seed have color in it? No, there's no fruit coloring in the seed. But it has data in it, millions of bits of information. Besides for storing data, there's machinery in here (*the Rav was holding an orange seed*) that can take the air, the carbon dioxide, and some materials in the soil - we couldn't do that - but the seed takes these materials that have no color at all and it creates a beautiful orange color.

THE COINS INSIDE

So you'll stop for a minute while you're enjoying the sweet pulp of the orange, and think about the One who made that orange - so many things to think about, so many reminders of Hashem in the orange. You're thinking, "This orange is really all juice - that's what an orange is, a ball of juice. But when I cut the orange, the juice doesn't come pouring out. The juice is locked up in tiny little cells - it's a remarkable thing! Otherwise, I'd give a little cut and the juice would spill out."

And then, when you come to the pits of the orange, the seeds, you've come to another opportunity for *k'vod shamayim*. How did the seeds get inside there? The Torah points that out so that you should think about it. אֶשֶׁר זָרְעוּ בוֹ - "A fruit with seeds inside it" (Bereishis 1:11). How did that happen? If you would find a quarter inside the orange you'd become *meshuge* with admiration for such a magic trick. A seed is a million times more complicated than a quarter. The seed has millions of instructions written in it!

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE MAKES KIDDUSH

And if you would try to eat that seed - you should try it one time; take one of the seeds and try to chew on it. They are very distasteful. So you should stop for a moment and think about that, because it's not an accident. Even the scientists explain it's not an accident.

You know, I used to come to the Mirrer Yeshiva for some time - I had business there in the yeshiva - and at lunchtime I would take a nap in the library. One day I pulled out from the shelf a publication from the Department of Agriculture in Washington D.C. And it said there that the reason orange seeds are bitter is in order to discourage the eaters from eating them. Now, it wasn't a *tzadik* writing there; it wasn't the *Chovos Halevavos*. It was a *goy*; a pamphlet written by a gentile. He didn't have any good intentions - he was just writing the truth. The pits of the orange are purposefully disgusting in taste in order to discourage us from destroying the seeds by means of eating. Instead we spit out the seeds and a tree grows.

KELLY GETS BUSY WRITING

Now some fool asks, "Then why aren't *all* seeds bitter?" The answer is this: You're walking in the desert, in a field full of stones, and on one stone there's an inscription, "Kelly was here." Was Kelly here? Absolutely. What about all the other stones? It doesn't say "Kelly was here" on all the other stones. The answer is you don't need it. As long as on one stone it says "Kelly was here" that's enough.

And the truth is that every fruit is being *mikadeish sheim shamayim* in its own specific way. How is the apple seed

protected? Around the apple seed is plastic, there are little plastic shields surrounding the seed. And so, you don't eat it. You enjoy the apple and then you take the core and throw it away and a tree grows.

THE REAL KIDDUSH HASHEM AT THE POST OFFICE

By the way *rabosai*, I'm just spending a minute or two on this subject to encourage you. But it's superficial - very superficial. The truth is we could speak for hours and hours about the apple and we wouldn't exhaust the subject. Because all of the materials in a fruit are assembled by a system, an assembly line. And each step causes the next step to happen. And there are thousands of steps. So not only does the seed contain all the information necessary to make an apple tree - roots and bark and leaves and apple blossoms and nectar and branches and hanging fruit - but the seed also has all the machinery to carry out the whole process.

I'll tell you a good idea. Put a seed in your pocket. Carry it around with you and look at it from time to time. I do it. I carry seeds with me. And I take it out sometimes in the middle of the street and look at it. Ahh! Look at the miracle. People write to me that I should send them some of my seeds. I send the seeds by mail. I go to the post office and I mail my seeds to people. They are miracle seeds!

HOW TO SEE THE SHECHINA

If you sit and look at an apple or an orange for fifteen minutes, you won't be the same person anymore - I guarantee it. If you look at the apple for fifteen minutes and think about the wonders that you see there, you'll see the *gilui shechina*, absolutely. And Hashem made the apple for that purpose - so that you should think about Him. He told us that when He introduced us to fruit for the first time: וְנִחַמְדָּהּ הָעֵץ לְהַשְׂכִּיל - "The fruit is desirable to make wise" (Bereishis 3:6). Not just to eat. The real function of the fruit is to make you wise - fruit causes wisdom, yes!

Only that in order to make the lesson more delicious, He makes the apple taste delicious too. It's like having a *gemara*

printed on sponge cake. So you're saying the Rashi, and then you take a little bite from the margin - it's a *geshmaka sugya*!

And that's what the apple is for - not only the apple; all of the fruit and all of creation - so that you can see Hashem in this world while enjoying His *briyah*. It's happiness and wisdom together.

A PEACH SHOULD MAKE YOU BLUSH

A peach is a work of art. The peach has a blush on both sides. It's not all red. It has a blush. It's so beautiful to look at a peach blushing. When we look at the peach we should blush too because we are ignoring that great lesson. The beauty of the peach is to make us think of Hashem's kindness to us. That peach is what it means *מִלֵּא כָּל הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ*. Hashem wants us to think about that, and when we think about all the things that we enjoy at the time of the eating then you should know that's *kavod Hashem* and that's fulfilling the promise Moshe Rabeinu made - *וַיְגַדֵּל נָא פֶּה ה'שָׁם* - and it's the reason Hashem kept the Am Yisroel alive.

By the way, it's only a beginning. I only chose a few things - the world is full of outstanding things that are expected to cause us to admire Hashem. Of course, I just chose fruit as an example. The summer is coming so it's a tremendous opportunity to be *mikadeish sheim shamayim* by means of fruit. There are thousands of things besides fruits. If it was the winter we would talk about the snow and wool and rain and we'd aggrandize Hashem by means of that as well. But the fruit is a remarkable example for fulfilling our function of *וַיְגַדֵּל נָא פֶּה ה'שָׁם*, for making Hashem's name great, that Moshe Rabeinu proposed to Hashem.

STOP AT THE FRUIT STORE

Suppose you make it a principle that every time you pass a fruit stand, *bli neder* you'll stop for one half minute - every fruit store for thirty seconds - and you'll admire the handiwork of Hashem. It's an amazing exhibition! All types of colors and tastes. Learn to be excited over the show that Hashem is putting on for you - for thirty seconds. "Oh," Hashem says, "You made a step in the right direction, so I'll push you a little further too." *הֲבֵא לְטֶהֱרַ* *מִסְעִיין לוֹ*.

And therefore, of course if it would ever happen that a goy is forcing you to bow down to *avodah zarah*, so of course you'll be *mikadeish sheim shamayim* and give up your life to make His name great in this world. But how many times does that happen to a person? If it does happen, it's a once in a lifetime event. And so we said tonight that wherever we go in this world we try to keep in our minds all the time, as much as possible, that we are going to behave in a way that will make Hashem great among people - Jews and gentiles. But we're learning now that one of the most important places to make the name of Hashem great *is in your own mind* - and that's an opportunity that is available all the time wherever you are.

WE'RE TALKING TO IDEALISTS

Now, I understand that if this was said to an ordinary congregation of *bnei torah*, and it was not explained well, so they would think that it's just a waste of time. They wouldn't come to hear such things; it's *poshut*, it's too simple for them to hear. They want bigger things; they don't want to hear about apples and peaches and oranges.

But now I'm talking to people who deserve credit because they came here for a purpose - people who are *mivakshei Hashem*, people who are seeking Hashem, people who want to make the name of Hashem great in the world. And to such idealists we can propose this plan of Moshe Rabeinu that we should utilize all of the creations of this world to admire the ways of Hashem and to glorify His name by means of His wonders.

Now when you begin to think these thoughts - and you'll be surprised how many opportunities you can find during the day to do this - you'll see that the entire *briyah* testifies to Hashem. By means of its kindly arrangements, the entire world testifies to the glory of Hashem: like it says *יְהוָה הֵשֵׁם כָּל מַעֲשֵׂיךָ - כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתְךָ יֵאמְרוּ* - *all of Your works speak of the glory of your kingdom*. Everything is praising Hashem. *הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ מְסַפֵּר כְּבוֹד אֱלֹהֵינוּ* the sun praises Hashem. Utilize the sun! Isn't that a pity how you're wasting such simple opportunities. Walk outside and the sun is shining and you never once thought that the sun is there to cause you to realize the glory

of Hashem. So it's **הָעָם הֹלְכִים בַּחֹשֶׁךְ** - *people are walking in darkness*. All their lives they're sleepwalking. Wake up!

REASON TO DANCE

And we're expected to utilize the body for that. Like *Iyov* said **מִבְּשָׂרִי אֶחְזֶה אֱלֹקִים** - By means of my flesh I see Hashem. You're expected to do that. It's not something *derech agav*; that's why you have a body! So that you should look at it and see the marvels that are so obvious. Anybody who is willing to open his eyes can see the hand of Hashem.

You have to see the glory of Hashem in your body. Study the body. It's miracles and miracles in our bodies. Everything is so wondrously contrived with such superb planning and intricate and cunning devices that we marvel, we dance with *simcha* when we understand how the body functions.

And it's all for one purpose: **כָּלֹו אוֹמֵר קָבוֹד** - The entire creation is giving honor to Hashem. And that *kavod* is our success in this world. When we come to the Next World we will be questioned, "What did you bring along with you? How much baggage did you bring from your stay in that world?" And therefore our purpose in this world is to fill our lives with as much baggage as possible. And the best baggage you can bring along with you to *Olam Haba* is a mind that thought constantly about Hashem - because that means you were being *mikadeish Hashem* all your life.

YOUR OPPORTUNITY FOR KAVOD

And it's by means of the glory we attribute to Hashem in this world, that's how we achieve *our* glory in the World to Come. When a man comes to the Next World, so after he passes through the necessary preparations - sometimes a little *gehenim*, sometimes he has to pass through certain other judgements - but when he finally arrives in *Olam Haba*, Hakodosh Boruch Hu is going to announce: "This man deserves the greatest honor," and He calls out the *malachim* to sing *shira* to you. Forever and ever they'll sing songs of glory to you. And that *kavod* is tremendous - it's the *simcha* of *Olam Haba*!

צְדִיקִים יֵשְׁבִים וְעֹטְרוֹתֵיהֶם בְּרֹאשֵׁיהֶם - "Those who deserve it will sit in Olam Haba with crowns on their heads." (Berachos 17a). Now, the word crown is more than just an expression. It's a crown of monarchy. Suppose you were given a crown now that declared you the emperor of the Western Hemisphere. What is the Western Hemisphere after all? It's just a small sliver of this world. The emperor of the Western Hemisphere?! You'd be *meshuge* with happiness! It's a question whether you'd be able to survive such an intense ecstasy.

And in the World to Come, when Hakodosh Boruch Hu puts a crown of honor on your head, it's infinitely more happiness than that. The one crowned by Hashem in the Olam Haba has an infinite happiness because he knows how important he really is. Because to whom is he important? Not to ordinary people; not to newspaper journalists, and to prime ministers and presidents. He's important to Hakodosh Boruch Hu Himself - the One he was *mikadeish* all of his life. He was careful to always make the best impression on others - *because he wanted to bring honor to the name of Hashem*. And he thought about Hashem as much as possible - *because he wanted to honor Hashem*. And as a result of that, he himself achieves true honor in the World to Come and he earns for himself the most intense happiness forever and ever.

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With
Rav Avigdor Miller Ztz"l



Q:

What is the most important thought that one should have when making a bracha?

A:

The answer is "*Atah Hashem*." That's number one! You're not just saying a *bracha* - you're talking to somebody. The Mesillas Yescharim says that it's not an easy thing to to gain that attitude and to impress on your mind that somebody is actually listening. But when you put effort into it - when you keep on trying - after a while it's possible to gain that attitude that Hashem is right in front of you and is listening. "*Ki atah shomei'ah*" - You are listening to "*amchab Yisroel b'rachamim*." Yes; You are listening. You are really listening. The truth is that He is listening - no question about it - but you have to work on gaining that true attitude. Don't wait for it to come by itself.

And therefore that's the first and most important attitude required for making a *bracha*. Not the *peirush hamilos* but the true attitude of "*Atah Hashem*" - "You Hashem." He is listening. "I am talking to You, Hashem."

And the second important *kavanah* is to thank Hashem. I am thanking You Hashem. It's not enough just to know what you are saying but you should actually feel a debt of gratitude to Hashem. Thank Hashem for the favor that He has bestowed on you. Let's say you're saying *pokei'ach ivrim* - "You open the eyes of the blind." Oh, what a favor that is! Suppose Hashem didn't give you the ability to see. What a tragedy, *chalilah*, that would be. To live a life in total darkness. What a pity; what a pity that would be. So you are filled with happiness that you can see and you actually should feel a debt of gratitude to Hashem.

And therefore once more: The first thing that you must work on is gaining the attitude that you are speaking directly to Hashem and that He is listening. And the second thing is that you are thanking Him and that you appreciate what you are thanking Him for.

Don't make a *bracha* just to be *yotzei*. It's better than nothing. But not much better.

TAPE # E-213

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