

תורת אביגדור

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SEFER BAMIDBAR - THE RAHMANI FAMILY EDITION

FOR THE HATZLACHA, HEALTH, AND HAPPINESS OF OUR FAMILY AND ALL KLAL YISROEL

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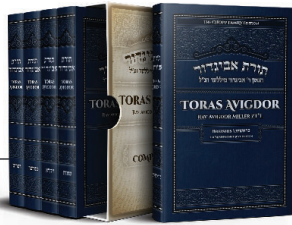
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Year 3 | Issue 38

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Address: 5014 16th Avenue, Suite 488, Brooklyn NY 11204

פרשת פינחס

WITH

R' AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"l

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

An Everlasting Memorial

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Part I. Life in This World

Keeping It In The Family

In this week's *sedrah* we learn about the *dinim* of *yerusha*, the laws of inheritance: **אִישׁ כִּי יָמוּת – וְהֵעֲבַרְתֶּם אֶת נַחֲלָתוֹ** – you have to give over his property to his children. There's a process of inheritance; who gets first, who gets second and so on – very many *dafim* in *Shas* are filled with its laws, but whatever the details are, what we see is that, **וּנְתַתֶּם אֶת נַחֲלָתוֹ לְשֵׂארוֹ הַקָּרֵב אֵלָיו** – you shall give his inheritance to his relative who is closest to him of his family (Pinchas 27: 9-11).

Now what's the idea of *yerusha*? So people say, "Well, it's common sense; man's property is inherited by the son. Even *goyim* know that. What else should we do with his property? It should be a free for all? Everyone should come and grab whatever they want?!"

Ancient American Minhagim

You know there were some Indian tribes that did that. Everyone knows that when Columbus discovered America he found here a lot of Indian tribes; and some of these tribes had “beautiful” *minhagim* that were unknown to the Europeans.

We should listen for a minute to a certain Professor Mitchiner – he considers himself an authority on Indian culture – and hear how he describes the process of inheritance. Here is an Indian warrior who gave his life to save his tribe. He fought heroically but, *nebach*, he lost his life. And how did they bury him? They put him on a wooden pallet – it was like a wooden bed – and they carried him to the woods and left him in a certain tree-grave that they had prepared. They put the pallet on the tree and there he lay for the birds to come to pick at his eyes and consume his flesh. That was the hero’s burial.

Little Wigwam On The Prairie

Now, this warrior, he left over a widow and children in his tent. What happened to his *almanah*? So here Mitchiner describes with a note of apology that there was a “cruel and inexorable law of the prairies.” It means they had a *minhag* – Mitchiner wants to blame it on the prairies – that as soon as this man’s funeral was over, the sisterhood of the tribe, all the *chusheveh* ladies, descended upon the grieving widow and they took away every last thing she possessed.

That was the rule – now that there was nobody to protect her, it’s the law of the tribe to take away every shred, every stick that she possessed. They took away everything – her dishes, her cooking utensils, her sewing utensils – and they left her with nothing except for the clothing on her back.

They even took away her home; they took her wigwam apart and she was left homeless as midwinter arrived. And nobody invited this widow into their homes; that would have been against procedure. And so what did she do? She went to live among the horses in order to try to maintain her life a little longer. And in the morning they found her frozen to death.

That was the *hilchos yerusha* of this Indian tribe. That was the standard procedure – there was no such thing as inheritance.

Inheritance Secrets

And the truth is why should there be? Why *should* you have *yerusha*? He's a dead man – he doesn't own anything anymore. Why shouldn't you say, a man dies – he's finished. Why should his family get it? He's a pauper! It's *hefker*! Nothing is his anymore. It's like a *ger shemeis*, a convert who dies without any relatives, so we say *bizbezu yisroel nechasav* – *anybody can come and seize his property*! That's how it should be even if there are *yorshim*; if you're finished with this world, why should your property remain connected to you or your children?

So you'll tell me about the *umos ha'olam* that *do* have laws of inheritance, procedures and details for who gets what – first the government comes and steals a big piece of your hard earned money, and then this family member or that one takes something too. *Yerusha* is just common sense, you think. “Why not? Many of the *umos ha'olam* have laws of inheritance and we also have laws of inheritance.” Of course it's Torah, but it's just *dinei mamonos*.

That's wrong; it's very wrong. There's more to the laws of the *yerusha* than just details of divvying up someone else's money; more than just children benefiting from the hard work of their parents. There's much more here that Hakodosh Boruch Hu intends.

And it's not merely that the Torah is training us to have *rach-manus*, to care about the widow and the orphans. That's true too, but the Torah is teaching us here an entirely new attitude – Hakodosh Boruch Hu wants us to know that the one who left this world is looking down to see what's doing with his property, with his money. He's actually interested in what's doing!

Watching From On High

So you'll say, “But he's in *Olam Haboh* now!” Now he sees that *Olam Hazeh* is nothing; he knows now it was all a facade and therefore it should mean nothing to him now. He thinks about such things?! He cares that his son should have his money?! What difference does it make to him now?

No! The *possuk* is teaching us here that it means *everything* to him. He's watching; he's terribly interested. He wants his sons to have his property!

Now, I know this is a delicate subject and I won't be able to convince anybody completely but there's no question that there is a definite connection with the *neshama* and *Olam Hazeih*. Not only a connection, but the *neshama* clings to *Olam Hazeih* with all its *koach*.

And it's not merely while you're still alive in this world – the instinct of self preservation like we see that even an insect tries desperately to save its life. No, it's much more than that because the Torah is telling us here that *even after a person leaves this world he continues to yearn for Olam Hazeih*. Of course, I'm not capable of telling you the secrets of the *neshama*, but the fact is that everyone wishes to have some connection with *Olam Hazeih*. Even after he leaves the world; the *neshama* remains intensely interested in what was left behind.

Olam Haboh Is Ah Gutter Zach...

And that's because in the depths of the *neshama* everyone senses that there's concealed in *Olam Hazeih* a great secret. *Olam Hazeih* has something that *Olam Haboh* does not have; there's a certain quality in this world that is unequalled even in *Olam Haboh*. And just because of that, the *neshama* understands that *Olam Hazeih* is the place!

What is it about *Olam Hazeih* that the *neshama* doesn't want to leave go of? The answer is that it's only in this short life that we have the opportunity to choose. “*U'bacharta ba'chayim*,” Hashem said. “Choose life!” Not only I'm telling you that you could do it, but I'm commanding you, I'm encouraging you – “Choose life.”

Lernen Toirah Iz Ah Besser Zach

The great gift of *Olam Hazeih* is *bechira*, free will – the ability to choose to become better. That's the purpose of life. Like Dovid HaMelech said, *לֹא הַמֵּתִים יְהַלְלוּ קוּה* – The dead will not praise Hashem (Tehillim 116:17). So we ask, *mai komashma lun* - what is Dovid telling us? Certainly the dead man won't praise Hashem anymore; we need Dovid to tell us that?

Dovid is saying, “Be afraid of death! To die?! That’s the last thing we want to do in our lives!” Because death means you stop - not you stop breathing; something much worse than that - you stop serving Hashem. Your opportunity to choose goes lost forever.

Moshe Protests

You remember when Hashem told Moshe Rabeinu, הֵן קָרְבוּ יְמֵיךָ, לְמוֹת – *The end of your days is coming soon*; so did Moshe Rabeinu accept the news stoically? No! He made a big fuss; he put up a big fight. וְאֶתְהַנֵּן אֶל הַשָּׁמַיִם – *I don’t want to die!*

It’s because he knew that it’s a tremendous opportunity to be alive! יְפֶה שְׁעָה אַחַת שָׁל תְּשׁוּבָה וּמַעֲשִׂים טוֹבִים בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה מִכֹּל חַיֵּי עוֹלָם הַבָּא – *One moment of teshuva, of good deeds in this world is better than all eternity in the Next World!* (Avos 4:17). If Moshe Rabbeinu could come back for one minute, he’d give up everything; he’d give up a big part of *Olam Haboh*, even to be just one minute in this world. That’s how precious every second is! Every minute is a diamond because it’s a glorious opportunity for achievement. If it means you can learn just one more line of *gemara* or put one more nickel in the *pushka*, it’s worth it.

Accomplishment Is Greater Than Happiness

Now, there’s no question we’ll be very satisfied with *Olam Haboh*. We’ll be very happy in the next world. If we could even just picture it we wouldn’t be able to survive. The happiness of *Olam Haboh* would burst our blood vessels with excitement. The *gemara* says that the happiness is so great that Hakodosh Boruch Hu has to give *koach* to the *tzaddikim* in *Olam Haboh* so that they should be able to endure the happiness - that’s how tremendous it is.

And even so, even though the *neshama* was especially created for that existence in *Olam Haboh* that is independent of the body and independent of this world and even though it’s certainly capable of utilizing that career in the next world for very great happiness, yet despite everything, the *neshama* wants to live longer in *this* world.

We want to live because we still have so much to accomplish - it’s never enough because the more you do in this world, the more

you're putting away for everlasting life in *Olam Haboh*. Every deed that you do here, even the smallest *mitzvah*, is *chayim nitzchi'im*; it's forever and ever.

Part II. Life in The Next World

Sacred Property

Now, one of the most important ways that a person makes use of this opportunity for *bechira* is by means of the things he owns in this world. Whatever it is; money, a car, a house, when a person owns things, that property is an opportunity to accomplish tremendous things in this world.

Let's say you have a house. In that house, first of all, you put up *mezuzos*. What a *zechus* it is to take an ordinary house and nail *mezuzos* on the door. Now, I know that people are accustomed to having *mezuzos* on the houses and after a while they forget all about them. Maybe they kiss the *mezuzah*. Very good; beautiful. But it's not enough.

The *mezuzah* is telling you something. It says, "This house is dedicated to Hashem!" שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל ה' אֶחָד ה' שֶׁמַּע יִשְׂרָאֵל ה' אֶחָד. Hashem is the one and only thing in our lives! Everything in this house is for the service of Hashem!" Ah! Ah! Ah! You're *machnis orchim* into that house. You sit in your house and open a *sefer* to learn. You say *birkas hamozon* in that house - you're *mekayem* all the *mitzvos d'oraysa* and *mitzvos d'rabanan*. It means that we're choosing to use our *nechasim*, our valuables in this world, for You!

Every detail in the house is under the law of the Torah and the mother is directing it all like a *Kohen Gadol* in the *kodesh kodoshim*. Everything has to be *kosher* - and *kosher* means so many things; *milchigs* and *fleishigs* and *pareve*. You walk in the kitchen and you ask your wife, "Chanaleh, is this a *fleishige* fork or a *milchige* fork?" It's a *makom kadosh* - even your cutlery is holy. It's a house where every Jewish man and woman is constantly creating *chayim nitzchi'im*, eternal life.

Moving Day

Now, this man or woman lived a long *frum* life, *boruch Hashem*; a successful *frum* life. All of you here should live very long *frum* lives; you should be healthy and happy in your homes and see *nachas* from everybody. But the time comes after 120 years when we all have to leave that house. *Oy vey!* It's a great *tzaar!* Because such a house you won't have in *Olam Haboh*. No *milchigs* and *fleishigs* in *Olam Haboh!* Oh no! No *brachos*, no *netilas yodayim*. In this world you come out of the *beis hakisei* and you can make a nice loud *asher yatzar!* No *beis hakisei* in *Olam Haboh!* *Oy vey!* No *asher yatzar* in *Olam Haboh*.

While we're alive, we may not feel the importance of experiencing these things – while you still can say *asher yatzar* you don't appreciate the opportunity – but when the time comes to say goodbye to the world, all of a sudden you discover what a great thing you had that you're about to lose. *Life!* The opportunity to serve Hashem and make something out of yourself! All of a sudden the awareness of what you're losing becomes overwhelming!

Now, you shouldn't be too sad because *Olam Haboh* is a place of *simcha*; there'll be better things than *asher yatzars* there; but whatever it's going to be, it's still a great loss to have to say goodbye to a Jewish home, to say farewell to *Olam Hazeh*. What a great existence it is! And now I'm going to have to say goodbye?! The heart breaks with sadness.

The Limbs Live On

But there's good news on the horizon. The *gemara* (*Eiruvim* 70b) makes a statement. *Yoreish kar'a l'avuha, bra kar'a d'avuha* – A son, someone who inherits property, is like the foot of his father. That's a very great teaching. A son is like the two feet and the two hands of the father.

Now, let's not think this is just imagination, a *mashal* – it's a *metzius*, it's a fact. And it's based on sound common sense, *pesukim* and *ma'amarei Chazal*. What it means is that when the son does good deeds, in a certain sense it's like the father is still alive and going around in this world doing good deeds. Daughters too. Daughters are also *karah d'avuha*; children are like the feet of their

parents. And even though the child may not always be thinking about his parents; still, it's to the benefit of his parents. It means that the father and mother who leave over children in this world will never leave this world – they continue to live through the *mitzvos* of their children.

Long Distance Shipping

And what kind of *mitzvos*? Anything that the child does. If the child is a *frum* Jew, that's already a *zechus* for his father and his mother. If he fulfills the duties of a *frum* Jew, then even if he's not a great personality – he's an ordinary *frum* Jew – that child is sending gifts to his parents constantly. And if he's more than a *frum* Jew, if he's an *ish chassid*, an *oved Hashem*, so it's a much greater *zechus* for them.

Every *mitzvah*, every *bracha*, every penny of *tzedakah* that he gives is like a gift to the father and the mother. It means thousands upon thousands of *mitzvos* are being mailed to your ancestors in *Olam Haboh*. Even though they're in *Gan Eden* now, sitting on golden thrones and enjoying all the delights of the *ziv haShechina*, the tremendous happiness of the *Olam Haboh*, nevertheless the joy of being connected to this world by means of a son or daughter is a tremendous satisfaction to them! They're being rewarded with a feeling, a *hargasha* that they're connected to the opportunities of *Olam Haze*, and that quenches their craving to continue living in this world! It gives even more happiness to their stay in *Olam Haboh*.

Invest In Futures

Now we can begin to understand how great is the function of bringing up a generation of *shomrei Torah u'mitzvos*. Of course to have children is a *mitzvah* of the Torah – it's *avodas Hashem* to get married and have children and bring them up – but not only are you doing something for *avodas Hashem*, but you're doing for yourself one of the very greatest benefits you could. When you bring into the world a family of children and you bring them up *b'derech haTorah*, you're creating for yourself a wealth of *nachas*. It's very important because not only are you helping the child, most of all you're helping yourself. Whatever you do, it's a tremendous achievement because you'll be in this world long after you pass away from the world.

And that's why it's so important to invest your efforts in your children; it's so important to think, "What can we do to make the best out of children? Which *cheder* is the best one for Chaim!? Which Beis Yankev should we send Chanaleh to?"

Because when you raise up a *dor of frum bnei Torah*, of *ovdei Hashem*, boys and girls who are going to have *frum* families of their own, not only are you a happy person in this world – after all, there's nothing like *frummeh nachas*; *frum* children are a happiness that will fill your hearts with joy all your lives – but in the next world is where your real happiness will take place. When you pass out of this world, that's when the true *nachas* begins. The eternal *nachas* you'll get from your children is indescribable.

Certificates For Your Children

That's what it says (Tehillim 128:6), וְרָאָה בְּנִים לְבָנָיָהּ – If you're *zocheh* to see a grandson, *ah, ah, ah!* Don't think it's a small thing. If you leave over a child, it means you're still in this world. You're still in this world! And the child of a child?! You should be so happy. Not only by the *bris*, by the first *mazel tov*. Whenever you see him, you should really enjoy it. וְרָאָה בְּנִים לְבָנָיָהּ – Look at it him and think, "Boruch Hashem, I was *zocheh* to a son's son. It means I'll be in this world even longer. I'll be in this world forever and ever! That's a success! *Shalom al Yisroel!*"

It's a very great happiness that your children and their children will give you by being decent *frum* Jews. That's why I would suggest, if you have good children, go to a sign painter and order for yourself a sign as follows: "This is to certify" – if you want to do it in *loshon kodesh* you can say וְתַעֲרֹדָה זֶה תַּעֲרִיד עָלַי בְּמֵאָה עָרִים – "This is to certify that you, my son and my daughter-in-law, have given me very great *nachas*." And put it in a frame and hang it in on the wall in their house. You want to go further? You can hang such a sign in the house of your grandchildren. And if you'll do it in the house of your great- grandchildren, even better.

Your Eternal Home

That's why *yerusha* is so important to the *meis*. So that his house, his *makom kadosh*, will continue to live on. So you'll say, "Well, it could be my son won't have that house. Maybe the

neighborhood changed; the wrong people moved in and now they have to move on.” No matter – you live on in that way. Maybe the house becomes money, it’s changed into money, so he’ll buy another house with the money; he’ll use your money for a down payment or to help pay the mortgage on his house. And therefore, you have a certain satisfaction, an *oineg* of the *nefesh* knowing that your house continues.

And even though you can’t go anymore into your son’s house or your daughter’s house, you can’t go visit your children and grandchildren and great grandchildren anymore, but you know in that house, in the house of your children, they’re continuing the ways that they saw in your house or in the ways that they learned when they went to the *yeshiva* and to the girls’ *frum* schools. You paid tuition for them! And therefore, it’s your ways that they’re continuing forever and ever.

Holy Shabbos Guests

And so it’s like you’re sitting together with them in their home. It’s actually like you’re sitting in their homes and you’re witnessing what’s going on in your old home. You see that your descendants are keeping Shabbos; you see them sitting at the Shabbos table and singing *zemiros* and you’re so happy that you sing along. Yes; don’t think it’s just talk. Tomorrow night when you sit at your Shabbos table, all your ancestors will be coming down and watching, they’ll be singing together with you, happy. “Ah! That’s what we wanted. That’s a *nachas*. Our children are talking about *bereishis bara Elokim es hashamayim ve’es ha’aretz*. Oh, our children are doing such a great thing for us!”

They’re so happy when they see that you’re going *b’derech ha-Torah* and making something out of yourselves. The *chasunas*, the *bar mitzvahs* of great grandchildren; they’re learning in *yeshivos* and doing *mitzvos*. The children are wearing *tzitzis*. The boys and girls are all making *brachos*. Everybody goes to the *yeshiva* and to the *beis yankev*. Everybody keeps everything. Everybody is busy putting on *tefillin* and keeping Shabbos and learning Torah and acting with *derech eretz* – everybody is busy being *mekayem kol haTorah kulah*.

And so, after you pass away, everything goes on, and you're still there. You're there! It's the great happiness of having your representation in this world continue forever and ever. And that's what *yerusha* is always reminding us of. You're living on! By means of your house, your money, your property and your descendants, you're still accomplishing in this world. Your *yerusha* is working for you forever.

Part III. Life in Both Worlds

There's Hope For Everyone

Now, before we end our meeting tonight we must take into account the fact that some people were not blessed with children; not all of *acheinu bnei Yisroel* were blessed with the opportunity to continue to live on in this world through the arrangements of *yerusha* that we learn about in this week's *Parsha*. And therefore we must add a few more things to our discussion; they are true for everyone but they're especially true for those without children.

A person who didn't merit children can also continue to live forever in *Olam Hazeh*. וְאֵל לֹאמֹר הַפְּרִים הֵן אֲנִי עֵץ יָבֵשׁ - *The childless one shouldn't say, "I'm a dry tree – he shouldn't think that there's no hope (Yeshaya 56:3).* And that is because every person leaves over a *yerusha* in this world; maybe not a house or a car or children, but there's something very real he leaves over – to a certain extent it's even more real than property and valuables.

Nobody Will Escape It

Now, in order to better understand this subject we'll begin by studying the words of one of our great teachers. The *gemara* (Berachos 17a) tells us that whenever Rabbi Yochanan would finish the *sefer Iyov*, he would say as follows: *Sof adam lamus*, The end of a man is that he must die, *v'sof beheima l'shechita*, and the end of a cow is the slaughterhouse, *v'hakol l'misah heim omdim*, nobody will escape it; everybody is eventually going to die.

Rabbi Yochanan is comparing the end of man to the end of a *beheima*. A *beheima* when it was alive, it did a lot of good things. It

gave milk. Milk is wonderful! It worked too – it pulled a wagon, it fertilized the fields, maybe it gave rides to children too. A cow is very useful when it's alive; it's a big gift *min hashamayim*.

And so, when we slaughter that cow, we think it's finished. That's the end of the cow in this world. But Rabbi Yochanan is telling us that it's not over – the cow continues to exist in the world for a very long time.

The Cows Live On

First of all, because of the cow we have meat for the *chulent*; that's already something! We appreciate the cow for that. And there's more. The cow lived for maybe twenty years; much longer than that it can't live. But from the cow's hide you make shoes and sometimes those shoes last a long time; a good pair of shoes could be worn sometimes for thirty years. It means that the cow is still living on your feet for even more years than it lived on the farm.

You can make from the cow's hide many leather belts. A lot of people in this world are able to keep their pants from falling down because of this dead cow. A good belt can last a long time. Better things too! You can make *retzuos* for *tefillin* and *batim* for *tefillin*. From the skin you can make a *sefer Torah* that will last sometimes a hundred years.

So the *beheima*, when it dies, sometimes it's more useful than when it was alive. That's what it means *sof beheima l'shechita* – *The end purpose of the beheima is when it's shechted*; sometimes that's when its career begins; it's doing more after its death than it would have been if it had remained alive.

Man Lives On In This World

And now along comes Rabbi Yochanan and he says that man too is like that. *Sof adam lamus*, *The end of a man is he must die*; but just like the cow, that's not really the end. A person can also continue to live on in this world acquiring merits. And therefore, because we want to live forever, *אֲשֶׁרִי מִי שֶׁגָּדַל בְּתוֹרָה* – *happy is the man who grew up with Torah*, *וְעָמְלוֹ בְּתוֹרָה* – *and he labored in Torah*; it means he grew up in a good environment and he added his own labors as well, *וְגִדַּל בְּשֵׁם טוֹב* – *and he did pleasure to his Creator*.

– He developed for himself a good name, וּנְפִיטָר בְּשֵׁם טוֹב מִן הָעוֹלָם – and he left this world with a good name.

And about such a person, Rabbi Yochanan says, the *possuk* tells us: טוֹב שֵׁם מְשֻׁמָּן טוֹב – A good name is even better than perfumed oil. In the olden days when people went to a *chasunah* or some other important place, they would rub perfumed oil on their hair – *l'kavod* the *simcha* they made their hair smell good. It was such a fragrance that sometimes it would percolate throughout the whole room.

Perfuming The World

Let's imagine that – let's say somebody sitting here has a perfumed oil in his hair. It smells good and we're all enjoying the fragrance. So he's sitting here for a little bit listening to the lecture and then he walks out of the room. But he's still here! He left the room but something remains behind; there's a sweet fragrance, a *reiach tov*, in the room.

Now, the *possuk* says that there's something even better than that: “A good name is even better than good oil.” When a person is alive and he acquires a good name – it means good character and *yiras Shamayim* – so it makes an impression; it lasts. As he passes through the world he leaves the fragrance of his good name wherever he goes. And even after he leaves this world the fragrance lingers on in the atmosphere; the sweet fragrance of his personality remains. “I was here,” it's calling out.

They Live On

A long time ago there was a *sefardi* man in this neighborhood, Reb Shama. He's an example of a man who left over a *shem tov*, a good name. He made a very good impression; he was a *tzaddik* and people admired him. For years and years after he died, they kept on talking about him here. His deeds, his behavior, his *mitzvos* and *maasim tovim* are still influencing the world.

Many times in my life I benefited from the *reiach tov* of good people. I remember a *frum* Jew; years ago I knew him very well. I used to watch him; I loved him and admired him. He didn't know but he was my model and he had a very big influence on me. I knew him as a *bochur* but he's still in my memory; I can't forget him.

Another *frum* Jew I knew as an adult already; he was an elderly man. This man knew all the *poskim*, all the *sha'alos*. He was a man who never spoke *loshon hara*; he never was angry at anybody. *Kol yomai*, all my days I watched him; he was a *tamim* in character, a *kiddush Hashem*, and I learned very many things from watching him. And I'm sure he influenced many people besides me. He's not in this world anymore but the *reiach tov* he left in the world is still here.

The Science of Smell

Now, I want you to understand that the “good fragrance” that a person can leave in this world is not merely *ruchniyus*; it's a physical thing. Those of you who are even a little familiar with science know that a good smell is not just “a smell” – it's very real. When someone wearing perfume leaves the room and you still smell the fragrance it means that there are molecules in the air that you're breathing in. You don't see it but it's real – there are millions of microscopic molecules floating in the air and when you breathe in they bind to the olfactory receptors in your nose and those receptors relay the odor messages to the brain. Smell is real – if you had the right equipment you could see it with your eyes.

Now, the fragrance of a *shem tov* that a person leaves over in this world is the same; it's also physical. Of course, this physical phenomenon carries with it certain ideals. *Chesed*, *bein adam l'chaveiro*, *bitachon*, *limud torah*, *tefillah*, *kabolas yissurin b'ahava*, other things too, and the fragrance of those ideals you leave in this world continue to waft through *Olam Hazeih* carrying the message. It doesn't go lost; your *maasim* do not leave the world; they continue to live on – and that's the *yerusha* that matters most in the next world.

Tinokos Shel Beis Rabban

I know one *tzaddik* – he didn't have children – and he used to bring together boys every *chol hamoed* and talk to them. He would learn with them and tell them stories and then he would give them prizes for learning. It was a beautiful thing!

But then one day this *tzaddik* finally left the world and now it became quiet – it was a *kol d'mamah dakah*. Oy, what a pity! A *tzaddik* left this world; he went lost it seems.

No, he didn't go lost! First of all, those boys are grown up now and they're living with the ideas that he put into their heads – they'll teach those ideas to their children and grandchildren forever! But besides for that; the mere fact that he spoke to them means that his words are echoing and re echoing in the atmosphere. That's important to know. They're not going lost! The air is more pure because of what he said! When you walk in the streets where he walked, you're breathing in that air. You should know you're becoming *niskadesh* because you're in the place where this man purified everything by his presence.

Tikun Olam

I once heard the Lubavitcher Rebbe say that. He said, “When you go someplace and you learn *mishnayos* in the street, you're changing the street.” Now, it's not a big *chiddush*; it's an important *chiddush* though. I'm just quoting a name of a *tzaddik* who said it, but you could say it yourself.

Here's a man who is saying *mishnayos*. Not in all places is it to *mutar* speak in *divrei torah* but suppose there's a street where everyone is dressed properly or nobody is walking except you; it's a good *kosher* street and you're saying *mishnayos*. It's not the same street anymore! The street is a different street. You're physically changing the world. There's no question about that.

Today the world is doing the opposite. וְהַטְּמָא הָאָרֶץ – *And the land becomes unclean from wrong deeds*. The *reshaim* are making the world smell bad. It actually smells bad. When you walk by a movie theatre you have to hold your nose closed. It doesn't help anymore to walk on the other side of the street because the stench is terrible – you have to actually hold your nose closed.

Eradicating Pollution

And therefore, in order to counteract that, as much as possible we have to create the good fragrance of *maasim tovim*, of *Torah* and *mitzvos* and good character. From good deeds the land becomes

more *tahor* and more *kadosh*. Not only Eretz Yisroel. Wherever you go, you're purifying the atmosphere; you're improving the soil. Everything becomes better as a result of what you're doing and what you're saying.

It's a big responsibility, of course, but it's important for us to realize that it's true. You are affecting the world by your *maasim*. When you walk in the street and you're thinking about *yetzias Mitzrayim* or *matan Torah* or *shor she'nagach es haparah*; maybe you're making a *cheshbon hanefesh* – you're thinking how much you have to respect your mother and father, how much you have to honor your wife and make her happy; you're thinking like a Jew has to think, you have to know that you're making that street clean; you're making it pure! No matter what street it is! Of course the streets today are so full of *tumah* that they can stand a great deal of purification – you have to do a lot of thinking as you walk – but that's what you're accomplishing.

A Spokesman In Both Worlds

That's what it says (Avos 4:11), קוֹנֵה לּוֹ פְּרָקְלִיט אַחַד, הָעוֹשֶׂה מִצְוָה אַחַת, – If you do one *mitzvah*, you create one *spokesman* for you; someone who speaks up for you. Now you might think it means that a *malach* is created by your deeds and when the time comes for the *beis din shel maaleh* to consider what you accomplished in this world, so that *malach*, that *mitzvah* that you did, will stand up and speak for you. That's true, I'm sure it's true; but it's much more than that – what it means is that you're creating something that still exists *in this world!* Not only he speaks up on the *Yom Din* – he's speaking *in this world*; you don't hear him but he's speaking.

Let's say you said some words of kindness to a fellow Jew; you were *me'odeid anavim*, you encouraged somebody and you made him feel good. These words, you should know, are not finished after they enter the mind of the listener. They live on forever and ever. That's the *praklit* that he means. It's the *spokesman* who will never stop talking. Your good deeds, your good words, even your good thoughts, are still in the world. And they're affecting the world. It's a *hashpa'ah*. Oh yes!

Children For the Childless

Every good deed, every *mitzvah*, is a *praktit*. If you learn a *mesichta*, and you *chazer* it and acquire it, that's your *bechor*, a beautiful boy. *Bava Kama* is a beautiful little boy to have, believe me. Or even *Mesichta Megilah*; it's a very little boy but an equally beautiful boy nonetheless. The more *mesichtos* you learn the more children you have. Besides the reward for Torah, the mere fact that the words continue forever in this world is the *yerusha* that matters most.

Girls can learn Torah too. *Mesillas Yesharim* is a very beautiful child. *Chovos Halevavos* and *Shaarei Teshuva* are beautiful children that will last forever. *Maasim tovim* are very beautiful children. There are so many things to do. People need help constantly. Women can do tremendous things. If you help other people, *maasim tovim* are your children; in a certain sense it's something like your child. I'm not saying it's a child, but it's something like it. It doesn't go lost. When people live lives of righteousness it doesn't go lost; it's preserved forever in the airspace here and that's the real *yerusha* a person leaves over in this world.

Money Talks

The truth is that just like a person who leaves over a *yerusha* of money for his descendants continues to live on through that money, a person without children can do the same. When you give some of your money to the *yeshivos*, to poor *talmidei chachomim*, often that's more valuable than what you leave for your children — it depends what they're using the money for. If your children will go now on a trip to the Caribbean because you left them a *yerusha*, so there are much better places to put your money. The fragrance of a Caribbean cruise you need like a hole in the head.

When you give money to a *yeshiva* and the boys are sitting and learning *gemara*, it's your money that's learning *gemara*. If the *bochurim* are learning late at night in the *beis medrash*, so you're sitting next to those boys. Your money is studying *Mesichta Bava Kama* now. It's not just that you gave money, you did a *mitzvah* of *tzedakah* and that's all, now you're finished. No, you're not finished — you just started; you just started accomplishing great things!

A man once told me that his wife died. So I said, “Buy some *seforim* and put them in the *yeshivos* in her name.” So when they’ll learn in the *yeshiva* from that *sefer*, it’s like his wife is helping them learn Torah. Yes, absolutely, it’s like she’s sitting in the *beis medrash* learning Torah even years after she passed away. She’s living in both worlds at the same time.

A Foot In Both Worlds

That’s what Dovid Hamelech asked for: **אֶגְוֶרָה בְּאֶהְלֶךָ עוֹלָמִים** – I want to dwell in your tent forever; in both worlds (Tehillim 61:5). “Your tent” means the *ohel Hashem* where Dovid used to come with his *chaveirim* to sing *shevachim* to Hakodosh Boruch Hu and learn Torah together. Dovid said, “I want to live in that tent forever.”

So fret the gemara (Yevamos 96b), “Is it possible for a man live in both worlds at the same time?” What is this that he’s asking that he should remain in the tent of this world forever? He doesn’t want *Olam Haboh*?! Dovid certainly wanted *Olam Haboh*. And if he’s there, how can he be here?

Yes, you could be in both places at once. When a person leaves a good name, a *reiach tov*, in this world, so he might be in the next world enjoying his eternal reward, but he is still in this world physically in the form of his good deeds; by means of the *reiach tov* that he left over in this world.

The Lesson of Yerusha

And that’s the most important lesson of *yerusha*. *Hilchos Yerusha* is not only a procedure of *dinei mamonos* so that we should be different from the Indians; it’s not merely a good arrangement so that it shouldn’t be a *hefker velt*. And it’s not even that we want to be *gomlei chasodim* with the grieving children.

The *dinim* of inheritance are a *gemilus chesed* with the *neshama* to fulfill its desire that it should not lose its contact with this world. Hakodosh Boruch Hu is telling us, “I want to teach you a lesson about *Olam HazeH*. I want you to know how much the *neshama* craves the opportunities in this world – so much so that even after the *neshama* has to leave, it still wants to remain attached to *Olam HazeH*.”

Prepare Your Own Yerusha

And that lesson is intended for all of us; children or no children, *yerusha* or no *yerusha*, every *neshama* wants to continue living in this world forever because this is the one chance to succeed. And therefore, as long as you're putting in efforts to improve the world, to leave something over, so in a certain sense that fragrance you're creating is just as valuable as leaving over children and money.

The *praktitim* will speak on a person's behalf forever in both worlds and the more spokesmen he has for himself the louder the noise is; it's making a tremendous noise all the time, long after he has already gone. And the person looks down at his children, at his property, and most important, at the *reiach tov* that he left in the world, and he's happy that he continues to live forever in both worlds, accruing the merits of the *shem tov* that he left in *Olam Hazeih*. And that's what the *neshama* cares about most - because the *yerusha* of the *shem tov* that is left in this world is the *yerusha* that the *neshama* enjoys in the next world forever and ever.

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שאל אביך ויגדך זקניך ויאמרו לך

Q:

Should I be saying *tikun chatzos* during this time of the year – the Three Weeks?

A:

Tikun Chatzos is a good thing, but don't just daven it up. I would say that it's a good idea to just sit down on the floor before you go to sleep – even for a minute. Do it after your wife falls asleep – or after your husband falls asleep – so that they won't think you've gone crazy. But sit on the floor in *aveilus* for the *Churban Beis Ha'mikdash*, mourning for the destruction, for a full minute and then go to sleep.

A minute is also good enough. Don't think it's a small thing. When I was a boy I used to say *tikun chatzos*. But now – even better – sit on the floor for a moment and think about what we're missing. A minute for the *Churban Beis Ha'mikdash* and then go to sleep. This is a very good *eitzah* you're hearing now – a very important piece of advice.

TAPE # E-239 (July 1999)

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