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**Email:** [info@TorasAvigdor.org](mailto:info@TorasAvigdor.org) | **Telephone:** 732.844.3670

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

פרשת נצבים-וילך

WITH

R' AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"l

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

**Career of Speaking**

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*Part I. Gift of Speech*

**The Easy-Shmeezy Guide To Torah**

In this week's *sedrah* Hashem declares that the Torah is not difficult to keep: *It is neither hidden from you, nor distant from your reach. It is not high up in the heavens ... or across the sea ...* (Netzavim 13: 11-14). And not only fulfilling all the *mitzvos maasiyos*, but even to achieve all the great ideals that the Torah demands of us is not out of reach. לֹא רְחֹקָה לֵאמֹר – *It's not far away from you, הוּא מְקֻדָּר – בִּי קְרוֹב אֵלַיךְ הַדְּבָר מְאֹד – actually it's something very close to you.* The Torah is telling us here that achieving greatness is something within arm's reach for everyone – it's right here; all you have to do is grab hold of it.

However, when we look around, when we look at our own *avodas Hashem* too, it doesn't appear to be that way. *Karov me'od?* Very close?! The Torah demands from us so much greatness, so much perfection of mind and character! It's *endless* what we're expected to achieve in this

world: *Ahavas Hashem, yiras Hashem, deveikus*; to be aware of Him always, to fear Him, to feel gratitude towards Him; to love His Torah and His people. There's so much to accomplish and to us it seems so far away; so far out of reach. How could the Torah say that such immense responsibility is "very close" to us?

### **To Say, To Think, To Do**

Now, pay good attention to our *possuk* because that's the question it's coming to answer. Achieving Torah ideals is not difficult – it's not "hidden and distant from you" – only that you have to start out in the right way: *בְּפִיךָ וּבְלִבְּךָ? כִּי קְרוֹב אֵלֶיךָ הַדָּבָר מְאֹד* – *How is it very close to you? בְּפִיךָ וּבְלִבְּךָ? לַעֲשׂוֹתוֹ* – *With your mouth and with your mind to do it.* There are three words here and they indicate three separate stages; number one is *בְּפִיךָ* – *with your mouth.* It means you have to talk; we'll soon explain that. The second is *בְּלִבְּךָ* – *in your heart*; it means your thoughts. In *lashon kodesh* 'heart' always means the thoughts because genuine thoughts are always backed up with *hargasha*, with feelings. And the third stage is *לַעֲשׂוֹתוֹ* – *to do it.* So again – it's *בְּפִיךָ*, your mouth; then *בְּלִבְּךָ*, your thoughts, and finally *לַעֲשׂוֹתוֹ*, to accomplish.

The Torah is telling us here the way to accomplish things in this world. The first step is *בְּפִיךָ*, to say it with your mouth. By means of expressing with your mouth the great Torah ideals, by repeating them again and again, little by little those words have an effect *בְּלִבְּךָ*, on your mind. It's Torah psychology – I say the word psychology, *lehavdil* – today they call it autosuggestion, but it's an ancient Torah teaching.

### **The Mouth Is A Tow-Truck**

Our great teacher, the *Chovos Halevavos*, describes the principle as follows: *hamachshava nimsheches achar hadibbur* – *Your thoughts are pulled along by your words*; it means that the way you talk, that's the way you're going to think. It doesn't mean immediately, but over time the way you talk will influence the way you think. Your mind begins to think along the lines of your words.

And there's nothing more important than that because your mind is who you really are! The *Chovos Halevavos* says that "most of the achievements that a man accomplishes in this world is by means of his thoughts." Thoughts are supreme! And the way to create a mind is by saying words: *Bificha*, you'll speak; *ubilvavcha*, and it will transform

your mind; *la'asoso*, in order to make a new person out of you. The greatest accomplishment you could make in this world is by making something out of yourself, and by means of speaking the right words, in the course of time, you'll become a different personality!

### **The Gift Gorillas Don't Have**

The ability to talk is one of the most outstanding features of humanity and it's something unique to Mankind. Don't listen to what they tell you in the National Geographic and the New York Times. Never will they teach a gorilla to speak! The *koach hadibbur*, the ability to speak words, belongs to us only. And what we're learning now is that its purpose is not merely for communicating one with another – one of the prime purposes of the gift of speech is the opportunity to create a Torah mind.

And that's because the mind works best in tandem with the mouth. Actually when we think, in a minor way the organs of speech are formulating. Your larynx, your palate, your tongue are being activated even while you're thinking. It may come as a surprise to you what I'm saying, but most of our thinking is verbalized in the organs of speech – even if we're not expressing the words, but as we are thinking, the organs of speech are functioning in a sublimated way. That's why when your mouth is busy eating it's harder to think – when you are busy chewing and swallowing, your speech organs are busy doing something else and that makes it harder to think. It's possible but it's more difficult.

And therefore speech is the perfection of the thought process – the best way for a person to sharpen his thoughts is by means of expressing them with his mouth. And therefore if you actually say the words instead of just thinking them, it becomes so much clearer; it brings the ideas into clearer focus. So even though you might be thinking some noble thought, nevertheless by articulating, by saying with your mouth the noble ideals that you think in your mind, you're making it so much more real to you and it becomes so much more effective in transforming who you are.

### **Making Him King**

I'll give a *mashal*, something that's approachable to you. When Rosh Hashana comes, so we'll stand all day saying: *Hashem melech, Hashem malach, Hashem yimloch l'olam va'ed*. What are we doing? We

should say it once and finished. We agree, “He’s the king.” What’s with “Hashem melech” all day long? Hakodosh Boruch Hu needs us to proclaim Him king like we need a hole in the shoe. He was always the King and He’ll always be the King. He doesn’t need us to coronate Him.

The answer is that we’re talking to ourselves. We’re putting into our mind, into our feelings, that He’s the One and Only. And that’s why we say it so many times, because the repetition, saying it again and again, puts it more firmly into our mind. *Beficha*, you say it; *u’bilvolvcha*, and it gets etched into your *neshama*. You say it again – “Hashem Melech!” – and it’s etched in a little deeper. That’s the purpose; all day long we stand on our feet and shout “Hashem is our King,” because we want to bring into our *seichel*, into our *hergeshim*, into our emotions, that He’s the king.

### **The King Becomes a Servant**

Now you should know that our great men practiced this from the earliest days. Look in *Tehillim* – Dovid Hamelech was always talking to himself. הַלְלִי נַפְשִׁי אֶת־הַשֵּׁם – “My soul, bless Hashem.” בְּרַכִּי נַפְשִׁי אֶת־הַשֵּׁם – “My soul, go wild over Hashem.” He’s talking to himself. He wasn’t saying it in public to an audience. He said it privately!

That was Dovid Hamelech’s system; he was constantly urging himself to speak more. He said, אֲמַר לַיהוָה מַחְסֵי וּמְצוּדָתִי – “I will say to Hashem, ‘You are my protection, You are my fortress.’” Why does it have to say, “I will say”? It should be, “You, Hashem, you are my Fortress.” But it doesn’t say that. It says, “I have to say to Hashem, You, Hashem are my protection,” because Dovid was training himself to speak out the words: “I will always be saying this.”

Dovid wasn’t merely expressing the greatness that he already had in his mind – he was expressing these words in order to make his mind great! That’s one of the methods Dovid used to achieve perfection. Now, I can’t tell you how Dovid became great – it’s too much for me – but that’s certainly one of the methods that he followed. By means of *beficha*, speaking words; and from his mouth it became *bilvolvcha*; it penetrated into his mind – it became so real to him that he became a new person because of that. He wasn’t Dovid any longer; now he was *Dovid avdi* – Dovid, My servant.

## Gaining His Aroma

And that's why we *daven* with words. People always ask me here, why can't we *daven* with our thoughts? Hashem knows what we're thinking – why do we have to express it in words? So the *Chovos Halvovos* answers that by saying great words, we think great thoughts. The words we use make us think – they sharpen our thoughts. That's why it's called *tefillah*. *Tefillah* comes from the word, *pillel*, to think, and *mispallel* – it's called the reflexive form in *dikduk* – means 'to cause yourself to think.'

That's why every day we retrace Dovid's footsteps by repeating the *shirei Dovid avdecha*. We repeat his great words over and over again because if we say them properly – of course, if you're just *davening uhp* the words, just saying the words without any thought then it's nothing – but if you're saying the words of Dovid Hamelech with the intention of utilizing the *koach hadibbur*, so then our minds become shaped in that direction and all of those ideals that Dovid spoke about become part of our minds; a little bit of the aroma of Dovid's personality enters into our minds.

## How to Say Tehillim

That's why the *Chovos Halvovos* said that it's a good idea to say *Tehillim* when nobody is around and to say it with emotion; not to say a whole *yom*, no. Say it slowly, slowly, with emotion. You can become great from *Tehillim*. I remember when I was a boy, I used to go to a certain *shul* and Shabbos between *mincha* and *ma'ariv*, they didn't eat *shalosh seudos* in the *shul*. They sat and they said *tehillim*. They said it slowly; every word was a diamond. They were putting diamonds into their minds.

That's why I say that it's not good to have a *niggun* without words – it should always be with words. And you're saying the words over and over again not because you want to hear the *nigun*; not because you want to maintain the tune, the high part and the low part. No! You want to maintain the words in your heart deeper and deeper. The fact you're repeating the words should be utilized by you. Absolutely! Each time you say it, it's with conviction, with the intention that the ideals of the words should be pressed deeper and deeper into your *neshama*. And as those words are repeated by you, they gain a firm hold in your mind and you become a different person as a result.

## Part II. Using Speech

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### A Good Piece of Advice

Now, this *yesod* of **וּבְלִבְכֶם לְעִשְׂתוֹ**, is such an important principle that no matter how much I'll aggrandize this idea to you, I'm not overstating it. We could sit here for hours and hours, for days on end, and it would still be too big of a field for us to treat in its entire spectrum. But one thing is certain, that it's an *eitzah hagunah ad me'od*, it's a very important piece of advice, and therefore we should make it our business that from now on this *possuk* should be a *yesod* in our lives because there are endless forms of greatness we can achieve by means of this principle of *hamachshava nimsheches achar hadibbur*.

Let's say, for instance, you wish to become a *yarei shamayim*. Who doesn't want that? Everybody would like to be a *yarei shamayim*; only that it seems very far away from us – it's way up high “in the heavens” or it's far, far away from us, somewhere “over the sea.” If only we knew how to get there. And meanwhile life is passing us by – one year, another year, another year, a decade – and nothing is happening!

But we're learning now that **קָרוֹב אֵלֶיךָ הַדָּבָר מְאֹד** – it's very close to you. It's **וּבְלִבְכֶם לְעִשְׂתוֹ** – by means of your mouth you can create a mind of a *yarei shamayim* and make something from yourself. Now, that doesn't mean you just say, “I'm a *yarei shamayim*,” and finished; it takes more work than that. But if you're willing to make the effort it actually is *karov eilecha*.

### Cultivating Awareness

*Yarei Shomayim* means that you feel that *haShomayim* is right here – that Hashem is looking at you. That's what it means to be a *yarei shamayim* – it means you're aware of the presence of Hakodosh Boruch Hu. It's very important to know that He is looking! And it's true too! But who feels that it's so? Nobody is talking about it and nobody is thinking about it either; it's a lost art today because nobody is doing anything about it.

So what's the solution? It's by means of the words of your mouth. You want to be a *yarei shomayim*? The first thing is to gain an appreciation of the fact that Hashem is looking at you. **עֵינֵי הַשָּׁם הִמָּה** **מְשׁוֹטָטִים בְּכֹל הָאָרֶץ** – “The eyes of Hashem are looking everywhere”

(Zecharia 4:10). He's looking! No question about it. Dovid Hamelech says it too! הַשֵּׁם מִשְׁמַיִם הַשְּׁקִיף עַל בְּנֵי אֲדָם - "He's looking down from the heavens" (Tehillim 14:2).

And the first step in the right direction is to say it. So, if you're walking down the Avenue by yourself, say, "Hashem is looking at me." Nobody should hear you - say it to yourself: "Hashem; I know that You're looking at me right now." Not only once. "Hashem is looking at me! He's looking at me. He's looking at me." Say it again and again. And tomorrow you'll try it again.

Now, at first you don't have any attitude at all of accepting it; you don't really feel what you're saying. Say it anyhow because the words that you say with your mouth are going to inscribe these truths into your heart. It's only a little beginning, but if you don't say it, you'll never start out in the career of being a *yarei Shomayim*! The first step is to say it with your mouth and then the ideal begins to percolate into your mind and that changes who you are. It makes you a new person.

### **Chocolate, Ice Cream and Torah**

What about becoming a person who loves the Torah? Why not? It's a great accomplishment to become an *oheiv Torah*. You have to train yourself to love the Torah. אָנִי אֹהֵב אֶת הַתּוֹרָה - the Torah said, "I love those who love me." (Mishlei 8:17). Not only those who *learn* me - those who *love* me.

Here's a *yeshiva* man who spends all day long in the *yeshiva* learning the Torah. Did he ever say, "I love the Torah?" Not once in your lifetime?! You'll say, "It's silly. Sure I love the Torah." But you never even thought about it. You surely don't actually love the Torah. Ice-cream you love. Chocolate cake you love. But Torah, you don't love it; it's out of the question. He's learning the Torah - why? He has to do it. Maybe it's an obligation, a *mitzvah*, or he's ambitious to become a *talmid chochom*. Very good! That's important too! But whatever it is - it's not because he loves the Torah.

Now how do you love the Torah? Start saying it. Say, "מִדָּה אֹהֵבְתִי! תוֹרָתְךָ! How much I love Your Torah, Hashem." So whenever you open a *sefer*, in the *yeshiva*, wherever you are, say, "I love the Torah." Constantly. "I love the Torah." You're passing by a *yeshiva*, a *beis medrash*; you can't go in now because you'll miss the bus. But you can say it. "I love the Shas that is in that shtiebel. I love the *chamisha chumshei Torah*. Little by

little, the love of the Torah begins to take shape in your mind. And soon it becomes a pleasure to read the Torah.

### **Talking In The Waiting Room**

That's why on Tisha B'Av, when you cannot eat and you cannot bathe, you cannot study Torah either because it's a pleasure. People today are surprised when they hear that. What's the pleasure of learning Torah? On the contrary, just like we fast on Tisha B'Av, we should also force ourselves to learn. We afflict ourselves by learning Torah. The answer is that we don't understand. Torah is a pleasure! A real pleasure. Only that we don't realize it. And one of the ways to gain that attitude is by speaking about it.

Suppose you're sitting in a waiting room waiting to be called on, either by the business man you're visiting or some other executive or maybe you're in the dentist's office and you're waiting. So while you're sitting there you have the good sense to practice – make sure nobody is around; otherwise they'll think something is wrong with you – you'll say to yourself something out loud. Say aloud, "I love the Toras Hashem. I love every word of the Torah."

If you'll say it over and over again you're making your mind great. Every time you say it it's another diamond that is waiting for you in the world to come. Isn't it worth it coming here just to hear this? Because people are recklessly wasting the precious minutes of life. The minutes tick off on the clock of life.

### **When Will You Do It Already?**

Now, imagine you want to take the next step. Not only do you want to love the Torah; you want to love the One who gave us the Torah. Now that's a subject that's not spoken about enough. To love Hashem?! Some people think that it's a subject for the Beis Yaakov girls, that's all. Oh no! After all, it's a commandment of the Torah. The Torah says, וְאֶהְבֶּתָּ אֱלֹהֶיךָ – *you should love Hashem your G-d*, בְּכָל לִבְּךָ – *with all of your mind*. Every day you're saying it in the morning and then by *maariv*, and then again before you go to sleep. But when are you going to do it already?

Suppose you're a man who's interested in this career of loving Hashem; so imagine now that you're walking in the street tomorrow and you remember the lesson we learned here – that it's קְרוֹב אֵלֶיךָ הַרְבֵּה

מאד, that it's very close to you, בְּפִיךָ וּבִלְבָבְךָ לְעִשְׂוֹתוֹ, by means of your mouth you can do it all. So as you walk you say – nobody can hear you; they'll think you're a fool if they hear it – walk in the street and say, "I love you, Hashem. I love you, Hashem." You don't, but say it anyhow.

### **At Least Once!**

And even though it's artificial and you're not head over heels in love with Hashem yet, say it anyhow. It's not בְּכָל לִבְבְּךָ, with all your thoughts, but at least a little bit you're saying it. Say it with our mouth, "Ich hub dir lib, Ribono Shel Olam – I love you, Hashem." Say it in Yiddish, in Polish, in English – just say it! "I love you Hashem." Ah! And it's a tremendous achievement because from *bificha* it makes its way, little by little, to *bilvovcha*. You'll say it again and again and again and little by little your personality begins to change.

Some people never said it once in their lives! Not once in their whole life Never once?! What stupidity! You're going to wish you could come back to this world after 120 years: "Oh, Hashem, how I'd like to go back just for one minute! Now I understand; I want to say it now." But Hashem says, "It's too late, My friend. I gave you plenty of time on this earth. You didn't utilize your mouth to become great while you were still alive."

### **Mezuzah Talk**

Now I'm going to tell you something that's worth money. It's worth a thousand dollars to hear this. You know, some people kiss the *mezuzah*. It's very nice but it's not enough – no. What matters is what's in the *mezuzah*. It's written in there: *You should love Hashem*. It's reminding you; it's telling you, when you pass a *mezuzah*, say, "I love you, Hashem."

Not only when you walk through the door. You're sitting on the couch; take a look at the *mezuzah* over there and say the words, "I love You Hashem." When you're eating in the dining room, from time to time look at the *mezuzah* and say, "I love you, Hashem."

### **What Do Other Families Do?**

Teach it to your children too. Say, "Children, altogether let's say, 'We love You Hashem.'" They're embarrassed. They don't know if their friends' fathers do such things at the Shabbos table. But say it anyhow! All the children in a chorus; boys and girls all chime in and say, "We love

you, Hashem.” Oh, you’re planting a seed in their minds forever. Someday they’ll remember, “We once said that we love Hashem.”

And although we’re far away from that ideal, at least we say the words and strive to come closer to it; we make a semblance, some superficial resemblance to love of Hashem and little by little it becomes more and more sincere. As you continue to repeat it, you come to mean it after a while. When you’re young, it’s only words but make no mistake about it, Hakodosh Boruch Hu is listening. But not only is He listening; your mind begins to hear it too. And little by little, that love becomes part of your thoughts.

You begin to love Hashem and if you continue to say these words, again and again and again, after a while that fountain within you gushes up and you become a lover of Hashem. Oh, you’re a different person now – you’re not the same all your life. Once you get going, you’re transformed entirely.

## *Part III. Growing From Speech*

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### **Life is Full of Joy**

Now, one more subject – it’s the very important subject of becoming a happy person in this world. And don’t think it’s a small thing; one of the great tragedies of Mankind is that they don’t appreciate the happiness of this world while they have it. Life is full of joy and Hakodosh Boruch Hu intended it for that purpose. He wants us to be happy!

And that means that He wants you to learn how to enjoy life. Listen to me again: You must learn how to enjoy life! That’s the big rub of life: Hashem made this world a world of happiness, a world of chesed – *olam chesed yibaneh* – and yet most of the world is not enjoying themselves. It’s a pity; it’s a big question – why is it that world does not know how to enjoy life?

And the answer is that nobody is speaking about it! Dovid Hamelech said: כִּי אָמַרְתִּי – *I said*, עוֹלָם חֶסֶד יִבְנֶה – “The world is made for kindness.” “I say it!” said Dovid Hamelech. He made sure to speak about it: “Hakodosh Boruch Hu does things in this world for kindness,” said Dovid to himself again and again. Everything is *ki li’olam chasdo!*

## **Your Words Need Backing**

Now, most people who have come here for some time have already gained an inkling of the duty of gratitude – at least a little bit they understand the obligation to actually feel grateful to Hashem. “Well, certainly I’m grateful,” someone says. “What are we wasting time for?” But that’s just a blank check. A man gives a check to the store, a blank check – trouble is there’s no money in the bank. It’s only when you back it up with a genuine feeling of enjoyment in this world, that’s when gratitude means something.

It is a very big subject because it includes all the phenomena in this world. And therefore, Hakodosh Boruch Hu is waiting to hear from you. If it’s a nice day outside, be happy. **בְּיוֹם טוֹבָה הֵיְהִי בְטוֹב** – *If it’s a good day, then you should make sure to be happy.* What does that mean, “make sure to be happy”? If it’s good, then I’ll be happy. What do I need the *possuk* for? Oh yes, you need it. It’s telling you to say “Boruch Hashem! It’s such a nice day today – I’m so happy!” Not like people say, “Boruch Hashem,” but they don’t think what they’re saying; it’s just a formality. Say “Hashem, *boruch Atah* for a beautiful day!” Ah! Now you’re talking. It takes a long time before the day is finished; you can thank Him a number of times for the beautiful day. “Thank You Hashem for a beautiful day.” “Ahh, it’s beautiful today.” “It’s such a happy day!” Now it’s getting into your head; you’ll become a happy person.

## **Bathing in Gold**

Let’s say you’re walking in the sunshine. Everybody enjoys the sunshine by instinct. But if you don’t stop to talk about it then your enjoyment is minimal. It says, **וּמִתּוֹק הָאוֹר** – *How sweet is the light,* **וְטוֹב לְעֵינַיִם לְרְאוֹת אֶת הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ** – *how pleasant it is for the eyes to see the sun.* It’s actually a lot of fun to walk in the sunshine. But if you don’t talk about that then you only have a minimal pleasure, like the pleasure of a cat sitting on the sidewalk and basking in the sun.

But if you begin to formulate it in your mind; you think about how beautiful the sunlight is; this cascade of gold that is pouring down upon us and you’re really bathing in it, and and you begin to talk about it so those words that come out of your mouth cause the pleasure to increase a hundredfold. You’ll start enjoying life much more than otherwise. If you say with your mouth: “How sweet is the sunlight!” you’ll begin to actually enjoy the sunlight to a much greater extent.

## **Words of Winds**

And maybe it's freezing and a blast of cold wind is piercing your clothing and still the sun is shining. You walk on the sunny side of the street when it's cold, don't you? So as the sun is shining, first you think how good it is to get this additional warmth. And then you say with your mouth, "Thank You Hashem for giving me a sun. It's such a pleasure that You're giving me – the sunlight and the heat." The wind too. When you feel the wind blowing, whether it's a zephyr or a breeze, enjoy and remind yourself with your mouth that it's a pleasure. The winds freshen the air; takes away the stale air and brings the fresh air. When the wind blows, enjoy the fresh air and express your gratitude by means of speech.

You won't be the same person anymore because when you formulate something with your words, with your mouth, when you verbalize it, it's an entirely different experience. Sometimes you have a good thought but the thought is not going to affect you enough. It's wonderful to have a good thought! Very good! But it's a type of weak emotion. But if you say that good thought, it becomes so much stronger – it brings the idea into much sharper focus.

## ***Diamonds Fall From the Sky***

Now when it's raining, that's also a beautiful day – oh, it's beautiful when diamonds are falling from the sky! It's a miracle when it rains. Where does it come from? Pure water. And the earth needs it – life-giving drops. It means that next spring all the trees will bloom again, so all the apples will start coming out and the pears and peaches and cherries and all the good things will come out because of the rain that comes today and not only pears and peaches and flowers, but babies will come because of the rain. Where does a baby come from? The mother who was drinking water and drinking milk and eating bread – all that because of the rain!? When a baby is born, most of him is water.

So when it rains, actually people are coming down. Did you ever think about that? When it rains, it's people coming down from the sky! All of us sitting here once came down when it rained! We are 80% water. Where does the water come from? It came from the clouds. So when it rains, all the future generations are coming down from the sky. And two years later, you'll see baby carriages on the street and they're

full of rainwater; all the babies you see are the results of the rain from the days of rain that you appreciated. And years later, you'll see buses! You know the buses of children going back and forth from Yeshivas! It's all the rain! It's a fact of chemistry, you can't deny it. And so, when you see rain, don't make a mistake and just think some vague thoughts. Say, "Boruch Hashem, it's wonderful that it's raining – it's the miracle of life!"

### **Waking With Joy**

By means of speaking the right words all your life, you'll train yourself to be genuinely happy. You have to say to yourself the words. Say the words, "Hashem, I am so happy that I can see!" Did you ever say those words? Never? Not to mumble, *meh meh meh meh, pokeyach ivrim*; every morning you roll off a whole list – you hardly think what you're saying. No. That's not how to become happy. That's futility – you're not living right because if you don't speak about it, it's that much harder to appreciate. You have to express the words with sincerity.

And you have to say it not once. You have to say it many times. Many times! Until finally you wake up in the morning and you'll be ecstatic with the glorious joy of the ability to see! Finally when you come to that, let's say, fifty years from now, you'll say, "Aaayayayayay! It's such a *simcha*!"

### **Happiness May Not Be Forever**

Someday – it shouldn't happen to you – but some people look back at the good old days when they were able to see. What a happiness it is to see! If they could see again, they would be delirious with joy!

Here's a true story, one. A man was blind and an accident happened that he suddenly regained his eyesight. It's a true story. He became almost *meshugeh* with happiness. To see!? Seeing is fun! Seeing is happiness! It's a joy to see! Just to see is pleasure! To look with your eyes is a pleasure! How can you live all your life and not experience the joy of seeing?! Not only seeing the beloved ones among you, seeing your children's faces, seeing your wife, seeing everybody else. No, not only that! Just seeing in general is a happiness! But if you never make the effort to think about it and express it with your mouth, you'll never experience it to its fullest.

### **“I’m Not Homeless!”**

That’s how it is with everything. Let’s say you’re well now. You’re well; you have no headache right now. You have no appendicitis. You have no heart trouble. You’re well. “Boruch Hashem, I’m well!” Do you appreciate what that means? *Chas v’Shalom* some day you might look back and say, “Oh! The good old days! I’m so sorry when I had perfect health, I could have been very happy! I didn’t enjoy life!”

Enjoy the fact that you have a home. You’re coming home tonight to a house? As soon as you walk into the house, say, “Boruch Atah Hashem that I’m not going to sleep on the railroad tracks tonight. I’m going to sleep in a bed tonight!” You know how many people are going to sleep on the railroad tracks tonight? Oh! Plenty of people. People who don’t have any homes, homeless – a *rachmanus* on them! Very many people are in jail, *nebach*. A lot of people are in jail. “Boruch Hashem! I have a home to go to at night.”

### **Rejoice O’ Youth!**

Boruch Hashem, you have so many things! You have food to eat. You have clothing to wear. You have fingers and eyebrows and ears. You have electric lights! Did you ever stop to thank Hashem for a light, an electric light?! Every *motsei Shabbos*, you make a *bracha*, *Borei meorei haeish*. What’s it for? Just a ceremony? You’re thanking Hashem for artificial light! You never stopped to say thank you to Hashem for artificial light? In the olden times, who had artificial light in the ancient time? They used to go to sleep early when the sun set. Now we have artificial lights! You won’t appreciate it fully if you don’t speak about it.

We have so much! And the more we speak about the more we become happy with what we have. *Eizehu ashir* – *Who is the truly wealthy person?* *Hasameach b’chelko* – *he who rejoices in what he has!* That’s the solution to most of people’s problems – rejoice! It’s a very big job, a very big function because there are so many things to thank Hashem for. So let’s get busy right now speaking to ourselves. “How lucky I am to have this!” “How fortunate I am to have that!” “How happy I am!”

### **The Deathly Silence**

If you have sense, you’ll listen to these words now and maybe you’ll even do it. As soon as you walk out of here tonight, you should try it out.

Because you have to think, “Someday there’ll come a time where I won’t be able to talk anymore.” You know, death is called silence; *yordei dumah* – those who go down to silence. Dovid Hamelech said, “Please Hashem, save me from death. I shouldn’t be among the *yordei dumah* – those who go down into silence.”

That’s the great tragedy; when a man’s life is over and now he knows of the opportunities that he lost; the opportunities he had to express himself, to say what he should have said. “Oh,” you’ll say, “I wish I could come back again to this world for a little while and continue the career – or start the career – of putting great ideals into my mind by means of speech.” But it’s too late now. And even though he goes to *Gan Eden* and he lives a happy existence, he’s always going to regret the words he didn’t say. In the next world the *neshama* continues, but the *neshama* yearns to come back again for one moment. If it could come back to this world for one moment and say these noble words: “I love You Hashem.” “Thank You Hashem for the clouds.” “I love Your Torah Hashem.” “Hashem Melech!” – just for that alone, the *neshama* would surrender a great part of its happiness in the afterlife.

### **A Year Of Speaking!**

And so, let’s make a commitment to ourselves to use it while we still have it. We’re asking Hakodosh Boruch Hu, “Give us life! Please give us another year of life!” so let’s commit ourselves to making use of the great gift of speech that only Mankind has. As long as we’re still breathing we’ll verbalize all of these important ideals and make from ourselves new personalities.

Hashem says, “I put you into this world to accomplish.” That’s what it says, *אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא אֱלֹקִים לַעֲשׂוֹת* – *The world is made to do*; it’s a world of doing. And that’s why every minute is so precious – because you can accomplish so many things. And one of the easiest ways of doing is by saying the right things. It’s *karov eilecha hadavar me’od*; it’s so close to you. *Bificha*, you’ll speak, *u’bilvavcha*, and it gives you a new mind, *laasoso*, and you’ll accomplish in this world – you’ll become something!

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# QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

שאל אביך ויגדך ויקניך ויאמרו לך

Q:

**How should one prepare for the Yamim Noraim?**

A:

Every Monday and Thursday we say נחשפה רכינו ונחקרה – “We will search out our ways and investigate.” But nobody does it. So the first step is to fulfill what you’ve been saying your whole life. Let’s begin searching out our ways and looking into our behavior. Did anybody here ever stop for three minutes straight and think about his ways?! So you see, people are just saying words that they don’t even think about. And they’re not insincere. And they’re not dishonest people. They just don’t know what they’re saying. They don’t know what they’re talking about.

So the first step is נחפשה רכינו – to search out our ways. It’s very important to spend a few moments thinking about yourself. Even if you’re a good man, you’ll find a lot of room to improve. And I’m being generous when I say that.

Make some time for yourself. Don’t wait for it to happen by itself. You have to set aside a few minutes, at least two or three minutes, to think about improving your *avodas Hashem*. Saying *selichos* is wonderful. It’s wonderful. But you’re going to have to do much more than that to prepare for Rosh Hashana. Much more than that. Absolutely. And if you sincerely want to prepare, you’ll spend as much time as you can searching out your ways.

Listening to me say it is not enough. You have to go home and do it. Nobody else is going to help you. Nobody cares about you more than you do. So get busy helping yourself. And you’ll discover many very things that you didn’t even dream about. If you search, you’ll find. And then you can begin the process of making a new person out of yourself.

TAPE # 834

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