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SEFER BEREISHIS - THE CHOPP HOLDINGS EDITION

IN HONOR OF OUR DEAR FRIENDS ARI & TOVA LOWY

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Time and Money

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THE **CHOPP HOLDINGS** EDITION

IN HONOR OF OUR DEAR FRIENDS ARI & TOVA LOWY

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פרשת וישלח

WITH

R' AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"l

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

Time and Money

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Part I. Money and Life

Yaakov Avinu at the River

When Yaakov Avinu was returning to Eretz Canaan from Padan Aram loaded down with the wealth that he had acquired in the house of Lavan, a very queer incident occurred. The Torah records how Yaakov and his family reached the Yabok River and had to cross over in order to continue forward. Now, crossing a river can be quite a difficult job, especially when you're traveling with a large family and you're loaded down with sheep and cattle and servants and possessions – but Yaakov was up to the task.

Yaakov was a very strong person by the way. How do I know that? Because the Torah tells us that when he first came to Charan many years before he single-handedly took off the stone that was covering the well – a stone so heavy that many shepherds together couldn't move it. Don't

think that *tzadikim* have to be weak. Yaakov was exceptionally strong and so he got busy bringing his family over the Yabok.

It states in the *possuk* that Yaakov went back and forth, back and forth, taking his family and all his possessions across the river onto dry land. **וַיַּעְבֵּר אֶת הַבְּחַל וַיַּעְבֵּר אֶת אֲשֶׁר לוֹ** – *And he took them across the river, and he also brought over everything that belonged to him* (Vayishlach 32:24).

And then suddenly there's a twist in the story: **וַיִּזְוַר יַעֲקֹב לְבְרוֹ** – *Yaakov was left alone on the far side of the river*. Everyone knows the story of Yaakov being left unaccompanied and how he encountered the *malach* and wrestled with him up till the morning. But that's not our subject for tonight – what we want to know is how it happened that Yaakov was left alone in the first place.

The Precious Pots

Our sages tell us what happened. Yaakov didn't intend it *lichatchila*. Chazal tell us that “*shachach pachim ketanim*.” It means he forgot some earthenware vessels on the other side of the river. He had made it across with his family but then he reminded himself that he had left over a few inexpensive pots and he returned to fetch them (Rashi 32:25)

Now, that's quite surprising to hear. He went back to retrieve a few small utensils?! After all, Yaakov was very wealthy and the sages describe the utensils as *pachim ketanim*; not only were they small but they were earthenware vessels. *Klei cheress* are a matter of a few pennies – maybe more than a few pennies, but surely they shouldn't warrant Yaakov bothering himself to cross back. Even if it wasn't dangerous to cross the river, why should he care if he left over some cheap things on the other side of the river?

Righteous Love of Money

About this story the *gemara* (Chulin 91a) says like this: “*Tzadikim chaviv aleihem memonom*” – *From the incident of Yaakov and his little inexpensive pots we see that the righteous people love their money more than they love their body*; their money is more precious to them than their bodies. If Yaakov Avinu troubled himself to cross over the river just to get his pots, so that's the model for a righteous Jew.

“Aha!” you'll say, “Those greedy Orthodox Jews! I always knew it!” Oh no! We're not talking here about Orthodox Jews – we're talking about *tzadikim*. Not all Orthodox Jews are *tzadikim* but the ones that are, love their money more than their body.

Now that's a statement that some people misunderstand and misuse, but it's a true statement and therefore it's necessary to explain it fully. Because on first glance, it's the opposite of what we would expect. "Money?! says the *tzadik*, "Feh! Who needs it?" But now we see that just the opposite is true. *Chazal* tell us that for the righteous *money is most important*. And if they ascribe this love of money to Yaakov our father, our model, so we should try to understand it. Because actually we can't make sense of it. The wealthy Yaakov should care so much for his possessions that he would go back for some inexpensive *pachim ketanim*?

The Wealthy Pauper

The answer is Yaakov didn't go back for his pots – he went back to retrieve Hakodosh Boruch Hu's pots! For the pots of Hakodosh Boruch Hu, even if they're cheap earthenware, you go back across the river.

I'll explain that. Here's a rich man sitting by the kitchen table counting his money when suddenly a quarter rolls off the table. So what does he do? He gets on his knees under the table and he's looking for that coin. "I know it's here somewhere," he's thinking. Now his wife walks into the kitchen and she's standing there chuckling at him. "Sam? You, Sam?! You're crawling on the floor for a quarter? What's a quarter to you?!"

He says, "You don't understand Chana; it's not my quarter. It's the synagogue's money; it's *hekdesh* money. I was elected treasurer of the synagogue and I'm counting the change that we made at our little rummage sale." He's a very rich man but he takes his responsibility with serious dignity – he knows that it's not his money to waste.

A Loyal Custodian

Now suppose you're a *tzedakah gabbai* and you left some of the charity money someplace; you accidentally left it on a counter in the store. You have to go back! It's cold outside? Too bad! It's not your money to leave. *Your* money you can forget about, but *tzedakah* money, nothing doing.

The true servant of Hakodosh Boruch Hu understands that even "his" money is not really his. He's a loyal custodian for Hakodosh Boruch Hu and therefore even for his own property he has a special concern as if it's *tzedakah* money – it's Hashem's money.

Now, Yaakov Avinu, not only did he say "My money is not really mine" – empty words, that *anyone* can do. But Yaakov actually felt it! Yaakov Avinu *wasn't* wealthy – he was a pauper. "Whatever I have," he said, "is not mine. It belongs to Hashem. I'm the *gabbai*, a treasurer who's

tasked with taking care of Hashem's property; and therefore it's not up to me to spend Hashem's money according to my own desires or to be careless with property that He entrusted to me. It's not my money. I'm merely a treasurer for Hashem."

Every Man a Treasurer

Let's say you're Secretary of the Treasury for the United States of America; do you have the right to take dollar bills and throw them out of the window? Imagine you were passing by the Treasury Building in Washington D.C. and you saw dollar bills floating out of the window. You look up and you see the Secretary of the Treasury is standing by the window dropping bills from his office. They'd send policemen; they'd send a squad with nets to catch him and he'd be put in a cell right away. Everybody knows that the money is not his to waste.

Yaakov actually lived with the constant awareness that he's just a Secretary of the Treasury for a certain amount of money and property that Hashem gave him to take care of temporarily. He had attained that awareness to such a degree that when little vessels were left behind, he was such a loyal custodian that he went back to fetch them; they weren't his – he went back to get Hashem's money.

That's how a great man understands his wealth. It's not mine. I cannot throw it into the street. I can't waste it. He doesn't believe that he owns anything; he's just a treasurer for Hakodosh Boruch Hu. If he's a poor *tzaddik* then he's the treasurer for the few dollars he has in his wallet and another few hundred dollars of savings hiding under his mattress. If he's a rich *tzaddik*, he's been appointed as Secretary of the Treasury for Hakodosh Boruch Hu.

Extravagant Wedding Spending

That's part of the perfection of a man in this world – we're expected to train ourselves in this awareness. When a man has such an awareness of the *Borei Yisborach* that he feels that he possesses nothing and that he is merely holding it in trust for Hakodosh Boruch Hu then he has reached the pinnacle of *emunah*; it's an awareness of the fundamental teaching that's found at the beginning of the Torah, בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים – *At the beginning, Elokim created.* This statement teaches us many things, but one of the primary teachings is that nothing in this world is *hefker*. Nothing is ownerless because Hashem created it. It's His. That's the first teaching. לַיהוָה הָאָרֶץ וּמְלוֹאָהּ – *To Hashem belongs the world and all that's in it!* Even your money, your *pachim ketanim*, it all belongs to Hakodosh Boruch Hu.

When a man thinks that his money is his, he says, "What do you mean I can't spend \$50,000 for my daughter's wedding? It's my money!" Such words mean that he has not yet attained this level of awareness of Hakodosh Boruch Hu.

Reusable Disposables

That's why it is *ossur* to waste. It's not only the few dollars; it's a matter of remembering that it's not yours – you're wasting what doesn't belong to you. That's why it has always been a virtue among Jews, don't waste. When the old mother a generation ago used to say to her child, "Eat it up; don't waste it," it wasn't just because they were poor – it was because they understood that nothing is ours.

Some people are wise enough not to throw away plastic dishes. In America, there's a lack of that, but some people still wash out their plastic dishes and use them again and again indefinitely. Plastic forks and plastic knives and plastic plates. Why can't you wash them out? I don't understand it.

That's why it's a wonderful thing to see a housewife, she has a wet paper towel; it's not dirty, it's just wet, so she doesn't throw it away. She takes the wet towel and hangs it up to dry to use it again. Not only because she's an *eishes chayil* and she's trying to save her husband's money. He's trying to make a living and she's trying to save pennies. But it's not only to save the penny; he might tell her, "No need for that Chana," but she does it anyway because she's training herself to recognize that it's really Hashem's paper towels – she's training herself to think like Yaakov Avinu.

Part II. Money and Time

Visiting the Chofetz Chaim

But there is still a second reason, an even greater reason why *tzadikim* are so solicitous about their property. And it's an explanation that opens up for us an entirely new vista of *avodas Hashem* that is included in the principle, "*the possessions of the righteous are more precious to them than their bodies.*"

You know why Yaakov went back to get the *pachim ketanim*? Because even little earthenware vessels cost money and *money is time!* That's the foundation of this *maamar chazal*: *pachim ketanim* equals time and *time is the most important thing you have in this life!*

I remember when a friend of mine, a *yeshiva bochur*, went to see the Chofetz Chaim in Radin. Unfortunately, I didn't join him. I was a poor boy and I didn't have money to go from Slabodka to Poland. Lithuania and Poland didn't have diplomatic relations so you couldn't travel directly; you had to go around through Latvia and I couldn't afford it. But my *chaver* went – he visited the Chofetz Chaim.

He told me this story himself. When he got to the Chofetz Chaim's house he went into the vestibule and he saw two old men sitting. So he sat down too; he was waiting – he thought that the time will come and the *gabbai* will come out and call him in to see the Chofetz Chaim. He was waiting and waiting and waiting and waiting and finally one old man said to him, “*Yungerman*, what are you waiting for?”

Time Is Money?

He said, “I came to see the Chofetz Chaim.”

So the old man pointed to the other old man. He said, “There he is! That old man sitting on the bench, that's the Chofetz Chaim.”

He went over to him. The Chofetz Chaim was very old then, almost a hundred years old. He looked at him, at my friend, and said to him, “Where do you come from?”

He said, “I'm from America.”

When the Chofetz Chaim heard that he said to him, “*In America zugt men tzeit iz gelt* – in America they say ‘time is money.’ But they should rather say, ‘*Gelt iz tzeit* – money is time.” *Ad kan* the words of the Chofetz Chaim; end quote.

Those are very important words you're hearing now from the great man: *Gelt iz tzeit* – Money is important not because of the money itself but because money is time.

If you're careless with your things, if you lose your *tefillin* because you put them someplace in the *beis medrash* and forgot about them; you came back the next day and they're not there anymore, so you're very far away from being aware of the value of life. Now your poor father has to go earn six hundred dollars to buy another pair of *tefillin* for you. He's a slave; he's giving away his time, his life, for that money.

Money Comes with a Price Tag

Now, a few years later when this same *yeshivah* boy gets engaged, he's immediately faced with a big problem. Where to get money for a diamond ring. A diamond ring! That's the barest necessity. Who doesn't

give a diamond ring? And her family is just bristling to see how cheap of a ring this fellow is going to give.

So what does this poor fellow do? He has nothing; he certainly doesn't have the funds to buy the ring so he mortgages his poor father. He takes \$1900 from this father's savings and he buys a diamond ring.

Now, you people who think \$1900 for a ring is nothing listen well because you are the ones who need it more than anyone else. Be patient with me now as you might hear some surprising things because some things have become so accepted and so common to us that they are no longer considered luxuries.

Weeks of Accomplishment

Once I was visiting in a man's house; I was sitting on his sofa and he said, "This sofa you're sitting on cost me eight hundred dollars. Today eight hundred dollars is a pauper's sofa, but this was twenty years ago (1950). I nearly fell off the sofa. I said, "How much money do you make?" He makes seventy dollars a week. I was polite. Otherwise, I would have given him a *mi sheberach* that he would never forget. To cater to his wife's vanity, this man gave away over ten weeks of his life. He gets up early in the morning and runs to catch the bus or subway. He comes home at night. Ten weeks for a sofa! Ay yah yay, what he could have done with those ten weeks! He could have accomplished *Olam Habo*.

Your money, your possessions, are important not only because you are the Secretary of the Treasury for whatever Hakodosh Boruch Hu has given you, but even more so because in order to get money it costs you time. And time is life! And so when people spend money without thought, they're actually wasting chunks of their life. If you go out for unnecessary things, if you're buying luxurious items that you can do without, you're giving away part of your life for nothing.

When a woman goes out and buys let's say an expensive carpet it can sometimes mean four weeks of her husband's life. Now the fact that he doesn't put up a big protest is because life is cheap to him; it's meaningless. He's like a sheep walking to the slaughterhouse; the poor fellow doesn't understand that he's been bled of part of his life. Because if that carpet would have remained in the store, he could have taken four weeks vacation and he could have retired to *Mirrer Yeshiva* just to sit and look at them.

Just to sit and look at them it's worth the money! Sit four weeks in *Mirrer Yeshiva* and look at the innocent faces of decent boys, and you've already accomplished something tremendous. Like it says in *Pirkei Avos*

(5:14): *Holech ve'eino oseh, sechar halichah beyado* – if you go to where people study Torah and you didn't learn a word, you're rewarded for going. It pays to go to the *yeshivah* and sit and just look at them – even if you don't understand their language at all. And certainly if you had taken that money you spent on the expensive carpet and hired someone to tutor you there, you could have become great! A pity! You were robbed of the opportunity for success, for perfection.

And that's why the *tzaddikim* consider their money precious. Money means life and life is a commodity that should not be exchanged for anything except for achieving perfection. The only thing that's worth sacrificing life for is Torah; *shleimus*, perfection. Otherwise, it's a bad bargain; you got the raw end of the deal.

The Spending Wife

Now, I'm not telling you what to do if your wife wants to spend money on having a home that is more elegant because it depends on many factors. Of course, if you can persuade her not to be extravagant and that it's really nothing, then all right. But if she insists, then a certain amount of leeway you have to give to her. Certainly; after all it's a *chesed*.

Doing *chesed* to your wife is a very important function of life. אָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעִי כְמוֹתְךָ. “You should love your fellowman like you love yourself.” And your wife is your best fellowman! Certainly you should deal with your wife respectfully and to a certain extent you should spend money according to your wife's desire. You're going to have to reach some sort of compromise but whatever it is, both of you must know that it's not money you're spending, it's life.

Yaakov Avinu didn't want to waste his life. It wasn't just *pachim ketanim* – it was his life! Losing those earthenware *keilim* would mean that a certain amount of time and effort would have to be expended to make up for the loss. And that loss of time was too precious to overlook. That's why he went back – not only because it's wasting money but because money is time!

The Sorry Inheritance

The *gemara* (Gittin 47a) tells about a certain sage named Reish Lakish who was a poor man; he lived with the bare minimum. And now the day finally came when he was on his deathbed. Let's picture the scene. Reish Lakish is dying now. His cabin was empty because he wasn't the kind of man to waste his life on possessions; he had more important things to do than fill up his cabin with fancy furniture – he didn't have

much of anything. And as he lay on his deathbed he looked around smiling with the satisfaction of knowing that *he was leaving nothing behind*.

And then suddenly his eyes alighted on a pot. It was a pretty poor kind of a pot, the kind that you make by walking into your backyard, scooping up some clay and banging a hole in it with your fist and letting it dry in the sun. Now, the pot didn't bother him because it didn't cost him any money or any time and he had made use of it for many years. But what did bother him was what was in the pot; it was full of saffron, a herb. *Reish Lakish shavak kaba d'morika* – he left over a pot of saffron which he had picked in the garden the day before.

When Reish Lakish saw that, it bothered him terribly. The Gemara says that as he was dying, he gave a sigh, *v'kara anafshei*, and he said upon himself a *possuk*: **וְעִזְבוּ לְאֲחֵרִים הַיְלָם** - “*And they leave over their wealth to strangers*” (Tehillim 49:11).

“Oy vey,” he cried, “I'm leaving over my wealth for somebody else.” Which means, “Had I known that I wouldn't live long enough to eat that up, I wouldn't have wasted my time picking it. I could have been learning during that time that I was picking it in the garden.” That was his regret that he expressed in his last moments. He said **וְעִזְבוּ לְאֲחֵרִים הַיְלָם** - “I worked for nothing.”

Now, how much time do you think Reish Lakish spent in the garden? Let's say he spent fifteen minutes, maybe even less. What was the crying about?! The answer is that Reish Lakish understood the value of time; those fifteen minutes were for him a tremendous loss! And that's why he left this world full of regret that he was leaving something – because the possessions a person owns means that he gave up time, and time is life.

The Value of Time

Now, to us it may seem exaggerated but that's because we don't understand the importance that great men attributed to every minute of life. For our great men who understood what it means to accomplish in this world, every minute was precious. Reish Lakish made it his business not to exchange any of his life for objects that he wouldn't be able to take along with him – as much as possible he spent his time cashing in on life the successful way.

There's a great lesson here because most people would say – if you won't say it, you'll think it – “Why are you so selfish, Reish Lakish? Don't you want to leave something for your posterity?” And the answer is, we're in this world to be selfish.

Of course, everyone is important but as far as you're concerned there's nothing as important as your own perfection in *avodas Hashem*. Now, this doesn't mean a man shouldn't worry about his family, that he shouldn't provide for his family. That's also part of your service of Hashem but if he has that feeling that he wants to provide for them, then *al achas kama v'kama*, all the more so he should be providing for himself – and the only provision that really matters is what you prepare for the next world.

That's why people who are careless with their time, it's like throwing money out of the window. You're crazy if you take even one dollar bills and you throw them out the window. Imagine if you take ten-dollar bills, or twenty-dollar bills and you scatter them into the wind. That's what it means to waste ten minutes and twenty minutes – you're wasting thousands of dollars by just throwing them away carelessly.

Part III. Life and Time

Killing Time

Everyone knows that when the Torah states *lo sirtzach* – you shouldn't murder, it applies even to an old man. Even if he's 119 years old and he only has one minute left to live, if you end his life you're a full-fledged *shofech damim*. If there are *eidim* and *hasra'ah*, the *beis din* will put you to death for taking away one minute of life from that person the same as if you took away a hundred and twenty years of someone's life.

What that means to us is that “You shall not murder,” doesn't mean only taking away a *life* – it means something else; it means *taking away even one minute of someone's life*. And that's what we're talking about tonight.

The property of *tzadikim* is so precious to them because they understand that it takes time, it takes minutes, to acquire money, and they understand how precious one minute of life is for achieving in this world. That's the reason you're a full fledged murderer if you take away one minute from someone.

Opportunity Cannot be Wasted

Suppose a man was born into this world for only a few seconds and in that short amount of time he opens his eyes and he says, *מָה רַבּוּ מַעֲשֵׂיךָ*, *מָה גָּדוֹל מַעֲשֵׂיךָ* – “How great are your deeds, Hashem!” and then he dies. That man lived for a very great purpose! “*Yeish koneh olamo b'shaah achas*” – *A man can acquire everything in one moment of life* (Avodah Zarah 17a).

Because what is life? Life is an opportunity to do things, to accomplish! And if you take that life, those minutes, and throw them away, it's *retzicha*, it's murder. On *motzei Shabbos*, on the long Saturday nights when you get into your car and you go and visit your relatives in Boro Park or in Flatbush and sit for hours talking, that's suicide. And if you take your wife along with you, then it's homicide too. If you'll both sit down in the dining room, you and your wife, and he and his wife, and you talk and talk and talk, you're a *rotzeiach*, no question about it.

Ooh wah, will this be atheism when you repeat these words at home! No Saturday nights in Boro Park?! You can't visit your *mechutanim* for two or three hours and shoot the breeze?! *Retzicha*?! Murder?!

Time Comes with a Price Tag

We don't look at it that way because we're accustomed to following the footsteps of the unthinking multitudes who don't care if they waste their time. We think that our time belongs to us. Just like we think "our" *pachim ketanim* belong to us, we think our minutes belong to us too.

But along comes Dovid Hamelech and he says, **בְּיַדְךָ יְיָ, הַשָּׁמַיִם** – "In Your hand, Hashem, are my times" (Tehillim 31:16). It means other things too but it includes this idea: "All my times belong to You, Hashem – they're not mine."

It means, "All my minutes are in Your hand, Hashem." And if I take out of Your hand another minute, another diamond, and I take it and throw it out of the window, so Hakodosh Boruch Hu says "Oh, is that *chutzpah*! I'm handing you the precious gift of every minute – it's *b'yada*i, it's in My hands, and you're taking it from Me and wasting it?"

There's no time for wasting minutes! *Hayom katzeir* – The day is short, *v'hamelacha merubah* – and there's so much work, *uba'al habayis docheik* – and there's a *Ba'al Habayis* who is pressing us. He wants us to accomplish and He's not *moichel* anything. *Doichek* means He's pressuring us – He wants to see results. "I'm giving you this time for a purpose," Hashem says, "and you have to show Me something for it."

Confessions of a Gaon

The gift of more time from Hashem is a tremendous opportunity, but it's also a tremendous responsibility. You have to realize that there will be a *din v'cheshbon*. I told you this story before. The Gra, *zichrono livracha*, had a son who saw his father with his *talis* over his head saying *viduy* on Yom Kippur. Now, when you say *viduy*, when you say the *al cheits*, you don't say only the things that are printed in the *machzor* –

every person has to add his own individual sins. Whatever you remember, you have to add between the lines.

So the son wanted to hear, what sins did his father have? Now our sons shouldn't do that to us; you don't know what you might hear. But this boy, his father was the Vilna Gaon so he thought it's safe to listen to his father's sins. So he stuck his head under the *talis* and he saw his father was crying; he was weeping bitterly. About what? His father was crying about five minutes that he had wasted during the year. Now, I don't know how he wasted the five minutes, I can't tell you that, but he was weeping bitterly about the five minutes of *bitul zman*.

What can you do in five minutes? It's endless! If you're capable of learning or you're capable of learning how to learn, there's no question how precious a minute is. Hakodosh Boruch Hu has given life for the purpose of Torah; like it states openly, **כִּי הוּא הַיִּיד וְאָרְךָ יָמָיךְ** – *the Torah is your life*. Don't misunderstand these words; it's not a general statement that your life should be a Torah life. It means that even a little bit of Torah, even a minute of Torah, is your life.

Every Spare Minute

You know, in the Kelmer Yeshiva when they went home at night, it was after a long day of learning. They went home late at night to their *stanzas*, the places where they stayed at night. And then they came back again for five minutes! Everyone returned to the *yeshiva*; they made a special trip from home back to the *beis medrash* to learn five minutes. Five minutes of learning and then they went home again.

What was that all about? A game? A charade? Oh no, it was a *chinuch*! It was a training of the mind; it was to teach them that five minutes of learning is worth coming to *yeshiva*. If you can learn five minutes, three minutes, one minute, it's already a very important achievement.

I want to explain something to you people – if you're ambitious, I have something to tell you. If you'll learn how to utilize your spare moments, you can learn an entire *mesichta* in a few minutes. Have a *gemara* ready and whenever there's a few minutes, open it and learn a few lines. If you understand it well, good. If not, make a mark in pencil along the side, so some other time, you'll come back and look it up and think more about it. You'll be amazed how much you can accomplish with the time that people waste otherwise. As the years go by, you're going to accumulate a remarkable amount of wealth. And if you waste time that you could have spent learning, not only is it throwing away diamonds, it's committing suicide.

Ban Telephones

Now suppose you're not a learner or you don't want to learn, there's still something very important that you can accomplish with your minutes. And that is thinking! Everyone is capable of living a rich and rewarding life if they would learn to use their minutes to think about all of the great principles of the Torah. And it's something so important, it's such a great opportunity, that it makes every minute of your life priceless.

That's something everyone can do! Women at home, men in the office, boys and girls on the street, the yeshiva man in the kollel and the working man in the factory all have a glorious career ahead of them of using their minutes of life to become great. That's why no one should ever consider "killing time" on the phone – it's poison! The telephone should have a skull and crossbones painted on it. It's *retzicha*, it's suicide to give up these precious minutes on the telephone.

Put a Diamond in Your Pocket

Here's a mother in the kitchen and she's stirring the pot or maybe she's sweeping the floor or sewing; whatever it is she's doing she can be using those precious minutes given to her from the hand of Hashem for glorious achievement. For instance, let her think about *Maamad Har Sinai*. The Rambam, in his *Iggeres Teiman*, says it's a command not to forget *ma'amad Har Sinai*; to think about what happened on that day.

Did you ever think about that in the kitchen? Maybe on Shavuos. Maybe. It's a *mitzvah* to think about *ma'amad Har Sinai* once in a while while you're sweeping. Once in history it happened; at least two million people were standing in front of Har Sinai and they heard the voice of Hashem. **הֲשָׁמַע עַם קוֹל אֱלֹהִים** – *Did a nation ever hear the voice of Hashem, כְּאֲשֶׁר שָׁמְעָה אֶתֶּה* – *like you heard*. A glorious experience! One minute of thinking of *ma'amad Har Sinai*, and you just put a diamond in your pocket that cannot be bought for the highest money in the world.

All of us, ladies and girls, men and boys, we all can accomplish great things every minute of our lives. Of course, we can't expect so much from ourselves immediately. It takes a training of the mind, of character because by nature we're lazy; it's easier not to think at all. But everyone can at least begin to travel the road to perfection; even if you don't think all the time, even though you waste a lot of time, if you'll spend one minute of thinking it's already a big achievement. You're an important person by that one minute even. If it's two minutes, you're even more important.

So Many Thoughts

And therefore, because it's so important to learn what to do with your spare time we're going to spend our last few minutes together on that subject – we're going to prepare some practical examples just to give ourselves some idea of what's expected from us. And anyone who cares about their future in the Next World should make a list of important subjects that are emphasized in the Torah and be prepared to think about these subjects whenever you have spare time.

Why does the Torah tell us about *Sedom*? Why did the Torah tell us about *mann*? What did the Torah tell us about *kriyas Yam Suf*? About *Avrohom* and *Yitzchok* and *Yaakov*? About our *Imahos*? Why all the stories about the *Am Yisroel* in the *Midbar*?

Do you ever take the time to think about these things? You *must* think about these things! What's the proof that you're *mechuyev*? Because it's written in the Torah. All these things were written in the Torah in order that we should always think about them and remember them – thinking about them is called Torah.

Even when you're hanging on the strap in the subway, close your eyes, watch your wallet and think about *yetzias Mitzrayim*. Yes! לְמַעַן תִּזְכֹּר אֶת יוֹם צֵאתְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בֵּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ. You ever thought about that? In the middle of the day, think about *yetzias Mitzrayim*. Think about the earth opening its mouth to swallow *Korach*. Think about *Moshe Rabeinu* and *Aharon Hakohen*. Think about *Gan Eden*. Think about *akeidas Yitzchok*.

Think about the *mabul*. The *mabul* was given for the purpose of remembering it. *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* followed the principle of *schar v'onesh*. And although he promised he won't send a *mabul* of water anymore, but a *mabul* of *eish*, *chas v'Shalom*, he can send. He has done it again and again. The city of *Pompeii* was buried under a *mabul* of fire. Ashes fell on the city and destroyed the whole city. Ten thousand people were buried there; it was a *mabul* of *aish*.

Now, to some people all this seems superfluous; they want to think only in a *sugya*. Very good; if you want to think about a *machlokes* of *yiush shelo mida'as*, alright, very good. But whatever you think about, the main purpose of these words is that life should be utilized; we have so much to accomplish in every minute.

Learning From Yaakov

And that was the great lesson that *Yaakov* understood; *the righteous people love their money more than they love their body*. Because “money is time” and there's nothing in the world as precious as time.

Once we realize what Yaakov knew, we'll sit home instead of traveling. We won't get in our car and drive around wasting our lives. We can't; there's too much to do. If you want to exercise you'll go out in the street and take a walk; you'll get fresh air and while you're walking you can think – except when you have to cross the street; then you'll make sure to look both ways and right away go back to your thoughts. As soon as you get to the curb you're back to your precious thoughts.

It's a glorious career! And I'm serious about that; don't underestimate what you're hearing now. Instead of taking these minutes, these diamonds, and throwing them away, you're cashing them in and every day you're becoming wealthier and wealthier. Those thoughts are your most precious achievements in this world and all of that wealth that you acquire in this world will be your most prized possessions when you come after a hundred and twenty years to the Next World.

Have A Wonderful Shabbos

LET'S GET PRACTICAL:

Money is Time.

This week I will train myself to walk in the ways of Yaakov Avinu. Once a day I will go out of my way to be especially careful with my own money but not because I am being stingy or trying to save money. I am doing it with the intention of training myself to appreciate these two lessons: 1) My money belongs to Hashem and I'm a loyal custodian; and 2) It took time to acquire this money. The value of even one minute is immeasurable in its potential for greatness by means of devoting myself to Hashem and his service.

This week's booklet is based on tapes:

**R-13 - Jacob and the Angel | 84 - The World Has An Owner
224 - Purpose of Sun | 846 - Life and Time**

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

שאל אביך ויגדך וזקניך ויאמרו לך

Q:

The Rav said tonight that the suffering we endure from the goyim is a benefit to us. How could it be that we benefited from the decrees of Antiochus during the days of Chanukah if we weren't allowed to keep our religion?

A:

You have to know that there was a tiny group of people among us who sought to adopt the ways of the Greeks – and had there been a stronger enthusiasm among the nation as a whole, then such a group could have never arisen. It's like a sore that arises in your mouth or somewhere else on your body because the whole body tone is not sufficiently vigorous. If the body would have had all the vitamins and all the other requirements for perfect health, then it's quite possible that this sore would never have happened. And so too, if the nation as a whole had been healthy and vigorous enough in their love of Hashem, then such a painful sore, such a group like the Hellenizers, never could have arisen among us.

And therefore the people were given now an exercise in virtue – it became very hard to be a Jew and they began to sacrifice themselves for Judaism. And that brought them back to their original greatness! And so there's no question that the decrees, the *gezeiros* of Antiochus, were a very big benefit for the Jewish people.

TAPE # R-28

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