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IN HONOR OF OUR DEAR PARENTS VOLVI & MALKA NUSSEN

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פרשת ויגש

WITH

R' AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"l

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

The Result of a Good Deed

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Part I. An Eternal Act

The Great Reunion

In this week's *sedrah* we read about how Yosef revealed himself to his brothers and then sent them back to Eretz Canaan with a message to his father asking him to come down to Egypt in order to be safe during the famine that was then plaguing the land.

"Take your father and your households and come down to Mitzrayim and I will support you with food and all good things" (Vayigash 45:18). And that's what happened: "Yaakov said, 'I will go down to see my son before I die,'" and then finally, after weeks of traveling, "Yaakov and his family were approaching the land of Egypt" (ibid. 45:28, 46:28).

Now, the Torah states that when Yosef was informed that his father's caravan had arrived in Mitzrayim so וַיֵּאָסֶר יוֹסֵף מְרַכְבֵּתוֹ וַיַּעַל לְקִרְאֵת יִשְׂרָאֵל אָבִיו – Yosef harnessed his chariot and he rode out to greet his father (Bereishis 46:29). It means that he left the palace, took horses from the stable, harnessed them to his coach and he headed out to fulfill the *mitzvah* of honoring his father.

The King Forgets His Role

Now, the sages point out that what happened on that day was quite unusual. Yosef, after all, was the *mishneh l'melech*, the second in command of Egypt, and he had servants aplenty at his beck and call who did every chore for him. He could have called his right-hand servant and given the order, "Prepare my chariot," and the word would have quickly come down to the servant in charge of the stable who would have harnessed the *mishneh l'melech's* chariot. It would have been done immediately! That's how it was done always and this day should have been no different.

And so you understand how strange it must have been in the eyes of Yosef's servants when they saw him running into the stable in his royal garments and his crown. There's no question that they looked askance at the lord of the house opening the stable door with his own hands and harnessing the horses to the chariot. The servants were looking on – they wanted to do their job – but Yosef brushed them off. "Never mind," he said, "I'll do it by myself." They must have shrugged their shoulders or raised their eyebrows but what could they do already? Their boss didn't let.

So why *did* he harness his carriage with his own hands? That's the question our sages ask. And they explain (Bereishis Rabbah 55:8) that at that time Yosef forgot himself; he forgot propriety. Yosef's great love for the *mitzvah* of greeting his father, caused him to forget the correct procedure. He was so happy at the opportunity to honor his father – especially after so many years when he had been deprived of this *mitzvah* – that now, when it finally presented itself to him, he couldn't contain his enthusiasm. And so, he hurried out of the palace, unlocked the stable door himself, took out the

horses, harnessed them to his coach and rode out to greet his long lost father.

Seller's Regret

Now we'll fast forward 210 years. We are now more than two centuries after this incident and the Bnei Yisroel are finally leaving Mitzrayim. After suffering so many *makkos*, Pharaoh finally yielded and set them free and now they were marching away from Egypt towards Eretz Canaan.

And yet as soon as he did that, he regretted it. **מָה זֹאת עָשִׂינוּ כִּי** – “What is this we have done?” said Pharaoh, **שָׁלַחְנוּ אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרָיִם** – “We just sent out such a multitude from serving us!” (Shemos 14:5). When he came to his senses and realized that he had just lost a tremendous workforce that was laboring on his behalf day and night for nothing he immediately had second thoughts. He was foaming with rage: “It’s preposterous what I just did! To let that scum go free and also take our money with them?! So many slaves! So much wealth! What did I do that I sent them out?! Did I go mad?!”

Pharaoh's Plan

At that moment Pharaoh was overcome by such anger that he decided to bring them back. He was so eager to recoup his loss that he ran out of the palace. **אָמַר אוֹיֵב אֶרְדֹּף אֲשֵׁיג אַחֲלִיק שְׁלַל אֲרִיק חֲרָבִי** – *The enemy said, “I’m going to pursue, I’ll overtake them and I’ll draw my sword.* He was picturing himself speeding in his chariot chasing his escaped slaves. He was already imagining that he’ll draw some blood from them and then whichever ones remain, he’ll drive them back into slavery. And so, he took his army and began to chase the Am Yisroel.

Now, we all know the outcome; we know how Pharaoh suffered an ignominious defeat: **טָבְעוּ בַיָּם סוּף** – *They were drowned in the sea.* **וּמִבְּחַר שְׁלֹשֵׁי** – *The best of his officers were drowned and all of their equipment went under.* The mighty force was laid low and after that Egypt didn’t raise its head for many years. The Am Yisroel was saved

in such a spectacular way that we don't hear anything about Egypt for hundreds of years after that.

The Sages Search

Now, our sages understood the principle that everything Hashem does has some reason and therefore they wanted to find what *zechus*, what merit it was that the *Bnei Yisroel* had to be saved like that. They were in grave danger after all! They were caught between a large Egyptian army and the sea and a great miracle was necessary to save them. What was it that helped the *Am Yisroel* at this perilous moment?

And so the *chachomim* studied the words of the Torah to find the answer. After all, Hakodosh Boruch Hu always gives clues. He writes things in the Torah in particular ways so that capable people can study certain events and see why they happened. It's not for amateurs, but the *chachomim*, the *Tanaim* and *Amoraim*, were specialists and they were capable of studying the events of *Tanach* and looking for hints to understand why things happened in a certain way.

And so these sages began to look for something in our past that would give a hint to what gave our people the merit that Pharaoh should have such a downfall. Maybe there's some place we can find a *remez* and tie one thing to another. And *yagata matzasa* – If you search, then you'll find. And so, when our sages searched, they found.

Plausible Parallels

When Pharaoh's heart smote him and he decided to lead his army in the chase after the *Bnei Yisroel* something remarkable happened. The king of Egypt ran to the stables, opened up the door, pulled out his horses and he harnessed them to the chariot himself!

His servants surely ran to do it for him but Pharaoh waved them aside! And his servants looked on in amazement. This was the first time in their lives they saw such a thing! A monarch should go out and pull the horses out of his stable and harness them? I don't

know if a Pharaoh ever harnessed a chariot in the history of all the Pharaohs! It's remarkable. But that's what the *possuk* says: וַיֹּאסֶר אֶת רֶכְבוֹ – *And he harnessed his own chariot* (Shmos 14:6).

Ooh! Those are familiar words! By Yosef we also saw words like that: וַיֹּאסֶר יוֹסֵף מְרֻבָּתוֹ – *Yosef harnessed his chariot*. And because the language of the Torah is always measured with precision, our sages understood that there's something here.

That's the principle behind *gezeirah shaveh* – when you find an expression in one place and a similar expression in another place it's a hint that there's a connection there. And so, because the *chachomim* learned Torah with a magnifying glass, because they inspected every *ois*, so when they came across these two parallel expressions “and Yosef harnessed his chariot,” “and Pharaoh harnessed his chariot,” they understood that it wasn't in vain that the Torah inscribed these two parallel sentences with the same terminology.

Effect of a Mitzvah

And so, here's what the *chachomim* said about this subject: *Tavo asarah she'asar Yosef Hatzaddik* – Let come the harnessing that Yosef HaTzaddik did on his own because of his eagerness to greet his father, *v'ye'akeiv al yad asarah she'asar Pharaoh* – and it should overcome the efforts of Pharaoh who harnessed his chariot in order to overtake the *Bnei Yisroel* and avenge himself on them. Our sages are telling us that the parallel expressions teach us that Yosef's *mitzvah* had something to do with preventing Pharaoh from carrying out his wishes; the *mitzvah* had such an effect that it saved the *Am Yisroel*.

Now, we have to know that the story with Pharaoh occurred 210 years after Yosef's act of harnessing his chariot. Yosef was already long dead and probably nobody remembered anything of this episode. They knew that Yaakov Avinu had come to Egypt and Yosef had come out to greet him, but it's probable that nobody remembered that detail of how Yosef had harnessed the horses himself. It could be they never even knew about it – we only know

because we have the Torah. And even if they did once know, it was probably long forgotten. Two hundred and ten years is a long time after all! Who remembers a little and seemingly unimportant detail of a story that happened to his great great grandfather two hundred years ago?

I'll tell you who remembers such a detail. Hakodosh Boruch Hu remembers; He remembers everything.

Alive Forever

That's what it means, "Let the harnessing that Yosef did himself come forward, and it should overcome the efforts of Pharaoh who harnessed his chariot himself." When Yosef went out to the royal stable to harness his horses, it wasn't an act that stopped when he climbed onto the chariot. The act never died out. It was hovering, so to speak, in the air; it was hovering and waiting.

Years passed. Yosef passed away and then *va'yakam melech chodosh*, a new king came to power. And then there was the *shibud*, the years of slavery, and then finally the *makkos* came and the *Am Yisroel* left *Mitzrayim*. All those 210 years the *mitzvah* was hovering in the air. And then finally the day came when Pharaoh was harnessing his chariot to chase the *Am Yisroel*. What happened then? Yosef's deed came and pounced upon Pharaoh's deed and wiped it out. Yosef's harnessing overpowered Pharaoh's harnessing; it destroyed its effect and it frustrated the plan of Pharaoh.

What we have here is an example from the Torah of a *mitzvah* accomplishing forever and ever; of a *mitzvah* that continues to work for the people who achieved them. *Mitzvos* continue to afford us the greatest happiness because once something is done, it's forever. It might help you one day; it might even help the entire nation two hundred years from now. You never know what it might do because it's there. It doesn't go away; every *mitzvah* you do is alive forever.

Part II. On Eternal Acts

A Mitzvah Is Alive

We're learning now that when Yosef Hatzadik harnessed the horses to go to greet his father it had a special *koach*, an special ability to exert influence 210 years later, because it was what we call *mitzvah*. Let's say your father lives out of town and you've settled here in Brooklyn; if you know your father is coming to visit you so you're not merely going to wait at home until he knocks on the door. That's Americaneez, it's *minhag America*. But *al pi Torah* – and *al pi seichel* too, by the way – if your father and mother are coming, it's proper to go to the airport or to the railroad station to meet them. This should be considered superfluous to be said but today it has to be mentioned.

And so we understand that when Yosef Hatzaddik went out to greet his father he was doing what any good Jew would have done – it was a *mitzvah*. But we're learning something new. We think that a *mitzvah* is something like a job well done; we did it and we'll be paid off in the next world and finished. Of course, that's also valuable. It's written down in permanent ink on the credit side and it's your property forever and ever. But we're learning now that a *mitzvah* is much more than just a written record – a *mitzvah* is a living creature!

An Eternal Creature

Pay attention now; I didn't say 'a creation,' I said 'creature.' Rabbi Yehuda Halevi in his *Kuzari* tells us that a *mitzvah* is an actual living entity. Of course, it doesn't live like we live. It doesn't have to be fed or be bathed. But it's a living thing, something that has its own type of existence.

If you want an analogy, you can call it a *malach*. Now, don't be frightened by the name *malach*. It doesn't have to be somebody with wings – the wings are just a form of vision that is granted to us so that we should be impressed by the *malachim*. But a *malach* is higher than wings. It's something of *ruchniyus* that is of such

tremendous power that it doesn't need any wings to propel it. It's much more powerful than a winged creature – that's only a *mashal lesaber es ha'ozen*, to make it easier for us to understand and feel what a *malach* is.

But whatever exactly a *malach* is, a *mitzvah* creates an entity that's going to remain forever. When you put on *tefillin*, when you nail a *mezuzah* to your door, when you say *birkas hamozon* after eating, when you give a penny to a poor man for *tzedakah*, when you say *shema Yisroel*, when you mention *yetzias Mitzrayim*, when you think *Hashem Echad* or any of the other *mitzvos* of the duties of the mind, when you fulfill any one of them, you're creating an eternal creature, something that will exist forever. And not only it exists but it continues to exert an influence.

Children of The Righteous

A *mitzvah*, the Kuzari says, is exactly like creating a child. Now the Kuzari you have to know is a *Rishon* – he doesn't go into fantasies. He is practical and his every word is counted. And he says that when you do a *mitzvah* you are creating a living thing no different than the creation of a child!

How is a child, a baby created? There are hundreds of thousands of conditions which must be fulfilled in order that a child should be born. Conditions in both parents and conditions in the manner of birth. A living thing is so complex that it requires countless factors and each one must be present to bring life into existence. Each one must be there! If one is absent there'll be no baby.

Now, the Kuzari tells us that a *mitzvah* is exactly the same. "*Eileh toldos Noach, Noach* – These are the children of Noach: Noach". What does that mean? So the *medrash* says *toldosei hem shel tzadikim, maasei hem* – the *mitzvos* that a man does are his true children. Who was Noach's most important child? Himself. What he accomplished in his service of Hashem was his most important creation in this world.

Conditions and Details

And just like a child comes into existence only because certain conditions are fulfilled, a *mitzvah* is no different. That's on the authority of the Kuzari! He says that because a *mitzvah* is something that's alive, therefore it can be created only in certain ways; it won't come into being unless all the conditions are satisfied.

That's why, he says, if you do a *mitzvah* you have to be diligent; you have to care about the details, the exact specifications. Some people, *amei haaretz*, they complain about that: "Why are you so concerned about the little details? Why are you splitting hairs?" The answer is because we're creating living entities no less than children.

If only some of the details go wrong in the creation of a human being, the results are catastrophic. You see on the street sometimes a child without fingers, or a young boy in a wheelchair who can't move – he needs someone to wipe the drool from his lips. That's the result of little details in the cells, in the chromosomes, that went wrong. And the details of a *mitzvah* are no less crucial and determinant than the details of a cell.

Losing an Entire Mitzvah

That's why when you put up a *mezuzah* and by carelessness you drive a nail through one of the letters, now there's a hole, so it's worthless now. If you hang it up on the doorpost, you didn't do anything. There's nothing you can do except to put it in *sheimos*. Or *tefillin*; let's say you spent good money on your *tefillin* and they are square and black and you have *retzuos* formed of kosher leather. And the *parshiyos* are written on kosher parchment. In every respect you have fulfilled all the requirements. But if in one of the *parshiyos* even one letter is written incorrectly then the entire *tefillin* is nonexistent. Let's say the *kutzo shel yud*, the bottom point of the *yud* is missing, so the entire *tefillin* is *possul*. It's meaningless. It's like putting a sugar cube on your arm.

If a man wore such *tefillin* all his life, he never missed one day, so he's still called a *karkafta d'lo manach tefillin* – he's considered a

man who never put *tefillin* on his head his whole life. That's a very extreme statement because we know he *did* put on *tefillin* every day! And he *wanted* to put on *tefillin*. And the *tefillin* were there. The black boxes were there. The *retzuos*, the straps, were there. Even the *parshiyos* were there! Except that on one letter, on the *yud*, on the left-hand bottom side, the *kotz* was missing! That's all!

So to the untutored Jew it seems queer, superfluous. What difference does it make? Most of the letters are here! Why don't you say that he gets the majority of the *mitzvah*? At least that. After all, that one letter is only a fraction of the *mitzvah* so he should get a great majority of the *mitzvah*.

The answer is when a child has to be born and one of the essential conditions is not fulfilled, you don't get a majority of a child. The whole thing doesn't materialize because living things are different; living things require the fulfillment of all the conditions; otherwise they are just not created.

And because a *mitzvah* is no less of a living entity than a child, it must be done according to all the prescriptions, the full prescription. And if even one of the essential conditions is lacking, the *mitzvah* does not exist. If somebody will take the four *minim* on *Sukkos* and instead of an *esrog* he'll take a lemon, so he's not fulfilling the *mitzvah* at all. It's nothing at all.

Practical Assistance

And yet, once you are successful at creating that living entity, it's there forever; it continues to exist just like Yosef's *mitzvah* continued to live and it exerts influence. Actually we have a clearcut statement that tells us that: "*Ha'oseh mitzvah achas koneh lo praklit echad* – When you do a *mitzvah* you acquire for yourself an advocate, a defender" (Avos 4:11). That means the *mitzvah* speaks up for the doer. But from the story of Yosef Hatzadik we're learning the stunning principle that this creature is so powerful that it has the ability to save you not only in the Next World but in this world too! If you have *mitzvos* then מְלֹאֲכֵינוּ יְצוּהָ לָךְ, Hashem will command His angels concerning you, לְשָׁמְרֶךָ בְּכֹל דְּרָכֶיךָ, to guard you on all your paths (Tehillim 91:11).

In Tehillim (20) it states: **יַעֲנֵךְ הַשֵּׁם בְּיוֹם צָרָה** – Hashem is going to answer you in a day of distress. Everybody has a day when he needs help. We need help always but sometimes you need extra help. And we're learning now that the *mitzvos* that you've done can save you. **יַעֲנֵךְ הַשֵּׁם בְּיוֹם צָרָה** – He's going to answer you on the day of distress, **וְעוֹלָתְךָ יִרְשָׁנָה כְּלָהּ** – He'll remember all of your offerings, **וְיִזְכֹּר כָּל מִנְחֹתְךָ** – and the fat of your burnt offerings He's going to consider; it means that He'll remember your *mitzvos* when you're in an *eis tzarah*.

Emergency Meetings

You know, when you're lying *chas v'shalom* on the operating table so you need help. Who doesn't have an operation sometime in his life, and there's always going to be a question about the surgeon's knife. The surgeon has to do a very delicate procedure. He has to make detours around certain nerves and certain blood vessels. It's very delicate business. That's why you don't give it to an ordinary butcher, to the local butcher, to do it for you. You pay good money for somebody who thinks he's an expert.

Now, when the surgeon is beginning to cut, you know a lot of things could happen. His hand might slip just a little bit. Afterwards they won't tell the family anything of course. They'll just say that that the patient died on the operating table. That's what they say when the surgeon's hand slips.

Or maybe the surgeon might sneeze. What would happen if he sneezes?! You're finished! What happens? Just at the moment when the doctor feels he's about to sneeze, a council is hastily convened in *shomayim*; the *beis din shel ma'alah* gathers and they're saying the surgeon is about to sneeze or his hand is about to slip. What should we do? That's the question. It's an *eis tzarah*. Will this poor fellow be saved?

Another case. Here's a man who is rushing across Ocean Parkway. He looked to both sides. He saw nothing. But there are blind spots. Everybody knows there's a blind spot and just at that blind spot there was a speeding reckless car bearing down on him – a few tons of metal are now hurtling down against him and before he even knows it, poof!

So quickly they convene an emergency meeting in *beis din shel ma'alah*. A quick decision has to be made. What's going to happen? Will the car stop? Will the surgeon sneeze? Will his hand slip?

A Tale of Two Rulers

Suddenly something happens in *shomayim*. That *mitzvah* you once did, that living being you created, stands up to defend you and you're saved. Hakodosh Boruch Hu says, "This man has this *mitzvah* he fulfilled to perfection with all its details," and the sneeze doesn't come. The surgeon's hand doesn't slip. The car makes a short stop or maybe you notice it at the last second and you quickly jump back onto the curb.

And so when we were standing at the Red Sea, by all accounts we should have been finished off. We were a weak people, without weapons and not schooled in the ways of war. And here is the most powerful army in the world hurtling towards us, at full speed. The Egyptians were wild with enthusiasm. Pharaoh was so drunk with bloodlust that he had harnessed his chariot himself!

At this point an angel spoke up: Wasn't Yosef also a leader of Egypt? Didn't he also get so enthusiastic about Your will Hashem, that he did the same thing and harnessed his own chariot? "Oh," Hashem said, "Yes, yes; now is the time to strike down the actions of Pharaoh. His efforts to destroy My people will have no effect, because Yosef's act outweighs all of that military might."

Part III. Attitude of the Act

More Than a Mitzvah

And so we understand now that when Yosef Hatzaddik went out to greet his father he was creating an entity that was capable of being a defender; of being a *praklit*. But there's still a question here because that a *mitzvah* should have the *koach* to save an entire nation, and that it should hover for 210 years waiting for the opportunity to effect that salvation, that's something extraordinary. Every *mitzvah* is a *praklit* but what was it about Yosef's *mitzvah* of

going out to greet his father that was so powerful? It's a question that deserves an answer.

So we look a little closer at the words the *chachomim* used when they described this event. Listen to their expression: "Let come the harnessing of Yosef Hatzaddik, *his act of harnessing his own horses*, and it should overcome Pharaoh's harnessing of his horses." It doesn't just say that because he went out to greet his father so that *mitzvah* later frustrated Pharaoh. No, it says *tavo asarah*, let the harnessing that Yosef did, the fact that he drew out the horses and harnessed them with his own hands to the royal chariot, let that come and frustrate the harnessing of Pharaoh.

Yosef was too enthusiastic about the *mitzvah* to delegate it to somebody else. Like they tell about the Chofetz Chaim, *zichrono livracha*. A visitor once said that he came to him to sleep in his house and the Chofetz Chaim ran to take out the bedding and he was making the bed for him. So the visitor protested, "Rebbe," he said, "Let me do it myself!" But the Chofetz Chaim said, "Such a *mitzvah* I'll give away to somebody else?! I want it for myself!" He was excited, enthusiastic; he was like a young man. He didn't want any help.

That's what Yosef did. When he ran out of his palace his lackeys were running after him and they were yelling, "Master! Wait! Wait!" But he was too enthusiastic to hear them. And even if heard them, in his great enthusiasm he ignored them.

A Different Creature

And it was that addition to the *mitzvah* that gave it a different kind of effectiveness. The *simcha shel mitzvah* that accompanies a *mitzvah* makes it an entirely different kind of creature. It became more potent because of that enthusiasm; so much so that this *mitzvah* was able to accomplish the great miracle when Pharaoh's army was drowned in Yam Suf.

What would have happened had Yosef not run out of the palace to harness the horses with his own hands? We'll never know. It could have happened that Pharaoh would have had some effect.

Pharaoh could have attacked the *Bnei Yisroel*. Could be Hakodosh Boruch Hu would have saved them, but maybe Pharaoh might have attacked and afflicted some harm. He might have done like Amalek and cut off the stragglers. Maybe worse.

But whatever could have been, it didn't happen. Because of that powerful *mitzvah* that Yosef created with his enthusiasm, Pharaoh didn't do anything except cause his entire army to drown in the sea. The great victory was affected for the *Bnei Yisroel* because of the act of enthusiasm which one man performed when he harnessed his own chariot to go meet his father.

Enthusiastic Mitzvos

We're learning now the importance of *simchah shel mitzvah*, of doing *mitzvos* with enthusiasm. Of course, if a person is enthusiastic about other things – let's say people get together and they sing and they dance and they clap their hands for nothing, that's not what we're talking about. If a man at the base gives a whack with the bat and everybody goes crazy: "Whoooo!" Everybody is stamping their feet and your blood is ignited with excitement, that may be *simchah* but it's not *simchah shel mitzvah*; it's a complete waste of excitement. But if you're doing a *mitzvah* and you add some enthusiasm, it's not merely a small addition; it's immensely valuable.

We think the main thing is the *mitzvah* and the enthusiasm is like a little bit of polish, a little bit of gloss on it. That's an error. The enthusiasm is in itself a very big achievement. In fact, it's bigger than the entire *mitzvah*; it lifts up the *mitzvah* a thousand fold.

A Bargain

And so we come to the subject of bargains. When you're doing a *mitzvah*, it could take some effort to get yourself up and going to go someplace or to spend money or to do some labor. But once you do it, you think that the *mitzvah* is already done and finished. We think that that's the most important that's required of us.

And yet here's where we make a great error because there's something that's very easy to do that would change the entire nature of what you're doing; and that's adding a little bit of

enthusiasm to it. You're doing it anyhow so invest a little *simchah* in it. That's what you're learning tonight and it's a very important lesson.

Giving Tzedakah

Let's say you're giving a dollar to a poor man. Imagine a Williamsburger man comes to your door, a *chossid*, and he has a lot of little children. He's working in a tie factory all day long; it's hard work and it doesn't pay that much so at night he goes around trying to collect a little more because it costs a lot of money to pay tuition for thirteen children. He's not collecting for luxuries or for saving up. He's collecting money for *sechar limud*. So he comes, let's say, in your synagogue, or in your home, and you're willing to give him something. You give him \$1 or \$5, whatever you give.

Now, it costs you the money anyhow. If you would add a little bit of *simchah* to that deed, it becomes not only \$5. It becomes much more valuable. Now, of course don't think that you could give less and do more *simchah* and you'll save a little money. You're not *yotzei* with *simcha*. He can't cash it at the grocer. Your enthusiasm won't help him pay his *schar limud*. But the subject tonight is that if after you decided to give the money – it's going to cost you \$5 anyway – so now if you'll generate some *simchah*, if you add some enthusiasm to that money, it makes it expand into much more than the five dollars. It leaps up and becomes vigorous; the entire act is transformed.

Bringing In Shabbos

What about being enthusiastic about Shabbos. Isn't that a new idea? To be happy that Shabbos is coming in? Many Jews live their whole lives with loyalty; they dutifully fulfill Shabbos and yet when Shabbos is over they're somewhat relieved. They're sitting after *shalosheudos* looking at the clock and waiting for it to reach the moment when it will be *ois Shabbos*. Isn't that a pity? We are praised as a nation *hameacharim latzeis min HaShabbos, umemaharim lavo* – we delay the time to go out of the Shabbos and we're in a hurry that it should come in. And that's a very important praise. Don't

think it's just one little facet of the *mitzvah*. It's actually bigger than the *mitzvah*!

So here's a lady. *Challos* she baked already or maybe she bought them. She already has chicken and fish and meat. She already prepared the *chulent* and all the good things of Shabbos. And now she's lighting the candles. She's lighting anyhow so just before she lights the candles she remembers she once heard this idea so she stops for a few seconds and tries to create a *simcha shel mitzvah*, that she should be happy, excited about the *mitzvah* of bringing in the Shabbos. It's a wonderful idea. You should try it.

Creating Inner Happiness

Now, the question is where do you go to get *simchah shel mitzvah*? Does it mean you have to order it from the Kedem Wine Company? You have to go to the liquor store on the corner? No! It's right in here. You have within you a very deep fountain of *simchah* and all you have to do is lower a bucket and start pulling it up. If you can learn to generate happiness, you're doing something extraordinary. Of course, it needs some effort but it doesn't cost money. It costs no money to generate enthusiasm.

What's the simplest way to create a *simcha shel mitzvah*? Invest a little bit of energy and think how lucky you are to be able to fulfill a *mitzvah* and thank Hakodosh Boruch Hu that He gave you this opportunity. You're from the fortunate ones who was commanded to fulfill the command of Hakodosh Boruch Hu!

There's a statement in the *gemara* (Bava Kamma 38b) that surprises many people: "*Gadol hametzuveh v'oseh – A person who does something because he's commanded by Hashem to do it is greater than one who does things voluntarily*". Again – a man who does things voluntarily is not as great as a man who does things that is commanded by the Torah to do. That puzzles many people because we think that to volunteer of your own accord to do something seems a much greater *madreigah*. But we're learning now that it's much greater when you're commanded because that means that you've been chosen! You've been chosen by Hakodosh Boruch Hu to serve Him!

Attaining Holiness

That's why when we do a mitzvah we say *Boruch Atah Hashem*, we thank You Hashem, *asher kideshanu bemitzvosav*, You made us holy with Your mitzvos. A mitzvah changes you! A mitzvah makes you *kadosh*. Why? What is it in a mitzvah that makes you holy? Because *vetzivanu* – He commanded us.

“I’m doing what You, Hakodosh Boruch Hu, commanded me!” A mitzvah elevates you; you become a new person. You're everlastingly different as a result of that mitzvah. וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֶת כָּל מִצְוֹתַי וְהִיִּיתֶם קְדוֹשִׁים – You do My mitzvos and you become *kadosh*, you become holy. Holy! That's some achievement to become holy!

You should think about that before you do a mitzvah: “How fortunate I am that I can do a mitzvah.” You have to think, “*Boruch atah* – I thank You, Hashem! I’m full of gratitude to You, *asher kideshanu bemitzvosav* – that You made us holy by means of these commandments; that I have this privilege.”

Grab The Opportunities

So when a man or a boy steals a few minutes to open a Gemara and he reviews a few lines, or when a little girl has an opportunity to honor her mother – instead of saying, “Ma, give me a glass of water,” you get up and bring her a glass of water – so you're becoming holy by means of that. There's nothing better in the world!

Even if you're not making a *bracha* right now – you don't make a *bracha* for every mitzvah – still, you should think these words: “I'm becoming *kadosh* by means of these few minutes of learning, by means of bringing my mother a glass of water.” Think these words. “You're making us *kadosh*. And we thank You for the mitzvos. *Vetzivanu! Vetzivanu! Vetzivanu!* We're so happy that You commanded us!

Wash With Happiness

You should be thanking Hashem always for the opportunity to do mitzvos. Not only a mitzvah *d'oraisah*. Even a mitzvah *derabanan*.

If you wash your hands for the *seudah* — it's a *takanas chachamim* to wash your hands before you eat bread — so you're becoming *kadosh*. What a privilege! As you get ready to wipe your hands and you're making the *bracha*, think, "How lucky I am that I have this *mitzvah* of washing my hands for the *seudah*!"

Now some people, when they're in a hurry, so they say, "I'll eat a small piece of cake that way I won't have to wash." Now if he's in a big hurry, he wants to go to something urgent, like learning Torah, alright. But otherwise, he should know he's losing an opportunity. He's losing an opportunity to gain a very great *kedusha* of washing his hands. He should be *medakdek* in all the *halachos* which means he's becoming a *kadosh*; each time he becomes and more more *kadosh*.

And therefore, that thought should be the greatest stimulus to doing every *mitzvah* with happiness; and that enthusiasm, that *simcha*, transforms the act. It's not only a little bit bigger of a *mitzvah*; it's suddenly transformed from whatever it is to something that's a new kind of entity. It's big. It's enormous and it's vigorous and it's going to have an effect.

Magnify Your Mitzvos

And that's why we have to understand that *mitzvos* are our great opportunity in this world. All of you are doing *mitzvos* all the time. You people here are all pious Jews; you're all observant men and women and you're doing everything anyhow. Isn't it a pity that you're losing out when it's so easy and it doesn't cost anything to add some *simcha*, some enthusiasm, to your deeds?! It doesn't cost you an extra penny and you'll be getting so much more for your money. Whatever money or time or effort that it's going to cost you to do a *mitzvah*, if you'll put some *simchas hamitzvah* into it, it now becomes worth an enormous amount more.

And therefore when you're doing a *mitzvah*, you have to remember that much of its perfection comes down to the matter of enthusiasm. You can do *mitzvos* without being enthusiastic, but it just doesn't pay. When you add *simcha* to the *mitzvah* it makes all

the difference in the world and Hakodosh Boruch Hu takes that into account much more than the *mitzvah* itself.

And if you'll keep this in mind, if you'll always remember how fortunate you are to be a *metzuveh v'oseh*, it becomes easy to generate enthusiasm. Sometimes you can even generate a lot of enthusiasm. And that's going to transform your act and magnify it a thousand fold; the same way that Yosef's *mitzvah* was magnified a thousand times over in this world and saved the *Am Yisroel*, your deeds too will be magnified in this world, and forever and ever in the World to Come.

Have A Wonderful Shabbos

LET'S GET PRACTICAL

10 Seconds A Day To Create A Mitzvah

As precious as mitzvos are, if we continue our path in life doing *mitzvos* without thought, we're giving up great opportunities day after day. By means of appreciating the details of a *mitzvah* and invigorating the *mitzvah* with an enthusiasm, the living entity we create becomes much more powerful.

I will choose one *mitzvah* every day – every day a different *mitzvah* – to practice this week's lesson. Before I do the *mitzvah* I will think for 5 seconds to make sure that I am doing the *mitzvah* with the specifications required in order to create that living entity in the best way possible. And then I will think again for another 5 seconds about the *kedusha* that the *mitzvah* brings upon me in order that my enthusiasm should create an even greater result.

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

שאל אביך ויגדך ויקניך ויאמרו לך

Q:

Should we be storming the heavens about the bringing of Moshiach?

A:

Every day you should storm. את צמח דוד עברך מהרה תצמיח; say that with a storm! You should also storm by מיני את השנה הזאת ואת כל מיני ברך עלינו את השנה הזאת ואת כל מיני When you get to the words ותן טל ומטר you should storm. Storm by *tal u'matar*! Don't just be *yoitzei*. What a miracle *tal u'matar* is! You think it just happens? *Tal u'matar* just happens?! It's a *neis*, no less a *neis* than the *mann*.

You know, when they came to *Eretz Canaan* and they saw food coming out of the ground, that was a *neis*. Food coming out of the ground?! "Look! It's a *neis*! Food is coming out of the ground!" The *mann* was 'natural' – for forty years! So they thought food should come from the clouds. Because really it's all a *neis*; only that habit makes you not notice. So we have to storm the heavens for *tal u'matar*.

And we have to storm for everything else too. You have to storm for *העשות* *לעשות* *בשר* *ומפליא* *לעשות*! You went to the bathroom? It's a *neis* that you were able to go to the bathroom! Miracles are happening when you go to the bathroom! *ומפליא לעשות* – it's all wonders what happens in the bathroom only that we're fast asleep. Our minds are *m'tumtam*; we're stupefied by *gashmiyus* so we're not thinking. So we have to storm; it means we have to fight back against the *gashmiyus* and see the *yad Hashem*, the miracles of everything in this world. Certainly we have to storm – about everything.

TAPE # 854

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