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SEFER SHEMOS - IN MEMORY OF R' SRULY MILLER A"H
GRANDSON OF RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"L, DEDICATED BY HIS CHILDREN

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פרשת תצוה

WITH

R' AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"l

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

A Sweet Savor

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Part I. Aromatic Mishkan

The Fragrant Incense

Among the many appurtenances that the Am Yisroel was commanded to set up in the Mishkan, one of the most exceptional was the *mizbeich hazahav*: וְעָשִׂיתָ מִזְבֵּחַ מִקְטֹרֶת קְטֹרֶת – And you should make an altar for the burning of incense (Tetzaveh 30:1). A golden altar was set up directly in front of the *kodesh kodoshim*, upon which the *kohanim* were commanded to burn *ketores* every day: וְהִקְטִיר עָלָיו אֶהְרֹן קְטֹרֶת סַמִּים בְּבֹקֵר בְּבֹקֵר – The Kohen should burn a concoction of various spices on the altar every morning and create a sweet fragrance to spread out through the house of Hashem (*ibid.* 7).

Now, I won't claim to know the secrets of burning incense in the Beis Hamikdash but one thing I can do; I can quote from the Rambam – he's a reliable source after all. And in his *Moreh Nevuchim* (3:45) he explains the *mitzvah* as follows. He says that the mind of a person

generally feels elevated in the presence of a good fragrance and it's the *ratzon Hashem* that as soon as you approach the place of His service, you should feel an admiration, a special appreciation for that place.

That's the secret of *ketores* according to the Rambam – Hashem wants the incense molecules to be wafted through the air into your nostrils and relay the message to your brain: “Ahh! Geshmak! Right here is the place to be; this is the sweetness of life.” It's like when you walk into a flower store and the fragrance of that bouquet tingles your sense of smell; it's delightful! You feel a certain appreciation for that place; you like that florist shop.

Cosmetic Competition

You know, the Gemara (Bava Kamma 82a) tells us that when Ezra came to Eretz Yisroel he made a *takanah* that the peddlers who sell women's cosmetics should be allowed to come to every town and sell their wares. And even though there are already people in the town who have the same kind of business, they weren't permitted to complain that the traveling peddlers are being *masig gevul* and illegally competing with the locals. Ezra said that this case of selling cosmetics is an exception to the *halacha* that forbids outside competitors from having free access to a town's customers.

Now, that's quite puzzling because what's so important about perfumes? After all, Ezra didn't make the same *takanah* for *mochrei seforim* or for peddlers who are selling *mezuzos* and *tefillin*. What's this special business with perfumes?

And so, we'll say that the idea is like this. Every man knows that as soon as he gets married the imaginary romance flies right out of the window. After the *chuppah* now it's real life and in real life there are always bumps in the road. And the danger is that once the road gets bumpy you might lose some appreciation for your wife. It's actually a great danger because the truth is that there's nothing more important than a wife.

Admiration and Appreciation

What's most valuable in the house? The *mezuzos*? The *seforim*? No, *your wife* is the most important thing! Suppose there's a question of a fire in the house and the *mezuzos* might get burned up, or all of your *seforim* might get burned. Maybe you have a *sefer Torah* in the house? No matter – you can't put out the fire on Shabbos. But suppose your wife is in the

house? You have to put out the fire to save her life! There's nothing more important in your home than your wife.

And therefore you're expected to treat your wife like she's the most important thing in the home – a good husband looks at his wife with admiration, with appreciation all the time. But what can you do? A husband is sometimes hard-headed; he's not thinking. So what does his wife do? She encourages his mind – she puts on a little bit of perfume and therefore a man walks into his house and there's a sweet fragrance; ooh wah, now he's impressed. Now he remembers what's really important in the house.

Ezra understood that – he understood the lesson of the *ketores* that a person's mind is affected by things as superficial as smell and so Ezra said that this is the *ratzon Hashem*. A man should always be reminded of what's really important in this world, and therefore, in order that the perfumes should always be readily available for the *nashim tzidkaniyos*, the perfume peddlers were given special leeway that nobody else had.

The Lesson of Ketores

And so we return now to the Mishkan. The burning of a rare incense blend directly in front of the *aron habris* was intended to produce a feeling of especial admiration for the place dedicated to the worship of Hashem. It was a rare concoction of unique spices and as soon as a person walked into the place of *avodas Hashem* the aroma of the *ketores* reached into a person's *neshama* and made him feel that this was an important place. The overpowering delightful fragrance created in your mind a love, an honor, for the house of Hashem – *avodas Hashem* was now elevated in the mind of man.

Now, we're learning something special here: Hakodosh Boruch Hu didn't rely merely on your intellect, that you should understand on your own that the *avodas Beis Hamikdash* is the sweetest of all things – oh no; He encouraged that feeling by means of making the Mikdash smell good! And that's expected to be for us an important lesson. We too are expected to take the cue from Hashem and be *maktir ketores* in front of everything connected to the Torah.

Glorified Wickedness

We're learning now the great principle of making the good things in this world smell good. Among the *umos ha'olam* it's always the opposite

- unimportant things were always made to smell good. They had hippodromes. Aah, the glorious hippodromes! Those wicked places where thousands came to view men being thrown to the lions. *That* was sweet smelling to them; *that* was the ‘culture’ appreciated by the Roman aristocracy. Oh yes, it’s glorious to see how a lion takes a man’s head in his mouth and crunches it like you crack a peanut. The entire family would gather together for an afternoon of good culture. They would sit there Sunday afternoon munching popcorn and watching the performance. As the lion would bite into the victim’s skull, the master of the house would turn to his wife and say, “Paulina, did you hear that crunch? Now that was a crunch!”

Today they have similar things. People come to boxing matches and when one man punches the other and his eye socket begins to gush blood, everybody is shouting and applauding. “Ooh wah, did you see that punch! It was beautiful!” And when the man is in the corner about to faint, the other man is hitting him again and again. Ohhh! That’s a hero.

Not only boxing; all the unimportant things - *arayos*, shootings, sports, music, movie stars - are beautified outside on the street. And at the same time, all the important things are belittled. The *yetzer hora* is busy trying to deprecate, to belittle and to minimize the importance of everything good in this world. Don’t think it’s a small thing - the *yetzer hora* is a very powerful force in the world. That’s why the world has been convinced for a long time that the Orthodox are no good. On *reshoim*, there is always a *limud zechus* but the Orthodox Jew is always made to smell bad in the eyes of the world - and the more Orthodox he is, the worse it is.

The Best People in America

I remember once there was a man who worked for AIPAC, The American Israel Political Action Committee. He was the president or their executive director and he once made a statement; he said that he never went to Brooklyn because he doesn’t like to be around Orthodox Jews. “They’re smelly,” he said. The New York Times loved that - they printed it twice.

The truth is that the *yetzer hora* is hard at work even among the frum Jews. And I’m sad to report to you that he’s succeeding. That’s why we find observant Jews who sometimes ridicule other frum Jews; they ridicule *frumkeit* and *avodas Hashem* that they think is too extreme.

A woman from Virginia, an observant woman, she visited Boro Park and she called me up. She is going back now and she said, "I'm so happy to be going back! Boro Park is too crowded with frum people; so extreme! And they all deceive the government and live on programs."

I told her, "You know what you are saying? That's how you speak about our best people?! You are doing a terrible crime! You are talking about the best people in America." Except maybe for Williamsburg – Williamsburg is even better. But Boro Park is second best! You walk by blocks and blocks of *shomrei mitzvos*; *mezuzos* on every door. And inside, the homes are filled with children! Every house is a Beis Hamikdash of *kedusha*; I say that every house smells like *ketores*! I'm not exaggerating – it's a beautiful fragrance.

True Beauty

And that's what the *mitzvah* of *ketores* is teaching us to do. We smell a sweet fragrance in Torah things and we have to get busy making a stand against that *yetzer hora* – we have to get busy saying the truth and creating a good fragrance around anything connected to Hashem and His Torah. Whatever belongs to Hashem and his Torah is beautiful to us. Anything connected with our nation – of course I mean the Torah nation, the Torah practices – everything connected with the service of Hashem is beautiful. Of course, if it's not Hashem's then it's not Jewish. It could be in the land of Israel, but if it's not Hashem's, if it's not Torah, it's not beautiful. But whatever belongs to Hashem – His *mitzvos* and His Torah and His ways are all beautiful.

And that's the only beauty we recognize – to us there's nothing in the world as handsome as a Jew who keeps the Torah; and the more he keeps, the more beautiful he is. In Yiddish we used to say "*ah sheineh Yid*," which means that's a handsome person. But *ah sheineh yid* doesn't mean a good looking Jew. No. *Ah sheineh Yid* means a frum Jew because to us, every decent frum Jew is good looking. And if he's not a *shomer mitzvos*, he's not beautiful. He's a cripple. Something is funny with him if he's not a frum Jew. But a frum decent Jew? Nothing is more beautiful.

The Glorious Yeshiva Man

Here's a yeshiva man. What's your attitude when you see him? You tolerate him, that's all. Could be you even think sometimes that you are superior to him. He's silly, maybe you think. He doesn't know the truth of the world; he's not practical.

Forget about those foolish thoughts! The Gemara says that there will come a time when *u'mala haaretz deiah*, when people will see the truth – not only they'll see; they'll *smell* the truth: עתידין בחורי ישראל שלא טעמו טעם הקטא שיתנו ריח טוב כלבנון – There will come a time when people will see Jewish boys, yeshiva men who don't sin – they don't mingle with girls; they don't know about the movies and the basketball players – and when you see them, you'll feel the perfume in the air like a pleasant breeze blowing from the pine forest! Now, if the Gemara says that, it means that's the truth! That's how we're expected to think right now. When you see a yeshiva man you have to produce in your mind an aroma like the fragrance of the pine forest.

The Glorious Kollel Wife

The sweetest smelling people are the *luftishe* Yeshiva men. They're young. They have no money. They have no power. But they are devoted to learning the Toras Hashem. People who sit all day long in the Beis Hashem, those are the ones who smell the best. The wives too! Here you have a young idealistic girl and she marries a kollel man and he tells her beforehand, "I have nothing so we'll have to live in a basement in Boro Park – at the edge of Boro Park in a Spanish neighborhood. And it won't be so clean either; it's infested in those buildings. But the rent there is the cheapest I could get and I want to sit and learn." And she says, "I'm all in – that's what I want!"

And so they move into this little den; that's all it is, a den! It's not easy for them. Everything is covered; otherwise they would find droppings in the food. Every night they put out the mouse traps and every day she sprays the baseboards with DDT. But they're living happily; they're succeeding at their goal in life – they're building a *mishkan* for the *shechinah*!

Now today, some people would disparage that. If the father-in-law can buy you a nice car and pay for a nice apartment, OK, why not be a kollel man on your father-in-law's shoulders? But to live with such simplicity?! Many people aren't impressed by that. But that's a mistake. It should be our pride that our young couples forgo the pleasures of this world to live idealistic Torah lives!

Of course, living among gentiles many Jews lose that viewpoint; they become jaundiced against Jewish attitudes because all the truly good things are despised by the environment we live in. And it rubs off on

us; no question it has an effect on us. And therefore it's important at all times, as much as possible, to recall the *mitzvah* of the *ketores* which is always teaching us that we're expected to make the important principles smell good in this world.

Part II. Aromatic Ideals

Our Job

Now, if we are serious about making a career out of this lesson of the *ketores*, of elevating the honor of *Torah u'mitzvos* in the eyes of the world – and we should be *very* serious about it – it would be a good idea to listen well to what a great man said about this subject.

Rabeinu Yonah in Sha'arei Teshuvah (3:148) says like this: “The foundation of a person's life in this world, if he wants to serve Hashem, is to make known – whenever he speaks and in every way possible – that the foundation of a man's stay in this world, the beauty of a person, is only *avodas Hashem* and *yiras Hashem* and *toras Hashem*.”

Rabeinu Yonah is telling us here that we have a job to do – not just a job but a program for life: As much as possible, our business is to make known to other people – and to ourselves too – that what's most beautiful in this world is everything associated with *Hakodosh Boruch Hu*. It means we're expected to be propaganda agents for Hashem.

Russian Propaganda

You know, I remember when the Soviet empire was still in existence, in America there were thousands of Russian spies – America was honeycombed with Soviet agents. What was their function? They had one job – to spread propaganda in favor of Mother Russia. They were expected to mingle with the people and to put in a good word; to always speak up for Russia.

I was once in the post office standing in line waiting for my turn and there was a man standing there with a sign, “No Nuclear Weapons! No War Against Russia!” He was asking people to sign the petition demanding that America should stop producing nuclear arms! “We're wasting our money on arms,” he said to me, “when we could be feeding people like they do in Russia.” He was telling me stories about how in Russia everybody is fed and happy.

They were spread out everywhere! And whenever they could, every opportunity, they would put in a good word for Communism. In the news, on the college campuses, in government offices, they were always speaking up about the glories of communism – that was their job.

Kosher Propaganda

L'havdil elef havdalos, that's *our* job in this world! Only that instead of being an agent of *sheker*, instead of propagandizing about empty ideals, Rabeinu Yonah is telling us that every Jew should feel like he's an agent of Hakodosh Boruch Hu sent into this world to speak up; he should consider himself a propagandist for the truth who is always on the lookout for opportunities to speak up for everything connected to Hakodosh Boruch Hu.

That's a life program for every Jew. You don't have to be a professional speaker, a *darshan*; it's a career that's *shaveh lechol nefesh* – every man and woman, every boy and girl, if they put their mind to it, can make it their program for life to speak up for Hakodosh Boruch Hu. If you're a wise boy or girl you can find ways to speak up among your friends. They don't have to know that you came here and heard this – they won't know that you're following the program of Rabeinu Yonah but you'll always be dropping ideas into their heads, propagandizing for Hashem.

Let's say you're going someplace, you're going to a *chasuna* or some family gathering, so make a plan beforehand. "I'm going to use the opportunity to propagandize for the honor of *avodas Hashem*. I'll speak about the beautiful *yeshiva* I passed by yesterday or about a new *sefer* I saw that's full of wonderful Torah ideas." Every time a different thing.

Sweet Prayers

When you're home alone with your wife, say something that will praise the *mitzvos*. Tell her you've been thinking about how great a certain *mitzvah* is. "This *mitzvah* is really something!" you say. Praise *davening*! Did you ever think about that? You're going to the synagogue every day to talk to the Creator of the world! Isn't that something! "Ahh," you can tell her when you come back from *maariv*, "the pleasure of talking with Hashem – there's nothing like it!

I remember when I was a little boy I once heard a man come out of the shul and say, "Ah! *Ich hob gedavened a geshmaken ma'ariv*." I just davened such a sweet *maariv*, he said. I can't forget that. I was 10 years

old when I heard that and I learned that night that it's possible to *daven* a *geshmake ma'ariv*, that when you *daven* right, it can be a pleasure.

Family Talk

A father in his home should be thinking at all times what he can say to his family. Whenever you have an opportunity, say a good word about the *chesed Hashem* in this world, about Torah and *mitzvos*. Always try to say something that will make your family admire *lomdei Torah*; choose words that will make them admire *mitzvos*. You don't have to be a big *lamdan* to talk about the *mitzvos* and make them impressed with the importance of serving Hashem – all you need is to understand your role of being a propagandist for Hashem and then your conversation in the home becomes a part of your program. Don't think they're not listening – it goes in, it absolutely goes in. It will enter their minds forever and ever.

Of course, when you're sitting at the table on Shabbos or even during the week, that's an excellent opportunity. Prepare a few words; speak about how important it is to *daven* with *kavanah*, to go to the *beis haknesses* and *daven* with a *minyan*. Speak of the importance of learning Torah. Elevate Hashem's Torah to the sky. Speak of *matan Torah*, that great spectacle of Hashem speaking to the entire nation at Har Sinai. Talk about it. "We're the only nation in the history of the world that Hashem spoke to!" Tell your family that again and again.

From time to time speak about the glory of *avodas Hashem*; the glory of *tznius* and of loving our fellow *frum* Jews. Speak about the glory of *shemiras halashon* and about the importance of being a *lamdan* and obeying the word of Hashem in every area of our existence. That's the table-talk of a loyal Jewish home. That's a home where they're still burning the *ketores* every day in front of the *kodesh kodoshim*.

Frum Children

Even when you're talking business in the office, sometimes put in a good word. *Agav urcha* you should mention, "I was in the *yeshiva* yesterday to pick up my son and it was so nice to see those fine boys. It's a pleasure to see how they behave." Or when you see *frum* girls on the street, praise them to whomever you're with. Don't be bashful about it. When the *Beis Yaakov* girls pass by, or the *Beis Rochel* girls or *Beis Rivka* girls; make it your business to be *maktir ketores*: "Ah! *Boruch Hashem! Frum, tzniusdige girls!*"

We're proud of those girls; they are our glory and we shouldn't disdain the opportunity to praise them up to the sky. The truth is that the youth *are* our praise. In the whole world there's nothing like the *frum* Jewish boys and *frum* Jewish girls. And therefore we shouldn't keep quiet about it – we have to talk about that always; as much as possible you should find ways and means of propagandizing to the world about the greatness of our *frum* children.

Lehavdil the boys and girls from a Catholic school – they're better than in the public school, but still what kind of comparison is this? *Pheh!* They have different kinds of *derech erez*! *Ach* – not even the slightest comparison!

We live decent lives – the gentiles talk about decencies, but *l'ma'aseh* there's only *goy echad baaretz*, there's only one decent nation in the world – that's the *frum* Jews.

Kosher Kiddush Hashem

We're a nation of exceptional people; every *frum* Jew is a gem, a diamond and our obligation is to talk about it. They won't talk about it, that's for certain; don't wait for the gentiles to be *maktir ketores* and sing our praises; that's *our* job in this world.

Look for excuses to talk. You're walking down the avenue with your wife, or your children; even your friends. Say, "How beautiful it is to see a big truck – it's half a block long – going down the street and on the side of the truck in big letters *Chalav Yisroel!*" Tell the people around you that it's beautiful. I remember not long ago you couldn't get *chalav Yisroel* in America. When I came back from Europe, a farmer came once a month, a Jewish farmer, and brought us milk from his cow. It was never fresh, and it was always whole milk. And now, *Mehadrin* – *Chalav Yisroel* in big letters on the truck. Tell your children that you're excited about it.

Ooh, and right behind it, here comes *Kemach*, a big truck, the *Kemach* truck; all *yashan*, all kosher provisions. The fact that the Jews came to Williamsburg now and began to manufacture kosher food products and advertise them everywhere in the world, that's a tremendous kiddush Hashem. Don't think it's a small thing. They did it for their business but it's our business to propagandize and make it great.

The Great Reward

Now, because this program is so valuable in the eyes of Hakodosh Boruch Hu, therefore the reward we'll get for fulfilling it is also valuable. Listen to what Rabeinu Yonah says about this: *Veyizkeh belo yegiah ufoel kapayim, zechus gedolah ad shamayim* – If you make this program part of your life, if you spend your days being *maktir* sweet smelling *ketores* on the altar of everything connected with the service of Hashem, then without any labor of your hands – just by speaking up – you will merit a reward that is so great that it goes up to the heavens.

It means that if you raise up the Am Yisroel to the high heavens, so your reward for your efforts will also be up to the highest places. That's how important this career is.

Part III. Aromatic People

Praising to The Skies

Now, when a great man like Rabeinu Yonah makes such an offer to you – “without any labor of your hands you can achieve great merits up to the sky!” – that's an offer you can't turn down. Not only we can't turn it down but we should grab onto it with both hands as tightly as we can! Because we're learning now that this is one of the great opportunities available to us in this world – to speak up and raise on high the important ideals.

Included in the important ideals we must raise up, is the important people. That's what the Navi says, *אָמְרוּ צְדִיק בֵּי טוֹב* – *Raise up high the righteous one because that's what is good* (Yeshaya 3:10). Now, some want to translate *imru* as “speak about the righteous,” but that's not the whole story. It's true, you should speak about the *tzadik*, but the *possuk* is saying much more than that.

Imru tzadik means to raise the righteous man up high. Like *בְּרֹאשׁ אֲמִיר* (*ibid.* 17:6); *omir* means the top of the tree. So *אָמְרוּ צְדִיק בֵּי טוֹב* means, “Praise the righteous man up to the sky because that's what is good in this world.” Not only is the *tzadik* good, but *you* are good; you are fulfilling your great function in *Olam Hazeh*.

Our Roshei Yeshivah

Do you spend any time praising the *tzaddikim*? No?! Well, then you're not fulfilling this function. We have to talk about how great the *tzadik* is! It's important to let the world know about it. It's necessary to praise him and cause him to find favor in the eyes of people.

To whom should you praise it? To anybody who's willing to listen; to your children, to your wife, to your neighbors, praise *tzaddikim*. When someone mentions this Rosh Yeshiva, "Oh-hoh, is he a *tzaddik*. Let's say someone mentioned Rav Pam; "Oh! He's such a *tzaddik*; such a humble *tzadik*." Rav Birnbaum – oh, a big *tzaddik*! He makes our entire neighborhood holy. Rav Aharon Shechter; a *tzaddik*.

Be so happy when these names are mentioned because they give you an opportunity to heap praise on them. אָמְרוּ צְדִיקָה – Raise on high the *tzaddik*. Yes; when the name of a *tzadik* is mentioned, say a good word for him. You don't have to wait until they die. זָכַר צְדִיק לְבָרָכָה (Mishlei 10:7) doesn't mean only after he dies. It doesn't mean when he passes away. In this world, while he's still alive: *zecher tzadik*, when a righteous man is mentioned, *livracha*, say good things about him.

There's so much to talk about. Ah! He's a *rosh yeshivah*, a *tiere mentch*, *zol ehr lang leben*. Mention the *roshei yeshivah*; the *rosh yeshivah* of Chaim Berlin, of Torah Vodaas, Mirrer Yeshiva, all the *yeshivos*. Mention them from time to time and speak of them and praise them. Of course you have to be careful not to praise them in the presence of *leitzim* who might say, "but ...", and they start bringing in objections and *loshon hora*. But if you're talking to decent people, then you should go all out in praising *tzaddikim*.

Plenty of Gedolim

Let people know that we honor them and look up to them. It's very important that the *gedolei Yisroel* are honored by our nation, and Rabeinu Yonah says you will get a *zechus gedolah ad shamayim*; that's how big the *zechus* is. By singing the praises of *tzaddikim* you are going to gain that "very great merit up to the heavens." That's Rabeinu Yonah's guarantee: You're raising up the good things, so Hashem will raise you up too.

That's why I say that when the *chassidim* gather around the table, let's say in the *shtibel*, and talk about their own *rebbe*, very good! Excellent! Why not? They're *mekayem* this *mitzvah* of raising on high the virtues of

their *rebbe*. I don't laugh at the *lubavitcher* when they go overboard for their *rebbe*. Very good! I'm sure he's a very intelligent man and I'm sure he's a big *lamdan*. I'm sure he can give good advice too and I'm sure that Hakodosh Boruch Hu listens also to his *tefillos*. Why not?

Now if you can't agree today who is a *tzaddik*, go back generations ago. Certainly there's a *haskamah* on *gedolim* of the past generations. Everybody will say the Sfas Emes was a very great *gadol baTorah*. Everybody knows his *seforim* are very useful and even in *halacha* we rely on his words. In the generation not long ago, we had Rav Yisroel Salanter – a *tzadik*! There is no question about that. And so there are plenty of *gedolim* on all sides! Sefardim, Ashkenazim, Chassidim, all kinds! And why shouldn't we talk about them?

Go further back! Abayye and Rava. Tell people that we love Rava; Ah! Rava is our life! We love Abayye; we love all of the Amoraim! We should love Rabbah, and love Rav Yosef. We should love Rav Yehudah and Rav Chisda. We should love them, no question about it. And we should speak about them with the greatest *derech erez* all of our lives.

Dating Advice

You know, if you're a boy or a girl, someday you'll have to go out with somebody – they call me up on the telephone and they ask me, "What should I talk about when I go out the first time?" *Imru tzadik* – talk about the *gedolei Yisroel*! Certainly you should talk about *gedolei Yisroel*. Why should you talk about Clinton?! Our conversation has to be not about baseball players, not about actors and politicians. As much as possible our words are words of praise for righteous people and righteous things.

I think the *Shechina* will come down on a *chosson* and *kallah* if they're talking about *gedolei Yisroel*, *tzaddikim*. She's listening to him as he's telling her stories of *tzaddikim*. He says, "My *rosh yeshivah* is an excellent man. He's a *lamdan* and a *ba'al middos*! And the *mashgiach* of my *yeshiva* – a wonderful man!" And she's praising the Beis Yaakov and the *tzidkoniyyos* who are building up the future mothers of the Am Yisroel. Don't say it's foolish – that's the way to talk; to beautify all the things that are beautiful in the eyes of Hashem. *Imru tzadik*! Raise up on high the righteous ones! That's the way their future life is going to be built; around the beauty of the Am Yisroel.

Expected of Everybody

Now, it's important to make a point here. Included in *imru tzaddik* is the obligation to praise *every Jew* who is loyal to the Torah. A *tzadik* doesn't mean that he has *chassidim*; you don't have to do *mofsim* to be a *tzadik*. Every man or woman who is a *shomer Torah* is a *tzadik* – *v'ameich kulam tzadikim* (Yeshaya 60:21) – and therefore we should be speaking highly of them all the time; always talk about the Am Yisroel with admiration.

Now, this already you'll think is not for you. "Who am I?" you'll say. "Am I Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Barditchiver or am I Moshe Rabbeinu that I should speak on behalf of the Klal Yisroel?" And the answer is, *everybody* is expected to speak up for the Am Yisroel. As much as possible we have to adorn the Am Yisroel. In as many ways as possible Hakodosh Boruch Hu expects us to put ornaments, *tachshitim*, on the heads of our nation.

The Sweetest Fragrance

Of course, I don't expect a *satmerer* to go all out, let's say, for Lakewood. A *satmerer* sees advantages of his own people more easily; in Lakewood they like the Lakewooders. But the truth is that if you make it your program in life you'll raise up *all* the *frum* Jews. Don't limit yourself. I'm not a *satmerer* but I can speak many wonderful things about Satmar. I see their advantages and what we gained from them; how the whole Klal Yisroel became different because of the big *kehilla* that was in Williamsburg and spread out subsequently. It had a very big influence and many *tikkunim* rose as a result; a great revolution in *yiddishkeit* came about when the Satmerer Rebbe came to Williamsburg.

And therefore you should keep in mind that this is included in our program. Whenever you can speak in the honor and the glory of the Am Yisroel; speak the praises of the Jewish nation and beautify them as much as you can.

Now I can speak about this for hours and hours, but I want to finish up the subject now and so we come back to the Moreh Nevuchim that we spoke about in the beginning of our talk. The Rambam taught us that the *ketores* was burned every day in the Beis Hamikdash so that we should be reminded always that in this world it's *avodas Hashem* that has the sweetest of all fragrances.

The Most Important Thing

And that's why the *ketores*, you know, has a special *din*: אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִרְקֹחַ כְּמִזְבֵּחַ – Anyone who should prepare the *ketores* outside of the Mikdash ... וְנִכְרַת מִעַמּוּי – shall be cut off from his people (Shemos 30:32). It's forbidden to make any incense with the same formula as the *ketores* that was used in the Beis Hamikdash. Anybody who tries to imitate the formula and make the *ketores* is *chayav kareis*. That's a tremendous punishment. *Kareis*?! Just for imitating the formula! Even if he wouldn't use it for himself, just for imitating it, he's *chayav kareis*.

And the reason for that is because Hakodosh Boruch Hu wanted this fragrance to be felt only in connection with the *Shechinah*. Nowhere else should this especial sweet fragrance of the *ketores* be smelled because that's the great lesson of the *ketores*; it's only the people and ideals that are connected with Hakodosh Boruch Hu that should be alluring and beautiful in this world. Nothing else. And that's why this is one of the great careers of a Jew in this world – to spend your days raising up *avodas Hashem* and making it the sweetest and most important thing in *Olam Haze*.

Have A Wonderful Shabbos

LET'S GET PRACTICAL

Spreading Propaganda for Hashem

This week I will make a concerted effort to speak up once every day in praise of great ideals. Whether a *mitzvah*, a *middah tovah*, a *tzaddik*, or a praise of the Am Yisroel, I will plan out once a day to create an opportunity for myself to open my mouth and bring honor to Hashem by means of making the things that are important to Hashem into the sweet smelling things in this world.

This week's booklet is based on tapes:

752 - Adorning Our People | E-181 - Speak Up for The Truth
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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

שאל אביך ויגדך ויקניך ויאמרו לך

Q:

Now that Purim is over, what are we supposed to think?

A:

Ahh, the age old question: What will be left after Purim? What packages are we taking with us after Purim? On Purim, over here, we sang “*Ah gantz yahr freilich*” and we added in the words “*Ah gantz yahr Purim*.” Because the wise man uses his Purim, he puts his mind to all the lessons of Purim, and the day of Purim makes his whole year *freilich*. His whole year becomes a Purim. Not only *ah gantz yahr freilich*, but all your life becomes *Purimdik*.

And one of the biggest *simchos* is the recognition that Hakodosh Boruch Hu is *oheiv amo yisroel*. That’s the second *yesod*, the second foundation, of the whole Torah. The first *yesod* is “*Bereishis bara Elokim es hashomayim v’es ha’aretz*” – that Hashem made the world. *Hu omar vayehi, Hu tzivah vayaamad* – the whole world is nothing but the *dvar Hashem*! That’s the first *yesod* of the Torah. And the second *yesod*, right on the heels of the first one, is *oheiv amo yisroel* – that Hashem loves His people. The whole Torah, the whole Tanach talks only about *amo yisroel*. And that’s a great happiness when you know that Hakodosh Boruch Hu is thinking about you.

Not about the Am Yisroel in general – He’s thinking about you! You see this man sitting here? Hakodosh Boruch Hu is thinking about him. Hakodosh Boruch Hu says, “That’s My son!” Hakodosh Boruch Hu loves us more than parents love their children. The love that a mother has for her children is nothing compared to the way Hashem loves each one of us.

And since Hashem loves us so much, that’s the happiness in life. There’s no happiness like that. The greatest *simcha* is that Hakodosh Boruch Hu is *oheiv amo yisroel*. That’s the true *simcha*, and that *simcha* remains all year round. And that’s the lesson that you study all day on Purim and then you take it with you all year long.

So let’s think about that for a minute before we say goodbye to Purim. Hashem is looking at us right now, and He’s thinking, “Ah, I have *nachas* from you, My children. I love you *My tiyerah kinderlach*.”

From the last moments of the Rav’s Purim Mesibah – March 23, 1997

— This week’s Q&A sponsored: —

לכבוד היום הולדת של הרב דוד שטערן, יה”ר שתזכה לילך מחיל אל חיל