

פרשת קרח

WITH

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BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

You Take It With You

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Part I. Personality Forever

Fighting Over Finances

There's a famous story in Mesichta Brachos (18b) about a certain chossid, a pious man, who was angered by his wife. It was during the famine years and a poor man came to his home to collect tzedakah and this chossid gave the poor man a dinar, which is a sizable amount of money.

Now when his wife heard about that she became angry. "In famine years you give away so much to strangers?" She was concerned about

feeding her family and she thought her husband had given away too much. And so she vexed him and he became angry. It doesn't say that he did anything, but he was irritated.

The Gemara says that it was Erev Rosh Hashanah and so we understand that this man had already made many preparations for the Yom Hadin. He had purified his character for the Day of Judgment over a long period of time, many days, and now suddenly just before the Yom Hadin he became angry. And he knew that **כָּל הַבוֹעֵס בְּאֵילוֹ עוֹבֵד** **זָרָה**, to become angry is like being an idolater (Shabbos 105b); and so he needed to do a hurry-up teshuva before the Yom Hadin.

Taking the Jab

What could he do in such a short time? If there had been still a long time before Rosh Hashanah, he could work on himself and he could regain his complete composure, the perfection of character that he had lost. The Gemara says (Mesichta Brachos 5a) that when a man sees that the yetzer hora is gaining control of him there are certain things to do, certain programs. But those things are long-term remedies and now the time was too short. When you don't have time for a long-term treatment you have to find some emergency treatment.

What's an emergency treatment? The Gemara says **yazkir lo yom hamaves**, he should remind himself of the day of death. That's a very quick

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injection to heal the yetzer hora. Of course it has side effects and it's not recommended if something else is available. But if necessary you have to take that injection.

And so this chossid decided to use the emergency treatment. "Tomorrow is Rosh Hashanah," he was thinking. "Tomorrow I'll stand before Hashem to be inscribed in the Book of Life or that other book - and so I must do something extreme." And so he went that night, the night of Rosh Hashanah, to the cemetery, and he slept there all night. He didn't only sleep; I'm sure he was thinking too. He was there all night among the dead trying to engrave lessons upon his mind so that he should become purified.

The Underdressed Ghost

Now, during that night Hashem gave him a vision. He was a noble man, a holy character, who went out of his way to purify himself so he was given a gift. As he lay sleeping in the cemetery he had a dream; he saw a vision about two girls who were buried in that cemetery. And he heard them conversing; one said to the other, "Let's get up and let us float around in the world and hear what's going to happen to the world during the ensuing year. It's Rosh Hashanah so let's discover from behind the curtain what's going to be the verdict for the ensuing year."

But the second girl answered, "I'm not able to go with you because I haven't been buried in funeral shrouds, in tachrichim. I'm buried only in a basket of reeds." She was too ashamed to go out in public if she wasn't dressed to a "T".

That's what the chossid saw that night and although it's only a vision we understand that every word is fraught with wisdom here. We have to know that in the Talmud everything is important and this story is no less - we're going to learn a very big lesson from this vision.

How You Develop a Taste

You know, when people are born, when they're still very young children, they have no interest in styles of clothing. If a child would grow up without being influenced, he would just as well walk in the street dressed in reeds as any other kind of garments. Only that over time people acquire various tastes, tastes in styles and colors, because of society.

Even if we will grant that there is an instinctive interest in clothing - I imagine it's so - nevertheless if the style would have been to wear a dress of reeds, then it would have been just as acceptable as silk. Your idea of what's proper is based on what Dior, a fellow sitting in Paris, thinks. You'll wear - not only you'll wear but you'll like whatever he decides. Don't you see how as styles deteriorate even good people follow along like dumbbells? Things that thirty years ago would have been out of the question even for the lowest people, today are accepted in the streets.

And so this girl, because she had been among the living, she had acquired a taste for clothing - an especialized taste that meant she disdained to wear a basket of reeds. And therefore the spirit of this girl refused to go along because she wasn't properly dressed to go out.

Now this to us is a puzzle. A spirit should refuse to go out because she wasn't properly dressed?! We think it's incongruous for a spirit to sincerely speak such words because we know that clothing means something only to the living. And so even if they had been permitted to float around in the world like this vision portrayed, the lack of proper funeral shrouds should not have been a drawback. She was dead now and her spirit was now in the land of eternal life; wherever she was she didn't have a body or clothing to be concerned about. So how could she be pictured - even in a vision - as refusing to go out because she wasn't properly dressed?

Interworld Parcels

The answer to that question involves a great principle that will be important for our subject tonight. But first another story; a similar story that will help emphasize the principle. The Gemara there tells us about another vision that a great man once had. It could be it was a dream, I can't tell you, but whatever it was, it was intended to teach a lesson.

This man was talking to a woman who had already passed into the Next World – she had hidden something of his and she had died before telling him where she had put it and so he was trying to get some information from her. Meanwhile, while he was speaking to this spirit she asked him for a favor. She said, “If you can please get my comb and my eye paint, my makeup, that I left home; I didn't take it along with me. There's a young woman who is going to die soon,” she said, “and if you could please send it along with her, I'll have what I need.”

And so once again we see here a queer thing. We see that when there are no longer any eyes, no longer any cheeks, no longer any hair – there's no need for makeup and combs – still there is a desire to continue all the foibles, all the mannerisms of life.

Keep Your Attitude

The answer is, that's what Olam Habo means! Not only do you bring with you into the Next World all of your maasim, all of your good deeds and the other deeds, but even your attitudes and idiosyncrasies – all of the quirks of character that get into the neshama – that also goes along with a man into the Next World. And that's how it is le'olam; you're stuck like that forever and ever.

Now, it doesn't mean there's anything wrong with wanting to be pretty. A married woman should always try to be pleasing to her husband. But if someone will put her heart into prettying herself and that becomes the overriding principle in her life and there's nothing else; so when she goes to

the Next World she'll take along nothing but that. Even in the grave she'll be thinking about combing the hair that she doesn't have anymore and about putting makeup up on her long gone eyes.

Because when a person passes over the boundary into the Next World, he doesn't stop existing. He continues on just like he always was. The body in itself is nothing and when a person sheds this earthly cloak it's like taking off a garment; the wearer continues to exist; he just moved over to a different place. The word מוֹת, to die, is a brother of the word מוֹשֵׁ, to move away, to depart. In the holy language we don't say 'die.' We say 'depart' because you don't die; you move. And you move with everything you had in your mind.

The Clay Factory

That's what the Rambam says in Mesichta Avos (4:17). He says that when a man dies, the way he is in the last moment of life כְּדֵי יִשְׁאֵר לְעוֹלָם, that's how he'll remain forever and ever.

I'll explain this with a parable so we can better understand it. Imagine we are all working in a big factory, a tremendous ceramics factory. There are tables where we work and right next to each one of us is an oven, a very hot oven. And the big foreman comes and gives each one of us a lump of clay and he says, “Get busy making the best that you can out of that piece of clay. And don't waste time because as soon as the bell rings, you'll have to hurry and shove your clay into that little oven and it will be baked.”

Now some don't take it seriously. They play around. They squash it. They put their fingers into it. It becomes unsightly and shapeless. Others, the smarter ones, are busy from the beginning making a beautiful vessel out of it. There are all types of workers. Some work a little bit in the beginning of the day but then they become negligent. Others are negligent the whole time but before they finish, the last hour they get busy and they try to make something out of it. Sometimes you even have a

person who was bumbling over the clay the whole day, wasting his opportunity. But then when he heard the bell, in that last moment he's desperate so he quickly punches a hollow into that clay. It's crude; it's nothing to look at but he did something at least. You can drink from it. That man at least rescued himself to a certain extent.

Whatever it is, finally the bell rings and everyone has to get up in a hurry. There's no waiting now and you have to shove your clay into that little door of that hot oven. You slam the door shut and lock it and in one second it's baked hard. That's the shape it's going to keep forever. Whatever it is in that second, that's how it will be forever and ever.

Yours Forever

Sometimes a worker runs over to the foreman and he pleads – “I didn't realize you were serious. Let me take it out please – I was negligent; I didn't do a good job.” So the boss says, “Sorry my friend, it's baked already; it's baked hard forever.”

And that, says the Rambam, is what death is. כָּךְ יִשְׁאָר לְעוֹלָם! That's how you'll be forever! Death bakes a man's character forever and ever. What a man is in his last moments that's how he enters that kiln and in one second he is baked permanently. And in the Next World the personality continues; the entire personality with all its attitudes and desires and ideals continue on into the World-to-Come. If you acquired wise attitudes or benevolent traits, you'll take that with you. And chas v'shalom if you acquired silly ideas or irritable and malicious traits then that's what you'll take with you. כָּךְ יִשְׁאָר לְעוֹלָם!

Part II. Crying Forever

Discovering Korach

And that brings us to the famous personality from this week's parsha; it's our old friend Korach. And we'll begin our story in Mesichta Bava Basra (74a) where we read the strange experiences of

Rabbah bar bar Chana. Now, we must understand all the narratives that we find there are intended in a figurative sense. Important and fundamental lessons are being taught in simple language and therefore they have to be studied with the utmost seriousness. And we read as follows.

Rabbah bar bar Chana was once traveling in the desert and he met an Arab who said to him, “Ta achvei lach belu'ei deKorach – come with me and I'll show you the swallowed-up congregation of Korach.”

So Rabbah bar bar Chana states that this Arab took him to a certain place where he saw two fissures in the earth from which there issued a smoke. This represents the smoke coming up from Gehenom. And this Arab took a big wad of wool which he soaked in water and he put it on the edge of his spear and he inserted it into one of these holes; and when he took it out it was scorched black. He wanted to demonstrate how hot it was inside of the fissure.

And the Arab said to Rabbah bar bar Chana, “Pay attention to what you hear from this crack in the earth.” So he put his ear close to the apertures and he heard screaming; he heard people crying out, “Moshe vesoraso emes – Moshe and his Torah are true, va'anachnu bada'in, and we are liars!” It was Korach va'adaso.

The Liar Tells the Truth

Now this Arab was an experienced desert wanderer and he told Rabbah bar bar Chana that every thirty days the Gehenom turns them over to this place. It means that they're going to sink soon and be carried away but in about thirty days the boiling water will bring them to the top again. It's like meat cooking in a pot. The meat rises to the top and then revolves and sinks again and again it rises. And whenever they come to the top you can hear them yelling those same words, “Moshe emes vesoraso emes va'anachnu bada'in – Moshe and his Torah are true and we are the liars!”

Now, that's the end of this episode in the Gemara but we have to study this story well. Right away we understand that Gehenom is not in the crack there, somewhere in the desert. We'd be very fortunate if Gehenom was just a hole in the ground with boiling water. Gehenom is some place that's deeper than this earth can supply. It was only a vision; but that vision was important however.

Korach was suffering in the next world because of what he had said and done in this world. In this world he had said "Moshe is not true and what he's telling us is not true – it's exaggerated and distorted." And because of that, because he opened his mouth against Moshe, finally the earth opened its mouth and swallowed him up.

Asimov and Trotsky

And now Gehenom started. Because right away Korach and his cronies came into the Next World and suddenly everything became as clear as could be. It's like what I said once when Isaac Asimov alav hashnubbel died. Isaac Asimov was a famous Jewish apikoris, a big atheist. He was proud to say, "I don't believe in G-d." Well, you know what happened as soon as he died? He went over to the Next World – the lower level – and he heard a big booming voice, a loud voice: "So, Isaac! You didn't believe in Me, eh?!" And now Gehenom began for him.

Ay! A rachmanus! If only he had changed his mind before he was baked permanently. While you're still on this side of the curtain anything is possible – as long as the candle burns there's still hope even for the most wicked ones.

Let's say Leon Trotsky, when they shot him down for his good deeds – Leon Trotsky was assassinated in Mexico; I think it was in Mexico. Trotsky was an ardent communist and an enemy of the emunah. But suppose a moment before they shot him – the assassin pointed the gun at his temples and as he was pulling the trigger, at that last moment suppose Trotsky would have shouted, "מֹשֶׁה אֱמֶת וְתוֹרָתוֹ אֱמֶת." He would have been saved

from Gehenom! In that last second, if he would have said those words he would have been saved. I'm not saying he would have gone straight to Gan Eden but it would have helped, absolutely.

Now he's saying it! Right now Trotsky is yelling, "The rabbonim in Russia were emes and I am a liar! Reb Yitzchok Elchonon was emes. Reb Chaim Brisker was emes!" Those were the rabbonim who were famous when Trotsky became a revolutionary and an enemy of Judaism. Now he's saying it because in the World of Truth he knows the truth. But it's too late; he cannot change his tune now because he was baked solid already. But he knows! And he wishes he could get those words into his personality only that it's too late. And that's why these words are hurting him more than any boiling waters.

Confronted by the Truth

Because in the Next World there's only truth. Gehenom is the other side of the boundary and all the fallacies of life come to an end over there. It's only in this world that a person can be fooled by the weakness of his character. Only in this world can a person be fooled by materialism and dresses and combs. It's only here that there can arise a Korach. Only in this world can a person be foolish enough to say that Moshe is a liar or that we come from monkeys.

Only in this foolish world can you have imitators and falsifiers. Only here can there arise a Paul who says that Moshe didn't know the whole truth and that along came this new fellow, a mamzer, and he knows everything. And then along comes Mohammad and he says, "It's all abolished. I'm the one who knows everything." Along come the evolutionists and they say, "No, no. Nobody knows anything except us." Only here can people be fooled with garbage like that.

And that's what the Gemara is telling us. Korach is suffering now because now he's facing the truth. He sees now that it was one big mistake and that actually Moshe was emes and soraso emes. As soon

as he died he recognized how wrong he was. And he understood that this was his Gehenom. This was his suffering; knowing the truth that Moshe emes v'soraso emes but now he was baked hard already and he couldn't make that truth part of his personality. He couldn't change what had already become part of his personality in Olam Hazeh.

The Truth Hurts

And so Korach's existence became regret; very deep sorrow and regret. Forever and ever he's crying and he's trying now, every day and every moment, with all of his strength to cause this truth to penetrate into the core of his soul. Korach is trying his best to bring his suffering to an end and that's why he and his people are saying over and over again, "Moshe emes vesoraso emes!"

They're attempting with all their power to bring the realization of this into their hearts. If only they could get these words into the core of their consciousness, that would solve their problem and the Gehenom would be dispelled. If they would only be able to cause this knowledge to penetrate their souls, they know that their suffering would stop immediately. They'd be delivered – they'd come out of Gehenom. And so they're saying it over and over again in the hope, "Maybe it will change us; maybe our minds will finally accept it." But it's not possible anymore. It's only while a person is alive that he can make a change in his mind and his character.

And that's a big part of what Gehenom is. Their errors go along with them and that's the fire that burns them. They're punished by the understanding and recognition of the truth. And that fire consumes a person by day and by night and he can't end it. He would like to end it because now he knows the truth but it's impossible to change anymore.

Now, I know that you think you can breathe a sigh of relief when you hear that. "Oh," people think, "if that's the case we're quite relieved. We thought it was really a fire, a burning fire. It's only going to

be the torment of the error in our minds, that's all? Boruch Hashem!"

Oh no! That's worse than anything else! In the world of the neshamos, where what you acquired in your mind is so important, and where it's forever and ever, that's going to be a terrible suffering.

An Endless Nightmare

Did you ever have a nightmare? You're lying in bed and in your dreams you're suffering. You're suffering terribly and you're scared and you're nervous. You're in a panic! But finally you wake up and you see it was nothing. You were twisting and turning all night and you woke up exhausted but now you see it was nothing.

That's Gehenom! Only that you never wake up! It's worse than a nightmare because in a nightmare at least the morning brings relief. You wake up, you're exhausted but now you see the problem is no problem. But Gehenom is a nightmare that doesn't come to an end.

And that's why it's so important that when a man is still alive he should make sure to get busy creating a good mind. When you walk out of here tonight you can say, "מִשָּׁה אֱמֶת וְתוֹרַתוֹ אֱמֶת! Whatever foolish ideas I've heard, whatever sheker I've read in my life, I'm saying now once and for all that מִשָּׁה אֱמֶת וְתוֹרַתוֹ אֱמֶת!"

Now, maybe you're saying it because you want to show off to other people, to make a good impression. No matter! It's a good start; it's something. Look, if Korach was saying it to get out of Gehenom it certainly wasn't entirely sincere and still it would have been accepted in this world. Because that's the power of the gift of free will that is given to us while we're alive.

And so we should utilize that gift as much as possible. Everyone! Let's say you have a street corner loafer and he's sitting on the street corner for hours and hours; he's wasting time. His mind is a television mind and a New York Mets mind and a magazine mind. There's still hope! That's the

principle we're learning from this story. That this world is your chance! And you have to grab it because whatever you are when you're **מֵיִשׁ** into the other world, that's how you'll remain forever.

Part III. Singing Forever

The Greatest Pleasure

Now I want to change the scene to a happier place; I want to talk to you now about Gan Eden. And it's not a new subject because actually it will be exactly the same; it's the mind that you create for yourself in this world, that's what's going to be your happiness in the World to Come. All the good attitudes that you acquire in this life, all the improvement that you created in your character, all of those ideals and attitudes go with you and it continues in the form of reward. The mind you create in this world will cause you joy and happiness forever and ever.

And it'll be such a happiness that it's impossible to imagine it now. In the Next World Hakadosh Baruch Hu is going to give us a sensation of the greatest happiness, the greatest sensation of pleasure that He Himself is able to create. You hear these words? These are the words of the Mesillas Yesharim. It's the greatest sensation of pleasure that Hakodosh Boruch Hu Himself is able to create and He'll bestow it on us.

But the rule is that it requires a certain preparation of the mind. The truth is it requires a lot of preparation. To create a mind that believes “מִשָּׁה אֱמֶת וְתוֹרָתוֹ אֱמֶת,” takes work; you can't just say it once, superficially, and patur yourself. You have to create a mind that loves Torah; a mind that loves learning Gemara. You have to create a mind that loves Hashem and that loves His loyal people. There's so much work to do in this world to create a mind that will enjoy the Next World.

Olam Habo Rehearsal

But I'm going to tell you something now that might be a chiddush to many of you. It's good you came here tonight because you're going to hear something now that is very important. Listen well because you won't hear this outside: we have to train our minds in fun and good times! Even though there are many attitudes that will cause you tremendous happiness in the Next World, one of the most important is the attitude of being happy. If you want to be happy in the Next World being **נִהְנֶה מִזֵּיו הַשְּׂכִינָה**, enjoying the splendor of seeing the Shechina – the greatest pleasure possible – you have to get busy creating a mind that enjoys Hakodosh Boruch Hu while you're still in this world.

Now we'll try to study that subject in the little time we have left tonight. First we'll see what Rashi says in Mesichta Brachos; it's in daf samech gimmel amud alef, if you care to look. Not that I'm a baki in Mesichta Brachos; I've just said it so many times that I can't forget it. The Gemara says there that in the Beis Hamikdash when they used to conclude a bracha, it was different from the way we finish up a bracha. They used to say min haolam ad haolam – from this world to the Next World – at the end of every bracha. For instance, we say baruch atah Hashem Goel Yisrael but in the Beis Hamikdash they said baruch atah Hashem ‘min haolam ad haolam’ Goel Yisrael – We thank You from this world to the Next World.

Now why did they do that? So Rashi says an interesting and important statement. Rashi explains that every bracha begins here in this world and it finishes there in the next world. And here's his language; pay good attention because these words are the clue to our function in this world: **הִנְהִיגוּ הָהָא בְּרִכּוֹתַי בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה**, accustom yourself to saying His blessings, the blessings of Hashem, in this world, **בְּרִי שְׁתַּחֲוֶי רַגְלֵיכֶם בּוֹ לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא**, in order that you should be practiced in them for the World-to-Come. Become accustomed to thanking Him in this world

in order you should be well rehearsed for Olam Habo.

It's a Happy World

To explain it a little more, we'll learn a Gemara in Mesichta Sanhedrin (91b): אָמַר רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן לֵוִי כָּל הָעוֹסֵק בְּשִׁירָה בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה – Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levy says that if a man is osek, he's occupied, with saying song in this world, so something special is going to happen to him. I'll get to that special thing momentarily but first, what does it mean osek? It means he is busy with it; it's not just once in a while. And what's he busy with? Beshirah. Beshira doesn't mean saying prose; it means saying song. If a man says "things are good" that's prose. But suppose you get a call from OTB that you are the one, that your horse won and you're a millionaire now, so when you turn around and your wife says, "what is it?" you won't speak prose to her. You will speak in poetry! You will speak in lyric words! You might even dance too! And that's the way we have to talk about this world.

Now, a person doesn't sing from unhappiness. If a man goes around this world unhappy, if he says "this world is nothing; this world is just darkness and bitterness," so that man will never fulfill his purpose in this world. But if you learn how to be happy with this world and you get busy singing about it too, you're always thanking and expressing gratitude, that's how you live successfully.

And what's going to happen just because of that? אָמַר רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן לֵוִי כָּל הָעוֹסֵק בְּשִׁירָה בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה זֹכֶה וְאִמְרָה לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא – If you busy yourself singing to Hashem in this world, you'll be rewarded that you'll continue to say the song in the Next World. You'll be happy forever! Forever and ever you'll be singing in happiness!

Afflicted with Butter and Cream

So what do you see? It's your job as a good Jew to be happy in this world. Don't make the great mistake of thinking like many frum Jews think that this world is suffering. "It's only affliction," the frum

Jew thinks, "but I'll get it all in the Next World. That's where it's waiting for me." So as he sits for his breakfast, eating let's say eggs and butter and jam on his bread; he's afflicting himself with coffee and cream and he's so sad at his plight in this world. And at lunchtime again he goes through the whole torture all over again. And he's waiting for the Next World. There at least, he will be paid back. There all his pious deeds, his Torah and mitzvos will be paid back.

Well, when the time comes and he comes to Gan Eden and knocks on the door, he's in for a big surprise. "You ate it all up already," they tell him.

"But I had no fun out of it," he says.

"It makes no difference," Hashem says, "You had it. If you would have had fun out of it then we would have rewarded you."

"But I made a bracha every time. I never missed a bracha in my life."

So Hakodosh Boruch Hu tells him, "Look, it's true that you have to pay for everything in this world and a bracha is the coin with which you pay Me. But you've been paying with counterfeit money all your life!"

Counterfeit Brachos

Suppose you walk into a store to buy a big bag of vegetables and you put a shiny coin on the counter and you walk out. So the storekeeper bangs the coin on the table and he hears no noise. Or he holds up the bill to the light and he sees that it's Monopoly money, fake money. So he yells at you, "Get back here. Put those vegetables back. This money is counterfeit."

So Hakodosh Boruch Hu says, "Yes, you made brachos. But they were counterfeit because you didn't mean them. You weren't happy! You didn't enjoy it! If you didn't learn to be grateful then it's counterfeit money." If you never learned how to enjoy this world then you're not singing to him; your brachos are counterfeit.

Now it doesn't mean you have to run after the piece of bread. That's a mistake. Don't run after any pleasure in this world. But you have to eat sometimes, don't you? So when you finally eat your pas bamelach, your bread dipped in salt, and when you drink your glass of water, learn to appreciate how good it is! Train yourself to feel what a great experience it is to eat. It's so much fun, so much happiness.

And then the next time you'll say baruch atah Hashem hamotzei lechem min ha'aretz, you'll say it in sing-song. Not merely "Baruch muh muh muh." Like an old mashgiach once said to his students. He said, "You boys, when you make a bracha you don't even open up your mouths. If not for the fact you have to put in the piece of bread you wouldn't even open up."

Learn to Have Fun

It means we have to get busy opening our mouths. You have to thank Hakodosh Boruch Hu from the bottom of your heart and you can't do that unless you learn to appreciate a glass of water. So when you take in your hand that glass of crystal clear liquid, you should stop and think first. "Ahh! This wonderful elixir of life, a miracle combination of two gasses." Could you drink gasses? It wouldn't do you any good. A tank of oxygen and a tank of hydrogen wouldn't do any good. And here you have this wonder chemical and it goes down so smoothly and it quenches your thirst. And then it gets busy transforming all of the organs and tissues and fluids of your body. It lubricates everything in your body.

And so when you'll drink a glass of water and you'll say baruch atah Hashem Elokeinu melech haolam shehakol nehiyeh bidevaro, all of those happy thoughts will go into the bracha. And as you're drinking you're becoming happier and happier with every swallow. That's how to drink a glass of water. You have to do better than that; I'm making it short because we're late.

And don't think you only have to pay for vegetables and bread and water. You have to pay for everything! You have to pay for air in this world. Even if you're a tzadik and you don't want any luxuries but you have to breathe don't you? Even tzadikim have to breathe. And so as you breathe in a lung full of air, you have to learn how to be grateful for it. You're doing it anyhow, so learn how to be grateful for it.

The Boring Smorgasbord

And if you train yourself to live that way, so all your life you're singing a song of happiness. You don't have to be rich. Rich people don't sing songs of happiness. On Park Avenue a lot of people have jumped off from their fancy penthouses. More people commit suicide on Park Avenue than in Brownsville. Happiness doesn't depend on money; it depends on your mind.

Now, all this takes a great deal of effort because if you don't study it, so you become a leitz, a scoffer. The leitzanim of the world say, "What so great about it? It's an ordinary pair of shoes, an ordinary house, ordinary electric lights, ordinary warm water." To a leitz everything is ordinary. "It's nothing," the world says. That's because they never learned how to be grateful. They never learned to enjoy this world.

Instead of being morose, instead of being sad, you have to be happy in this world because that's the only way to thank Hashem continually. There's so much He's giving us. This world is a smorgasbord; so many knishes and other good things He's serving us and we have to say thank You, baruch atah, thank You, baruch atah.

And so all of you sad-faced people perk up and listen to what's being said here. Hanhigu birchosav, accustom yourself to saying in this world to Hashem, "Baruch atah!" Thank You and thank You and thank You. And the more you say thank You in this world, the more you'll be happy in the World-to-Come.

Our Motto: Rejoice!

That's why I say that in this place we always remind ourselves that our motto is שְׂמֵחוּ צְדִיקִים בְּה'שֵׁם. That's our motto: all you righteous people, let's be happy in Hashem. רְנְנוּ צְדִיקִים בְּה'שֵׁם, let's get busy singing to Hashem. Because that's the great rehearsal for when we come into the big banquet hall where we're going to have something really important to say thank You for. That's the preparation for the great happiness that will be served in the World-to-Come.

And therefore along with all the other Torah attitudes we have to get busy gaining, one of the most important is to gain the attitude of happiness. The more you learn to be happy with Hakodosh Boruch Hu in this world, that's how you create a mind that's prepared for happiness. And then move into the Next World with the same mind you created here and you'll be happy forever.

Have A Wonderful Shabbos

LET'S GET PRACTICAL

Attaining Eternal Happiness

The errors we make in this world are engraved in our minds forever and cause us endless torment in the World of Truth. Conversely, by gaining the right ideas and attitudes, we can make them part of our personality so that they will bring us pleasure forever. This week I will bli neder stop twice a day to state the truth that "Moshe is Emes and his Torah is Emes". This will remind me to try and acquire good attitudes as long as I'm alive.

— This week's booklet is based on tapes: —

R-48 - You Take It With You | R-76 - In The Evening Do Not Rest

15 - The End Is Important | 321 - One Minute of Life

436 - Eating for Perfection | E-146 - Speak While You Can

Listen: 718.289.0899 Press 1 for English and 2 for Thursday Night Lectures

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

שאל אביך ויגדך זקניך ויאמרו לך

Q:

Should we say that all is good even though we don't feel it?

A:

And the answer is yes! Because vehalachta bedrachav – you have to walk in the ways of Hashem, and Hashem says in the Torah: Vayar Elokim es kol asher asah – Hashem saw all that He had made, v'hinei tov meod – and behold the whole thing is very good. Hashem said this is a very good world! And so, instead of walking around and grouching, "It's too hot. It's so humid," or "It's too cold – it's nasty; it's raining;" instead of that, we should always speak well of Hashem's world.

It's hot? Wonderful! The apples are getting red on the trees. The pears are becoming sweet on the trees. If it wasn't hot, they wouldn't become sweet. If it's cold, that's also wonderful! The earth now is taking a rest from producing and while it's taking a rest it's recuperating all the minerals it lost, all the materials it lost during the summertime. Without the winter, there can't be a summer. If it was summer all year, the earth would keep on producing and it would become arid and infertile. That's why the earth takes vacation in the wintertime. Cold is wonderful. Cold forces the earth to stop producing.

Rain is wonderful. Without rain, we're nothing. When it rains, we're coming down from the sky. You came down in the rain once upon a time! We're 80% rain. We came down from the sky once. And people are grouching and complaining about the rain. Here we were coming down from the clouds and they were complaining against us. That's our chance to come to this world! That's rain! And therefore when rain comes down, all the boys of the yeshivos are coming down and their future brides, the kallos from Bais Yaakov, are coming down. They're all coming down together from the sky. So rain is wonderful.

So Hashem says it's a very good world, and He wants us to keep on saying that all the time. Hodu laHashem ki tov, that He gave a very good world; and if you keep on saying it, after a while, after some time, you'll begin to feel it.