

תורת אביגדור

הגאון ר' אביגדור מיללער זצ"ל

Rav Avigdor Miller on Parshas Vayakhel Pikudei

Adapted from his Tapes, Seforim and Writings of Talmidim

נתנדב לזכות

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בת מרים

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Rav Avigdor Miller ztz"l on

פרשת ויקהל-פיקודי

THE MISHKAN OF SHABBOS

ויקהל משה את כל עדת בני ישראל ויאמר אליהם אלה הדברים אשר צוה השם לעשות אותם: ששת ימים תעשה מלאכה וביום השביעי יהיה לכם קדש שבת שבתון להשם. "And Moshe assembled the entire congregation of the Bnei Yisroel and he said to them: "These are the matters that Hashem commanded you to do. Six days work may be done, but the seventh day shall be holy for you, a day of rest set aside for Hashem." (Shemos 35:1). And although this gathering was for the sake of instructing the people in the making of the *Mishkan*, the fact that it was introduced with the teaching of Shabbos, is intended to demonstrate that the Shabbos is the first and most important Sanctuary to be made. Unlike the Sanctuary of the *Mishkan*, which was to be limited to a single location in the encampment, the Sanctuary of Shabbos was erected in every Jewish home, in all lands. And Hashem stresses that to us. בכל מושבותיכם, He said. "In all your habitations," you will celebrate Shabbos forever. The awareness of Hashem, which is the purpose of our stay in this world, can be achieved in the Shabbos home of every Jew, even more readily, and on a greater scale, than could be bestowed by the *Mishkan*.

THE HIDDEN TREASURE

In the Torah it states that Hakodosh Boruch Hu told Moshe Rabeinu that he should go and tell the Bnei Yisroel, ראו כי - “See that Hashem has given you the Shabbos” (Shemos 17:29). ראו, See! An unusual introduction to a mitzvah that is not found in connection with any other mitzvos. See that Hashem has given you the Shabbos, which means that you must contemplate the Shabbos. And what is the first thing that we should contemplate? כי השם נתן לכם את השבת - that Hashem gave you something here. Hashem didn't just command you to do something - He gave you something.

“I'm giving you Shabbos,” says Hashem. And that's a remarkable description of a mitzvah that we don't find anywhere else. The Torah doesn't say that Hashem gave us *korbanos*. It doesn't say that Hashem gave us Pesach, or Kashrus or tzitzis. Only Shabbos. And the Gemara (Shabbos 10a) explains the meaning of ונתן like this: אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא מתנה טובה יש לי בבית גנוי - Hashem is telling us, “I have a precious gift in My treasure house,” ושבת שמה - “And it's called Shabbos.” And Hashem says, “If I'm giving you a special gift from My treasure house, then ראו, I want you to think about it and understand what it means.”

A LIFE OF MACHSHAVA

Now, this requirement of *machshava* is actually a rule for all mitzvos; everything should be done with *chochma* and *da'as*. Your future in the World to Come is dependent primarily on your thoughts, your attitudes and your *dei'os*. And therefore, every mitzvah that you do, and actually every moment of your life should be spent with *machshava*. A Jew must live with thought, with *da'as*, because he has a career of accomplishing, a career which no other nation in the world has been entrusted with.

However, since this expression, ראו, see, contemplate, is used especially by the Shabbos, it implies that you should especially utilize the day of Shabbos for contemplation. We are

being expressly commanded to look into Shabbos, to study the subject of Shabbos, more than any other instance of serving Hashem.

THE FOOL LOSES OUT

And therefore, we're going to spend some time together studying this great subject of Shabbos. We must know how to make the most out of this gift if we want to succeed. If someone gives you a precious instrument, and you put it away and don't use it - you might honor it, and you might take care of it; you won't let it break, you guard it well - but if you don't use it, that's a tremendous loss! Only a fool will be given a gift and not make use of it. You might sing about it a little, tra-la-la tra-la-la, you might say some special words of *tefillah* for the Shabbos, and you'll even eat special foods. And of course you'll be vigilant in guarding it against any transgression. But that's still not utilizing the gift the way the Giver of this gift intended.

Now, this great gift of Shabbos, you should know, is your life. It's one seventh of your life! And therefore, ראו, says Hashem. See, know, that **השם נתן לכם את השבת**. If we're going to study the subject together and gain the most we can from this study, we must first recognize how important this part of our life is, and how incumbent it is upon us to make use of that part of our life. And in that way we will gain all the great benefits Hashem had in mind when He gave us this great gift.

TRANSFORMING YOUR LIFE

And so the subject for tonight is how to make use of the Shabbos. And you should know, it's a very big subject. We're going to study some aspects of it and we should practice some of them. Even though you won't be able to practice everything at once, but at least you should start practicing these ideals and utilizing the Shabbos. Sometimes for this purpose, another time for another purpose, and little by little Shabbos becomes utilized

by you. And a lifetime of utilizing the Shabbos will bring to you a benefit that will transform your life.

THE HEAVENLY GUESTS

And so, we'll start by preparing for tomorrow night. The Gemara in Mesichta Shabbos (119b) says that when a man prays on Friday night, and he says **ויכולו השמים והארץ וכל צבאם** - "The heavens and the earth and all their hosts were finished," so two angels come and put their hands on this man's head. So this coming Friday night make sure to be aware of what's happening to you. You're going to say **ויכולו**, and you're going to be visited by two *malachim*. Now you'll be saying it twice and which of the two times the angels will come I don't know. But one of the two times it will happen, so be ready for it.

YOM KIPPUR ONCE A WEEK

The angels will put their hands on your head and they'll say: **וכר עוונך והטאתך תכופר** - "Your sins will now depart, and your iniquity will be atoned." Now, isn't that a great opportunity?! Here you thought that you were going to have to wait another half a year for Yom Kippur to come, and meanwhile you can have a Yom Kippur every Friday night. When you say **ויכולו**, you're going to have two *malachim* who will arrive to assure you that your sins will be forgiven.

How precious is that fleeting moment that it resembles the great day of Yom Kippur! You say **ויכולו**, and you're standing **נעילה**! But the question is, what's Yom Kippur doing here on Friday night? What's the occasion on Friday night that our sins are being forgiven?

So we'll have to study the occasion. Because it doesn't say that as soon as the sun sets and the Shabbos comes in, that the *malachim* put their hands on your head. No! It's when you declare a declaration of **ויכולו** - that's when it happens. And that means something.

VA'YICHULU: GREATER THAN FASTING!

So what is so important about saying **ויכולו** that it makes you worthy of a mini Yom Kippur? And now we come to the point. Because the answer is that it is the biggest kind of *teshuva* there is. There is no bigger repentance than saying **ויכולו**! If you would fast for twenty-five hours, and you would stand all day in the synagogue in prayer, and if you would take upon yourself not to do any more sins - and you meant it sincerely - it's still nowhere near the purification that you get from saying **ויכולו**.

THE BIG BANG

And that's because it's a return to the *yesod ha'yesodos*, the foundation upon which all foundations are built: **ויכולו השמים והארץ וכל צבאם**, that this world was created out of nothing; that before Bereishis, nothing existed. There was no Big Bang, and there was no Little Bang. There were no black holes and no explosions of stars. There was nothing to explode. Nothing at all existed. Except for the *ruach Elokim*, the spirit of Hashem which pervaded all space - I don't want to say space because there was no space yet. And then, Hakodosh Boruch Hu willed space into existence; and then He willed that the universe should be filled with heavenly bodies; and that there should be one planet that should have atmosphere, that should have hydrosphere - that it should have water; that it should have a lithosphere - soil; that it should have living things. There is no planet, there is no body in the universe that has anything like it. And He willed that everything should come into existence including Man.

נעשו - "By the word of Hashem the heavens were made," - **וברוח פיו כל צבאם** - "And by the spirit of His mouth all their hosts" (Tehillim 33:6). And we say it every morning. **ברוך שאמר** - "Blessed is the One who said, and the world came into being." Isn't it a pity? Every morning we have an opportunity to review this great lesson, but we're asleep on the job. And even if you know the *peirush hamilos* - you know what the words mean -

but you're not sinking your mind into it. **והיה ברוך שאמר** - He spoke! **והיה העולם** - And the world came into being!

Now this is a startling statement that has no equal. You'll never hear anything more revolutionary than this statement! You can make skyscrapers out of dust - it's possible. If you take the dust and you mix in chemicals, you can amalgamate it in such a way that it becomes bricks and building blocks. You can make almost anything out of anything else, but never again will there be a creation of something from nothing. That's a stunning idea, and we must labor all of our lives in order to gain a little bit of its impact.

THE SCIENTISTS CATCH UP TO US

Now, until recently many of the **הכנאים בעיניהם**, many of the scientists, believed that matter was around forever. If it's matter now, then it had to be matter always. That's how they always learned *pshat*. But now the world knows that matter can be destroyed and created, and the same with energy. Matter can be transformed into energy, and energy into matter. The world didn't know this until recently but now they know. Now they say that there is a Law of Conservation of Energy-Matter. It's one or the other. If you destroy matter it will become energy, or energy can be transformed into matter. And now we see that matter at one time didn't have to be matter. And therefore today, even the academicians, the materialists in the universities, have to admit that matter could have once been energy.

But to us, that's an old teaching! At the beginning of our Torah, **בראשית ברא** - Hakodosh Boruch Hu took His energy, and He said, "Let it be!" and the energy of His imagination caused matter to come into existence, and it's that energy of Hashem's imagination that causes the world to continue. Now of course, even the energy we speak of today is a creation, it's a *yesh* that was created during that first second. But energy is a *mashal* for us - just as we see today that energy can be transformed into matter, we

understand that at the beginning of time, it was Hashem's energy, the *dvar Hashem*, that became the universe.

CATCHING SUNLIGHT IN A BOTTLE

Energy can be transformed into matter. And if you want a demonstration of that, then tomorrow morning walk out on the street and look at any tree. And take a look at the sunlight shining down on the leaves. What is sunlight? Try to capture some sunlight in a bottle, and then try to weigh it. The bottle will weight the same as before the sunlight entered. You can't weigh sunlight - it's not matter, it has no mass. Sunlight is energy.

But when the sunlight hits the leaf - the green leaf that has chlorophyll - so the sunlight begins to manufacture starch. Don't think that the sunlight changes the materials in the leaf into starch. No, the sunlight, the energy of the sunlight, combines with the materials and it creates starch. It makes food. The sunlight becomes matter. So here we have an open example of energy being transformed into matter. And once we wrap our minds around that, we can begin to understand also that in the beginning of time nothing at all existed. And then Hashem made **יש מאין**. Hashem's thoughts, the energy of His thoughts, brought energy and matter into existence. Because it's just as difficult to picture energy becoming matter, as it is to picture nothing becoming energy. Imagine sunlight streaming through the atmosphere, and you see in the sunlight potatoes and apples. You see human beings! Is that what sunlight becomes? And the answer is yes. So if sunlight, which as I explained earlier is not matter, can become something material, then you begin to fathom the great truth that the *dvar Hashem* became energy and also something material.

When we say here that energy can be transformed into matter, it doesn't mean that Hakodosh Boruch Hu had to go through that process. Not at all; because just as He could will energy into existence, He could also will matter into existence. This

is only said as a parallel so that you can better integrate the concept of **יש מאין** into your heads - that it should be real to you, not merely some words that are **פורה באויר**. So we say that just as it is difficult to picture matter being created out of energy, but we still see it's true, the same also, energy and matter were created from the *dvar Hashem!*

THE VERY FRUM COW

And at the end of six days, **ויכולו השמים והארץ וכל צבאם** - it all ended. The creation of something from nothing came to an end, and the universe began to run like a well-oiled machine. And that statement, when impressed upon the mind again and again, is life-altering. And that's why the *malachim* come just then. *Malachim* come to your home for your own personal Yom Kippur because of those words of **ויכולו** that you say. And this idea of **יש מאין** is so important to understand, that if you don't understand it, then it is a waste of time doing *teshuva*. Look, I say waste of time - of course, it's better do teshuva. It's better to do teshuva and be a frum ignoramus. It's better to be a frum cow than to be a wicked cow. But you're still a cow!

You won't begin to be anything worthwhile if you don't get into your head this fundamental idea which most people - even many frum Jews - never think about at all. And that means that they didn't yet take the first step towards living successfully. And that's the great principle of **בריאת העולם יש מאין**. The universe was made out of nothing. It was the creation of something out of nothing.

And you have to know that the lesson of **בריאה יש מאין** is much deeper than that. Because really, it never ended. It says **עושה** **שמים וארץ את הים ואת כל אשר בם** - "He made the heavens and the earth; He made the sea and all that is therein." And then right away it states **השומר אמת לעולם** - "He keeps His truth forever." What's the connection between these two statements? He made heaven and

earth, and He keeps His truth forever? What sense is there? It's a non sequitur. How does one follow the other?

HASHEM THE GREAT CARPENTER

And the answer is that they're both the same. He made heaven and earth. But not only did He make heaven and earth, but He wills constantly that they should continue to be. Not like a carpenter who makes a bench, and then the carpenter walks off and the bench remains. No! The universe continues to exist only because Hakodosh Boruch Hu continues to want it to exist. Every second, He's creating it all over again. Every second, He is keeping His word. He maintains His word. **הַשׁוֹמֵר אֱמוּנָתוֹ** - "He keeps His steadfastness." He doesn't take it back. So not only did He create the world out of nothing, but He continues to maintain this world, and everything in it. Hashem is willing everything into existence at this very moment.

THE BIG APPLE

This is a very subtle point that I'm making now, but it's so important, so I'm going to give you a mashal. Imagine a big delicious apple. It's a big apple, the size of this room. So you're imagining this apple now. There's a stem protruding from the top as thick as a cane. And surrounded with beautiful blushes of red, with delicate tints of yellow. It has beauty spots all over it like a real delicious apple. And underneath will be dimples; and it will be begging you to sink your teeth into it. As you think about these words, the apple is entering into your consciousness. Your thoughts are creating an apple in your head. And while you think about this big beautiful apple, to some extent, the apple is really alive in your mind; your imagination is creating real images.

Imagination is a reality. Only that it's a different type of reality. You can't touch it. But you can see it with your mind's eye. Now, Hakodosh Boruch Hu also imagined things. But His imagination is much more powerful than ours. And so when He

imagined a universe, it came into being. And He continues to imagine it right now. And because He imagines it right now, here it is!

HASHEM'S IMAGINATION

And therefore, we are nothing but imagination. Even if you take a pin and you pierce your skin, and you shout, "Ouch!" it's all imagination. But it's Hashem's imagination. And that kind of imagination hurts. And if you sink your teeth into an apple, it's also imagination. But the pleasure of that bite, Hashem willed into existence by His superlative imagination.

So there's nothing in the universe except for the *dvar Hashem*. Wherever you look, wherever you see anything, it's מלא כל הארץ כבודו - The universe is full of His glory. There's nothing in this world except for Hakodosh Boruch Hu, the Creator. He is everywhere and there is nothing but His will, His imagination.

You know, that when I stopped describing that big apple a few moments ago, we stopped thinking about it. When we took our mind off the apple, the apple disappeared; no more apple. Now, if Hakodosh Boruch Hu would take His mind off us, off this universe, everything would disappear into nothing. Nothing at all!

SITTING ON THE *DVAR HASHEM*

So what I'm telling you now is that this chair that you're sitting on is nothing but Hashem. There's no wood. And there's no stone. And there's no metal either. It is nothing but different forms of the will of Hashem. The sun, all the stars, everything, is nothing but concretized forms of the will of Hashem. And that's what Shabbos is saying. Everything is Hashem! The apple you eat, the chair you sit on, the breeze blowing on your face, it's all the *dvar Hashem*. It's all the imagination of the Creator. There's nothing except for Hashem. It's only His will that we see. There's no

matter! And that should be your first lesson that Shabbos teaches you. That wherever you look, you are being reminded of Hashem.

Now isn't it a pity that so many people who are *shomer Shabbos* don't ever think about that. It's the number one requirement of Shabbos, but they go through Shabbos after Shabbos, week after week, and nothing! No thinking at all. They keep everything. But they are accomplishing next to nothing.

And therefore, let's keep in mind, from now on, every Shabbos, as much as possible, that Hashem wants us to learn about His presence, about His greatness, about the fact that He is the one who existed before anything else. And whatever you see in the world is nothing but an act of imagination by which Hakodosh Boruch Hu willed it into being. And every moment, it continues in existence only because He continues to will it to exist. If He would stop willing it, it wouldn't exist anymore. All of matter is merely His imagination. The only concrete thing that truly exists, and that will exist forever is Hakodosh Boruch Hu alone. And everything that you see wherever you go, while you walk to shul, while you walk back from shul, everything you see on your Shabbos table, is only the vapories so to speak from His mind. He created it all with His imagination and that's why we see them - but actually it's nothing but Hakodosh Boruch Hu in all the forms of matter that the universe contains.

THE JOGGER GOES BLIND

And now we can understand a Gemara that we are familiar with. Chazal say (Berachos 43b) that פסיעה גסה נוטלת אחד מחמש - מאות ממאור עיניו של אדם - "When one takes a big step, it takes away one-fifth hundredth of his eyesight." We're not speaking here of a man who is going jogging, somebody taking big steps because he's running. No, no, that's not what Chazal are talking about. We're talking here about a person taking big steps because he is nervous and harried. When a person is anxious, running here and there, he has to finish this or accomplish that, his eyesight is affected. He's

rushing and worrying because he feels that he's the *macher* here, he's the one who will make things happen. And that anxiety is bad for the eyes. Eye specialists will tell you that excitement often affects the eyes. Dovid Hamelech said עששה מכעס עיני - "My eye became worn out from anger" (Tehillim 6:8). So be careful of *ka'as*, beware of anxiety, it could ruin your eyes. I knew a man who was blind as a result of *ka'as*. Emotions, fright, and anxiety can upset the function of your eyes. That hasty footstep of פסיעה גסה, the anxiety that plagues us all week, takes away one-five hundredth of a man's eyesight.

LASIK SURGERY OR KIDDUSH

So the Gemara asks: מאי תקנתיה - "What's the remedy?" What's the remedy that will restore a person's eyesight. And the answer given is this: להדריה בקדושה דבי שמישי - "He can restore his eyesight at kiddush Friday night." Now there are those who don't learn the right *pshat* in this answer, so listen to me now. How does it happen? How does kiddush heal your vision?

All week long, you lose sight of the great principles of truth. You lose your mental eyesight during the week. That's what involvement with *gashmiyus* does to you. Even kosher *gashmiyus* has an effect on you. You become more materialistic, you think everything depends on you - to make a living, to accomplish this and that - you think that *your* efforts will crown you with success. And so you run and you do - you take a big step running here, and another big step running there. You're anxious, under pressure and you worry. And all that is bad for your eyes - your physical eyes, as well as your eyes of *da'as* - your mental eyesight.

THE CALMING EFFECT OF KIDDUSH

And now it's Friday night. You're standing, dressed in your *bigdei Shabbos*, holding the wine in your hand, and it's all behind you. You're declaring ויכולו השמים והארץ. Everything was done by Hashem. And He's still in charge, conducting our affairs. A

whole new perspective is washing over your mind - Hashem is everything! He's in charge! And so you can sit back and relax now. It was all a waste of worries, a waste of emotions and anxiety. Shabbos is the great consolation of life. Hashem says, "Don't worry. I'll take care of everything. You keep on doing what you're supposed to be doing, and leave everything to me. I'll do the worrying for you." That's what Shabbos tells us, and that is the way to restore your eyesight.

However, when we say **ויכולו השמים ואת הארץ**, we have to ask ourselves, "What is this man learning now that he didn't know before? This is a Jew who has been saying **ויכולו** every Friday night for years. So what new information has he gained by standing up again and saying it once more? What change has been effected in him now, that he deserves this special visit from *malachim*?

THE MISSING RADIUM CAPSULE

Let me give you a little *mashal*. Let's say there's a capsule of radium, pure radium, that's worth, we'll imagine, a hundred thousand dollars. And now in the hospital it got lost. A nurse who was handling the radium machine, had taken out the capsule and put it on the table for a moment, and when she reminded herself and came back, it wasn't there anymore.

So what did they do? They set off the alarm for the nurses: What happened to the radium capsule?! It's a hundred thousand dollars! And then they called all the orderlies and they said maybe it was swept off into the wastebaskets. And so they took all the wastebaskets and they examined them thoroughly. Each one was examined thoroughly.

And then someone said that maybe in the meantime some of the bins had been taken down into the basement and dumped into the big garbage bin. So they raced down to the basement and began combing through the garbage. But then the orderly in the basement said that the garbage truck had been there in the

meantime and a lot of the garbage was already carted off to the dump.

And so they jumped into their cars and they raced to the dump - this is a true story by the way, a true story - and they divided the dump into piles. And they went through each pile separately, until they found it. And it was worth all the trouble and all the expense. Because when something is precious, then even the smallest amount of it is extremely valuable.

And now we come to this precious gem of **בריאת העולם יש מאין** - how precious it is to understand this principle that there is nothing in the universe other than the *dvar Hashem*. And there is nothing better than that for a Jew. There is no better *da'as* than that.

YOUR IMAGINARY SPOUSE

But not only if a Jew never knew it before - or even if he knew but he never thought about it - like many of you people here who I'm sure never thought about it before. And now you possess it and you'll be going home a millionaire. Many of you didn't know this before, you weren't properly aware of it, and now you're leaving here with the knowledge that you are only the word of Hashem. And that your street, your home, your spouse, is only imagination. And that everything in this world is only the *dvar Hashem* concretized into something physical because He imagined it so. He imagined this street, He imagined this sky, He imagined the sun. Everything is only the imagination of Hashem, but intrinsically nothing has any existence.

So if you gained that awareness tonight then you became wealthy - you're rich! And it's a Yom Kippur; *malachim* are putting their hands on your head and they're saying **וכר עוונך והטאתך תכופר**.

But suppose a man has been saying this for many years. And not just saying it; he's been thinking about what it means. Still, when he says it one more time, he gains a tiny grain of more

awareness. By repeating it, it becomes a little more clear to him. So even though he's said it thousands of times, when he says it one more time it becomes more and more firmly embedded in his mind. And that little bit is like the capsule of radium. It's so precious that it's worth everything. Because the principle is so great, therefore every grain of it is so precious.

DIAMOND DUST

I was told that in a diamond shop at the end of the day a rich diamond manufacturer would get down on his hands and knees with a brush and he would sweep up the dust from under the tables. So a visitor said to him, "What's this? You, under the table sweeping up dust?!" So he said, "This dust is diamond dust. And it's worth my while and my energy to sit on my knees and collect that dust."

THE HYDROGEN BOMB IN YOUR HEAD

And so too, when a man makes this declaration of **יכולו השמים והארץ** he has put into his mind not a bit of important information, but he has actually put a hydrogen bomb into his head. The results of this idea are incalculable. When a man declares that Hashem created this world from nothing, he in effect is saying that there is nothing in the worlds except for Hakodosh Boruch Hu.

And therefore, it's worth our while, even on one Shabbos, to say it once more. It's so great of an occasion, this little bit of extra *da'as* that we gain, that we deserve that *malachim* should come join us.

TESTIFYING ON HASHEM'S BEHALF

Now remember these ideas tomorrow night when you stand up for kiddush, or by *shmonah esrei*. You aren't merely standing because of a *din*, a technicality. You are standing as a witness, and Hakodosh Boruch Hu is waiting for your testimony. And what are you testifying? You are declaring to yourself -

forget about the world for now; you have to testify to yourself first of all - that Hashem made this world, this universe, out of nothing. That's the first thing that you must think about. That there was once nothing. No elements, no space, no time, nothing. And then, Hashem's imagination brought everything into existence.

And the second thought, the *yesod* that follows immediately on the heels of the first, is that even now, everything that exists is only here because of the *doar Hashem*. You are going to speak to yourself and declare the *yesod ha'yesodos*, the most fundamental principle of the Torah, that *Hashem Elokim Emes!* There's only one thing in the world that is true, and that is *Hashem Elokei Yisroel*. And outside of Him, everything is nothing but imagination. It's His imagination, but it's nothing but imagination. Intrinsic existence belongs only to Hakodosh Boruch Hu.

And so our function on Shabbos is, to keep in mind the purpose of Shabbos. To remember the *Borei Yisborach!*

WHY AREN'T WE TALKING ABOUT BEREISHIS?

But I must point out a question that should bother us. Why do we speak about the end of Creation instead of the beginning? We should stand up on Friday night and proclaim out loud to ourselves and to our families *בראשית ברא אלוקים את השמים ואת הארץ* - In the beginning there was nothing. Nothing! No space, no time, no basic elements, nothing. And then Hashem said *ויהי*. And with that word, the world came into being. That's what we should be speaking about during *shemonah esrei* and kiddush, and all Shabbos long.

So why do we speak about *ויכילו*, the end of Creation, instead of what should be the real topic of the day, Creation itself? And the answer is as follows: We're not admiring Hakodosh Boruch Hu because He could do tricks, because He can make something out of nothing. Of course, it's a remarkable feat, and it

will never again be repeated in history. But there is a specific aspect of *יש מאין* that Shabbos comes to celebrate, to emphasize. And that is the aspect that the world was created for the purpose of kindness. Like we say in the song that Dovid Hamelech sang about Shabbos: *כי שמהתני השם בפעליך* - "Because You Hashem have made me happy with Your work" (Tehillim 92:5). Not merely that You Hashem have *shown* me Your work, but *כי שמהתני* - "You have made me happy with Your work." It was for the purpose of bestowing happiness, kindness, that Hashem made that "trick." It's not just that Hashem is capable of imagining energy and it comes into existence. No, it's that He causes apples to come into existence! And He causes Man to come into existence with teeth and a stomach so that he could eat those apples! I say apples, but it's everything. Hakodosh Boruch Hu made bread, and oranges, and sunlight, and water, and milk, and potatoes. And onions! What would this world be without onions?! It's a world of endless *chesed*!

And therefore we won't speak only about *yesh mei'ayin* on Shabbos. Of course, we speak about it; we speak about *ma'aseh bereishis* on Shabbos whenever possible. But the purpose of it all is to recognize the *chesed Hashem*. That's what we say in the *shemonah esrei* as we bring in the Shabbos. *אתה קדשת את יום השביעי לשמך, תכלית מעשה שמים וארץ* - "You Hashem made the seventh day holy for Your name; it is the end-purpose of the entire creation of the universe." All of creation comes for the purpose of the finished product, for the *ויכולו*. It's the *יום השביעי* which is the *tachlis* of the *briyah*, because Shabbos represents the sum of all creation, the perfect creation of *chesed Hashem*.

EATING APPLES WITHOUT TEETH

And that's the reason why we declare *ויכולו השמים והארץ* instead of *בראשית ברא אלוקים את השמים ואת הארץ*. Because that's what we're talking about when we speak about Shabbos - the *chesed* of the *briyah*. *Olam chesed yi'baneh*! If you would just see energy shooting

through the atmosphere, even if you would see the creation of the first bolt of energy from nothing, that would be remarkable. You would never forget that sight! But no matter how remarkable it would be, if there would be no apples to eat, and no teeth with which to chew the apples, then you wouldn't appreciate the *chesed Hashem*. The world was created for kindness, and the kindness of the *briyah* wouldn't be appreciated until we see the finished product. ויכולו השמים והארץ - "It was finished!" It was perfect!

EARTHWORMS AND ANTS PLOW THE EARTH

So when we say ויכולו, we should utilize that opportunity to think about this wonderful world that is functioning like a well-oiled machine, with all the parts cooperating. The *dvar Hashem* brought everything into being, but only when Friday night was ushered in did it become *la'asos*, everything began to function. And now we see how everything fits in, and how each thing works in tandem with everything else - everything is needed by everything else - to make the complete picture of a happy *briyah*. It was finished, perfected, and all the parts began to work together in perfect harmony. The sun works together with the soil, and the soil is working with the earthworms and the ants - if either one of them was missing you couldn't have any food. No Shabbos food. You have to thank Hashem for the earthworms and the ants who are tilling the earth for the purpose of your enjoyment.

The wind is working together with the seeds, and the rain is working together with the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. The force of gravity is working in tandem with the sun: the sun brings up the water from the oceans, purifying the water in the process, and then the wind takes over and conveys the rain clouds over the land masses, the continents, and then the force of gravity brings the water from the clouds down to the earth where it gets busy producing food for you to eat. The entire creation is founded on giving you pleasure. All working together for your pleasure. עולם חסד יבנה - a universe of *chesed*!

THE GRAND FINALE

So now you know what we're celebrating on Shabbos. It's the chesed of the *briyah*. And what's the most optimum way of celebrating Hashem's chesed? By enjoying His chesed. And therefore the grand finale of *בריאה יש מאין*, the great celebration of *עולם חסד יבנה*, takes place at the Shabbos table in your home. And that brings us to the subject of *oneg Shabbos*.

On Shabbos we do our best to do things that will impress upon ourselves the great lesson of *oneg Shabbos*. *וקראת לשבת עונג* - You must proclaim joy and pleasure on Shabbos! Because we're doing our best to proclaim this great principle that Hashem made this world out of nothing for the purpose of bestowing happiness and joy on Mankind. *עולם חסד יבנה* - that's what *oneg Shabbos* purports to announce.

MAKING KIDDUSH ON A CHUMASH?!

So instead of merely standing up and announcing to your family that Hashem made this world out of nothing, instead of passing around a chumash and having each guest read a few *pesukim* from Parshas Bereishis, what we do is we pass around a tray of delectable foods. We don't make kiddush over a Chumash. Even *tzadikim* make kiddush over a cup of wine, not over a Chumash. We're sitting around the table and drinking some wine - and there's no harm if there are other beverages on the table as well, soda water and juice - and as you down them, the truths that we're speaking about are being washed down more and more deeply into your mind. Because when you combine the *ruchmiyus* with the *gashmiyus*, it has a more lasting effect.

And therefore, Shabbos is the time to declare: It's all *oneg*! *וקראת לשבת עונג*. Make it a day of *oneg*, of impressing on your mind all of the pleasures of life that you're too busy to think about during the week. That's why Hashem gave *you* this special day and He didn't offer it to the gentiles. When the gentiles gather around the tables at a banquet, they'll talk politics and sports and *avodah zara*.

And then very quickly they move on to words of immorality. But not so the Am Yisroel. We are expected to use the leisure time, and the simple pleasures, the *oneg* of life, to talk about Hashem, and Hashem, and more Hashem.

THE FISH AND CHICKEN DEMONSTRATE

It's a day to demonstrate this great principle that the Almighty has made everything for us, the recipients of His *chesed*, who are His guests. When we sit down to the *oneg Shabbos*, and we enjoy the challah, and the fish, and the soup and the chicken, and everything else, though that enjoyment we are declaring this great principle, that the purpose of *briyas ha'olam*, the reason why this world was created, was in order that Mankind should be happy. We were created for *oneg*!

And *oneg* means physical enjoyment. Included in that is a little bit of sleeping - I'm not saying you should get into your pajamas and climb into bed for the whole afternoon, but sleeping is also one of the great pleasures that Hashem bestows on Mankind - and good things to eat, and all forms of *ta'anugim* and *ma'adanim* - sweet things that we chew on. Solid things, real food that we chew on and enjoy. Not spiritual things. And we do all of this in order to bring home to our minds the great truth that Hashem created this world from *a'yin*, from nothing, so that we should be capable of enjoying His *chesed*. And by means of all these pleasures that He bestows upon us, we become more and more aware of Him.

DON'T BE BASHFUL

Only that you can't forget the *ruchmiyus*! You can't forget what the purpose of the chicken is. So while you're eating and enjoying the delights of Shabbos, you're reminding your family, "Do you see what Hakodosh Boruch Hu created for us?! And this delicious piece of chicken that Ima cooked for us is a symbol of the creation of the universe. Because we're all guests at the banquet of

Hashem and Hakodosh Boruch Hu is our host, and He's showering us with all good things." And if you're going to be too lazy, or too bashful to fulfill your purpose in this world and tell your family these things, then at least you should sit at the meal on Shabbos, and teach these principles to your own self. At least someone should make Shabbos what it's supposed to be.

And it's not only the food. The good food is meant to arouse you to recognize all of the good things that Hashem is providing you with. Is that all that Hashem gave you? A piece of chicken and gefilteh fish?! No! Not only is He giving you good things to eat, but He's giving you good air to breathe, and good water to drink, and clothing to wear. And He's gives you a pair of kidneys to use, and a heart as well. And He gives you lungs.

A PAIR OF PANTS FOR A PAIR OF LUNGS

Lungs! Suppose you had to go out and buy a pair of lungs. Let's say that your lungs were wearing down and were now ready for a change. It would cost you a pretty penny. It would be an expensive purchase because lungs are expensive. It's not cheap to duplicate a pair of lungs. So you'd sell your house. No question you'd sell your house. You'd sell your pants! You'd go out from the lung store naked, happily carrying a pair of lungs with you. It's worth everything.

And Hakodosh Boruch Hu gave you lungs! And He lets you keep your pants as well! And He bestows upon you a lot of other things. You're a storehouse of important things that you're carrying with you. And you wouldn't be able to enjoy the chicken soup and the cholent, and everything else your wife is slaving away preparing in the hot kitchen, if you didn't have a liver, or a spleen, or kidneys or a brain.

And now we come to the real problem that we face on Shabbos. Because you're only thinking about the fish and the chrain; you're singing the י-ה רבון and all the other beautiful songs,

but you're not making any time to think about this great purpose. Hashem is showing off to you! He's trying to get your attention. First He pours some wine down your throat, but you're too busy thinking about exactly how many words should be in the kiddush. So He tries again with the challah, and you sit at the table discussing which bakery has the best challah. Hashem is doing His best to show you His world of chesed, but you're too busy to listen. But He won't give up. He'll try again with the fish, and the soup, and the chicken, and the kugel and the compote.

And if you're not thinking these thoughts as you enjoy the Shabbos, then although it's still something, it's still better than nothing, but it's not called being **מענג את השבת**. Because when we sit down to the meals on Shabbos, we are expected to do more than express empty platitudes of *oneg Shabbos* and *kavod Shabbos*. Hashem desires more from us than to just sing some songs and fill our stomachs. Hashem wants us to squeeze out much more than that from the pleasures of Shabbos. He wants us to spend the day demonstrating that Hakodosh Boruch Hu created this world, so that we should become more and more aware of His kindness, and thereby be thinking about Him, and loving Him, all the days of our lives.

IT ALL STARTS IN THE STOMACH

Now the Gemara says that **כל המענג את השבת נותנים לו נחלה בלי מצרים** - "If you cause the Shabbos to be delightful, you're going to gain an estate that has no boundaries" (Shabbos 118a). That's a promise that even the Florida real estate people can't promise you. Even if they'll sell you a castle in the sky, as they sometimes do, even the sky has limits. But here we're being told that it's going to be an estate without boundaries. Now we have to understand that this is not being given for nothing. **כל המענג את השבת**, doesn't mean merely to fill your stomach with as many delicacies as possible. To enjoy Shabbos the way Hashem wants from you, means that you fill

your mind with all of these delicacies. Only that the path to your mind goes through your stomach.

So you're sitting down to eat a piece of fish Friday night. And it's a big test. Will you just eat the fish like a sea lion eats fish? Or will you make sure to eat it with the proper intention, and that way you'll be a tremendous success. You can't even imagine what a perfection it is!

GREATNESS ONE BITE AT A TIME

So after you wash, and you take that first bite of challah into your mouth and you're enjoying it, you should add the thought, "Hashem is making me happy. That's why Hashem made this world, so that I should become more and more aware of Him through the endless *chesed* that He is showering down on us all the time." That's the purpose of that first bite - it's a declaration of the purpose of Mankind!

THE CORE OF JUDAISM: YOU'RE A GUEST

The successful man is thinking as he chews the food, "The whole world is a banquet hall in which we are the guests. Hakodosh Boruch Hu is **הפני חסד**, He desires to do good, and He invites us into the hall." As much as we can say about Hashem that He desires, He desires someone on whom to bestow kindness. That was the purpose of the *briyah yeish mei'ayin*. That's the purpose of **ויכולו השמים והארץ וכל צבאם**. There's no other purpose. And it's such an important teaching, that if you fail to understand it, then you have failed to understand the core of Judaism. That's the heart of the Torah - that Hashem is the source of all kindness, and that He made Man for the purpose, for the sole purpose, of bestowing on him kindness.

And if you think about it by the second bite as well, then you're already a great man. You're **אחד מניי אלף**, you're one out of a thousand. And if you're able to continue thinking these thoughts as you make your way through the first course, and then the

second course, and you continue that way through the *compote* at the end of the meal, then you're a man who understands his purpose in this world. And that's the man who will be prepared to enjoy the eternal pleasures of the Next World.

And we sit at the Shabbos table and we study this great principle that life is sweet. There's no question that life is sweet. Every part of life is sweet. And if something goes wrong for a moment, but we're talking about the normal processes, the way they were planned to be. Life is full of *ta'anug*. *Oneg! Oneg!*; that's the theme of life.

THE GIFT IN THE TREASURE HOUSE

And Shabbos is the day most conducive to the great study of all the truths of life, and the day most conducive to achieving greatness. And with that, we come back now to the *מתנה גנוזה*, the gift of Shabbos that Hakodosh Boruch told Moshe Rabeinu that was stored away in His treasure house for the Am Yisroel. And the Gemara tells us that Hashem told Moshe Rabeinu to go and teach the Am Yisroel the secret of this great day. So Moshe Rabeinu came to the Am Yisroel and told them, *al pi Hashem*, that Shabbos would be a time when each individual would be given a *neshama yi'seirah*. Your weekday *neshama* is capable of achieving a very great amount of accomplishment. The *neshama* can do a great deal on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday - there's no question that your *neshama* can lift you to greatness. You have to learn how to do it, of course. You have to use the right methods. It's not mysticism - there's nothing mystical about it. But it needs certain training. It needs application and dedication. But it's very possible. People have become great during the week too.

THE NESHAMA YI'SEIRAH

But on Shabbos there's a *neshama yi'seirah*. Hakodosh Boruch Hu gives a special spiritual energy to the *neshama*. And on

that great day, as you sit in the Mishkan of Shabbos, you are capable of a very great amount of achievement - more than any other day of the week. And therefore, Hashem commanded Moshe Rabeinu to tell that to the Am Yisroel. אמר להם מתנה טובה יש לי - בבית גנוי ושבת שמה - "Let them know that I have a remarkable gift for them, and that is the secret of the *neshama yi'seirah* that I give to them on Shabbos."

And that's why Hashem was insistent that Moshe that should go and inform the Am Yisroel about this great gift. לך יהודיעם! "Go tell them! Because we have to be taught about what we are truly capable of on this day of ויכולו השמים והארץ. We have to be made aware of what we can achieve when we use our *neshama yi'seirah* on Shabbos to become great. Because the ideas that we spoke about here tonight are not simple ones, and they require dedication and application of the mind. But the achievements that we are capable of, the perfection that one can attain on Shabbos, makes it more than worth it. And so, we are given the *neshama yi'seira* as a gift from Hashem in order that we could best utilize the great gift of Shabbos. And now that we have laid down the path towards the perfection that Shabbos brings, we can utilize the day to its fullest extent, and be forever grateful to the Giver of this great gift of Shabbos.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

תורת אביגדור

"שאל אביגדור ויגדך זקניך ויאמרו לך"



Q&A With Rav Avigdor Miller Ztz"l

Q:

In Kiddush on Friday night we say that Shabbos is "*zeicher li'yitzias Mitzraim.*" In what way is Shabbos supposed to remind us of Yetzias Mitzraim?

A:

Shabbos teaches us that Hashem chose us to be His people. We, the Am Yisroel, were chosen to be the people who testify to the truth of *Mai'saeh Bereishis* by keeping Shabbos. "*Atem Eidai,*" Hashem said. We are His eidim who testify to the truth of His existence and to His creation of the world from nothing. And when were we chosen? We were chosen in Mitzraim. At Yetzias Mitzraim we were chosen. "*Shalach es b'ni,*" Hashem said. That's the first time Hashem said that. At Yetzias Mitzraim, Hashem called the Am Yisroel "my son." He chose us in Mitzraim. And he chose us for what? "*Shalach es b'ni vi'ya'avduni.*" Send out my nation so that they should serve me. My son should serve me. So at Yetzias Mitzraim, Hashem chose us to serve him. It says it openly. Send them out to serve me. So we were chosen at Yetzias Mitzraim for this job – for celebrating Shabbos and thereby testifying to the *bri'yah yesh mei'ayin* and to the Chesed Hashem and Chochmas Hashem that is so evident in the *Mai'saeh Bereishis*. And that's one of the aspects of *Zeicher Li'yitzias Mitzraim* that we think about every Shabbos.

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