

Sefer Devarim

THE PENSON FAMILY EDITION

IN MEMORY OF MENDEL BEN MENDEL A"H

חודש אלול

WITH

R' AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"l

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

Five Minutes a Day

Transcribed from tape #E-159

Bruchim Haba'im, welcome everyone. We're about to begin *b'Ezras Hashem* number E 159.

In the *Chovos Halevovos* there's a section called *Shaar Cheshbon Hanefesh*. The way the public understands *Cheshbon Hanefesh* is not the way the *Chovos Halevovos* understands it. The popular concept - which is a very important and good concept - is that a person must make an accounting with himself to see: "Are his *ma'asim* that he does in accordance with the will of *Hashem*? Is he fulfilling the *mitzvos* of the *Torah*?" And included in that is to see how to remedy any faults that he has, and to improve himself.

But the *Chovos Halevovos* when he talks about *cheshbon hanefesh*, he means something entirely different. He's talking about the responsibility of a serious Jew, an *Eved Hashem*, to embark on the career of Thinking; "*cheshbon*" from the root "*machshava*". The serious Jew should be a *thinking man*.

And the *Chovos Halevovos* gives us thirty examples of subjects that we could think about. Now these thirty subjects we're not going to discuss yet. They're written at length in the *Chovos Halevovos* and it's worth looking inside and seeing them.

But the *Shaar Cheshbon Hanefesh* teaches us about making a career of expanding our minds and

thinking into things a little more than they usually are considered. Things that are usually taken in a superficial and simplistic way are mentioned in that *shaar*, and the *Chovos Halevovos* expects us to spend a little time, or as much time as we can, to think into them. And then we discover that they're not so simple at all. They're actually quite profound, and many times they can transform your life.

How so? First it was just a maxim, a pleasant saying that everybody agreed with. But this man thought into it, he thought about this one idea, and he began to see that it has depth, that it has subdivisions. And he began to apply it in his life in ways that nobody else thinks about when they think about that *maamar* or that principle. And so with *machshava*, with *cheshbon hanefesh*, that idea adds a new dimension to his life.

Now, we're going to talk about an easy career here. A career of thinking five minutes a day on seventy different subjects. Now all seventy won't be announced here tonight, but we'll study a few of them. Some of these subjects are unanimously known and accepted, and some are not so well known; but each one deserves some thought. And the people who listen, if they'll undertake, *bli neder*, to spend five minutes a day - you can do it while you're eating breakfast, lunch or supper - five minutes a day thinking on one of these subjects, in the course of time it will transform you. It will accomplish a revolution in your way of thinking. A tremendous benefit! And by applying yourself, even in a superficial way, for just five minutes, you're going to see how great the benefit is. If you wish, you can keep a notebook and jot down every day your *chiddushim* that you yourself discovered by thinking what you didn't know before. In the course of time, it could fill up a notebook.

We start now, not in any order, at random.

#1

THE WORLD TESTIFIES TO ITS CREATOR

The first principle we'll say, is that the world was created to testify to the Creator. Which means: והאלקים עשה, "Why did *Hashem* make everything?"

שייראו מלפניו – “so that people should be aware of Him and fear Him” (Koehles 3:14). The world is made in such a manner, that if we utilize it by looking at it, by gazing and thinking even a little into it, we’ll see that the world testifies to the *Borei*. We’ll discover that there’s no scientific fact as open and as well founded as the fact that the world has a Creator.

Every person, even if he never had a teacher, even if he never learned anything at all – but if he used his mind like *Avraham Avinu* did, he would see that the world testifies to Hashem. Every object testifies to this great truth. Now some of the testimonies are not so apparent to us, but there are so many open testimonies, that we become convinced of this tremendous foundation of truth that there is a Creator. The world testifies to the *Borei*.

Now, to give an example of what you can do in order to practice this principle. You’re walking in the street and you see laying on the sidewalk a piece of an orange peel. On one side it’s a beautiful yellow-orange, and on the other side there’s no color. Now stop, and think about it. Why is it that there’s no color on the inside? The outside is so brightly colored, and on the inside there’s no color at all?

And the answer is, because when you look at the orange you don’t see the inside, only the top side. The underside is covered up. So we must say that the purpose of the color is to attract your attention.

You mean to say that there’s a purpose in the coloring of the orange? Yes, it’s to attract your attention. But the underside of the peel, nobody sees unless they take it off and look at it. Otherwise, when you pass by a fruit stand, you don’t see the underside. You see only the outside and it’s beautifully colored.

So we see that this was planned, the coloring of the orange is planned. But who made such a plan? How did such a plan originate? Is the tree smart enough to try to attract people by producing a cover on the outside of the orange, and not on the underside of the skin? The peel on the underside has no color.

Now that’s only a beginning. Start thinking about that and you’ll come to a tremendous conclusion. In the course of time, you’ll come to know of a *Borei* who is tremendously wise, with infinite *chochma*. He can make a machine that’s so small, it’s concealed inside of a cell. The cells are so small that you can’t see them without a microscope. And in that tiny machine there is the equipment to create color. The orange seed doesn’t have any color inside of it, but it has the equipment to create color. Out of what? Out of dirt, out of air, out of water. It’s a remarkable thing that a seed could create color!

And then, another thought; every seed is made in such a way that it contains the instructions for changing colors. When the orange is still unripe it’s green. Why green? Why isn’t it black or blue? It’s green so that it should blend with the leaves that are on its tree. So that you won’t see the orange when it’s unripe. It’s hiding. It says, “Don’t look at me yet, I’m sour.” And then, when it turns sweet, then the color changes into a beautiful orange color. So here you see both timing and purposefulness.

Where does the green come from? You think green is an accident? There’s no green inside of the orange seed. Besides for producing the orange paint, this little seed also has equipment to manufacture green. And it’s timed. It manufactures green to last up to a certain time and then it changes into the beautiful color – only on the outside.

Now once you start thinking that way, you should know it’s going to lead you to *emunah*, not only in *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, it will lead you to believe in *Olam Haba* as well. Now how that is, I’m going to leave to you to use your mind. You’ll be amazed where a little thought will lead you. Maybe not the first five minutes, but you’ll be surprised at how far this one little item, a piece of an orange peel on the sidewalk, can bring you. It will be an introduction to a whole world of *machshava*.

And so this little piece of orange peel can confer on you a blessing in a small and easy way that will reap for you tremendous benefits. All you have to do is spend five minutes. Of course, you’re going to have to do it! Think for five minutes a day: Everything in the world is exactly the same, with one purpose,

and that is to demonstrate that *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* made it.

It's stated (Tehillim 104:24) *מה רבו מעשיך השם - כולם בחכמה*, "How many are your works O'Hashem", *עשית* - "they are all made with wisdom". Now he adds something, so pay attention: *מלאה הארץ קנייניך* - "The world is full of your *kinyanim*". What is meant by a *kinyan*? A *kinyan* is an act that shows ownership. The world is full of things that show ownership. Like the stamp of a factory "Manufactured by so and so". The world is full of stamps that demonstrate that the things in it were made by *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, the great Creator, the great Designer.

Now, if you'll start thinking along these lines, there's no question that your mind will expand and you'll become an *eved Hashem*. You'll understand that *Hashem* is doing in the world not only acts of very great wisdom, but He's doing for the world acts of very great kindness. Because the orange is sweet! And orange juice has vitamins! And much more than that as well. Little by little, your eyes will open up and you'll see that *Hashem* is *גומל חסדים טובים*. Not only is He's giving *chesed*, "kindliness"; He's giving you *chassadim tovim* "good kindness".

What's "good kindness"? Kindness that will lead you to the greatest success in *Olam Haba*. You'll come to understand that *Hashem* is teaching you the principles of *emunah*. You'll see with your eyes that *Hashem* that made the world with design, with perfection and purpose. And with a little bit of thought you'll understand that the purpose can only be fulfilled if there is a life after death. People don't think about this. After you die you'll live on and on! And that's the real purpose of life. And you'll discover all this if you study the orange peel.

Now, it's not only the orange peel. *מלאה הארץ קנייניך* - "the world is full of Your *kinyanim*". Wherever you'll look. You'll look at your ear. You look at a hair. At a leaf. Whatever you'll see in the world, if you keep on looking at it, you'll be amazed. It will be a testimony: *עדותיך נאמנו מאד* - "Your testimony is very trustworthy" (Tehillim 93:5). *Hashem* filled the world with testimony. *כל פעל ה' למענהו* - "Hashem made everything for His sake" (Mishlei 16:4). Everything in the world is made for the purpose of teaching about Him.

Now that's one of the seventy principles we are going to study. You can write that down if you want to remember it: That the world was made to testify concerning the Creator. That's a principle to think about.

Now in case you'll think five minutes tomorrow at breakfast and you won't come to the conclusion that it proves *Olam Haba*, don't be discouraged. It teaches many things also in addition to that. Little by little as you think into it, you'll be amazed how it opens up the world to you. You'll be amazed what will happen to you.

Now we're going to try another subject. We didn't exhaust the first subject yet, but I don't intend to spend the entire evening on that one program. But you should know it's a tremendous lesson if you'll spend a little time thinking.

I can't help but give you some more examples. Why is it that a peanut opens up if you press it in a certain place? You have to press a peanut in a certain place and it opens up by itself. How is it that a seed can create a great tree? A tiny seed! What's in the seed? How many plans, how much equipment is in this little seed to create a tree? And therefore when we start thinking into everything in the world, it's amazing how we're going to see the *gedulas Hashem* and the *chesed Hashem*, all testifying to the Creator.

#2

EVERYTHING IS A MASHAL

Now another principle. Number two:

Everything in this world is for the purpose of teaching us a *mashal*; it's a parable of something else. Now, we'll give some examples from the *gemara* to explain. For instance, *Shabbos* is *מעין עולם הבא* (Brachos 57b). *Shabbos* has to remind us of the World to Come in various ways. First of all, *מי שטרך בערב*, *שבת יאכל בשבת* (Avodah Zarah 3a), if you prepared, you cooked and baked, you shopped before *Shabbos*, then you have something to eat on *Shabbos*. But if you didn't prepare, you have nothing. And this world is a time of *Erev Shabbos*. It's here that we have to prepare for the World to Come, but there, in the

Next World is the place of the great banquet. You can't do mitzvos in the World to Come. This world is the only place where you can cook and bake and prepare mitzvos to take with you to the World to Come.

Another thing, if you ever touch a hot stove with your finger, you pull it back. But that experience shouldn't be wasted. It's a *mashal*. There's a certain place where you'll touch a hot stove *chas v'sholom* and you won't be able to take your finger back again. Your finger will be stuck, it will be stuck to the stove. That's *gehinom*.

Fire, *ash*, is *אחד משישים בגיהנום* (Brachos ibid.). Fire is a *mashal* for *gehinom*. In order for us to learn a little bit of the taste of the *gehinom* that the *reshaim* are enjoying right now, think back to once in your life when you scorched your finger. Ahhh, what a pleasure it was. And you ran to the medicine chest to put something on it. But suppose you had to keep those fingers attached to the place that was scorching it, and you couldn't pull it back.

So let's say he's a person who was a *moser*, he *massered* a fellow Jew to the government. Because of his *mesirah* he caused great trouble to a fellow Jew. That *moser* will be in *gehinom*. They'll take his tongue and paste it to a hot stove. It's not a *mashal*. Only the stove won't be hot like our stoves. It will be sixty times hotter. He won't be able to pull his tongue away. His tongue will be up against the stove and it will be there, you know how long? Very long. And he won't get used to it. He won't become accustomed to it. Every minute it will burn more than the previous minute. It will burn and burn and he'll be screaming!

And the *tzadikim* sit in *gan eden* and they hear it and say, "Well, that's Hashem's *mishpat*". *נודע השם משפט עשה* "Hashem is known by the judgment that He does" - *בפועל כפיו נוקש רשע* - "the *rasha* is captured by the things he did" (Tehillim 9:17). He did a wrong deed. He did this deed with his tongue, and here he is now with his tongue pasted to a scorching stove.

So whenever it happens; suppose that a housewife in the kitchen, burns a finger on a hot tea kettle, by accident - don't dismiss it, utilize it. Make

use of the opportunity to remember this great principle. Of course, she won't go to *gehinom*, but one of the reasons she won't go is because she's thinking these thoughts. Think *esh* is *אחד משישים מגיהנום*, it's one sixtieth of *gehinom*. The *gemara* says that. Actually it's more than sixty times hotter in *gehinom*. But fire is the *mashal*, so that you can begin to get a taste of what you're striving to avoid.

Another *mashal* is when you go to sleep. When you go to sleep, you lie down, you stretch out. You should remind yourself that this won't go on forever. Someday will be the last time that you'll lie down. Hopefully it'll be at age 120. You'll lie down and you'll stretch out forever and ever until *techiyas hameisim*. *שינה*, sleep, the *gemara* says is a *mashal* for death (Brachos ibid.). It shouldn't make you sad. It should make you happy to think how precious life is.

Last night when you went to bed, you didn't know if you would get up again. You asked Hashem *השכיבנו והעמידנו*; you asked Him to let you get up again. And then morning comes. Ah, you get up again! It's *techiyas hameisim* to awake! It's *me'ein techiyas hameisim*, a little bit like *techiyas hameisim*, when we will awake finally. *ומקיים אמונתו לישני עפר*. Hashem will uphold His promise. All those bodies that sleep in the dust will come out of the dust. They will be so happy to be back again on this earth once more. And your body will join your *neshama* that was spending its time in *Gan Eden*. Your body was down below in the dust, and now it comes together once more in happiness. So when you go to sleep it's a reminder - you can't waste your life! It will come to an end someday. The *gemara* says that. And waking up is a *remez* to *techiyas hameisim*.

Suppose you think these thoughts; now you're a different personality. You're not living just like the Italian or Irish man is living. You're thinking like a Torah person. Your life is *transformed* by understanding these things.

In the springtime when the trees burst out with blossoms; there are pink and white blossoms everywhere. Utilize the opportunity to think that there's *gan eden*, a beautiful garden. And some day after 120 years the *neshama* will be in a place of great happiness in *gan eden*, only a thousand times more glorious and more beautiful than what you're

seeing now. Utilize the springtime. Don't waste the opportunity. You see a tree bursting out in pink flowers, it's so beautiful. Stop and look. Don't just rush by. Think about it. It's a *mashal* for *gan eden*.

Now this world is full of *meshalim*. Of course, it's not that easy to know which is a *mashal*, but if you'll utilize your mind, you'll discover very many *meshalim*.

A wife is a *mashal* for Torah. כמה טובה אשה טובה – “How good is a good wife, that she's compared to the Torah” (Yevamos 63b). A wife is compared to the Torah? Yes. The Torah is for the purpose of making something out of you. And a wife, there's no question, will change you. Of course if a person has a Torah, he has a *sefer*, a *shas* and he never opens it, never practices it, never studies it; so he's not getting any benefit. A person who utilizes his wife in order to gain the *shleimus*, the self-control, the perfection of character that comes from dealing with another person, for learning how to get along with another person, it's *mamash* a Torah.

Don't think it's a small part of the Torah. Most of our lives will be judged by our relationships to our wives and to our husbands. And when a person practices getting along with his wife, he's patient and he tries to help out and to console. And she does the same. She tries to make him feel good. He comes home from work and he's tired and she said a few kind words to him. And never do they try to hurt each other's feelings. That marriage is compared to a Torah. It creates such *shleimus*, such perfection.

Like it says about *Elkana*. *Elkana* was the father of *Shmuel*. ועלה האיש ההוא מביתו – this man went up from his house. So the *Midrash* says he went up to greatness from his house. נתעלה בביתו. He became elevated in his house. By living with his wife in a proper way he became great; that's נתעלה בביתו. He becomes great because of the way he's training himself in his home. Of course that's not the only thing he has to do, and he has to do it *l'shem shamayim* too. But a man who, in addition to everything else, practices living with a wife על פי התורה *l'shem shamayim*, he becomes very, very elevated in שלימות הנפש, in perfection of character.

That's why it says לא טוב היות האדם לבדו – It's not good for a person to be alone. It's not good to be alone. What does good mean? Good means all kinds of good. And the greatest good is שלימות הנפש. If you're alone, you do what you desire. You do what you wish. But if you're with a wife, you have to yield many times. You have to yield and yield and yield some more. With a husband, you have to give in many times. And that self-control is a perfection. It's an *aliyah*. It's *tov*.

So a wife is a *mashal* to Torah. Of course a *chasan* under a *chupa*, looks at the *kallah*, perhaps he's not thinking that thought yet, but he should know he's starting a career that's going to make something out of him. And something out of her. They'll acquire greatness in perfection of character as a result of living together properly.

When you see the episode of that airliner that crashed in Nova Scotia and over two hundred persons lost their lives, it reminds us of what we say in *Unesaneh Tokef*: מי לחיים ומי למוות מי באש ומי במים – everyone there had been sentenced previously and they were all brought together by Hashem's plans. I heard just recently that there was a ben Torah who was supposed to take a passage on that airplane. But for some reason, they made his ticket *pasul*. He wasn't able to go. It's *min hashamayim*.

So when you study those episodes it's a *mashal* for *yom hadin*. You have to study that. Now, don't say who knows if it was because of the *din*. No, you start out with the premise that Hashem does things with a purpose. Every man on that airplane was sent there by the *g'zar Hashem*.

A *mashal* of worldly people ending up their lives in misery: The Titanic. A tremendous lesson, the Titanic: In 1912, the Titanic went down. It was the world's greatest ship and millionaires booked passage on the Titanic. “A ship that could never sink”, but it sank. And here, Mr. and Mrs. Straus, millionaires were standing on the deck as the boat was going down. Millionaires. It's the famous Straus, the millionaire, he was going down.

Now when you saw Straus in New York, he wasn't a *frum* Jew, he was *mechalel Shabbos*, maybe a reformer. So people thought “look at this *tzadik*,

reshaim are succeeding in this world!" But you have to understand that just like Straus and his wife were standing on the deck as the Titanic went under the surface of the water - and they were drowned miserably, it was a terrible death - so too are all the *reshaim* going to get it. They're getting it right now! In *gehinom*. It's a *mashal*, the Titanic was a *mashal*.

Now this world is full of *meshalim*. You have to utilize it. You should spend five minutes a day thinking of it. Think that *aish* is *echad m'shishim* of *gehinom*. And you'll think of the spring time which is a *mashal* for *Olam Habah*. And think of sleep, *sheina* is the *mashal* for the *yom hamaves* which everybody will someday have to experience. And upon waking in the morning you say *modeh ani*, and it's a rehearsal for the great time when you'll open up your eyes and you'll say, "Thank you Hashem that you gave me *techiyas hameisim*." ברוך אתה ה' מחיה המתים. You'll make that *brocha* then.

And therefore, as a person thinks into these things, there's no question that his mind will expand and he'll become a new personality as a result. Of course the more you do it the better you are. But at least five minutes *bli neder* on each one of these subjects you should spend.

#3

THE WORLD WAS CREATED FOR US

Now the third one:

The *Am Yisroel* is the purpose why Hashem created the universe. Now it doesn't matter that you want to be an *anav*. You're going to have to live with this principle, despite democracy, and despite the constitution that says all men are created equal. It's not so.

Listen to the following *pasuk* in *Devarim* (10:14)-
הן להשם אלקיך השמים ושמי השמים - Behold to Hashem belong the heavens and the heavens above the heavens, all space belongs to Him. הארץ וכל אשר בה - and the world, the earth and all that is in it, belongs to Him. But רק באבותיך חשק ה' לאהבה אותם - only in your forefathers did Hashem delight to love them. Only your forefathers. From the whole universe, Hashem loved only our forefathers. And יבחר בזרעם

בכם אחריהם - and He chose their seed after them בכם כהיום הזה in you, as on this day.

So as you walk on the street you have to know that you are the center of the universe. You, of course, and all the other *frum* Jews. *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, who is the owner of this universe, a universe that is so tremendous - millions of huge stars, trillions of stars. There's no end to space. From all that vast expanse, the *Am Yisroel* is all that Hashem is interested in. And all the rest is only background for the *Am Yisroel*. We are the main persons in the whole drama of existence. And so you have to have a tremendous pride in being a Jew, a tremendous respect for the Jewish people. *Baruch atah Hashem shelo asani goy*. You're an aristocrat. The kings and the queens are nothing compared to you. And Hashem is thinking about you. בכם כיום הזה - about you, on this day.

Now that thought is a revolution in our ideas. If you'll spend five minutes sometimes thinking about that, you should know that you're investing your efforts in a very deep mine of gold. You get so much wealth out of this *cheshbon* of the greatness of the *Am Yisroel*: that the whole universe is only for them and that Hashem loves them more than anything else.

#4

AVRAHAM AVINU WAS IMPORTANT

Number four:

Everything that's written in the *Torah* that happened before *Avraham Avinu* was done as a *hakdamah*, a preparation, for *Avraham Avinu*. Even *Adam* in *Gan Eden*, the entire episode was necessary as the *hakdama* to *Torah*. And whose *Torah*? Our *Torah*.

Goyim don't have any *Torah*. You pick up *lehavdil* a history book; you won't find anything about *Adam* in *Gan Eden* outside of the *Torah*. It was done for us. Hashem knew that *Adam* would someday make a mistake. He knew he would be driven out of *Gan Eden*. And that lesson had to be written at the beginning of the *Torah* to teach the *Am Yisroel* who would someday come to the fore as

the main actor in the world. And they must know what it means to do a *chet*.

What happened later? The *mabul*. The *mabul* cleansed the world of a great population. They had to make way for the appearance of *Avraham Avinu*. If that great population would have existed, *Avraham* would have gotten lost among them. The world would have been populated by the *mabul men*. Everything was done to prepare for *Avraham Avinu*.

Now when you study the *chumash*, it's very important to understand this principle. If people would have continued to live for nine-hundred years, then it would have been a very difficult task for an *Avraham* to change them. An old person who is so convinced that he is right would never listen. And therefore *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* caused the world to shrink in their longevity. Their lives became shorter and therefore when *Avraham* came along he found listeners. The *Rambam* says tens of thousands listened to him. And *Avraham's* children surely listened to him.

They should continue to have long lives? No, impossible. לא ידון רוחי באדם לעולם בשגם הוא בשר (Bereishis 6:3)- it's not possible for a person who lives too long to be perfect because he becomes accustomed to the *gashmiyus* of this world, and the spirit of *Hashem* in him cannot compete with the tendencies of the *gashmius*. So everything that happened in the *Torah* was made so that the *Am Hashem* should come onto the world and therefore it was a *hakdama*, a preface for the history of the *am Yisroel* that started with *Avraham Avinu*.

#5

LEARNING FROM HISTORY

Another principle. Number Five.

Everybody knows this Principle. מעשה אבות סימן לבנים - everything that happened to the *avos* is a prophecy, it's a *meshal*, about what will happen to their children.

Yaakov Avinu was born *after Eisav*. The *reshaim* have precedence in the world. *Eisav* came first and he was the one who had more power. *Eisav* settled in *Edom* and remained there, while יעקב ובניו ירדו

מצרימה - they went into slavery in *Mitzrayim*. The *Umos ha'olam* seem to be dwelling in happiness and security. And the *Am Yisroel* is traveling in exile. It's a *meshal*. Because the outcome we know already. The outcome was that *Eisav* finally disappeared. *Edom* is gone forever, and the *Am Yisroel* is still around. And that's a *meshal* for us. We're always going to be around, and the nations of the world will go lost. Everything in the *Torah* is for that purpose; to be a *siman* for the future of the *Am Yisroel*.

Yosef hatzadik was envied by his brothers and they were desirous of getting rid of him. The end was כל מה שאירע ליוסף אירע לבניו - whatever happened to *Yosef* happened to the *Am Yisroel*. *Yosef* became the ruler, and the brothers had to bow down to him. Eventually, all the nations יכירו וידעו כל יושבי תבל - the whole world will bow down to the *Am Yisroel* and say, "You are right! You were right all along! We wasted our lives worshipping the false gods of all the other religions."

Now when you study all the things that happened to *Avraham Avinu* you see this too. *Avraham Avinu* went down to *Mitzrayim*. Everybody knows that this is a *meshal* that his children would go down to *Mitzrayim*. And *Pharaoh* wished to oppress them for his own benefit. The end was that included in מעשה אבות סימן לבנים, is the hostility of *Eisav* to *Yaakov*, which means, forever the *Am Yisroel* will be confronted by enemies. צוה השם ליעקב. צוה השם ליעקב - *Hashem* commanded that *Yaakov* should be always surrounded with enemies (*Eichah* 1:17).

In *Eretz Yisroel* we had enemies on all sides, *Edom*, *Amon*, *Moav* and *Midyan*. For hundreds of years wars were carried on with them. And wherever we go, we have enemies. Not merely because of the Christians or Mohammedans. Long before them, the Greeks were bitter enemies of the *Am Yisroel*. הלכה עשו שונא ליעקב - *halachah* means it's one of the ways of the world. The Jew has to be hated in this world. It's a test. Sometimes you have weaklings who yield and go lost because of that. Some go lost from the *Am Yisroel*. But the *Am Yisroel* are *ne'emonim*, we have complete faith that someday there will be a great announcement. פתחו שערים - "open up the gates" - "and let

come the righteous nation that keeps its loyalty” (Yeshaya 26:2). And the loyalty is being tested always by the fact that we are a minority. That’s *maaseh avos siman labanim*.

Then you study what happened as a result of *Eisav*’s hostility to *Yaakov Avinu*. What happened? As a result, *Matan Torah* took place. You know that? *Eisav* caused *Matan Torah* to take place! If *Eisav* did not have hostility towards *Yaakov*, he wouldn’t have gone away from home. *Yaakov* would have remained home. And if he would have remained home, when his father wanted a wife for him he would have sent a delegation to *Lavan*, and *Lavan* would’ve sent back Leah. *Yaakov* would have married Leah. But without *Rochel*, he couldn’t have a *Yosef*. *Yosef* was necessary though! So therefore *Eisav* was the enemy of *Yaakov* and he fled to *Padan Aram*. And there he saw *Rochel* and he chose *Rochel*. And from *Rochel* he had a son *Yosef*, and *Yosef hatzadik* is the one who was our leader in *mitzrayim* for eighty years.

Yosef did more for us than *Moshe Rabeinu*. *Moshe Rabeinu* didn’t have power like *Yosef hatzadik* had. Anyone who opened his mouth about *Yosef Hatzadik*, Pharaoh put him to death: **ובלעדיך ובליעך** - “Without your permission, nobody in *Mitzrayim* is permitted to raise their hand or foot” (Bereishis 41:44). They were all afraid of *Yosef*. And for eighty years he trained them in his secret: **את האלקים אני ירא** - “I am a man who fears *Hashem*” (ibid. 42:18).

It was only *Yosef hatzadik* who prepared them for *Matan Torah*. He had full control over his brothers and their families, and he kept them in line. It was only because of him that they remained the *bnei Yisroel*. You have to realize that. And all that wouldn’t have happened if *Eisav* hadn’t been an enemy. So what do we see? That the hostility of the *umos ha’olam* is the greatest blessing for us. If the nations would be friendly to us, we would have gone lost *chalilah* long ago. Only because of their hostility are we able to remain in existence.

The greatest danger for *Yaakov Avinu* in his entire history was when *Eisav* embraced him and kissed him. When they met again after all those years, *Eisav* fell upon *Yaakov*’s neck and embraced him and kissed him. The biggest *sakanah* was right

then. The *sakanah* of being friendly with *Eisav*. *Baruch Hashem*, *Yaakov Avinu* was able to evade *Eisav* with an excuse. He said the sheep are young, his sheep cannot go so fast, it’s difficult for us, they have to travel slowly, too slow for you to travel; so *Eisav* took the hint and went away. And *Yaakov* was rescued from *Eisav*. But to be friendly with *Eisav* is the biggest *sakanah*, the gravest danger.

That’s why when it came to *Edom*, the *melech* of *Edom* didn’t let them go through. The *Bnei Yisroel* told them, “We’ll pay for the water. If anyone wants water to drink, we’ll pay you for it,” but he said no. He said nothing doing. And so **ויט ישראל** - *Yisroel* turned away. It was a tremendous *hatzalah* for us. If we would have passed through *Edom*, who knows what would’ve happened? *Edom* is a brother. They looked like the Jews, they spoke the Hebrew language. We would’ve become too friendly with them. So it was a terrible *sakanah* to go through *Edom*.

And therefore *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* activated the principle of **הלכה עשו שונא ליעקב** - they were hostile to the *Am Yisroel* and we were not permitted to enter *Edom*. And this rescued us from being embraced by *Edom*.

Maaseh avos siman l’bonim is a very great source of the understanding our history. It was all planned by *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* so that we should learn from that model for all the other centuries of our existence. We should use the model of our *Avos*, and how *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* guided them, in order to know how to guide our own lives.

When *Avraham* saw that there was a difference of opinion between him and *Lot*, so he told *Lot הפרד מעלי* - “Separate from me”. That’s a tremendous lesson. We have to separate from those that have different opinions. We don’t believe in pluralism. We only connect with Jews who have our opinions, who believe in *Torah she’baal peh* and believe in the *Talmud*. Anybody else is outside, *m’chutz l’machaneh*. It’s a very important lesson. We don’t believe in unity. We don’t accept them as a *Yisroel*. Only those who are unified with us in the *emunah* in *Torah shebichsav* and *Torah she’baal peh*. And therefore **הפרד נא מעלי** was a great thing, a great lesson for us forever.

Avraham Avinu even sent away his sick son, because keeping him around would complicate matters for Yitzchak. And he wasn't always trying to make alliances with others. He wasn't looking to live among others. הן עם לברד ישכן - We are a nation that dwells alone. We thrive when we are separated from the gentiles. Our *hatzlacha* is when *we are by ourselves*. The less we have to do with others the more fortunate we are, and the more we are guaranteed success in our lives. We're called insular, we're called segregated. Yes, it's true. We believe in it! That's our success! Just that itself is enough to think about for five minutes a day. You practice this for five minutes a day, and you're going to discover a gold mine of very, very important information.

#6

MAN WAS CREATED FOR HAPPINESS

Principle number six.

האדם לא נברא אלא להתענג - A man is created only for happiness. You hear that? Hashem made man *only for happiness*. Now, the *Mesillas Yesharim* adds a caveat. He says להתענג על השם - happiness on Hashem, or *Olam Haba*. It means *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* wanted to make us happy. That's the purpose. That the righteous person should be happy. And why didn't He give us the happiness in this world? Because this world is not the *full* happiness. להתענג על השם - The happiness of *Olam Haba* is the greatest happiness. And כל ישראל יש להם חלק לעולם הבא - nobody else.

The happiness of *Olam Habah*, forever and ever, is given to *kol Yisroel*. Now don't be embarrassed by that. You think maybe it's selfish. You don't have tell this to the gentiles, but that's the truth. *Only* Yisroel. And that happiness was planned by *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* from the beginning. *Olam Haba* was made for happiness. Now, if there is happiness in this world before *Olam Habah*, that's also part of the plan. האדם לא נברא אלא להתענג - We were created for happiness.

There's happiness in this world. No question about it. Every time you eat, every time you sleep, all the things we enjoy in life, Hashem did it for the

purpose of giving us happiness. So *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* should be regarded as *olam chesed yibaneh*, as having created the world for happiness. We should realize that. And even though sometimes there are tragedies, but by and large, *rubah d'rubah* it's a world of happiness. The fact that people are not understanding how to appreciate it, that's their fault. If a person would see how lucky he is, how he can be *someyach b'chelko*, he would realize that the world is made for happiness.

That's a principle to study. The world is made for happiness. You walk in the street and you breathe in the air, ahh ahh ahh! It's a delicious cocktail of gases. האדם לא נברא אלא להתענג - you're made for happiness in this world. That's happiness - to breathe air. You can see that it's happiness. Enjoy life! Yes, Hashem wants you to enjoy life. Don't think He doesn't want you to enjoy life. The more you enjoy life, the more you're going to be given the happiness of the reward of *Olam Haba*. Enjoy life and sing to Hashem. The world was created for happiness.

So once more: האדם לא נברא אלא להתענג על השם. A man is created for happiness. The true *oneg* is in *Olam Haba*, because that's the *greatest* happiness. But Hashem intends happiness for us even now. He's giving it to us all the time. And we should learn to appreciate that happiness. And the more you spend time thinking about that, the more you're going to enjoy your lives. And it's a *mitzvah* to do that! The five minutes that we invest in this career of learning to understand that life is happiness, is going to pay a very great dividend to us.

#7

ALL THAT HAPPENS IS BECAUSE OF US

Number Seven:

אין פורענות באה לעולם אלא בשביל ישראל - "No misfortune happens in the world unless it's for the *Am Yisroel*". When that airship sank in Nova Scotia it was because of us. Hashem could have let them land, each one in his hometown and they could've gotten pneumonia or cancer. They could have died in a quiet way. Why did He bring them together to

die in this spectacular way all in one place when the plane went down? For us. We have to look at that and learn; and the purpose is to be afraid of Hashem and to cry out **כתבינו בספר החיים** – we should have utilized that on *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*. “Hashem keep us, guard us, protect us.” Rashi says that; what does it mean that it’s all *bishvil yisroel*? So Rashi says: *leyari’am*, to make them afraid. To make the *Am Yisroel* afraid so they should do *teshuva*.

When you hear how in Rwanda they’re murdering men, women and children, it’s for the purpose of us being afraid that it shouldn’t happen to us *chalilah*. And what happened in Europe – it’s for the purpose of making us afraid. Absolutely, we have to be afraid. Being in America you feel secure. But you know what? We were secure in Germany once. Germany was a polite country with law and order and *derech eretz*. Nobody dreamed that Germany would become a headquarters of a land of murderers. That such a thing could happen in Germany? Nobody dreamed about it in their worst nightmares. But *chas v’shalom* it could happen anywhere.

And so when it happens in a far off country, so it’s for this purpose. To make us afraid! And we have to do the best we can to remind ourselves that only Hashem is protecting us. Hashem is protecting us in a secure land, far away from Europe. There’s an ocean between us and them. You have to thank Hashem and do your best to deserve that protection. And so all the *purani’us* that happens is *bishvil Yisroel*.

When Princess Dianna was squashed in a car together with her paramour, the whole world went crazy with sympathy for her. Princess Dianna with the Egyptian man were killed, and they gave her the biggest *kavod*. But for us? It happened because of us. So we should learn the lesson. She was squashed like a cockroach – that’s what she was. You’re laughing. It happens to wicked people. That’s what we should learn from what happened. Only because of us did it happen. A photographer was chasing her in his car, so her taxi driver hurried up and they bumped into something and she was squashed. And the purpose was so that *Am Yisroel* should learn

that *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* takes care of *resha’im* in this world too.

When you hear of a wealthy man, a big executive, who was swimming in the Pacific Ocean of California and he drowned. He was drowned just recently, a very wealthy young man, a gentile. It’s a lesson for us. It doesn’t mean anything to the world. But for us it means that as he was drowning, all his money couldn’t help him. We have to learn from that to understand *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* is the only one who could help us. And we have to find favor in His eyes. And so **אין פורענות באה לעולם אלא בשביל ישראל** – whatever misfortunes happen in the world we should understand it is a lesson for us. Don’t shrug it off and forget about it. Take it to heart. Hashem is teaching you a lesson. And think about it, and gaze at it. And you’ll gain the great benefit of being aware that Hashem is in charge of the world. Utilize being afraid of *puraniyus*. *Yiras shamayim* is a tremendous benefit we gain from learning what happens to the *reshaim* in this world.

#8

ALL GOOD THAT HAPPENS IS BECAUSE OF US

Number Eight.

No benefit comes to the world except because of *Yisroel*. **אפילו ספינה המהלכת מגליא לאספמיא** – Here’s a boat full of merchandise. It’s traveling from ancient Gaul, that’s France, to Spain. No Jews are on board, there were no Jews in those countries yet. The Jews were all in *Bavel*. And that boat has a successful voyage. It had nothing to do with the Jews and yet the success of that voyage was *only because of Yisroel*. In some indirect way it has a connection with *Yisroel*. Maybe some merchandise will finally land up among the Jews. I cannot tell you. But there’s no question about it! The *gemara* makes that statement, **אינו מתברכת אלא בשביל ישראל** – that voyage was successful only because of *Yisroel*.

And so when Columbus made his voyage and discovered North America, it’s only *bishvil Yisroel*. It wasn’t to make Spain wealthy. Because Spain later lost control of all those territories and Great Britain

#9
THE GREATNESS
OF THE EARLY GENERATIONS

took over. Then Great Britain lost control. It had nothing to do with Spain and Great Britain. The purpose was that the *am Yisroel* should someday come here and build a tremendous *Torah* community!

Columbus was setting out to find a place where the *Am Yisroel* would build *yeshivos*, *kehillos*, and tremendous neighborhoods of *shomrei mitzvos*. This is just the beginning. It will get bigger and bigger as time goes on *im yirtzah Hashem*. Now Columbus was a *shaliach*. He didn't know he was sent by *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, but **אינה מתברכת אלא בשביל ישראל** - any *brochos*, any success comes only because of *Yisroel*.

Edison discovered the electric light? It's *bishvil Yisroel*. The gentiles use electric light too, but the purpose was for the *Am Yisroel*. They should sit by electric light, learn *Torah*, practice *mitzvos*. It's very important for us to have light. The fact that gentiles also enjoy the light, that shouldn't deceive us.

The Rambam gives a *mashal*. There's a palace. For hundreds of years it's standing in a place where the king and the queen hold court and they make balls. Wealthy people come there, and there are banquets. All for the *goyim*. But really it's not for them. Because one day when it was raining, a Jew was walking by in the street, so he stood under the projection in front of the door until the rain stopped. The palace was made for that moment when the Jew was there. He was only there for a few minutes, maybe fifteen minutes until the rain passed. And he didn't use the palace for its conveniences; he just used the awning, that's all. But the entire palace was made for that five minutes or fifteen minutes; for that Jew! And in order that he should have it, *Hashem* allowed the *goyim* to use it for hundreds of years. All kinds of celebrations and parties. That's how the world is made. Like a tree. A tree sheds thousands of seeds, yet only one tree grows. And so, any kind of *brocha* in the world comes only because of the *Am Yisroel*.

Now I know that's very difficult for people to believe. But think into it according to the principle of the *gemara* and you begin to understand how great is *Hakadosh Baruch Hu's hashgacha*, His control of the world when He does things for man.

Now we'll spend five minutes on another subject.

All the generations in general are **מתקטנים והולכים** - we are becoming less and less. That's more important than we think. It's not merely that we're *anavim*, we're humble when we compare ourselves to the old generations. When Adam was created he was a *k'lil hama'alos*, he had everything. A tremendous intelligence. And even after he sinned and he was diminished to a much smaller level of perfection, he was still a great personality, a very great personality. The old generations had brilliant minds. But they're *miskatnim v'holchim*. *Hashem's* plan was, that as time goes on, they become smaller and smaller, it's a plan. The further you get from the source, the smaller you become.

When it came to the *Avos*, the *Avos* were an exception, they were greater than their forebears. But not the whole *dor* of our *Avos*. Their generation wasn't any better than before. But *Avraham Avinu* was an exception. **עד שבא אברהם אבינו וקיבל שכר כולם** - *Avraham Avinu* came along and he took the reward of all of them. *Avraham* suddenly shot up. He became great and high and tall. His son, *Yitzchak* was very great too but less than *Avraham*. And *Yaakov* was less than *Yitzchak*. But from then on **אין קוראין אבות אלא שלשה** - It's only those three that we call our *Avos*. *Yosef hatzadik*, never did *Hashem* speak to *Yosef*. But He spoke to the *Avos*. You won't find in the *chumash* one place where *Hashem* spoke to *Yosef* or his brothers, no.

When *Moshe Rabbeinu* came along, *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* planned this man for a purpose. He shot up again very high, but the people, the generation of *Moshe* were all on a level much below that of the brothers of *Yosef*. At *Matan Torah* the people shot up very high. They sprang up. When they heard the words of *Hashem* they became transformed, but from then on, we got smaller and smaller and never again did we hear the voice of *Hashem* speaking to the whole *Am Yisroel*. Never again, never again.

Then the *nevi'im* were visited by the *dvar Hashem* for a long time and finally the generations became smaller and smaller and no more *nevuah*. Only *ruach hakodesh* continued until after a while even *ruach hakodesh* was taken away.

אם הראשונים כמלאכים, אנו כבני אדם אם ראשונים כבני אדם - "If the early generations are like angels, we are like men. And if they were like men, we're no more than donkeys!" so that's a big principle. And this is how we have to look back with humility to the words of the previous generations. What was said 200 years ago by the *gedolei Yisroel* who were the leaders of our *Torah* nation then, we have to respect them, we must have the greatest *derech erez* for them. But looking back to the *rishonim*- the *Ramban*, *Rashba*, *Ran*, *Ritva* and the *Rambam*, *Rashi*, *Tosefos*, their words to us are *yesodos* in *chochma*, foundations, because they are a much earlier generation. *S'yata dishmaya* helped more. They lived then a life of *kedusha*. Even the common people in their time were immensely more noble than the common people of later generations. Later generations become smaller and smaller.

It's a very important principle. All the *doros* are *miskatnim v'holchim* -with some exceptions like we mentioned- and therefore one of the goals when we study is to understand how much we have to respect the ways, of the previous generations. If they started *minhagim*; then to us these *minhagim* are *kodesh kedashim*, the utmost holiness.

Like the *Mirrer mashgiach*, *Rebbe Yerucham zichrono livracha* said seventy years ago. He said, מיר קענען נישט פארשטיין אונזער עלטע באבעס - we can't understand our great grandmothers. We don't understand them at all. This great man said it's impossible for him to understand the greatness of our great-grandmothers. Now he didn't say the greatness of our grandfathers. He was referring to the simple, unlearned grandmothers! We have to learn to have the greatest respect for them. And pride!

And *Hashem* made miracles for them. He made miracles for older generations. We shouldn't expect it. He does miracles for us too but it's *b'hastara*, *hester panim*. Today He hides from us. Those generations were worthy. *Hashem* showed them

openly the *yad Hashem*. It's important for us to know that.

All the generations become smaller and smaller, and therefore be happy that you were born now and not 30 years later. 30 years later it's a smaller generation you should know. Yes. Of course there will be more *frum* Jews, I'm sure. More *kollelim*, more *yeshivos*, bigger *kehilos* but you should know that the *ruach* that you inherited from the European Jews who are still among us, is disappearing. In the *yeshivos* there are *rebbeim* who are European *yeshiva* men. Older *rebbeim*, but not many of them are left however. Time goes on, they should be *ma'arich yamim*, but they're becoming less and less.

In *Mirrer Yeshiva* you have old *rebbeim* who learned in European *yeshivos*. There were tremendous lessons they gained there in spirit. What you had in Europe in the *yeshivos*, you don't have in American *yeshivos*, no matter how good the *yeshivos* are. We're a different spirit. There was fire. The fire is not burning as brightly in America as it burned there, as before. When *chasidim* come to a *rebbe* in America, it's not like the *chasidim* who came to a *rebbe* once upon a time in the old Europe, it was a different kind of *kedusha*.

Now we should look back with great longing to the olden days. Once a *Rosh yeshiva* told me, "I wish I was born", he said, "100 years earlier", "I wish I was born 100 years earlier." but 100 years from now people will say they're sorry they weren't born in our times. So make use of your time. For these five minutes you can get a great deal for thinking of this principle.

#10

FOLLY OF THE NATIONS

Now number Ten. Invest your five minutes!

There is no truth among the *goyim*. Only in the *Torah* and in *chazal*. Now, technicalities, yes. Gentiles can tell you technicalities. Because there are some forms of wisdom that they possess. *Hashem* appointed them to serve us. They make inventions for us and so on. We ride in their airplanes, we use their telephones, absolutely. But

when you're looking for *emes*, there's no *emes* among the gentiles.

All the ideals of the gentiles are false. If you hear sometimes something that might be *emes*, it's because they're repeating words from our *Torah*. The only source of *emes*, is our tradition; our *Torah*, *Torah shebichsav*, *Torah shebaal peh*, the *gemara* - all those sources of *Toras Hashem*. They're the only source of *emes*.

And people who spend time looking through newspapers while eating breakfast; they're swallowing *sheker* by the bucket full. Spend time looking into a *sefer* while you're eating. Better not to look into anything than to look into a newspaper.

And some fools spend time in front of the TV. That's committing suicide, spiritual suicide. They're swallowing *sheker*. Some people pay money to go to the movies. Of course it's all *sheker*, it's not true stories at all, it didn't happen. But even the best ones of the gentiles, Benjamin Franklin let's say, and better gentiles, whatever they say is not *emes* compared to what you'll find in our *mekor* of *emes*.

Only the *am Yisroel* has *emes*. A very important lesson. Think into that. And the more you'll think

into *pirkei avos*, *mamarei chazal*, or you'll think into *agadata*, and *halachos*, and *pesukim*, the more you have *emes* in your mind. Otherwise don't look for *emes* in the world. *Emes* is only in this place, in the *Torah*.

Now another principle, oh you have 10 already- In the future tapes we'll have more bli neder... I'm going to give you 70 bli neder!

Thinking for five minutes, don't think it's a small thing. You'll discover more than what I told you. But the idea is to *think it*. And that's what the *chovos halevovs* calls *cheshbon hanefesh*. Thinking, using your mind on ideas. And all these ideas will have *toldos*, they will bear fruit, and *toldos* of *toldos*. It's amazing what they'll create in your mind. And it could be that you'll make *chiburim* of your own as a result.

These ideas, they're not mine. I'm only telling them to you, but they come from the *divrei chazal*. And therefore there's no question, all of them are fundamentally solid principles. If we'll spend time thinking into them, we're bound for success and to have a wealth of thoughts in our minds that will be forever, in this world and we'll take it with us into the World to Come!