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Asking for Life

Tape #803

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Asking for Life

Transcribed from tape #803

Bruchim habaim, welcome everyone.
We are about to begin *be'ezras Hashem* number 803.

THE KEDUSHA OF KOL NIDREI NIGHT

On *Kol nidrei* night, besides for all the other aspects of *kedushah* that it has, there is something special that makes it even more *kadosh*. The Torah (Bereishis 45) relates that when Yosef finally was reunited with his brothers, so Yosef said הוציאו כל איש מעלי, "Send out everyone except for my brothers." And he stood there in the palace alone with the brothers. ולא עמד איש אתו, "Nobody was standing with him, בהתודע יוסף אל אחיו, when Yosef made himself known to his brothers." Now, it's a question: Why did Yosef insist that nobody should witness this reunion of the brothers? Why were all the *Mitzriyim* sent away?

And the answer is that it was a holy occasion. The *shechinah* came down at that time! When brothers come together after having been disunited, it causes *hashra'as hashechinah*. In general, when Jews unite, even just ten Jews, that's what happens: כל בי עשרה שכינתה שריא - Wherever ten Jews unite for the purpose of doing a *mitzvah*, the *shechinah* comes down (Sanhedrin 39a). But there, there's no *halachah* that a gentile shouldn't be standing there. In this case however, when the brothers reunited, it was even more special than that, and that's why Yosef sent everyone out. It was similar to the *Mikdash* and similar to *Shabbos*.

SHABBOS AND BEIS HAMIKDASH: NO GOYIM ALLOWED

The *Beis Hamikdash*, or the *Mishkan*, and *Shabbos* have something in common. The *gemara* derives the *halachah* of the *lamed tes melachos*, the 39 labors that you cannot do on *Shabbos* from the 39 kinds of labor that went into the erecting of the *mishkan*. What's the comparison? So we see that *Shabbos* is also a form of a *mikdash*. It's a sanctuary. And just as that sanctuary was created by 39 forms of work, craftsmanship, *melachos*, so also the *Shabbos*, the *Shabbos* mind, is created by refraining from 39 forms of work. Each one that we refrain from is a form of creating the *Shabbos Mind*.

Now the *Shabbos* becomes a *mikdash*; like it states that no ערלים, no goyim are able to come into the *Shabbos*. לא ישכנו ערלים it says in the tefillah. The uncircumcised cannot come in to *Shabbos*. What does that mean? נכרי ששבת חייב מיתה, a gentile should not keep *Shabbos*. He's *chayav misa* if he does (Sanhedrin 58b). Once a man came to me, and he said he's contemplating becoming a *ger*, and he's been keeping *Shabbos* a long time. So I said, "Stop! It's dangerous; don't do that!" "Every *Shabbos* switch on the light at least once," I told him. Because it's not for them. *Shabbos* is not for them.

And the same is in the *mikdash*; if a non-Jew came into the *mikdash*, he was put to death. There was a sign hanging outside of the *Beis Hamikdash* in Latin, "If a non-Jew enters these precincts he'll be put to death." It was written in Latin because it was a warning for the *goyim*. The *Shabbos* and the *mikdash* are not for strangers. לא ישכנו ערלים. No goyim allowed!

KOL NIDREI NIGHT: NO GOYIM ALLOWED

And so too, when Yosef made himself known to his brothers, and they became reconciled, it was also a moment of great *kedushah*. A very great holiness came down. It was a *nachas ruach* to Hakadosh Baruch Hu - "My children have made up" and therefore He was present. It's not just a form of speech, some poetic words. He was present! When the Am Yisroel reconciles, it's much more than ten Jews gathering together- it's so holy that goyim can't even be present. No goyim allowed!

And *kol nidrei* night is a time when people have reconciled; they've made up with each other. *Al pi halachah* that's what they have to do because Yom Kippur is not *mechaper* for *aveiros shebein adam lechaveiro ad sheyifayis es chavero*. Yom Kippur won't help you for sins against your fellow Jew unless you appease him first. You have to appease your fellow man. You have to be reconciled with him. Every married man before he leaves the house to go to the *beis haknesses* on Yom Kippur night should ask his wife to forgive him and she should ask him to forgive her. Everyone, every man, every woman, must reconcile before Yom Kippur. Then they all come together to the *beis haknesses* with the *kedushah* of *piyus*. *Piyus* means everybody now is reconciled. And just that alone is why there's a very great *kedushah*

kol nidrei night, in addition to all the other reasons why it's such a holy night. Hashem's chosen people have reconciled!

HASHEM CHOSE US BECAUSE OF OUR BEAUTY

Now we must know that Hakadosh Baruch Hu did not choose us out of caprice, because of a whim. In *Shir Hashirim* (4:1) Hakadosh Baruch Hu declares *יפה את רעיתי*, "You are beautiful, my mate." It means, there's a reason why I chose you - You are beautiful. *עיניך יונים*, "Your eyes are beautiful," Hashem says to the Am Yisroel. What does that mean? When *we say* to Hakadosh

By the way, in case in the middle of *davening* on Yom Kippur you remind yourself that you had insulted somebody and that man is right now in a different synagogue, he's somewhere in Boro Park, let's say. So you take a walk from here, where you're *davening* and you make your way to Boro Park. You find his *shul* and call him out. Ask somebody to call him outside for you. Please find Mr. Chaim Levin for me, or Mr. Sam Cohen; whatever it is. Call them out. I once did it. In the middle of Yom Kippur. I walked over to another *shul* far away. There was somebody standing outside and I asked him, "Please call out so and so." They called him out. I said "Forgive me. Please be *moichel* me for what I did to you." So he said, "You know I forgive you." Ah! It was a great achievement. Do that. Yom Kippur is the day. *כי ביום הזה יכפר עליכם*, on this day Hashem cooperates with you.

-TAPE #933

Baruch Hu in *Shir Hashirim*, יפה את רעיתי, “You are beautiful My beloved” so we're praising Hashem because we have a reason to praise Him. Hakadosh Baruch Hu has *all* the virtues. He's Perfection itself; there's a lot to praise! But Hashem said don't think it's merely because of Me, because you associate with Me, that you're beautiful. There's no question once you receive the Torah it benefits you. It improves your character. In every detail of your life you become better because of the Torah. But why did I give *you* the Torah in the first place? Why did I give *you* that benefit of becoming close to Me? And the reason is because you were beautiful beforehand. Your forefathers so shaped the nature of their families that they became perfect in character.

We have to know the old-time Jew was a beautiful personality. רחמנים ביישנים וגומלי חסדים, (Yevamos 78a) and these three are just headings of chapters under which there are many other qualities. The truth is that we *still* possess these qualities, only they're buried under mountains of externalities which we learned and picked up from the *umos haolam*. But the old-time Jews didn't have literature, they didn't have any gentile attitudes to contend with. They lived by themselves. הן עם לבדד ישכון, “Behold a nation that dwells alone.” Avraham Avinu did not consort with *anybody*. Even his own sons, he sent away so they shouldn't be an influence on Yitzchak. He had fine sons, beautiful sons, but he sent them away. He wanted to be alone with Yitzchak. And Sarah didn't even want Yishmael to be around. And Hakadosh Baruch Hu agreed with her. So our forefathers didn't have this encumbrance of gentile influence, and therefore their characters were what you call pure Jewish characters, *yiddishe middos*.

HASHEM IS STILL WITH US SINCE HAR SINAI

In the song of Moshe Rabeinu, in *Parshas Ha'azinu*, we read, השם מסיני בא - “Hashem came to us from Sinai” (Devarim 33:2). What does that mean that “He came to the *Am Yisroel* from Sinai?” It means this: From Sinai He comes to us in every generation. Because of what happened at Har Sinai, because we accepted His Torah, so Hakadosh Baruch Hu comes to us from

that historic moment, that momentous occasion at Sinai always, in every generation. He won't forsake us just because of that.

But now he tells an additional reason for coming to us forever: *וּזְרַח מִשְׁעִיר לָמוֹ* - "Hakadosh Baruch Hu appeared to us from *Se'ir*." What is *Se'ir*? *Se'ir* is where Eisav's descendants live, in Edom. *וְהוֹפִיעַ מִהָר פָּאָרָן* - "And He shines forth from the mountain of Paran." That's where Yishmael is, like it says "Yishmael dwelt in Paran" (Bereishis 21:21). But we have to understand- what does it mean? What was Hashem doing in *Se'ir* and in Paran?

WE'RE MUCH GREATER THAN THE BEST NATIONS

And the answer is as follows. In order to emphasize the perfection of His beloved people, Hashem said, let's take a look at Edom. Now Edom is a pretty good nation compared to other nations. Compared to the Englishmen, compared to the Huns and the Persians, Edom was pretty good. Because Edom was from Eisav, and Eisav you have to know had a good father and mother. Eisav was blamed only in comparison to what he should have been, what he could have become. But there's no question Eisav was a very fine gentleman. *וַיֵּאָהֵב יִצְחָק אֶת עֵשָׂו* - Yitzchok loved Eisav (Bereishis 25:28). And it wasn't for nothing that he loved him; Eisav had a lot of good qualities. And still, when Hakadosh Baruch Hu looked at Eisav, when he looked at *Se'ir*, he fell *more in love* with Am Yisrael. He saw the difference. No matter how good Edom is, they cannot compare to the children of *Yaakov ish tam*, the perfect man.

And then Hakadosh Baruch Hu made a detour to Paran, to Yishmael. Yishmael had very many good qualities. He was a good man, Yishmael. He was a *tzaddik* all his life, and he taught his people to be very modest. That's why all the Arabian women were veiled in ancient times down to today. The *gemara* tells us that Arabian women wore veils. And it was Yishmael who started that. And everyone knows that the Arabs practice *hachnasas orchim*, hospitality to wayfarers.

Yishmael gave over all the things he heard from his father, Avraham Avinu, who was a big *machnis orach*. There's no question

that Yishmael passed down good qualities to his descendants. Of course, in the course of time it became watered down with other qualities that they learned from other nations; but at that time, Paran was a model of very good behavior. And yet, when Hakadosh Baruch Hu looked at Paran, at Yishmael, He saw so many more reasons why He should choose *Am Yisroel*. And so when Hakadosh Boruch Hu came from His “detour” to Se’ir and Paran, and He came to the Am Yisroel at Har Sinai, He came to us with even more of a love for us! (See “He Came Shining” Chol Hamoed Sukkos)

WE'RE MORE IMPORTANT THAN MALOCHIM

And it wasn't only the *umos ha'olam* that Hakadosh Boruch Hu forsook for the *Am Yisroel*: **קדש ואתא מרבבות** - “And Hashem came from his tens of thousands of kedoshim” (Devarim 33:2). Hakadosh Baruch Hu didn't lack company; He didn't need the *Am Yisroel*. He had tens of thousands of *malachim* around Him. But he said, “*Malachim*, that's not My people.” **ואתא**, He went away **מרבבות קדש**, from His retinue of *malachim* and He came to *Am Yisroel*. The *Am Yisroel* are what's important in this world, said Hashem, not the *malachim*.

Do you remember when Yaakov Avinu was leaving Padan Aram and on the way into Eretz Yisroel he saw a **מחנה אלקים**, a camp of *malachim*. So the question is why all of a sudden are *malachim* here? And who was there first? Were the *malachim* there already, and Yaakov Avinu was *zocheh* to be together with the *malachim*? Or no, maybe Yaakov's family came first and *because of them* the *malachim* came? The truth is that the second answer is true. The *machaneh* of *malachim* was there *only* because of the *machaneh* of Yaakov Avinu. *Malachim* are only incidental to *Am Yisroel*. *Am Yisroel* is more important than *malachim*. And so, **אתא מרבבות קדש**, He came from the ten thousands of the holy ones around Him, and He came to the *Am Yisroel*. **מימינו אש דת למו**, and He gave them a fiery Torah.

So we see that Hakadosh Baruch Hu chose our nation because of good *middos*, good character and good practices,

decency. יפה את רעיתי, You are beautiful, My mate. And it was because of our beauty in the eyes of Hashem that He chose us to be His nation forever. We were greater than all the nations of the world, much better than even the good nations, and we were more beautiful than even the malachim, and that's why Hashem said to us, "You're mine forever."

HOW TO FIND FAVOR IN HASHEM'S EYES

So we're learning now, that this is the foundation of our relationship with Hashem, that fact that we are a nation that Hashem found to be a perfect people. In the days of old, Hashem fell in love with us and because of our fathers that's why He loves us. And so, when we stand tomorrow night before Hakadosh Baruch Hu, and we say כתבנו בספר החיים, inscribe us in the book of life, it is our duty to learn what is necessary for us to deserve that. How can we continue to find favor in the eyes of Hashem, the way our forefathers did?

So we should look in our old archives and see what is said there about the ways and means of gaining the gift of life. And we read as follows: מי האיש החפץ חיים - "Who is the man who wants to live?" Oh, that's what we were looking for! Now our ears and mouth are at full attention. Who doesn't want to live?! אוהב ימים לראות טוב, "to love days to see happiness." That's what we want. Oh, Hakadosh Baruch Hu give all of us a year of happiness. That's what we're begging for.

FIRST THINGS FIRST: ASK FORGIVENESS

So what does He require of us? And Dovid tells us: סור מרע ועשה טוב. Two things. סור מרע, turn away from evil. That's number one. And that's the first thing that Hakadosh Baruch Hu saw in us. That's all the good qualities, of keeping away, far away, from sin. And even when we do something wrong, we repent. That's the first of the *middos tovos* for which He chose us. And so, Yom Kippur night we say to our fellow man, "Forgive me for any wrong I did. Whether you know about it or not, forgive me." And he asks you to forgive him, and now everybody is reconciled and the past, all the wrongs are erased. And you make up your mind

you won't repeat it any more. From now on you'll be polite to your wife and she'll be polite to you. You ask Hashem to forgive you, to wipe your slate clean. From now on you're going to change - at least you want to change. סור מרע - On Yom Kippur, or before Yom Kippur if you prepared properly, you turn away from all the bad. And it's a great *kedusha*. The *shechina* comes down just because of that.

THE REAL WORK IS: DO GOOD

But there's something else that's required and that's עשה טוב, you must do good. It's not enough to turn away from evil. It's not enough to repent for all the misdeeds of the past. Of course, that's very important. Absolutely you must wipe them off the slate. If you can wipe them off with "a wet sponge," with some tears, even better. Wipe them off. Get rid of them. Old time Jews wept on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. They wept and wept. And they were wiping the slate clean.

And Hakadosh Baruch Hu pays attention to that: לא ננעלו שיערי דמעוֹת - The gates of tears are never locked up (Bava Metzia 59a). But still, Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants more than tears. סור מרע is important, but עשה טוב, do good! You finished crying, you wiped the slate clean - at least something you wiped off - but now *the real work* begins. עשה טוב - Make something out of yourself! That's really what Yom Kippur is for - to wipe the slate clean so that you can begin the real avodah of *asei tov*, of living life successfully.

Now there are so many things under the heading of "do good" that we don't even know where to start. A young man asked me last night, "What do I start from? From where do I begin?" It's a good question. And in order to have a successful Yom Kippur we'll have to answer that question.

AM YISRAEL FOREVER!

So we'll go back to the beginning. When Moshe Rabeinu came to the palace with the proposal that Pharaoh should send forth the Bnei Yisrael, he gave Pharaoh a reason. נלכה נא ונזבחה ליהשם אלקינו, We want to go bring offerings to Hashem (Shemos

9:1). The purpose of leaving Mitzrayim was *to serve Hashem*. That's what Hashem said. **שְׁלַח עַמִּי וַיַּעֲבֹדֵנִי**, "Send forth My people so they should serve Me." (ibid.)

Now that's a very important statement. It wasn't said only for Pharaoh. It was said for us to learn and to remember forever; why did Hashem take us out of Mitzrayim? We are a nation now; we're free from bondage. And we are given eternal existence in this world. Other nations have disappeared one after the other, but *Am Yisrael* continues to function. All the old nations have been forgotten. Some names are not even remembered, and those that we do remember are all underground. They're covered with the dust of ages.

HOW DID WE LAST?

Persia, Bavel, Shinar, Aram, Ashur, old Mitzrayim, Tarshish, old Greece, all forgotten, all gone. So why did Hakadosh Baruch Hu give *us* the right to continue? What is it that sets *us* apart from all the nations of the world that eventually fall into the dustbin of history? It's because we went forth from Egypt for one purpose, **וַיַּעֲבֹדֵנִי**, *to serve Hashem*. And Hakadosh Baruch Hu expressed it like this; that we are His army: **וְהוֹצֵאתִי אֶת צְבָאוֹתַי אֵת - עַמִּי** - "I'll bring forth My hosts, My army, My people" (Ibid 7:4). So it means we are not private people, free to do as we please. We are all enlisted in Hashem's army. A Jew cannot just feel that he is a man of leisure, a free person. No. He is in the army; the army of Hashem.

Now the question is what is meant by *korbanos*? Does it actually mean *only* offerings? We understand that the offerings are symbols. The *korbanos* that they intended to offer in the *midbar* were merely a symbol of their entire career; it was a *mashal* for the career of the *Am Yisrael* forever. In all the ages, the thousands of years since then, the function of the *Am Yisrael* was to bring *korbanos* to Hashem. And what do the *korbanos* symbolize? What is the heart of our service to Hashem?

So for that we turn to *Yeshayah Hanavi* and we read his famous words: **עַם זֶה יִצְרַתִּי לִי - תְהִלָּתִי יִסְפְּרוּ** - "This nation I have created for Me, they should speak My praises." (Yeshaya 43:21).

You hear that?! That's what we're a nation for. That's what we were created for. Yatzarti, I created you, says Hashem. And for what? תהילתי יספרו, we have to talk about Hashem. We have to praise Hashem.

WHAT WE ARE REALLY HERE FOR

Now Hashem could have said, "I created you to do *mitzvos*, to learn Torah" which is absolutely true. But He's telling us something here that is a generalization, an idea that includes everything else. The *navi* is telling us *the heart of the mitzvos, the heart of Torah*, what it's all about. תהילתי יספרו, *to speak the praises of Hashem!* That's what it's all about.

Now if people learn Torah but they don't think about Hashem, they're not fulfilling the purpose. If people do *mitzvos*, let's say he goes into the *sukkah* and doesn't think about what the *sukkah* symbolizes, he's not a real *oived Hashem*. Of course, he's better than nothing. You get reward for that too. But it states in the Torah (Vayikra 23:43) למען ידעו דורותיכם, "in order that your generations should know, כי בסוכות הושבתי את בני ישראל, that I'm the one who settled you in *sukkos* when you went out of Mitzrayim." You had no walled cities to protect you. You didn't have any fortification; just flimsy little *sukkos*. So the *sukkah* is a symbol of our gratitude and our appreciation that only Hashem protected us, and He protected us more than people who have fortified walls around their cities. So when you sit in the *sukkah*, you're praising Hashem, you're thanking Hashem. That's the heart of the *mitzvah*. תהילתי יספרו, My nation relates my praises - by sitting in the *Sukkah*.

IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO DO MITZVOS

So it's not enough just to do *mitzvos*. It's a very great thing certainly. We're not going to belittle people who do *mitzvos, chas v'shalom*. If someone wants to do *mitzvos* we'll accept him with open arms. But it's *not enough* to do *mitzvos*. It's *not enough* to learn Torah. Because Yeravam ben Nevat was a very big *lamdan*, he was a very great Torah scholar. And so was Achisophel and so was Doeg Ha'edomi. And look what happened to them. They lost their

cheilek in *Olam Habah*. So we see it's possible to be a big *talmid chacham* and to miss the entire point of doing *mitzvos*. And the point of doing *mitzvos* is, like we're learning here, **אתם עדי נאום** **השם**. Yeshayah said, "You are My witnesses" (43:10). What do witnesses do? Witnesses come and keep their mouths closed?! No. **אם לא יגיד ונשא עונו**. A witness has to speak up. If not he'll be punished for not fulfilling his duty.

And *that's our purpose* - we have to speak up about Hakadosh Baruch Hu in the world. That's our job, to talk about Hashem. Not only in shul. You have to talk about Him with your family. At the dinner table you must speak about Hashem. And if nobody wants to listen, they say, "we heard it already", then talk to yourself; but you must talk. Print up fliers and spread it in the world. I have beautiful fliers if anybody wants. Anybody who wants fliers about Hashem, I'll give them to you for five cents apiece. That's how much I paid for them. Print a thousand of them as you wish and distribute them. Why not? **אתם עדי**, you're My witnesses. You have to speak about Hashem!

LEAH PROPHESED ABOUT DOVID HAMELECH

Now, when our mother Leah gave birth to her son Yehudah, she said "הפעם, This time, **אודה את השם**, I'm going to praise Hashem." (Bereishis 29:35). Now she was saying something more than we think she meant. We think she meant she's praising Hashem because she had one more son. Oh no, it was much more than that! From this son Yehudah there would come forth Dovid Hamelech who praised Hashem. He was the singer to Hashem par excellence. The **שירי דוד עבדך**, songs of Dovid Your servant, that's what she meant. **הפעם**, now, **אודה את השם**, somebody will be coming into the world who will *live a life* of singing songs to Hashem. And the gentile world understand this also. They used to sing the psalms, the *shirei Dovid*, in all their gentile places; and *lehavdil elef havdalos*, the Jew always sang. To this day all our *tefillos* are mostly the songs of Dovid, the **שירי דוד עבדך**.

But even more than that, more than just song, the word Yehudah means "he shall praise." Today we're no longer called *Yisroel*. We're called *yehudim*. We all come from Leah except a little

admixture left from Rochel, yes, but most of us are *shevet Yehuda*. And Yehudah means the one whose function is *ומשירי אהודנו*, he praises Hashem. That's who he is, a *yehuda* - someone who sings to Hashem all the time.

Now this has to be taken seriously. We say in davening on shabbos morning *כל היצורים* *כי בן חובת כל היצורים*, "so is the duty of all those who have been created." It doesn't say *kol ha'yehudim*. It's the *חובת כל היצורים*, it's the obligation of all those who were created, that's *everyone*, to praise Hashem. What we're learning now is that *everybody in the world* has to praise Hashem. Black people have to spend time praising Hashem. Eskimos must get together and praise Hashem. South Sea Islanders, Chinese, must praise Hashem. If not, they're guilty.

CONSTANT PRAISING AND THANKING

But we especially; for us, it's *our purpose in life*, it's what we were created to do. *הללו את השם כל גוים*, all nations have to praise Hashem. But we, *כי גבר עלינו חסדו*, we are chosen especially. The Jew has to be busy all day long thinking about Hashem. That's not an exaggeration. *טוב להודות להשם*, do you know what's good in this world? To praise Hashem. *להגיד בבוקר חסדך*, start in the morning, *ואמונתך בלילות* and finish at night, and all day long in between. That's our job. Now that is the core and the heart of the service of Hashem. And therefore before we proceed, we'll have to analyze the word *להודות*. *L'hodos* means to praise, but it really means *to thank*. *Todah* means thanks. So why do we say praise

In *Ashrei* there's a *passuk* that goes like this. *זכר רב טובך יביעו*, the remembrance of Your great goodness, *יביעו*. Now we translate *יביעו* as "they will utter." That's not the right translation though. They will utter the remembrance of Your great goodness. No. *יביעו* comes from *נובע*, to flow, like a fountain, *מעין נובע*. It means they will overflow. Why will *tuvocha*, Your goodness, overflow?

YOUR TWO CUPS

Let's say you're sitting with a cup at a party and somebody pours some wine into your cup. Now another person comes and

pours in some more wine. And another pours in some more wine. What happens? The cup overflows. When it's too full, it overflows. It's נובע. Now every man has a cup. This "kup" up here (*the Rav pointed at his head*) and a cup down here in the heart. And Hakadosh Baruch Hu starts putting His kindness in the cups. So if your *kup* has a hole in it, it leaks out, and no matter how much gets poured in, it will never overflow. But suppose you have a good *kup*, if your cup does not have a hole in it, you'll become a happy man. Your cup will always be overflowing with happiness.

If you have a good *kup* and you don't forget, *zecher rav tuvcha*, you remember all of Hashem's good that he's done for you, that's the man Hashem loves. You remember once upon a time you were crossing the street and you almost got hit. It was *mamash a neis*. He missed you by almost a hair. You shouldn't forget that. You should remember that always; don't let it leak out of the cup. Remember that cold you had? Weeks and weeks, you thought you'd never get rid of it. You couldn't sleep at night. Finally, you came out in the clear - and you forgot all about it. Forgot all about it?! *Zecher*, remember, the great goodness! And you keep on pouring the kindness in our cup until finally the cup overflows. Dovid said "My cup is overflowing." כוסי רייה - My cup overflows with *chesed Hashem* because I don't let anything leak out from the bottom.

YOU'LL OVERFLOW INTO OTHERS

Now when your cup overflows, what do you do? It's a waste just to let that wine go lost. So you ask the people around you, please take a little bit of this wine. Help me drink this cup. And therefore the person whose cup is overflowing with happiness, he loves Hashem with such great gratitude that he tries to get other people to drink from his cup too. There's plenty left for everybody.

And he starts speaking to the world like it says: לישרים נאווה תהילה, if you're a person who is *yashar*, you're a right-minded man, then it's only proper that you should praise Hashem. A *yashar* appreciates what's being done to him, and therefore he cannot keep it to himself anymore. He starts saying הריעו להשם כל

הארץ - "Everybody, sing along with me." Here you have this man and he is telling the whole world they should shout to Hashem. You're telling the whole world to shout? What for? What's it to you?! It's because you're so full of gratitude that you know that you yourself cannot do the job. You can't thank Him enough. So you're asking everybody to help you thank Hashem. הריעו להשם כל הארץ - All of you, let's sing to Hashem. עבדו את השם - How should you serve Hashem? בשמחה, with a joy, with happiness.

AVODAH = SERVING OUT OF GRATITUDE

And that's the fundamental teaching of the whole *Sefer Chovos Halevavos*. He says that this is the beginning of *avodas Hashem* - the first step of service of Hashem is *to be grateful to Hashem*. But you can't just be grateful. What are you being grateful for? In order to be grateful, something has to come first, and that is *to appreciate what's being done for you*. You can't be grateful if you don't think it's something good for you. If you always think Hakadosh Baruch Hu is still missing, He's not doing His job, that He should have done more for you, you'll never be grateful. Your cup has a big hole in it! You'll never be grateful.

But suppose you're the kind of person who has eyes to see what happens to other people. Here's a man who has a bump in his side. You know what that bump is? That bump is a lid. When he wants to move his bowels, he unscrews the lid. He has a colostomy, *far keinem gedacht*, in his side. The good old days when he had a hole in the right place are gone forever. Ahh, he looks back on that. Those were the good days. "If I had any sense," he says, "I would have thanked Hashem when I was normal. I had a *pi hatabaas*. Ah! It was greased, it was wonderful to be natural. Now I live with colostomy supplies. I go to the drug store and buy various things in order to mop up the mess." Ooooh, is that a tragedy! Now we look at a man like that and we shouldn't let the opportunity go lost. You have to say *rofeh chol basar*. A visit to the bathroom is a time for *hallel*. Oh yes, we should be very happy, full of joy!

Here's another man who forgot what it means to urinate. For years and years, three times a week he's linked up to a kidney machine. He's a wealthy man so he has a kidney machine in his own house. Three times a week he has to spend a couple of hours on the kidney machine. He cannot cleanse his body of the waste otherwise. Without the machine, he's a dead man. And you're carrying around a little miniature kidney machine! And not only one, you have two. One for spare. You have a spare too! If he could get just one, he'd be delirious with happiness. He looks at you with great envy as you walk down the street.

APPRECIATION LEADS TO HAPPINESS

And so we have to spend our lives understanding what Hashem is doing for us. Now that's only one out of tens of thousands, *אלף אלפי אלפים ורבי רבבות פעמים שעשית*, that You did with us. So we see our lives have to be spent in studying what Hashem did for us.

Now, a byproduct of this pursuit is going to be happiness. No question about it. A man who thinks about these things, he puts thought into it, becomes happy in this life. You become a *sameiach b'chelko*. You'll be the happiest man in all society. You're living a life of the greatest joy, *and this is what Hakadosh Baruch Hu expects of us*. And so, if you're interested in *teshuva*, in coming back to the genuine service of Hashem, you'll get busy this Yom Kippur with *asei tov* of being grateful to Hashem. And while the *chazan* is singing his tra-la-la, instead of looking at the clock and thinking about what food might be waiting for you in the refrigerator at home, you'll begin to think about how to become a *sameiach b'chelko* by becoming grateful to Hakadosh Boruch Hu.

WE THINK HASHEM OWES US

Now when we talk about serving Hashem, this is fundamental. Otherwise, when you do *mitzvos*, you feel that *Hashem is obligated to you*. "Look what I'm doing for You, Hashem." That's what you're thinking. But when a person realizes that Hakadosh Baruch Hu already paid him in advance and that whatever he will do for Hashem is only pennies in return for the

millions that he already is indebted for, then he feels **מה אשיב** - "What can I pay back to You?!" And that man is a real *oived Hashem*.

Now, I'll explain that once more because it's so fundamental. The *Chovos Halevavos* is explaining what is meant by *avodas Hashem*. When you serve Hashem, are you doing any benefit to Him? When a servant serves his master, the servant is doing a benefit to the master. When you serve Hashem, what are you doing to Him?

THE REASON WE DO MITZVOS

So we'll say like this: The *gemara* says **האומר על קן צפור יגיעו רחמיך משתקין אותו**. Here's a man who composes a beautiful prayer. He says "Hashem in Your Torah You tell us to have pity on a bird's nest." When you see the mother bird sitting on the little birds or the eggs, you cannot take the mother bird. You have to send her away free; she shouldn't be penalized because of her loyalty to her offspring. You have to have pity on her. She allows herself to be caught because she doesn't want to forsake her children. So you'll grab her because she was loyal? No, that's not right. So don't touch her. You have to send away the mother bird if you want to take the eggs or the little goslings. And so a man once was in a synagogue, and he composed a beautiful poem. He said "Hashem, don't You have pity on a mother bird? So have pity on the Jewish people, on us too." And the sages who were present said, "Keep quiet." **משתקין אותו**, we tell him to keep quiet. That's a wrong prayer to ask. But it's a beautiful prayer. What's so wrong about it?

So the *gemara* says like this: **מפני שעושה מדותיו של הקב"ה**, it makes Hakadosh Baruch Hu's ways into ways of mercy. Hashem didn't say this *halacha* because He had mercy on the bird. No, that's not the reason we have to do that. If He wanted to set free the mother bird, He'd do it without us. He doesn't need *us* to set free the mother bird. So then why did He tell us to do it? **ואינן** **ואלא גזירות**, it's a decree. Rashi explains what it means "a decree." We set free the mother bird for one reason, *to demonstrate that we*

are ovdei Hashem, we are servants of Hashem. Hashem decreed, and we listen; that's all. That's why we do it!

HUMBLED FROM ALL OUR BENEFITS

It's a very important lesson you're hearing now. We do *mitzvos* only because we are serving Hashem. Now why do we express the *mitzvos* in a form of serving Hashem? Because the word *eved* the *Chovos Halevavos* explains means you are humbled, like a slave before his master. We are humbled to Hashem. We are bent over before Him. Why are we bent over? Because we are loaded down by all the benefits He bestowed upon us. We think about the thousand things He did for us, and we cannot pay back.

Let's say you come to somebody, your benefactor, and you ask him for another favor. That's what's happening here. We come on Yom Kippur, and we're asking Hashem for another year. Another year of eyes that can see. Another year of a functioning kidney. And a heart that doesn't stop pumping. And tens of thousands of other things. You know, life is not one thing. Life is made up of millions of details. And so, we're asking for *all* those things to continue. And so we bow down on the floor because we know Hakadosh Baruch Hu that we ask You so many times for another advanced loan and every year You lend us another loan hoping that this time You'll get something out of us. So we fall down on the floor and we say, "Look, we have no more capital. We're up to our ears in debt." We lay on the floor and say, "Please Hashem have pity on us. Give us another year. Advance us one more loan." And so we are *avadim* because we are all loaded down with debts. All of our service of Hashem should be done with a feeling of gratitude. "How can I ever pay You back Hashem? At least accept my mitzvos, my learning torah, accept all my avodas Hashem, as if I was paying up some debt."

DIFFERENT BOWS FOR DIFFERENT FOLKS

Now the *gemara* says that at the beginning of *shemonah esrei* we have to bend our knees and bow down. Why do we bend down? To show gratitude to Hashem. We thank You Hashem for so many things. *Baruch atah*, we thank You Hashem, so we bow

down. But the *gemara* says a *kohen gadol* doesn't bow down only at the beginning and the end of *shemonah esrei*. He bows down at the beginning and end of each *brachah*. *Magen Avraham*, he bows down. *Mechayeh hameisim*, he bows down. At the beginning and end of each blessing, the *kohen gadol*, the high priest, must bow down. And a *melech*, a king? When he bows down at the beginning, he doesn't straighten up at all. He remains bowed down the entire *shemonah esrei*, the entire *Amidah*! What's the reason for that?

The answer is this. We bow down according to the load of privileges that Hashem has given us. So ordinary people, we make a bow at the beginning, the first *brachah*, and a bow at the end of the first *brachah* and then at לך אנחנו מודים and then at the end. But a *kohen gadol* has upon his head the crown of the service of Hashem. It's a very great privilege to be a high priest. So he can't get by with merely bowing down once at the beginning and the end. He has to bow down at the beginning and end of each *brachah*. Now a king has a golden crown on his head. It's very heavy to have a golden crown on his head. He has to bow down all the time in gratitude to Hashem. Like Dovid said, "Who am I? You made me a king over Your people." And therefore the king can never straighten up. He's bowed down all the time.

MITZVOS ALSO PERFECT OUR CHARACTER

So now we're learning what *eved* means. *Avodas Hashem* means to show we're *avadim*. Now it's true that Hakadosh Baruch Hu gave us the *mitzvos* for our benefit. There's no question. To send away the mother bird causes you to feel compassionate, and you become a better person because of that. לא נתנו המצות אלא לצרף בהן את הבריות, the *mitzvos* purify our character. There's no question *mitzvos* make us better. But that's not *why* we do it. That's why Hashem commanded us to do it, so we should become better. But *we* do the *mitzvos* only for one purpose - the purpose of expressing to Hashem our great gratitude to Him.

So now we know what it means שלח עמי ויעבדני. What's the function of the Jewish nation? Forever and ever they're going to function as singers to Hashem. It's a song that will never come to

an end, and the song speaks about all the *chasdei Hashem* that He did for them in the many generations of our history and that He did for each individual throughout the years of his life. That's what's called *avodas Hashem*.

WE NEED LIFE TO SPEAK HASHEM'S PRAISES

Dovid Hamelech prayed to Hashem that he should be allowed to live. And we have to listen to his arguments because we need those arguments for ourselves tomorrow night. Dovid said *מה בצע בדמי ברדתי אל שחת*, what benefit Hashem will You get out of my blood if I go down to the grave? What benefit will You get out of me? *היידך עפר*, will the dust praise You? *היגיד אמתך*, will the dust relate Your truth? You have to listen to these words. Dovid is bargaining with Hashem. He says, "Hashem what will You get out of putting me to death? If you let me live, I'll speak Your praises." Now, Hashem does not need our praises, He doesn't need us at all, but Hashem wants us to speak His praises *because that's our accomplishment in this life*. That's our purpose in this world. The more we are aware of Hashem, then the more successful we are in our lives. And Hashem wants us to succeed. And therefore the purpose of being alive is *היידך*, to praise Hashem and to relate His truthfulness.

I'll repeat now the argument that Dovid Hamelech gave because it's the same one that we should use when we ask Hashem that He should allow us another year of life. *מה בצע בדמי ברדתי אל שחת*, what profit will You have if I go down into the grave? *היידך עפר*, will the dust praise You? *היגיד אמתך*, will I be able to express the truth of your *chesed* from the grave? Let me live Hashem, so that I can praise you.

YOU'RE CONSTANTLY BEING REMINDED

Now that's an obligation. Once we get a loan from Hashem for another year because of this motivation of singing to Him, so then you have to think about fulfilling it; which means we have to embark on a career of thinking about everything that Hashem does for us. That's serious business. The outside world is full of *leitzanus*, jesting and mockery, so they'll make fun of this idea. But

we have to be serious and understand that not everybody has what we have.

I saw a beautiful *frum* girl tapping her way down the street with a stick. It was a tragedy to look at her. My heart broke when I saw her. We have to learn from the unfortunate people to see how much Hakadosh Baruch Hu blessed us with happiness. So many people are put away in institutions for the insane. **אתה חונן לאדם דעת**, we have to thank Hashem for the great gift of sanity. Don't take it for granted. And those who are suffering from deep depression, it's also a form of insanity, *chas v'shalom*. **ברוך אתה השם החונן לאדם דעת**. You have to keep that in mind, not merely say the words like automatons. Even when you walk in the street and you see people sitting in wheelchairs or some with walkers and some with canes, and you are striding down the avenue in the exuberance of full health, you have to be aware of the message that needs to be gained from these people whom you encounter on the street. *They're there to remind you how happy you should be.*

So Dovid said to Hashem, I'm asking for life **למען יזמרך ולא כבוד** in order that my glory, that's my soul, should sing to you, **ולא ידום**, and never be silent. It means, I'll never stop this song of gratitude to You. **השם אלוקי לעולם אודך**, Hashem my G-d, *forever* I shall praise You.

PRAISE, PRAISE AND PRAISE SOME MORE

And that's the argument, the fundamental argument, that everyone should use on Yom Kippur, only he must be aware of the obligation that this entails for him. **לא המתים יהללוי-ה**, the dead will not praise Hashem, **ולא כל ירדי דומה**, and not those who go down into silence. Death is called silence. Why is that? Death is a lot of things, but is silence the one that is most important? And the answer is yes, absolutely. Because the dead are *not without life*. Dead have eternal life, they're still living. But they have lost the opportunity to utilize their free will for this great function of singing praises to Hashem. They have gone down into silence, they've lost the gift of speech, a glorious gift.

When you see people on the street talking to each other with their hands, is it interesting? Is that what it is, interesting? No. It's a message to you, to remind you of the gift you have. The ability to talk is very, very important and the most necessary purpose of that gift is **תהילת השם ידבר פי**, my mouth should speak the praise of Hashem. As you walk in the street, praise Hashem that you can talk! Praise Him that you can walk! Praise Him that you can see! Praise Him that you're normal!

The function of **אברכה את השם**, of praising Hashem is **בכל עת**, at all times. **תמיד תהילתו בפי**, "His praises are *always* in my mouth." Now that's not merely a form of speech. It actually is a fundamental function of the Jew. In addition to even what the nations of the world are required to do, the Jew is especially obligated to keep in mind that the happiness that fills his cup should overflow, and he should speak about it and try to spread the glory of Hashem in the world.

KORACH VE'ADOSO WERE GREAT PEOPLE

And now we'll consider another function of our ability to speak, another important commitment we should make when we stand before Hashem on Yom Kippur. The *gemara* tells a story that once Raba Bar Bar Chanah was traveling in the wilderness. And an Arabian who was in the desert at that time said to him, "You want me to show you the entrance to *Gehinom*?" And Raba Bar Bar Chana said, yes. So he took him to a place where there's a big hole. Inside the hole there was a cauldron, a boiling cauldron. The hole went down deep into the earth, and it was boiling. And he saw bodies boiling in that cauldron. And like a cauldron of boiling food, sometimes some of the pieces come to the top and then later they go to the bottom. The bottom piece comes to the top, then to the bottom again. He waited, and then he saw some faces peering out in agony from this boiling cauldron. And these faces were opening their mouths, and they were shouting. And he listened; and they were shouting **משה אמת ותורתו אמת**. Again and again with such an expression of agony, of despair: "*Moshe emes v'soraso emes*," they were crying. It tore his heart, and he recognized who they were. They were *Korach v'adaso*, who were swallowed up by

the earth. He had this vision. He saw an opening of *Gehinom* and they were suffering the most terrible pains, and they were trying to say these words in order to relieve themselves of this torture.

Now I have to explain that. Korach and his congregation made the great error of attempting to knock down the authority of Moshe Rabeinu. Of course, they believed in Hashem. Korach and his congregation stood at the foot of Har Sinai when the Torah was given and together with whole Klal Yisrael they shouted נעשה ונשמע with the greatest enthusiasm. Only *tzaddikim* left Egypt. Remember לא היה שם אילו, if the *rasha* had been in Mitzrayim, נגאל, he wouldn't have been redeemed. So they were *tzaddikim*. These *tzaddikim* came out of Egypt, and they received the Torah with everybody else. And they said קדושים כל העדה כולם, the whole congregation is holy, ובתוכם השם, and Hashem is among them.

KORACH IS A LITTLE TOO LATE

So what happened? Korach became snagged on jealousy. Even the biggest *tzaddikim* have to beware of jealousy; and that was his downfall. He became jealous and began knocking down the authority of Moshe Rabeinu. So Hakadosh Baruch Hu said, "People who are knocking down the authority of Moshe Rabeinu, I don't need in this world." And because they opened up their big mouths, so ותפתח הארץ את פיה, the earth opened up a big mouth too, מידה כנגד מידה, and they fell down into the hole. And ויאבדו מתוך הקהל. They went lost forever.

But *now* Korach realizes the tragic error he had committed, and he's trying to remedy it. So in *Gehinom*, as he's suffering the torture of the netherworld, he's shouting with all his *koach*, משה אמת ותורתו אמת. Now he's trying to make up for his mistake. But it's too late. Too late. Ay yah yay, it's too late! Ahh, the pity of it. Suppose when the earth opened up its mouth and Korach began falling, but before he fell in he would have shouted משה אמת ותורתו אמת. While he was still alive, even while he was falling, if he would have screamed out משה אמת ותורתו אמת he would have

been saved from *Gehinom*. He might have visited *Gehinom* for a short time but he wouldn't have remained there, however.

THE IDENTITY OF KORACH IN OUR GENERATION

How important it is for all of us to say in this lifetime **משה אמת ותורתו אמת**. Because then, in the cemetery, it's too late. You'll realize it then. Absolutely you'll realize it, but it will be too late. So people who speak against *Gedolei Yisrael*, who speak against *tzaddikim*, have to realize it's very dangerous business. Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants us to speak in honor of the Torah, in honor of the Torah leaders. And we have to be praising all our lives; not only do we praise Hashem but part of the function of **תהילת השם** is to praise Hashem's Torah and to praise the teachers of Torah.

When people get together in synagogues before the prayer begins and they talk among themselves, it's a *moshev leitzim*. Instead of opening a sefer, or at least keeping their mouths shut, they criticize the rabbi, they criticize *talmidei chachamim*. That's Korach! Just like Korach in his generation, they're Korach in *this* generation, and they have to be aware of a terrible fate that is waiting for them. Hashem says you want another year from Me? I want a promise from you that this year is going to be a year of speaking up in My honor, in honor of *talmidei chachomim*, in honor of the frum Jews - and the more frum, the more praises. You have to speak in praise of Hashem and His people.

YOU'RE A SECRET PROPAGANDIST

Now how important is that function? I'm going to quote to you Rabeinu Yonah in *Sha'arei Teshuvah*. Rabeinu Yonah says in *Sha'arei Teshuvah*: **הברואים כולם לא נבראו אלא**, all of the creatures were created only for one purpose, for **כבוד שמים**, to give honor to Hashem. Our purpose is to give honor to Hashem. That's what our job in this world is. And therefore whenever you're going to meet people or you'll be in the company of your family or among your friends, think beforehand: What can I do at that time to increase the honor of Hashem? What can I say in honor of Hashem or in honor of His Torah, in honor of *avodas Hashem*, or in honor of the people who study Torah? And then utilize the

opportunity. When you're among other people, make sure to open up your mouth to sing the praise of Hashem and His people.

You hear that function? Let's say you're going to a party some place, to a *kiddush*, a *simcha*. So imagine you're a propagandist. You were hired by the communist party to speak the praises of communism. As you go there, you're not going just to eat the food there. You're going to sneak in some propaganda for your party. So you also should think, I'm a propagandist. That's my job. I'm going to that *kiddush* or that *bar mitzvoah* or that wedding, and whenever I'm able, I'll get in a word to speak in honor of learning Torah, in honor of doing *mitzvos*, in honor of serving Hashem, in honor of *yeshivos*, in honor of *roshei yeshivos*. I'm going to utilize the opportunity. I'm a propagandist for Hakodosh Boruch Hu!

EASY WORK AND BIG SALARY

Now listen to what Rabeinu Yonah says. "By doing this," he says, "you're going to earn without any labor, בלי טורח ופועל ידים, without doing any labor with your hands, you're going to earn זכות גדולה עד לשמים, a great merit up to heaven." That's how great the merit is. Speak in honor of *frum* Jews. Speak in honor of *chassidim*. Speak in honor of Lakewood. Speak in honor of Meah Shearim. Speak in honor of all the *ovdei Hashem* wherever they are. The *rabbanim*, *talmidei chachamim*. Speak how good it is to be a *medakdeik* in *mitzvos*. Inspire people. When people listen to you, the message will get across. You're a man who is an emissary, an ambassador, of Hakadosh Baruch Hu in this world. Like I said before, even if you stand on the street and hand out fliers about *avodas Hashem*, that's also fulfilling your function. Whatever it is, you must feel that you have a function in this world. משה אמת ותורתו אמת is not merely something Korach should have said. Everybody in the world has to feel that it's his job to praise Hashem. כי כן חובת כל היצורים, it's the obligation of all the creations, but the Am Yisrael has an especial obligation because we were created as the nation with that purpose. עם זו יצרתי, I made that nation for that purpose. You must feel that your mouth is created for the purpose of being a propagandist for Hashem.

Now when we ask Hakadosh Baruch Hu to restore us to *Eretz Yisrael* in the days of Moshiach, pay attention to the motivation that we add. ואמרו, And say this. ואמרו means "Say this. Everybody should say this." הושיענו אלוקי ישעינו - Save us Hashem of our salvation, וקבצנו והצילנו מן הגוים, collect us and rescue us from the nations. For what purpose? For what purpose do we want to be rescued? להודות לשם קדשך, in order to give praise to Your holy name. That's the purpose. We'll come together to praise Hashem's name. That's the purpose?! That's all Moshiach is for?! Yes, that's the chief purpose. When Hakadosh Baruch Hu created the universe, כל מה שברא הקב"ה בעולמו לא ברא אלא לכבודו, the whole universe is made to praise Hashem. You're supposed to look at the light in the morning and praise Hashem. You don't do it, I'm sorry to say. Look at the light. Say ברוך אתה השם יוצר המאורות - Thank You Hashem for creating the sun, and the moon and the stars. And think about what you're saying.

WHAT ARE THE MALACHIM DOING?

And the *malachim* spend their time on that. Once a *yeshivah bachur* came to the Mir Yeshivah in Europe, and Rav Yerucham *zichrono levrachah* asked him, "What are the *malachim* doing?" The *bachur* didn't know what to answer. So Rav Yerucham said, "It says תמיד מספרים כבוד א-ל, that's what *malachim* are doing. תמיד מספרים כבוד א-ל. What are they doing? Always talking about the glory of Hashem.

And the *malachim* are our model. So what should we talk about? When we see the sunlight in the morning, על מאורי אור, שעשית יפארוך סלה, we have to glorify Hashem for the sunlight. Did you ever do it? Every morning you do it; you do it without thinking what you're doing though. You have to glorify Hashem for the sunlight. It's the longest *brachah* in the whole *siddur*. *Yotzer ohr*, we praise You for the light. Get excited about the light. קול רעש גדול, the *malachim* are very excited about the light. We should surely be excited. At least when we're saying that *brachah* we should be doing it in the right way.

FIND VIRTUES OF YOUR BENEFACTOR

Now once a person learns to be full of gratitude to Hashem, that's called *hoda'ah*, then he comes to the second function of appreciating the greatness of Hashem. I'll explain that. Here's a man sitting right here. I never saw him before. I'm sure he's a fine man. He's sitting here; he must be a nice man if he comes here! But I'm not going to take time now to speak about him. I could investigate, I could find out about all his beautiful qualities, the good things he's done, but I have other things to do.

But suppose that man did some benefit to me. Let's say he helped me out. Then it becomes my duty to find out about him and to praise his virtues. Once he's my benefactor then I have to find out his virtues and speak about them. He has virtues, no question about it. He has a *tzelem Elokim*, the image of Hashem. No question he has the image of Hashem on the face. No question about that. It's the image of Hashem. Also, he's from the *Am Kadosh*; a *Yisroel* is holy. A Jew is very holy. You know how holy he is? Listen to this Sifri: קדושים תהיו, Hashem said, you're a holy nation. That's what the *possuk* says. So the Sifri says, יכול כקדושת, I might think you're equal to My holiness. You hear that? יכול, I might think you're holiness is like Mine; there's a *hava aminah*. So the *possuk* had to come and tell us תלמוד לומר כי קדוש אני, Hashem says, "I am more holy than you are." It's a queer kind of statement. You hear that statement of the *Sifra*?! The *Sifra* says I might think that a Jew is just as holy as Hashem! So it says כי קדוש אני, I am holier than you are. It's a יכול, a *hava aminah*, I might have thought that the Jews are holy like Hashem!

And therefore, he is a *tzelem Elokim*, image of Hashem and he's holy, very holy. Holier than angels. A Jew is more holy than angels. So I have to stop and talk about this man now because he's a benefactor of mine. If someone does good to you, you have to look for his good qualities and praise them. That's why you have to look for good qualities in your parents. You have to praise your parents, *k'gdolei erez*, as if they're aristocrats, noble people, lords and ladies, dukes. Important people, your parents are. What they

did for you! They are your benefactors and that puts you in the red.

NOW YOU COULD ASK FOR ANOTHER YEAR

Now, if that's the case so we see now that *hoda'ah*, thanking, requires *hoda'ah*, praising. It comes from the world *yada*; *yadah* means to throw. יָדוּ אֲבָן בִּי, they threw stones at me. And therefore when we spend our lives in understanding what Hashem is doing for us, if we put thought into it, then we have the reaction of praising Hashem, studying the *g'dulas Hashem*. And that's why in *Ashrei* you have both elements. You have זָכַר רַב טוֹבָךְ יְיָ, the remembrance of Your great goodness flows forth from my mind, and וְגִדַּלְתָּךְ אֶסְפְּרָנָה, I'll speak about Your greatness. I'm constantly remembering all of the *chesed* You're doing for me, and all of the *chesed* that You've done for me in the past, and I'm praising You all the time. And therefore, the Jew knows what's his function in life is. Once you become aware of your function in this world, you can turn to Hashem on Yom Kippur and ask for life - because now you have a plan for life. You know what you'll do with the gift of life!

WHAT'S THE SECRET OF KETORES?

We recall an incident in the Torah when the wrath of Hashem was kindled against the people. And the *Am Yisroel* was dying in a plague. So Moshe told Aharon Hakohen to take the *ketores* and to hurry amidst the people to stop the *mageifeh* from spreading. וַיִּכְפֹּר עַל הָעָם וַיִּתֵּן אֶת הַקְּטֹרֶת, he put the *ketores*, the incense, and he atoned for the people. It says וַיַּעֲמֹד בֵּין הַמֵּתִים וּבֵין הַחַיִּים, he stood between the living and the dead. The *ketores* stopped the *mageifah*. Now it states there that the *malach hameves* gave to Moshe Rabeinu the secret that *ketores* rescues from death. Now a secret like that is good for us because we're looking for life on Yom Kippur.

We'd like to know the secret of the *ketores*. Because we want to know what kind of *ketores* can we bring? Unfortunately, we don't have it anymore. It's forbidden to make *ketores* today. But we have to understand what was the secret of the *ketores* that was

brought at that time that atoned in the *mageifah*, and that was able to make a wall between the living and the dead?

KETORES GIVES HONOR TO HASHEM

Now the Torah says, *ובמתכונתו לא תעשו כמותו*, it's forbidden to make any *ketores* for yourself with the same formula as the *ketores* that was used in the Beis Hamikdash. And the Rambam explains in *Moreh Nevuchim* a reason for that. The *ketores* had a peculiarly alluring fragrance; it was something especially beautiful, out of the ordinary. And Hakadosh Baruch Hu wanted that this fragrance should be felt only in connection with the *shechinah*. Nobody in the world should have that same perfume. Now what's the purpose of fragrance in the Beis Hamikdash? So the Rambam explains that *it gives honor to Hashem*. When you walk by and that bouquet fragrance is wafted out to you, you feel a certain inspiration, an admiration and a love for that place where you experienced that rare fragrance. It was a delightful aroma, and it created in your mind a love, an honor, for the house of Hashem.

So we see that *ketores* is an expression of honor of Hashem, of appreciation for Hashem. That's what *ketores* really is. And therefore the *malach hameves* told him the secret. *Kevod shamayim*, honor of Hashem, that's the great method of rescuing from death! If you give honor to Hashem, you're living for a purpose, and that is *matzil m'maves*. You're accomplishing, you're achieving, and Hakodosh Boruch Hu will keep you around even longer so that you could continue to accomplish.

We have to pay attention to that. That's what *kiddush Hashem* means; to cause glory to the name of Hashem. *ותעצר המגפה*. You remember when Pinchas came and he made a *kiddush Hashem*, he glorified the name of Hashem by taking action for His honor, and the plague was stopped in its tracks. And so we see that in order to gain life, to deserve the opportunity to continue to function in life, it is important that we should be agents in the honor of Hashem.

EVERY MEAL SHOULD LEAD TO MORE LOVE FOR HASHEM

And therefore, when we start viewing the entire panorama of the service of Hashem, there are so many things we must do as part of this great function. Let's say you're saying *birkas hamazon* after eating. It's a law in the Torah. **וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבַעְתָּ**, if you eat bread and you're satiated, **וּבְרַכְתָּ**, then *mideoreisa* you must *bentch*. But let's pay attention to the words that we say. We say **הִזָּן אֶת הָעוֹלָם כּוֹלֵו**, He feeds the entire world, **בְּטוֹבוֹ בַחֵן בַּחֶסֶד וּבְרַחֲמִים**, He doesn't merely give us colorless, tasteless pills that will enable us to continue living. No; He does it with colors and with tastes and with flavors and aromas. Food smells good, and it looks good too. It's **בַּחֵן בַּחֶסֶד וּבְרַחֲמִים**. Why are You doing all this? It's not a secret! It says **בְּעִבּוֹר שְׁמוֹ הַגְּדוֹל**, for the sake of His great name. He wants something in return. Because you're enjoying the food, you should learn to thank Hashem, and the more the food is delicious, the greater should be your thanks to Hashem. The purpose of food in this world is to bring honor to Hashem! You didn't think about that, did you? **בְּעִבּוֹר שְׁמוֹ הַגְּדוֹל** - that's the purpose of all food.

You have to train yourself for that. So if your wife makes a nice supper for you, of course you should remember to thank your wife too. You praise her too. But the purpose of this meal is you should learn to love Hashem more than before. Every experience at the dinner table should result in a greater enthusiasm for the honor of Hashem. That's the way the Jew has to eat; **בְּעִבּוֹר שְׁמוֹ הַגְּדוֹל**, for the sake of His great name. After you finish eating, so you have to stop and think. You have to say, "What is going to be the result of this meal that I just ate? I'll wipe my lips and just mumble the *birkas hamazon* and go away?!" No! You have to generate a love for Hakadosh Baruch Hu as a result of the pleasurable experience.

HAVE ANOTHER YEAR AND USE IT WELL

And so we understand that all the happy experiences in life - *all of them* - require some reaction on our part, and the reaction is what we call *avodah*. And so, tomorrow night we will stand before Hakadosh Baruch Hu and the final inscription will be made in the *sefer hachaim*. And so we say "Ribono Shel Olam, give

us another chance. This time we received the message." Whether we'll succeed on a big scale or a small scale, but *something* will be done this year in order to fulfill our function of living for the purpose of תהילת השם ידבר פי ויברך כל בשר שם קדשו לעולם ועד. And then we say ואנחנו, as far *we're* concerned - we don't care what other people are saying, we don't care if others don't understand this truth, ואנחנו נברך י-ה מעתה ועד עולם, *we'll* bless Hashem forever. הללויה, we'll go wild with excitement over Hakodosh Boruch Hu. I'll speak in honor of Hashem, in honor of His Torah, in honor of the Torah leaders of the generation, in honor of the frum Jews. And Hakadosh Baruch Hu will say, Since you're saying משה אמת ותורתו אמת, and because you're going to use your mouth to sing My praises, you're living for a purpose; you're living for Me. And therefore you'll be consigned to the living at least for one more year to continue to fulfill your purpose in this world!

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Q&A With Rav Avigdor Miller Ztz"l

Q:

Is it true what the Rav implied earlier that mitzvos of *bein adam la'chaveiro* are more important than mitzvos *bein adam la'makom*?

A:

Are *mitzvos bein adam la'chaveiro* more important than *mitzvos bein adam la'makom*? The answer is that *bein adam la'chaveiro* is *bein adam la'makom*. That's why we said tonight that *teshuva* means "*shuva ad Hashem Elokecha*" – "Ad Hashem" is the foundation of *teshuva*. Everything that we said here tonight about improving our *avodah* of *bein adam la'chaveiro* is not because of "*chaveiro*" - it's because of Hashem. It's all Hashem! There's no such thing as a dichotomy between the two types of *mitzvos* of *bein adam la'makom* and *bein adam la'chaveiro*. To love your fellow is exactly the same as loving Hashem. But we have to make sure to do it with the thought that these Jews that I love are "*banim aтем la'Hashem Elokeichem*". That's how you should love your fellow Jew - because he's a son of Hashem, a child of Hashem. So that way, if you love him, then you're loving Hashem.

And therefore there should be no question about there being any difference between the two types of *mitzvos*. If a person will, let's say, be kindhearted to Jews but he doesn't care for Hashem, then it's not called kindhearted at all. It's nothing. It's worthless. It's a waste of effort. It's a waste of effort loving your fellow Jew if you don't believe in Hashem.

And therefore, all of our efforts that we will make in the subjects we discussed tonight - understanding *tzelem Elokim*, appreciating the greatness of Klal Yisroel, loving your fellow Jews - these are all based on the concept of *avodas Hashem* – of serving Hashem. It has to be for Hashem.

TAPE # E-249

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