

# תורת אביגדור הגאון ר' אביגדור מיללער זצ"ל

Rav Avigdor Miller on the Parsha

Adapted from his Tapes, Seforim and Writings of Talmidim

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בעזה"ש

## פרשת פינחס

With Rav Avigdor Miller ztz"l

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### *True Knowledge and Sacrifice*

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נא שלא לקרוא בעת התפלה וקריאת התורה

### Part I. Paradox of Physicality

#### HOW DID KORBANOS GET HERE?

When reading through *Parshas Pinchas* we see that the Torah is telling us about various things that happened near the end of the forty years in the *midbar* as the Am Yisroel approached the border of Eretz Yisroel. Many things are enumerated there: the dividing of the territory of Eretz Canaan among the *shevatim*, the laws of inheritance, the appointment of Yehoshua to replace Moshe Rabeinu - other things too. And then, in the middle of everything, all of a sudden the Torah turns towards the subject of *korbanos*.

It's in *Parshas Pinchas* that Hakodosh Boruch Hu chose to teach the *dinim* of the *korban tamid*, the daily offerings brought on the *mizbei'ach*. צו את בני ישראל ואמרת אליהם את קרבני לחמי לאשי ריח ניחחי -תשמרו להקריב לי "Command the Bnei Yisroel and say to them: My offerings, My bread on the fires, you should make sure to bring for Me as a sweet savor" (Pinchas 28:2). And not only the *korban tamid*; other *korbanos* as well were taught then. Everyone knows that on Yom Tov, we stay in shul a little longer because we take out a second *sefer Torah* to read the *pesukim* of the *korbanos mussaf* from our *parsha*.

But the question is, how do *korbanos* come into *Parshas Pinchas*? Out of nowhere, in the middle the *parsha*, suddenly it falls in. It's a bit of a mystery because there's plenty of room in *Vayikra*

among all of the other *korbanos* - and it would have fit in there just fine too. What's it doing in *Parshas Pinchas*?

#### BAD NEWS TIMES TWO

This question is one that the Malbim asks, and we'll listen now to what this wise man answered - and I'll add to his answer a few embellishments of my own; ideas that I heard from my *rebbeim* in Slabodka. The Malbim states as follows: Hakodosh Boruch Hu now told Moshe Rabbeinu that his time in this world was coming to an end. "You will soon pass away," said Hashem, "and you will not be permitted to enter into *Eretz Canaan* with the rest of the nation."

And yet, there was even more distressing news that Moshe heard that day. At that time Hakodosh Boruch Hu conveyed to Moshe Rabeinu a prophecy as follows: הִנֵּךְ שָׁכֵב עִם אֲבוֹתֶיךָ - "You're soon going to lie down with your forefathers, וְקָם הָעַם הַזֶּה - and then, after you're gone, this nation will arise, וַיִּזְנוּ אַחֲרֵי אֱלֹהֵי נֹכַר הָאָרֶץ - and they will go astray after the false gods of the people of the land" (*Devarim 31:16*).

#### DANGER IN THE WILDERNESS

Now, as long as the Am Yisroel was in the *Midbar*, living in close proximity to Moshe Rabbeinu, this prophecy could not come to fruition. Because of Moshe Rabeinu's powerful influence, as well as the fact that the nation was isolated from the gentiles and lived together in one camp, there was nothing to fear. But once the nation would be settled in *Eretz Yisroel*, Yehoshua would lose that strategic advantage as they would begin to be dispersed throughout the land. And as great as Yehoshua was, he wasn't nearly as great as Moshe. And so, Hashem said: וְקָם הָעַם הַזֶּה - "The people will arise at that time, וַיִּזְנוּ אַחֲרֵי אֱלֹהֵי נֹכַר הָאָרֶץ, and they will stray after the strange gods of *Eretz Canaan*."

Now, did it come true? To some extent it did. It doesn't mean everybody, no. The majority of Am Yisrael always remained loyal, but as the nation spread out in the land, there was a general weakening in *avodas Hashem* - the fire of service of Hashem dimmed among the people, and that's what the Torah calls "straying after *elohei neichar ha'aretz*."

And so, the Malbim explains, now that Moshe Rabbeinu was about to leave this world and this peril would materialize, something had to be done to protect the Am Yisroel. And because of this danger, Hakodosh Boruch Hu inserted the *parsha* of *korbanos* right here.

### THE HOLY NATION IS AFFECTED

Now, such an answer, that *korbanos* would be the way to protect against the peril of *avodah zarah* is not something we can understand while standing on one foot - it needs to be explained very well, and so we'll take it one step at a time. We'll start with what the Rambam in Moreh Nevuchim tells us is the *sole* reason for *korbanos*.

The Rambam says like this: "Although you might be surprised that I say this," that's how the Rambam starts, "but the mitzvah of animal sacrifice is only a form of appeasing the people, so that they shouldn't feel deprived." Because the people were accustomed to seeing such things being done by all the umos ha'olam - all the ovdei avodah zarah would serve their gods by bringing gifts of food to appease their hungry gods - so the Am Yisroel wanted to do the same.

Of course, you people here laugh at such an idea; you think you're so much better than that. But when we look at ourselves we see how hard it is to oppose the opinion of the public. The nations around us think a certain way, they act and dress and talk a certain way, and to go against them is extremely difficult. Even *frum* Jews are influenced by the *hashkafos* of the gentiles to a very big extent. Even though outwardly we still maintain all the *dikdukei mitzvos*, but in the mind, we become affected by their ideals.

### KORBANOS ARE AN IMITATION

And so, says the Rambam, to give the Am Yisroel a Torah which omits a form of service so universally practiced, they would feel deprived. "All the nations are serving their gods in such a tangible way - they're feeding the Ba'al and their other gods - so we want that too. Hashem, we also want to serve *You* like that." And so Hakodosh Boruch Hu said, "I'm going to allow you to serve Me like they do." And He gave us *korbanos*.

Now, I'm sure you'd agree that this statement of the Rambam appears to be quite puzzling. Does it make sense to say such a thing? *Everyone* does it, so I'll let you do it too?! The *goyim* go to the theatre, so I'll let you do that too. A real *Amerikaner* is excited over sports, so watching baseball should now be *avodas Hashem*?! It sounds ridiculous and it has to be explained.

## CAN WE SKIP THIS PART?

And so we must say that the purpose of *korbanos* is not merely as appears first when reading the words of the Rambam. There's something much more here and that's what we're going to speak about tonight. And in order to understand what the Rambam is teaching us we'll first study together another piece from the Rambam's *Moreh Nevuchim*.

In the *Moreh Nevuchim*, the Rambam spends a great deal of time on a subject that to us seems superfluous. Even if you would learn the *Moreh*, you might feel like skipping the first third of the *sefer* because of this lengthy topic. What is it that the Rambam discusses there? It's pages and pages about *hagshama* - that means the personification of Hakodosh Boruch Hu that we find throughout the entire Torah.

The *Tanach* is full of expressions that attribute to Hashem physical characteristics, like a person, *chas v'shalom*. For example *yad Hashem*, the hand of Hashem, or *eini Hashem*, His eyes. And even emotions such as *vayinachem Hashem* - "Hashem regretted," *Vayisatzeiv el libo* - "Hashem sorrowed in His heart".

All of these expressions impart a physical conception of Hakodosh Boruch Hu. They are terminologies of human characteristics applied to Hashem.

## HASHEM DOESN'T NEED A HAND

Now this is something that bothered the Rambam very much: Why does it say such things in the Torah? *Einei Hashem?! Hashem doesn't need eyes to see!* He made eyes for *us* to see, but He sees everything without eyes. *Yad Hashem?! Hashem needs a hand!* Hashem gave *us* hands and He gave us the power to do things by means of our hands, but He doesn't need a hand.

וַיִּתְמוּנַת הַשָּׁמַיִם יְבִיט - "*Moshe Rabbeinu looked at the image of Hashem.*" (Bamidbar 12:8). Does Hashem have an image? Can you see Hashem's picture, His face? And the *nevi'im* describe *the throne* of Hashem as well.

It's *impossible* to say such things and yet in the Torah itself, this is how Hashem is portrayed. With eyes and hands and a face and a nose - it's something unbelievable! In the Torah, everything is portrayed in a most physical way, a most bodily way.

And therefore the Rambam has a big job on his hands, to explain away all these expressions. And he was up to the task - he goes through the entire *Tanach* and spends a great deal of time interpreting these expressions out of their simple meaning. He explains that they are only allegories; phrases that shouldn't be understood literally. He spends time explaining them away - it means something else, it's a figure of speech, a parable, an analogy of sorts. Whatever it is, the one thing it's *not* is literal.

#### BEWARE: PITFALLS AHEAD

And the Rambam makes a point to tell us that anyone who thinks that these expressions *are* literal, not only is that person misunderstanding the *Tanach*, but *הֵרֵי זֶה מִיָּן* - he is a *min*, a heretic, and he loses his share in the World to Come. And that means that when it states that Hakodosh Boruch Hu regretted that He made man, *וַיִּתְעַצֵּב אֱלֹהִים לְבוֹ* - "He sorrowed in His heart" - it's heresy! It's real *hagshama* and it's forbidden to think that!

Now, that means we have a very big question on our hands; it's a question the Rambam asks: Why did Hashem put so many pitfalls, so many perilous words into the Torah? How could Hakodosh Boruch Hu fill the *Torah hakedosha*, the *Toras chayim*, the *Toras emes* with such booby traps?

At every step, a man can trip up and *chalilah* lose his *chelek l'Olam Haba* because he believes in the wrong kind of a *Borei*. If he prays to such a creator, he's praying to the wrong address. Instead of praying in this direction, he's praying in the other direction. He can say the word Hashem and he can say he believes in Hashem, but he's a *min*.

#### THE TRUTH ABOUT ALLAH

Now, the Torah could have *l'chatchila* told us the truth. Like for instance, what Rabbeinu Saadya Gaon does in his *peirush* on the Torah. Take a look there and you'll see he explains *וַיֹּאמֶר ה'שָׁם* not as "Hashem said". Does Hashem have a tongue and teeth and lips? He speaks?! Of course not. Rabbeinu Saadya writes there, *Shah Allah*.

*Shah Allah* means "Hashem willed" in Arabic. Hashem willed the world into existence. Hashem doesn't speak, He wills. The *Targum Unkelus* does the same thing; he always attempts what we call *harchakas hahagshama* - to explain away the *gashmiyus* words of the

Torah. He dodges every one of these problems by taking the trouble to reinterpret these phrases in an abstract sense.

So why doesn't the *chumash* do that? Why does the Torah have all these expressions that need so much effort to explain in a way that they don't mean *k'pshuto*? Hashem could have written better than Rav Saadya Gaon. He could have made use of *harchakas hahagshama* just like Unkeles did and He could have done a better job of it too. But no, in the Torah it says that "Hashem spoke," and "Hashem saw." His eyes, and His hands, and His throne, and His feet!

#### MISTAKEN PEOPLE BRING PROOFS

What's this business of the Torah of being *magshim Hashem, chas v'shalom*? Why did the Torah use such expressions that are capable of misleading the people into such errors; errors so perilous that will make them lose their *Olam Haba*?

And it happened - don't think it didn't. There were many people who read the Torah and took it literally. People fell into great error - there were good people who believed that Hashem has a very big body, a very holy and tremendous body - noble, illuminated; not so materialistic like our bodies, but it was a body. And He has tremendous arms, and big eyes that can see. And these mistaken people pointed to the words of the Torah to defend their belief. And so it's a very good question: Why would the Torah create such a pitfall?

#### RISK-BENEFIT ANALYSIS

And the answer is as follows: If the Torah wouldn't have done that, there would be a bigger risk. There's a bigger risk than thinking Hashem is physical. And that is not thinking about Hashem at all. That's the real risk in this world. When you think about Hashem with no conception of Him, then even though you might say His name, and you might go to shul for davening, it's almost the same as not thinking about Him at all.

That's one of the greatest dangers for a person in this world. To waste our lives saying *Boruch Atah Hashem*, saying "Hashem," "Hashem," all day long, when the word has almost no meaning to us at all - that's even worse than having a false picture of Him. And therefore it's better to make use of physical descriptions of Hashem

as a *mashal*, rather than to think of Him as an abstract concept – a word in the *siddur*.

### DOES HASHEM GET FURIOUS?

We'll take one example for now. Three times a day we say the words: וְחָרָה אֵף הַשָּׁם בְּכֶם - "And the nostrils of Hashem will flare up in anger against you if you ignore His words". Af is nose in *lashon kodesh*. So you're saying, "His nostrils will flare up with anger." Of course, it's not true, but if the Torah wouldn't say that, so you would think you could flirt with *aveiros*, because what is it anyhow? It's just an *aveirah*.

It's useful; it's important to think that Hashem is furious. The worker has to know that the boss will be angry at him. That's what you tell the worker. You don't say, "It's against the rules if you do this or that. A report will be written up against you." No; you say, "The boss will be *furious* with you!"

And so we say, "Hashem will be furious!" It's impossible to say such a thing but we say it anyhow because it has an effect. And for the sake of being aware of Hakodosh Boruch Hu, it was worth the risk of falling into the error of *hagshama*.

That's why last year when a pious man put an ad in The Jewish Press, he wrote there that "the fury of Hashem will be kindled against the man who makes New Year's Parties." Why did he use such an expression? Hashem doesn't lose His temper - He's always calm, and always happy, and His wisdom always burns like an eternal light, a flame that doesn't flicker. I can't tell you much about Him; you'll have to wait till you get there, but there's no question that saying "Hashem is furious," is applying a physical expression to Him.

### HE'S MORE THAN A WORD IN THE SIDDIR

And yet, that's what Hakodosh Baruch Hu wants. He wants us to have a *hargasha chushis*, a sensory perception of Him. And because we are physical – we have eyes and hands and feet and feelings – so in order for our minds to actualize and feel the Presence of Hashem we must make use of *our* physical and human features as *meshalim* in order to relate to Hashem.

A word in the *siddur*, an ideal – that's what Hashem is? Oh no! Hashem is more personal, more real, than we are real! And that's why we're in this world, to acquire a perception of Hashem as very, very real – more real than anything else in our lives. It has to be real –

a powerful and tangible emotion. And that sensory perception of Hashem, it's called *da'as Hashem*, that's what we came to this world to acquire.

#### DAAS - TRUE KNOWLEDGE

In the *gemara* (Sanhedrin 92a) it states, גְּדוּלְתָּהּ דַּעְיָה - "How great is this quality called *dei'ah*!" What is *dei'ah*? The *middah* of *dei'ah* is distinct from *chochma*. *Chochma* means to have information, knowledge. *Dei'ah* refers to the *quality* of that knowledge. And this we see everyday, that people learn certain facts intellectually, but they are far away from the person's feelings.

Here's a mother baking in the kitchen, and she tells her little boy to keep away from the hot stove because it hurts, it burns. Now, this little boy has no doubts at all about his mother's wisdom. For him, everything his mother says is an Encyclopedia Britannica. If she says it, he has full *emunah* without any *sefeikos* at all. But what does he do? He's a curious little boy after all so he goes and puts his finger on the stove. And now he cries out, "Ow! It hurts! Mommy, it *really* burns!"

#### BELIEVING IN DEATH

Now, the question is, what knowledge has been added now that he did not possess before? His mother already told him it burns, and he *believed* her; he knew that already.

The answer is: before, it was *chochma*, but now he has *dei'ah*. There's a big difference between accepting certain principles, and actually living with them. For example, everybody believes in *Olam Haba*. If you're a Jew, you *believe* in the Next World, absolutely. But do you actually *live* with that belief? It's somewhere in the back of your mind; maybe when you're about to die it occurs to you, "There's really a next world, something more than here." So it's a consolation to a person on his deathbed, but he doesn't actually *live* with the ideal of *Olam Haba*.

That's because we have *chochma*, but not *dei'ah*. We know that someday will be our last day. But nobody believes it; we think we'll get out of it. "I'll finagle my way out of it somehow," you're thinking. Now, if you ask him, "Do you believe in death?" he'll look at you with indignation: "Absolutely, what's the question?!" But when a person *sees* death take place before his eyes, that makes a tremendous impression on him. That's really when he starts believing in death.

### MAN'S FUNCTION IN THIS WORLD

There's a vast difference between *chochma*, knowing something intellectually, and *dei'ah*, knowing it with a sensory perception. And that's the very big function of Man in this world - to take the great intellectual concepts, the truths of this world, and make them real.

Now what is the greatest intellectual concept, the most important of all things in this world? The answer is, Hakodosh Boruch Hu. There's nothing more important than Hakodosh Boruch Hu. And we believe in Hashem, certainly we do. But what does it help a man to subscribe to belief in the existence of Hashem, when actually Hashem is never in his thoughts?

### SCHMOOZING ABOUT THE PRESIDENT

How many times do you speak about Hashem at the table while you're eating breakfast or lunch? President Reagan, he's real - he has a nose and a mouth, he walks and he talks, and you've even seen pictures of him - so you believe implicitly in President Reagan. And so, he's the one you think about and speak about. But Hashem? Hashem is so far from your reality that you hardly ever think of Him as a *keil chai v'kayam*, a true living Being.

Your Uncle Morris in the Bronx, *he's* a true living being. Your mother tells you all the time about Uncle Morris and maybe you met him once, at your *bar-mitzvah*, but you don't remember. You don't visit him, he doesn't visit you, but you *know* you have an uncle in the Bronx. Now, if you would believe in Hashem as much as you believe in that uncle, then you're pretty good! I want to compliment you!

### EMUNAH SH'LEIMA IN MY NEIGHBOR

And if you would practice up some - we'll talk about how to practice soon - if you work on acquiring *da'as Hashem* and now you believe in Hashem like you believe in your neighbor next door, so that's even greater; you're already a *tzadik*. Don't laugh - it's not easy. It's not at all easy because your neighbor has a face; you see him every day. And it's much easier to believe in someone you see than a word in the *siddur*.

But however difficult it is, no matter, that's your job in this world, to be as aware of Hashem as you are of Chaim, your neighbor next door. That's a great perfection! It is man's perfection in this

world. "Man's perfection in this world is measured only by his knowledge of Hashem or lack thereof" (Moreh Nevuchim 1, 54).

## Part II. Making Use of Physicality

### OPPORTUNITY OF TEFILLAH

The big question is how do we do it? Talking about it is easy but how do we acquire *da'as Hashem*? Now, there are many ways, and each one is precious - each one is a diamond - but one of the most important opportunities is *tefillah*, *davening*, talking to Hashem. You stand up and you ask Hakodosh Boruch Hu for what you need; you say, Hashem, רַפְּאֵנוּ and בְּרַךְ עַלְיֵנוּ and everything else we're busy asking for.

Now, if you're asking, so you're talking to someone. You're not talking to yourself after all. Of course, if you're davening just by rote, just saying the words, so you could be saying words for years and years and still not acquire any *da'as Hashem*. You see that all the time, old men who come to shul every day, three times a day, and still they don't have any more sensory perception of Hashem than they did fifty years ago.

### THE JEWISH FIJI ISLANDER

I'm not talking now about those people, the multitudes who pray and don't think at all about the words. If you don't know what you're saying so you're like the Zulus. A Jew who doesn't know what he's saying so he's like a Fiji Islander. If you would ask a Fiji Islander, "What does it say in *Ashrei* or in *Az Yashir*?" so he'll shrug his shoulders - the same shrug these Jews would give you.

If you're not going to try to learn what you're saying you might as well drill a hole in your nose and hang some beads there, take off your pants and dance the island jig. It's the same thing - you're a Jewish Fiji Islander! How could you pray every day and have no interest in what you're saying, no interest in who you're talking to?

### DOES HASHEM NEED OUR PRAYERS?

But I'm talking now to those of us who know what we're saying. And still there's a big question: Why do you have to *daven*? Why do you need to ask Him for things? Can't you just think it?

Don't say anything, just think: "Hashem heal us." Actually why do you have to think at all? Hashem knows what you need. You have to tell Him? He didn't know and now you let Him know? Why do you need the whole *davening*? It seems like such a superfluous thing.

The answer is this: Hashem doesn't need our *davening* - we need it! By means of *davening* we accomplish for ourselves the biggest achievement of life - *da'as Hashem*, True Knowledge of Hashem. The more you talk to Hashem, the more you believe in Him.

I told you this story once, but I'll say it again. One morning, in the *shtiebel* of the Rebbe from *Berditchiver*, the Rebbe sent his *gabbai* up to the *bimah* during *davening* to make an important announcement. In the middle of *davening* the *gabbai* gives a *klop* on the *bimah*: "The Rebbe wants everyone to know that there is a *Ribono Shel Olam!*" In the middle of *p'sukei d'zimrah!* A special announcement: "Remember Hashem!" Because even when you're looking in the *siddur*, and you're shaking back and forth, you need to be reminded that Hashem is not just a word in your *siddur*; He's *really* there listening to you!

#### THE PRAYER PARADOX

What we're learning now is that there's a paradox that's required of us. There are two parts to *davening*, one is what we should *think* and one is what we should *know*. What we know is that *אין לו גוף ואין לו דמות הגוף*. It's *ossur* to even think that Hashem has anything physical about Him. He has no physical form whatsoever. Intellectually we have to know that He is *נשגב ומרום על כל תהלה*, elevated far above any physical concept; higher than anything that could be expressed in words.

And at the same time, we must gain *dei'ah*, a sensory perception of Hashem. *דע לפני מי אתה עומד* "You have to *know* before Whom you stand". However much you know, it's not enough. You have to think about it all the time. Hashem is in front of you. He's listening. He's listening! He's listening!! That's what *דע* means. *Ki Atah shomeia* - "You are listening. You are really listening."

So you'll picture yourself standing in front of a king. That's how Hashem showed Himself to the *nevi'im* after all, like a king sitting on a throne *רם ונשא*.

Because it's so important to know Hashem, to gain a perceptible awareness of Him, so for our benefit, Hashem gives us permission to imagine that a compassionate old sage is standing in front of us and listening to us, or a king is sitting on a throne and

looking down with kindly eyes upon us and listening to us. Now, exactly what type of picture we should have when we daven doesn't matter, because no picture is real, it's just imagination. And so, each person can utilize whatever picture is more beneficial to him.

#### THE MOST IMPORTANT WORD YOU'LL EVER SAY

You're not just saying a *bracha*; even saying a *bracha* with *peirush hamilos* is not enough. The single most important *kavanah* is the word *Atah* – that you're talking to Somebody!

The *Mesilas Yesarim* says you should picture Hakodosh Boruch Hu standing in front of you. He's paying attention, "Yes, my child, what are you saying?" He's listening to you. Oh! Hashem is listening to us! He's real!

And therefore the first and most important attitude required for making a *bracha* is not the *peirush hamilos*, but the attitude of "*Atah Hashem*" – "You Hashem; there's really somebody listening."

#### WALKING THE TIGHTROPE

It's a mental tightrope you have to walk, because otherwise you forget entirely about Hashem. And therefore, the Torah chose to take the risk of *hagshama* because *da'as Hashem* is more important than anything else. So we have a right to think those thoughts, even though we know that these thoughts are only forms to help us gain an awareness of Hashem.

And that's why the words "*Atah Hashem*" are so important. That's number one! The first thing that you must work on when *davening*, and when saying *brachos*, is gaining the attitude that you are speaking directly to Hashem and that He is listening. The truth is that He *is* listening - no question about it - but you have to work on gaining that true attitude; you can't wait for it to come by itself.

#### IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO LOVE A NAME

And so, if you're thinking about Hashem, very good. But when you speak to Him, it's ten times better. Not only by *davening*. Let's say you're walking down the street and you think, "I love You Hashem." You're thinking? Very good; very good! But if you say it, it's a different thing entirely. Did you ever say "I love You Hashem"? "*Ich hob dir lib, Ribono Shel Olam.*" Did you even say it once in your life? Try *saying* it once in a while. It's a different thing – it's not the same as thinking it. It's an entirely different experience. Once you say, "I love you, Hashem," you're a different person altogether.

But how can you love something that you don't know? Go and try to love a *siddur*! Ok, maybe a *siddur* you can love, but try to love a *word* in a *siddur* – it's impossible! But you have to love Hashem; it's a command like all the other *mitzvos*! When are you going to fulfill that *mitzvah*? How many people have ever felt a real love for Hashem? How can they? It's impossible to love a name in the *siddur*! You can't love an idea or word – Hashem has to be real to you if you're going to love Him.

That's why when you say "Hashem" you should think that He is *Avinu* - He's our father. You say that, don't you? הֵלֹא הוּא אָבִיךָ - He's your father. "*Avinu*," you say, "My father." Oh, a father; that's a different story already. You start thinking: A father is kindly; he has love and pity. He brings things home for you. You remember when you were a little child and your father came home from work and he put you on his knees and gave you a little toy. Those were precious moments; you look back with fondness at those moments. You know why? Because it was a father *whom you could see*.

So you'll say, "A father? Is that a way to speak of Hashem?! I should think about a father?!" And the answer is, yes! In order to come to at least a little bit of love, it's necessary, to develop an *emunah chushis*, a belief in Hashem that you can feel not only with your mind but with your nerves.

#### "JUST DO IT!"

Now there are other ways as well, many other ways to practice up achieving *emunah chushis*, and in the short time we have left we'll discuss a few of them. It's not only *davening* – you have to know that doing any *mitzvah* is a great opportunity for *daas* – for True Knowledge of Hashem. I'll explain that.

You know what the word *mitzvah* means? It comes from the word *tzaveih*. *Tzaveih* comes from *tzavach*, to shout – the *hei* and the *ches* are interchangeable letters in *lashon kodesh*. *V'tzivoanu* means that Hashem is *shouting*, "Do it!" That's what you should be thinking whenever you do a *mitzvah*. You shouldn't do it merely *mitzvos anoshim melumadah*, just out of habit, or even because it's a good thing – that's not enough.

#### THE HOW-TO GUIDE FOR MITZVOS

Of course if you're careful to be *mekayeim* all the *dikdukei mitzvos*, you'll get reward for that, no question about it. אֵין הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרִיךְ

הוא מקפח שֶׁכָּר קָל בְּרִיָּה - Hashem will give everybody reward, absolutely. But it cannot compare to a person who applies his mind and uses the opportunity of a *mitzvah* to gain *da'as Hashem*.

*Da'as Hashem* is the greatest achievement you can squeeze out of a *mitzvah*. When you keep in mind Who it is that has commanded you to do this *mitzvah*, you become a changed person. Even if you do it just once, it's worth it. You're thinking, "Hashem is shouting at me, 'Do it! Fulfill My word,'" and those thoughts transform your mind from a mind of *chochmas Hashem* to a mind of *da'as Hashem*. And that's the most important accomplishment that Hashem wants from the *mitzvos*. You do it because you're thinking *אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ* - "Hashem is shouting at me to do it." And every day - not only every day; every *mitzvah* - Hashem becomes more and more real to you.

#### WOW, THAT WAS AN EXPERIENCE!

Now, that's already an entirely new way of doing *mitzvos*. When you're putting on *tefillin* you're thinking: "Hashem, I'm listening to you Hashem, I'm putting on *tefillin*. Yes, that's why I'm doing it; because You're looking down at me and waiting." Doing a *mitzvah* like that is an experience! It's an experience in *emunah chushis*. *Tefillin* is very important, but the *da'as Hashem* you gain from putting on *tefillin* that way is even more of an achievement than the *mitzvah* itself.

Little by little, if you do *mitzvos* with the *kavanah* of the *mitzvah*, *וְצִוָּנוּ* - "You're shouting at me," so little by little you gain a feeling that Hashem is right there. When you pass a *mezuzah*, so you kiss it - it's a habit, a good habit, a beautiful habit. But there are much greater things than beautiful habits. When you pass a *mezuzah*, stop for a few seconds and think, "*V'tzivanu!* Hashem commanded us to put up this *mezuzah*." That's *emunah!*

And when you are making any kind of preparations for Shabbos - you're baking in the kitchen, you're out on the avenue shopping, whatever it is - you should know how important that opportunity is. Think, "I'm preparing now for Shabbos because You commanded me to keep the Shabbos; You're shouting at me, *זְכוֹר אֶת* - 'Remember to keep the day of Shabbos holy!' And You're looking down at me and watching."

## HASHEM'S EYES ARE ALWAYS OPEN

And that brings us to one more opportunity that we'll speak about tonight, and that is that Hashem is *always* watching. He's always looking. And the more you think about that, the more successful you are. And that's why the Torah says, forget about the philosophy that Hashem has no eyes, that He's *l'mailah* from those things. Forget about that! We have to think that Hakodosh Boruch Hu is looking at us. And He *is* looking at us!

Think, He has eyes. Yes, you should think He has eyes. עֵינֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם הֵמָּה מְשׁוּטָטִים בְּכָל הָאָרֶץ - "*The eyes of Hashem are looking everywhere*" (Zecharia 4:10). He's looking! No question about it. And because we are human beings living in a physical world, we cannot imagine 'looking' unless there are eyes that look. So we have to think of *einei Hashem*. When you walk in the street, imagine a pair of tremendous eyes looking at you. Don't say it's silly. You're silly if you lose the opportunity. Eyes are looking at you wherever you're walking.

### HE'S AT THE WINDOW

Dovid Hamelech says it too! הַשָּׁמַיִם מִשְׁמִיִּם הַשְּׁקִיף עַל בְּנֵי אָדָם - "*He's looking down from the heavens*" (Tehillim 14:2). Now, forget about the sky, forget the heavens; they're too far away. When you walk in the street say to yourself, "Hashem is looking!" But where is He looking from?

And therefore it's not enough to merely say, "He's looking," because you don't really believe it. You know that Hakodosh Boruch Hu is *kulo seichel, kulo ruchni*; He doesn't have eyes to see, so you forget all about Him.

And therefore if you want to be a success, you will make sure to actually imagine Hashem's eyes looking down at you from the window of this house that you're passing by. Imagine that He's peeking at you from behind the window shade. Oh, now we're talking! Now you're beginning to feel it! "He is watching me." The truth is that if you knew there was a little ten year old girl staring at you from the window, you'd be aware; you'd make sure your shirt was tucked in and your tie was straight. Because a ten year old girl is real! And she has real eyes! And so, if you leave here tonight and try this for one minute on your way home - "Hashem is looking at me!" - then you're already on the way.

Now, if you try it every day - even for one minute a day, you're already a great man! Don't walk out of here and forget about

what we spoke. Even if you just do it for one week, a minute a day for a week, you're *dagul mei'rivavah*, you're one out of ten thousand.

#### RAV MILLER VISITS A SHTIEBEL

I'll tell you something. When I was in Slabodka I heard from the older yeshiva men that there was a *mussar shtiebel* in Kovno. In Kovno there was a special mussar house. So I went there. I left the *seder* once; I left the Yeshiva and walked across the river and went to the Mussar House.

I walked in and I was all by myself in the old Mussar House. And I was sitting there. "It's an opportunity," I thought. So I was thinking, I should work on this: "Hashem is looking at me." So I sat there for an hour. For a full hour I sat there by myself, thinking that Hashem is looking at me. It was in the old mussar *shtiebel* in Kovno. And I don't regret that experience. Not at all. I left that mussar *shtiebel* a different person altogether.

#### TRUST RAV AVIGDOR MILLER

It's so important and you must find time for it. The great *tzadikim* of ancient times spent weeks and months on that. Of course, they did other things too. But they were constantly working on this attitude, this awareness that Hakodosh Boruch Hu is looking. All the time, His eyes are looking at you.

Of course everybody says, "It's a waste of time, I know it already. I have other things to do, things that I don't know about." No, trust me, you don't know about this either. And so you better work on it until you feel Hashem is looking at you. It's a lot of homework I'm giving you, but if you do it and you get a little bit of *hargasha*, then it was worth all the effort because now you're living successfully. That's called living!

#### LIVING NEXT DOOR TO HASHEM

And so, when Moshe Rabeinu was told that he would soon leave this world and the Am Yisroel would be dispersed throughout the land of Canaan among all of the idolatrous nations. There was a peril that had to be countered – the peril of forgetting about how real Hashem is.

The entire nation had lived for forty years with the Mishkan, *the house where Hashem lived*, within their eyesight at all times. You can't imagine what it does to a person's *neschama* to be able to point at

a home - a real house with walls and curtains and roofs - and to be able to say, “My Hashem lives there!”

The same way they were able to point to Moshe Rabeinu’s tent, to Aharon Hakohen’s tent and to their neighbor’s tent, they were able to point to the tent of Hashem as well. That was how the Am Yisroel acquired *da’as* every day for forty years - that’s why they were the *Dor Dei’ah*.

#### NEW NEIGHBORS

And now that great era was about to come to an end. They were going to enter Eretz Yisroel, and now, that great period of *hagshama* was coming to an end. Moshe Rabeinu was leaving them and they would be dispersed over hundreds of miles, far from the House of Hashem.

And that was the great peril the Am Yisroel would now face - to be far away from *da’as Hashem*, sensory perception of Hakodosh Boruch Hu. They would be surrounded by *ovdei avoda zarah*; idol worshippers who could point at their idols and visit the homes of their gods, and bring food to feed their hungry gods. As false as it all was, it was “real” - it was something you could feel, something you could see with your senses.

#### BRINGING FOOD TO HASHEM

And so, in *Parshas Pinchas*, as they prepared to enter Eretz *Canaan*, they were introduced to the *korbanos*; the daily *korban tamid*, as well as the *mussafim* of the *yomim tovim*. The Am Yisroel, wherever they would settle in Eretz *Canaan*, knew that the *Kohanim* were bringing “the food of Hashem” onto His *mizbei’ach* every day.

And then, three times a year the Am Yisroel would make the long trek to Yerushalayim. For days, even weeks, the entire nation was traveling the roads to visit the House of Hashem. And for what? That’s what Hashem taught us in *Parshas Pinchas*: To bring to Me אֶת קָרְבָּנֵי לַחֲמִי, *My offerings, My bread* (*Pinchas 28:2*).

Hakodosh Baruch Hu said, “I’m going to give you the gift of *da’as Hashem* by means of *korbanos*. You bring *korbanos* to Me and these *korbanos* are going to help you believe in Me!” How is that? צַו אֶת-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם אֶת קָרְבָּנֵי לַחֲמִי לְאִשֵּׁי רֵיחַ נִיחֹחַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ לְהַקְרִיב לִי - “Command the Bnei Yisroel and say to them: My offerings, My bread on the fires, you should make sure to bring for Me as a sweet savor”.

*Lachmi* means “My bread.” My bread?! Can you say that a *korban* is bread for Hashem? It’s a *chiruf v’giduf!* *Chalilah* to say such a thing. Hashem doesn’t need any food. But Hashem says, “Say it anyway because I want it to be real in your minds.”

#### KORBANOS IS THE SALVATION

And that would be the great salvation for the Am Yisroel! *Korbanos* would help them actually believe in Hashem. Even though Hashem doesn’t need our food, He doesn’t need our *korbanos*, but *we* need it!

When they brought the *korban*, it was a shattering experience. They were excited! They felt that the *Shechina* was right there; they’re bringing the bread to Hashem. And that’s important. It’s not true, but it’s important to feel. We serve the king bringing food to Him in His palace. That’s progress in the great achievement of True Knowledge.

And today, when Moshe Rabbeinu is not with us, and the House where Hashem lives is destroyed, it’s no different: וְקָם הָעָם הַזֶּה וַיִּנָּה אֶחָד אֶלְהֵי נֹכַח הָאָרֶץ. We see people getting lost. Many people are getting lost today. Even the *frummeh*, we love them and we appreciate them to no end, but so many have forgotten about Hashem as a real and personal Being.

#### HOW TO FIGHT THE WORLD

And so we have to utilize whatever we have and fight back against the distancing of Hashem from our minds that the world is foisting upon us. The whole world is fighting against the truest thing in the world, Hakodosh Boruch Hu - evolution, atheism, materialism, liberalism - the world is doing its best to make us forget about Hashem. And we’re fighting against all of them. How do you fight? You don’t need to fight with your fists. But we have to fight against the weakening of the True Knowledge of Hashem that has seeped into our minds from the nations around us.

Today we don’t have *korbanos* unfortunately, but at least we have *tefilla* and we have *mitzvos* - and we also have our imaginations, pictures in our minds. You *daven* with *kavanah*, and you learn Torah because Hashem is looking down at you, telling you to learn another line of *gemara*.

You wash your hands before the meal and you make the *bracha*, “Hashem is commanding me - *v’tzivanu*, He’s shouting at me to do it.” And when you walk down the street you’re imagining that

He's looking at you from the apartment window - from behind that window shade He's peeking at me. Whatever you can do, you do with *hargasha chushis*. That's the way we fight back against the world.

#### TRANSLATING HASHEM INTO REALITY

And by means of this, all of our lives we are gaining an awareness of Hashem as a real entity that is close by - He's looking at us, loving us, guiding us - a real Being that is in charge of all of the affairs of the world. And when a person will make use of this program, the program that we find in *Tanach* of making Hashem real, he'll succeed at actually living with Hashem in his life.

And that's our success and our greatness here in this physical world, that's why we're here - the more real Hashem is to you, the more you have succeeded in your coming to this world. To take the great ideas of the Torah and to make them so close to one's perception that they become live and sensory pictures is the great difference between not knowing Hashem and yes knowing Him. To take the great ideals and translate them so they can be felt by your physical senses, that's the greatness of a man! And therefore, forever and ever a man will be measured by the amount of True Knowledge of Hashem that he achieved in this world.

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