

תורת אביגדור

הגאון ר' אביגדור מיללער זצ"ל

SEFER BREISHIS - THE CHOPP HOLDINGS EDITION

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SEFER BREISHIS

THE CHOPP HOLDINGS EDITON

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פרשת תולדות

WITH

R' AVIGDOR MILLER זT"ל

Esav and His World

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Part I. Esav's World

Signs of a Leader

When this week's *parsha* describes for us the birth of Eisav we read the following words: וַיֵּצֵא הָרֵאשׁוֹן אֶרְמוֹנִי – *The first one came out and he was ruddy* (Toldos 25:25), and we note right away that there are two things the Torah is telling us here. First of all, he was born *rishon*, the *bechor*, which on its own merit entitled Eisav to a certain natural position of leadership – that's how it always was, the firstborn was privileged to preside over the family service; he was the boss in the family.

But not only was he chronologically the leader, but he *looked* the part too: וַיֵּצֵא הָרֵאשׁוֹן אֶרְמוֹנִי means that Eisav was born red. Now, it doesn't mean that he had red hair, but he was red blooded in his cheeks – the blood coursing through his veins was apparent through his skin. Hakodosh Boruch Hu favored him with a strong and robust

complexion and that was looked at by everyone as a demonstration that *min haShamayim* he was the one more suited for leadership of the family. He had the natural look of a leader – strong and energetic.

And if you would ask the Edomites, they would tell you that this *possuk* is the reason they acquired their national name. They forever called themselves Edom in order to emphasize that their ancestor was born with all the physical signs of leadership and that they, the ones descended from the *admoni*, were the ones who really should have been the chosen nation.

They lived nearby – Edom was right next to Eretz Yisroel – and they never forgot that Yaakov, the younger brother, used wiles and trickery to steal the *bechora* from its rightful owner, their ancestor Eisav. He was the red-blooded one, who was born to rule; and therefore the name Edom was intended as a loud and permanent protest to the world: “Our grandfather was born to be the leader of that family – and it was stolen from us by the little trickster, his younger brother.”

A Different Perspective

But along comes the Torah and tells us a very different reason for that name: **וַיֹּאמֶר עֵשָׂו אֶל יַעֲקֹב הֲלִעֵיטֵנִי נָא מִן הָאָרֶם הָאָרֶם הַזֶּה כִּי עֵינַי אָנֹכִי** – *And Eisav said to Yaakov, “Feed me please from this red red because I’m exhausted,”* **עַל כֵּן קָרָא שְׁמוֹ אֶדּוֹם** – *that’s why his name was called Edom.*

Now, you have to know that whenever it says **עַל כֵּן** it comes *l’afukei*, to exclude what you might otherwise think. The Torah is telling us, “Don’t listen to what the Edomites want you to believe, that Eisav was called Edom because of his strength and ruddiness. No, *al kein kara sh’mo Edom* – *this is the real reason he was called Edom* – it’s because of that episode when he sold away his birthright for a bowl of *adom adom*, red-red, lentils.”

How did that story come about? The Torah introduces it like this: **וַיָּבֵא עֵשָׂו מִן הַשָּׂדֶה וְהוּא עָיִף** – *Eisav came from the field and he was weary.* Now, the words **וְהוּא עָיִף** – *And he was weary*, are not written merely for description. Our sages tell us (Bava Basra 16b) that he wasn’t merely weary from hunting in the field. They tell us he was

mentally and morally weary – he was discouraged because of a shock that he had just experienced.

The Shock of Death

That day, the *chachomim* tell us, was the tragic day when Avraham Avinu passed away. And for Eisav – he was about fifteen year old – the *petirah* of his grandfather was a big blow. It was such a shock for Eisav that *chazal* tell us (ibid.) that on that day עָשׂוּ כָפָר בְּתַחֲזִית הַמָּוְתָיִם – Eisav rebelled against the belief in the World To Come.

Now, don't make any mistake about it, Eisav believed in *Olam Habo*. No question about that! Whatever you think about Eisav, you have to know, you are probably thinking incorrectly. Eisav was a *ma'amin*; he was a son of two great parents, and in that great family *Olam Habo* was the breath of their nostrils – they lived *only* because of *Olam Habo*. And Eisav didn't say anything that would contradict that; he didn't come out openly and say any foolish statement against the principle of his *Avos*, against the principles for which they lived. It was just as impossible for Eisav to say that he disbelieved in the World To Come as to say he disbelieved in himself.

So what happened on that day? When Eisav heard the terrible news that Avraham had passed away he lost a certain amount of confidence in *Olam Habo*; he lost his footing and fell down from the great *madreigah* of his family, because to the human eye, death seems to be a testimony against *hash'aras hanefesh*, the eternity of the soul.

Seeing is Disbelieving

You know, when a person is walking around; he's functioning; he's eating three meals a day and he has money in his pocket, so it's easy to talk about the World to Come. Sure, why not! In addition to this world, he wants the Next World too, why not? So he'll believe in it. But when he sees a dead body, it suddenly becomes very difficult to believe in the Afterlife.

That's how it is – death deceives the mind to think that this is the *sof kol adam*, that this is the end. What's the first thing that you think about when there's a *meis*? You think it's the end. No matter how much your *seichel* tells you that the *neshama* lives forever,

when you look at that dead body it hits you between the eyes: “Look, he’s dead now. It’s over, finished.”

There was once a man in the shul by us, a *frum* man, whose father died. So I went to be *menachem avel*, *nisht eingedacht* and he broke down weeping as I was speaking to him. He told me that it hurt him so much, he was pained so much, because at the time when his father died, he looked at his father's body and he saw the lifeless lump of skin and bones, and he felt that it was the end, a complete end; his father is no longer. Of course, this man was a *ma'amin*. But all of the *ani ma'amins* that he rattled off after *shachris* for so many years, come crashing down into a heap of rubble, at the sight of the lifeless body of his father.

And that’s what happened to Eisav – he fell down from his convictions. You have to understand, that was the *ayeif* – he was weary not only physically, but he was weary spiritually. He was knocked out and discouraged and for a short moment he lost his footing – his perspective on life.

Losing the Leadership Privilege

And that’s why when the tired and discouraged Eisav came back from the funeral and he saw that his brother was cooking a pottage so he took a look at the soup of red lentils and he said, הָאֵרָם הָאֵרָם הָאֵרָם – “Give me now to eat from this red red” (ibid. 25:30). Now, that’s not all he said; I’m sure there was a conversation there and Eisav expressed some of his dissatisfaction and discouragement. And Yaakov was a sharp young man and he heard what Eisav was getting at; he saw the weakness in Eisav, the relaxation of his conviction in *Olam Habo*.

Now, we could give a little bit of *limud z'chus* on Eisav and say that he was *ayeif*, he was confused and that in a few days, it would have passed. I’m sure Eisav would have reverted to his family’s principles and he would have been restored to his composure, but on this particular day the sight of death knocked Eisav flat on his back. The sight of death made him lose sight for a moment that הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה הוּמָה לְפָרוֹזְדוֹר בְּפָנֵי הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא – *This world is only a vestibule leading into the Next World*. It’s a long hallway, but it’s a hallway nonetheless. And what’s the only purpose in this world? הַתְּקוּ עִצְמְךָ

– prepare in the hallway in order to enter into the grand ballroom
בְּרִי שְׂתַכְנַס, הַתְּקוֹן עֲצֻמְךָ בְּפִרוּזְדוֹר
לְטַרְקֵלִין, in order to enter the dining hall.

Eisav lost his perspective and for a moment he thought that the vestibule, *that's* the dining hall. It's like a man who comes to a wedding and even before he takes off his coat and checks it in, he pulls out a bottle of brandy and he drinks it all out and he starts dancing and singing. The wedding is inside but he's dancing in the vestibule. And he extends all of his energy dancing in front of the coat checker instead of dancing in front of the *chassan* and *kallah*. He's living it up until finally he falls down and they have to tote him home in a taxi – he's finished for the night! A man like that doesn't understand what a vestibule is for, and that's what Eisav did on that day.

Now, when Yaakov saw his brother so discouraged by the phenomenon of death, so focused on *this* world, he understood right away that Eisav wasn't the right man to be the *bechor*, the leader of the family. Avraham passed away? So what about it?! It's the Next World that is important! And when he saw that Eisav had lost sight of the basic fundamentals – because what is more basic than *Olam Habo* – so Yaakov thought in his heart, “Now is the time to do something for the future of our people. We don't want our children to say, אֲלֵקִינוּ וְאֵלֵקֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֵלֵקֵי אֲבֵרָהִם אֵלֵקֵי יִצְחָק וְאֵלֵקֵי עֵשָׂו,” and therefore, he said, “Sell me your *bechorah* because you're not capable, not worthy of such an opportunity.” A man who can lose sight – even for a brief moment – of the important truth that this world is only a vestibule before eternity can't be the *bechor* of the family.

Father Of The Lentil People

Of course, Yaakov Avinu didn't say it like that – he couldn't say it to an older brother; in those days they respected older brothers – but in his heart Yaakov was telling Eisav: “Look – if you are so discouraged by the phenomena of death, by the passing of a *tzaddik*, it means that you have lost sight of the real meaning of life, and therefore, אֶת בְּכֹרְתְךָ לִי, מְכֹרָה בַיּוֹם – sell me your *bechora*, your birthright.

And even though Eisav said very frum words – he motivated it with professions of humility: הִנֵּה אֲנִכִּי הוֹלֵךְ לָמוּת – *I'm going to die*; so what is this world anyhow? This world is nothing, וְלָמָּה זֶה לִּי בְּכֹרָה – *What do I need kavod for?* – but what does the Torah say about it though? The Torah criticizes him bitterly. I don't think there's another place in the Torah where Eisav is criticized as he is in this parsha. וַיֹּאכַל וַיִּשְׂתֶּי וַיִּקַּם וַיֵּלֶךְ – *He ate lentils, he drank some wine, and he got up and went away*, וַיִּבֹז עֵשָׂו אֶת הַבְּכֹרָה – *Eisav scorned the bechora*.

That's a tremendous criticism on him. You had an opportunity to be an *oived Hashem*, to make use of this world for achievement and gain merit in the service of Hashem, and you gave it away so lightly?! וַיִּבֹז עֵשָׂו אֶת הַבְּכֹרָה. The *gemara* says שָׁט אֶת הַבְּכֹרָה – he despised the *bechora* because he lost sight of *Olam Habo* for a moment.

And that, the Torah tells us, is the real reason the people of Edom got their name. עַל בֶּן קָרְא שְׁמוֹ אֲדוֹם – They are the Red Lentil people. It's an eternal reminder that Eisav lost his opportunity for greatness because he forgot what this world is for. Instead of being a name of honor – the *admoni*, one who was born for greatness – he became Edom, the one who traded his opportunity for greatness for a bowl of red lentils. And that's the eternal label attached to Eisav. He's the one who forgot his purpose of life because he weakened for a moment and he traded everything away for a bowl of red lentils.

Part II. Yaakov's World

The Business of Hashem's Servants

Now, this story in the Torah, as well as the words עַל בֶּן קָרְא שְׁמוֹ אֲדוֹם, are intended to be a lesson for us about how to live our lives in this world – how to properly do business in *Olam Hazeih*. The Chovos Halevavos when he discusses the servants of Hashem and their ways, he says, סַחְרֵי עִמּוֹ – *They do business with Hashem*. You hear that? Others do business with money, with certain commodities, but the servants of Hashem do business with Him.

Doing business with Hashem – that’s an interesting expression and we should study it. We understand business – it means you’re selling something and you’re making a profit. So what’s the business that a wise person does with Hashem? What do *ovdei Hashem* sell and what do they gain in turn? And it’s explained there that they sell their *Olam Hazeih*. They sell this world to Hakodosh Boruch Hu and in return they receive *Olam Habo*.

In our history we have had many *tzadikim* who made such business deals with Hashem. Here’s a *tzadik* in the days of Antiochus Harasha who is given a choice – bow down to *avodah zarah* or else you’ll be tortured to death. And so the *tzadik* decides to undertake this business venture. He thinks, “I’ll give away to Hakodosh Boruch Hu all my young years I could have lived, all of the *Olam Hazeih* – I could have married and had children and I could have enjoyed a long life perhaps. And I’m going to give it all away to Him for the sake of *Olam Habo*.” So סְחָרָיו עָמָו – he does business with Hashem.

However, this business of completely selling away your *Olam Hazeih* to Hashem and in return He promises you *Olam Habo* is not the right *pshat*. It *would* be the *pshat* in the example we just mentioned, of a man who gave his life for *kiddush Hashem*, but that’s a rare instance.

The Real Way to Do Business

What’s the real way to do business with Hakodosh Boruch Hu? It’s not by giving up this world for *Olam Habo*. It’s those who live out their lives normally in *Olam Hazeih*, they are the ones who are סְחָרָיו עָמָו in the best way possible. They do business with Hashem by utilizing *Olam Hazeih* for the service of Hashem – they live out their *Olam Hazeih* lives normally – and in return He gives them *Olam Hazeih* plus *Olam Habo*. The true *ovdei Hashem* enjoys all of his days in this world, and then he enjoys *Olam Habo* as well! That’s how they turn a profit.

This that Yaakov lived his life for the Next World does it mean that he didn’t enjoy life?! It doesn’t say Yaakov didn’t leave any red soup for himself. Does it say that in the *chumash*? I suppose he had some of the soup for himself too. Even if he gave Eisav a big portion, a double portion, a triple portion, so he filled Eisav’s throat and took

away the *bechorah* – but I’m sure that Yaakov had some more for himself too. Yaakov had *Olam Hazeh* – you can be sure he had more *Olam Hazeh* than anybody else.

Now, we’ll take some time to explain that because it is of utmost importance. A servant of Hashem understands that the way to get to *Olam Habo* is to walk before Hashem in this world, to walk through the vestibule planning for the grand ballroom. And as he makes his way through this world, he does it with the knowledge that he’s doing good business, making good investments in the future that really counts.

A Temporary World

This story, you remember, was told here already. When a visitor once came to see the Chafetz Chaim, *zichrono livracha*, so he walked in and saw him sitting in a little room. There was no furniture except a table and a bench made of boards nailed together. So this visitor thought that maybe they were renovating the house inside, the real house, and the Chafetz Chaim, in the meantime, was exiled to the empty room with makeshift furniture while they were preparing the house for him.

So the visitor said, “*Rebbe*, where is the furniture?” So the Chafetz Chaim said, “And where is your furniture?” So he said, “I’m only a tourist – I’m just a visitor here.” So the Chafetz Chaim said, “So am I.”

That’s how the great men lived – that this world was only a temporary place. You know, when you go, let’s say, to the bus terminal of Penn Station or Grand Central because you have to travel somewhere and you have to sit down to wait for your train, so you don’t order from the local furniture store, that they should bring you an expensive sofa or even any kind of a sofa. You don’t order chairs or a dinette because any moment the conductor will come in and announce, “All aboard” and you won’t be able to take anything with you except a few small things that you can put in your suitcase.

בְּשַׁעַת פְּטִירָתוֹ שָׁל אָרָם – *When a man has to leave and they call, “All aboard,”* אֵין מְלוּיִן לוֹ לְאָרָם לֹא כֶּסֶף וְזָהָב – *all the cumbersome things you don’t take along, only the things you can carry in your suitcase,* אֵלֵא

תורה ומצוות טובים בלבד – *only the Torah and mitzvos that you achieved come along with you (Avos 6:9).*

But Torah and *mitzvos* are not the only thing a *frum* Jew gains in this world when he understands that it's a temporary stay here. Because, does being a visitor in this world make *Olam Hazei* any less fun? Not at all! On the contrary, the man who knows that life is brief is the one who enjoys it most. That's a principle that never fails – the *tzaddikim* have more *Olam Hazei* than anyone else.

You know, the Chafetz Chaim who sat on a wooden bench was here a long time enjoying this world. He was here until ninety two years, at least. And he was in good health; he had red cheeks until the last year. He enjoyed this world – he enjoyed it all the while he was making use of it packing his suitcases with Torah and *mitzvos*. The Chafetz Chaim didn't waste any time – he utilized his ninety two years. But while he was doing that, he was very happy – more happy than anyone who didn't understand that this world is only a vestibule, *because he understood that he was only a temporary visitor!*

Tourists Have More Fun

I'll explain that. If you people ever spent a summer in a bungalow colony in the country, you'll recall there are two kinds of visitors. There are those who come for the whole summer and you'll notice that they're in no rush to have fun because they think that they have all the time in the world. But the person who is in the city all summer long until his mother in law gives him the bungalow to use for a few days, so when he comes upstate, he tries his best to get all that he can out of his visit. He packs his bags with the tennis racquets and hiking boots; everything he's packing because he knows his time is short and he wants to suck out all of the fun he can during his short stay. Which means, a tourist makes more use of the opportunities than a permanent citizen.

And therefore those who know that they are tourists are in this world, they enjoy this world much more sharply, with more zest than anyone else. You don't see *tzaddikim* getting into cars Saturday night and driving around looking for fun. Other people are looking for pleasures; *tzaddikim* already have them. *Tzaddikim* don't have to drink for thrills. *Yeshiva* boys never take a shot in the arm. They

have their thrills; they're happy with the *beis hamedrash*. They are thrilled in the *beis hamedrash*. Even to walk from the house to the yeshiva is for them fun.

Do *tzaddikim* who sell out to Hakadosh Baruch Hu in this world for the sake of the World To Come, do they actually enjoy this world less? Do they feel less keenly the pleasures of life than someone who thinks that this world is everything? It could be you never stopped to analyze it, but when a person understands that this world is only a temporary visiting place, he certainly gets much more out of it whether he is aware of it or not.

Happiness of Yaakov

And that's the reaction automatically of all those who are facing the prospect of *Olam Habo* – this world becomes a much happier world for them. And if you don't believe me, then try it. Think about *Olam Habo*. I'll give you a simple experiment which I always give you. If you walk by a cemetery, it always cheers you up. It's unfailing because the realization that life will come to an end makes you appreciate more keenly what you possess right now. When you know that it's going to come to an end one day, you enjoy it much more.

And what's the best fun in this world after all? It's the knowledge that you're accomplishing, that you're doing the best business possible by putting away for your future in *Olam Habo* that will be forever. Those who understand that life is purposeful are going to utilize it and accomplish, whereas those who don't know the purpose of life, they're going to lose out and waste that most precious gift that never again will be offered to them. And that's the opportunity to utilize their free will to accomplish something in this world. That's the greatest pleasure of all – knowing that you're achieving.

That's what Yaakov means – it means the man who has patience and he waits for the end. Yaakov comes from the world *ekev*. *Ekev* means the heel or the end. Like in **וְהָיָה עִקֵּב תִּשְׁמָעוּן** – *in the end it'll come if you listen*. Yaakov means the one who comes on the heels of the other one. Eisav came first, but Yaakov is going to end up the most successful one because he knows how to make use of *Olam Haze*.

Olam HazeH also was given to Yaakov because he's the one who knows that it's only a hallway. Don't think *Olam HazeH* was only given to Eisav. When it states Eisav had *Olam HazeH*, it means he was given only *Olam HazeH*. When it says Yaakov was given *Olam Habo*, it means he was given also *Olam Habo* – and he acquired his *Olam Habo* by means of knowing what this world is all about.

Part III. Our World

Don't Think It's Extra

And that's why we have to be on guard all the time not to make the same error that Eisav made. Of course Eisav knew all about *Olam Habo* – he could *darshen* about the Next World better than we could – but he didn't feel it in his bones. And therefore when that day came, the day when Avraham passed away, he lost his footing and became discouraged. A man who *really* knows about *Olam Habo*, when he sees that even Avraham Avinu has to pass away, so he starts thinking about how precious life is. Every day is like a special gift; every hour is wealth. When he sees even a *tzadik* must die, so he thinks, "How could I cast away the wealth of life and let it go by?!"

And yet, the error that Eisav made is the same error being made by all Mankind today. Even the *frummeh* consider the next world merely as something of *emunah* – of course they're willing to believe in it, why not. But when it comes to *living* with the idea; that it should influence all of their behavior, that's a different story. With their mouths sometimes they mention *Olam Habo* but they're not aware of it as a tangible reality. And actually it's the *only* reality! This world is **בְּחֵלוֹם יְעוּפֵי**, it's like a dream passing by and the Next World is the *only* real world.

Now, before we go on, it's important to understand that this belief in *Olam Habo* is not just an extra, a *middas chassidus*. Because when we turn to the *Mesillas Yesharim*, the textbook of *avodas Hashem*, we see that *Olam Habo* is everything! He tells us there that we must always keep in mind that the **יְסוּד הַתְּסִידוֹת וְשָׂרֵשׁ הָעֲבוֹדָה** – *The*

foundation and root of avodas Hashem is שִׁיתְבַּרֵּר וְיִתְאַמֵּת אֶצֶל הָאֲדָמָה מָה הוּא הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא הוּא הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא ... חוֹבְתוֹ בְּעוֹלָמוֹ – That a man must make clear to himself and convince himself of his obligation in this world ... which is preparing for the World to Come.”

Becoming Convinced

Pay close attention to his words because there are two separate functions here. יִתְבַּרֵּר means that it must become crystal clear to you what your purpose is in this world. But it's not enough that you have pinpointed your purpose. It's not enough that you can say, "I believe in *Olam Habo*" and you're finished. Because in addition to clarifying that, there is also the function of וְיִתְאַמֵּת, you must become *convinced* about *Olam Habo*. You must exert whatever effort is required to convince yourself that it's true. You have to try with all your abilities to gain a firm belief, a firm conviction in the reality of *Olam Habo*. You should be convinced of the existence, the truth, of *Olam Habo* no less than you are convinced in the truth of your fingers.

And that's why it's so important not to get too caught up in *Olam Haze* and forget your purpose in this world. Like the *gemara* (Avodah Zara 17a) says, once you become entangled with this world it becomes very difficult to disentangle; it becomes very easy to make the same error Eisav did and to sell yourself out to this world completely. Because the deep conviction in *Olam Habo* is the foundation of our *avodas Hashem*, whatever we could do to וְיִתְאַמֵּת, to convince ourselves of this truth, and then to convince ourselves even more, that is our obligation. *We have to spend time thinking about Olam Habo.*

How can you be preparing for *Olam Habo* if you never even think about it, no less mention it? Isn't that a tragedy? So we're not going to let that happen to us because we don't like tragedies. And instead of just talking about becoming great, we'll actually do something about it. We're going to get busy immediately thinking about the World to Come. Together we'll start an *Olam Habo* program. We're going to spend at least thirty seconds every day thinking about *Olam Habo*, reminding ourselves that we're in this world only as a preparation for the World to Come. For one half a

minute, remind yourself that this world is just a vestibule, a place to put your things in order, before the World to Come.

Every day at least thirty seconds on the clock, we're going to think about *Olam Habo*. You're driving to work; maybe you're in the room waiting to see the doctor, or even if you're standing on the corner waiting for the light to change – whatever it is – look at your watch and let it tick off thirty seconds while you are now in the World to Come, thinking about the purpose of life. That's the foundation of being a Jew – the clear conviction that our purpose here is *Olam Habo*, the Afterlife. Not that the Afterlife is an annex, something that is *also* going to be given to us. No – the Afterlife is *it!*

Getting Reminders

Now, reminding ourselves about *Olam Habo* is wonderful; wonderful! But because it's so important not to forget our purpose here, so what does Hakodosh Boruch Hu do? He has pity on people who forget that they're only walking through a vestibule. He doesn't want us to scorn our opportunity in this world and so He sends us reminders, all types of reminders.

And the biggest reminder of all is that *Olam Hazeih* tends to disintegrate. It's a fact; if you look around you'll see that's how it is by everyone. Those people who live only for *Olam Hazeih*, they are always disappointed because *Olam Hazeih* always tends to collapse and fall apart. You could have the most beautiful home and you bring the most beautiful bride into the home, sooner or later, it all will fall apart.

The paint begins to peel and the pipes crack. The house becomes old and you become old and you won't enjoy it anymore. Eventually the bride becomes old too. What can she do? She can't be a queen always – she becomes old too. If you invest in a home, you'll be disappointed. If you invest in glory, you'll be disappointed. It all turns out to be nothing in the end – it turns to ashes.

Your Children and Your Body

Now, some people think that the answer is to invest in their children; but the truth is those who live for their children end up disappointed as well. When people invest everything they have in

their children, they're going to be disappointed. Even the best children that will give you the most *nachas*, eventually will turn out to be a disappointment.

Sooner or later, the children become self sufficient. They marry and they go off by themselves and you are supercargo. You're entirely unnecessary – unless you have a lot of money and you can still dish it out in your old age, so whenever you come around, they'll give you a welcome. But otherwise, they get along quite well without you. Not because the children are not nice children, not because they're unkind; but they have their own life to live and finally they have their own grandchildren and you become supercargo.

Your own body begins to remind you about *Olam Habo!* When a man's hair begins turning gray, it's a reminder to him that this world is not forever. Now you know why hair changes; that's the purpose. In case you weren't preparing during all your years, so your hair is telling you, "Get ready now." Arthritis too! Sometimes arthritis comes along to remind you. Usually the teeth remind you too. They're not there anymore; and with teeth that you have to buy in the store, it's not so easy to chew the food that you used to enjoy.

Little by little, your grip on this world is being loosened. That's what Hakadosh Baruch Hu is doing. He's loosening your grip gradually. It's like when a parent is holding onto a dollar bill and the child wants the dollar, so he pulls off one finger of his parent and he then he pulls away another finger and finally he loosens all their fingers and he gets hold of the dollar. You ever tried it with a child? And that's what Hakadosh Baruch Hu does with us. Little by little, he's loosening your fingers from *Olam HazeH*.

All these reminders are a *chesed*, because they're reminding you that if you invest all your hopes just in that, if you put your hopes into *Olam HazeH*, then you're going to be terribly disappointed. People have to be reminded that this world is not what we are destined for. And it's a great *chesed* to be taught this lesson while you're still here in this world before you make the mistake that Eisav made.

Greatness In The Old Age Home

I once visited a home for the aged and I was looking at the old people. Old people – American old Jews, *burim*, people who never thought about the subject we're talking about here. It was a pity on them. They were sitting around, staring. Life had turned out as a disappointment. "This hurts me. I can't go here." There was nothing but disappointment. Only complaints, that's all you can hear. These old people had all soured on life because they lived for Olam Hazeh and now it had all turned into nothing.

But over there, there was an old man with a white beard, sitting at a table with a *gemara* open and he was busy getting ready for the next world. He was reviewing all that he had learned in his lifetime. And he was the happiest man in the place. He was busy because he knew he had a purpose and nothing had disappointed him. Everything was turning out exactly as expected! The arthritis, the false teeth, the nurses – they were all constant reminders of the great ballroom he was heading towards. He's getting ready now to cash in! He was counting now, counting all his bonds before he leaves and making sure he wouldn't leave anything over! He was a happy man!

A *frum* Jew who invests in *Olam Habo*, then he's going to have – besides for the feeling that he's a visitor here and therefore he enjoys every minute, every pleasure that others disdain – but he also has the happiness of knowing he's living for a purpose and he has prepared for that which Hakodosh Boruch Hu intended he should prepare. He lives life flush with the happiness of achievement in this world!

A Happy Journey

That's what the *ma'amar* states as follows: כִּןּ הִיא דְרָבָה שֶׁל תּוֹרָה – This is the way of Torah, פֶּת בִּמְלַח תֹּאכֵל – you eat bread with salt. You hear that program? You want to succeed in learning? Eat bread with salt. Why with salt? Isn't butter kosher too? It means this, if there's nothing else; if you don't have any butter to put on the bread so you put some salt on. וּמִים בְּמִשׁוֹרָה תִּשְׁתֶּה – And drink water with a measure. Why with a measure? Because you don't have enough water – even the water you have to drink sparingly, וְעַל הָאֶרֶץ הַיִּשָּׁן – that's your

dormitory, to sleep on the earth. There's nothing else. Of course, if you have more, even better. Nothing wrong with butter on bread or sleeping on a mattress. But the most important thing is that **וּבַתּוֹרָה וְעָמַל אֶתָּה** – *and you're laboring in the Torah*. It doesn't mean only learning Torah. It means *avodas Hashem, mitzvos*.

Now what does the *mishnah* say about that? How fortunate you are in the World To Come, in *Olam Habo*? No! Listen to what he says! **אֲשֶׁרִיךָ בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה וְטוֹב לְךָ לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא**. How fortunate you are in this world. The truly happy ones are the ones who know that they're utilizing their lives to accomplish something. That's the great happiness!

And when he comes to the Next World he'll meet with his ancestors, all the *Am Yisroel* that are enjoying their permanent world, and he's going to join them with the great happiness of a person who finishes a successful journey. Like somebody who leaves home for a journey and he goes to a different country and he makes out well and becomes wealthy. And then finally he decides to return home to visit the old folks and he comes back with news of his great success, of his big honors, his big achievements and his wealth.

He arrives in *Olam Habo* successfully, bearing with him all the merchandise that he had prepared, his *tzeidah laderech*. And that's his happiness – to return home with a report of success. If you don't sell your opportunities in this world like Eisav did so you'll come to the World To Come, **בֹּא יְבוֹא בְרִנָּה נֹשֵׂא אֶלְמֹתָיו** – *you'll come singing, carrying the sheaves of the crop that you sowed and you reaped by your life in this world* (*Tehillim* 126:5). And you'll forever be the successful businessman – the one who lived happily in *Olam Hazeh*, and the one living eternally happy in *Olam Habo*.

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A VORT ON THE PARSHA

Toldos

וַיִּתְרַצְצוּ הַבָּנִים בְּקֶרְבָּהּ וַתֹּאמֶר אִם בֵּן לְמִזָּה זֶה אֲנֹכִי וַתֵּלֶךְ לִדְרֹשׁ אֶת הַשֵּׁם
And the children within her struggled together, and she said: If so, why am I thus? And she went to inquire of Hashem.

When Rivkah felt unusual pains and movement, she sensed a certain struggle between the two children she was carrying, this wise and perceiving woman saw it as a portent of the dissension that would arise between her two children and that hurt her terribly. She believed *b'emunah sh'leimah* that her children would become the nation of Hashem, and because she imagined that these two children would *both* be fathers of the Am Yisroel, she was greatly disheartened that two Avos of the chosen people should quarrel and struggle against each other. It bothered her tremendously.

"*Lamah*, why, should I bear children for *zeh*, for such dissension?!" she said to herself. She was at a loss for what to do – that the beginning of the Am Yisroel should be with *machlokes*?! It was unimaginable to her! It would be preferable, she thought, that such children should not be born; and that at a later time she should conceive again and bear offspring that were *not* destined to quarrel. She was at a loss to understand what it all meant.

And when one needs an *eitzah tovah* the best address is Hakodosh Boruch Hu. The *chachomim* tell us that Rivkah traveled to the Yeshiva of Sheim V'Eiver to visit the well-known *tzadik*, Sheim, in order to "inquire of Hashem." And Hashem revealed to her by means of His prophet that *שְׁנֵי גוֹיִם בְּבִטְנָהּ*, contrary to what you think, *there are actually two separate nations within you*, and only one of them will become the Am Yisroel.

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

שאל אביך ויגדך ויזכירך ויאמרו לך

Q:

What is this Ayin Hora concept that I always hear people talking about?

A:

I spoke about *ayin hora* many times already. *Ayin hora* is when a person parades his success in front of others. He parades his prosperity for others to see. It hurts other people. Are you that insensitive to other people's feelings?! It hurts other people. That's all. It's a *tzaar*. Not everybody is as successful as you are. So make sure not to parade your good fortune in front of others.

That's why when you're walking in the street and there's a man sitting in a wheelchair. He can't walk anymore. He once used to be able to walk in the street like you. And now he can't walk. As you come close to him, walk slowly. Walk slowly as you go by. You have to be careful with his feelings. And you're going to parade your good fortune of having two fully functioning legs, in front of this man?! When you get further out and he can't see you anymore, then you can walk fast again.

And by the way, don't miss that very important opportunity to thank Hashem that you're able to walk. And say it with your mouth. Don't just think the words. That's laziness. Say, "I thank you, Hashem, for my healthy feet. I'm so happy that I can walk and that I don't need to use a wheelchair to get around." But when you pass by him, walk slowly. He shouldn't see you striding past, showing off your strength. A person has feelings and you have to always be considerate of those feelings. That's why it's very important to never parade your success before anybody else. It's a *tzaar*. And don't be *mitza'er* other people. Don't distress others with your success, with your happiness.

[TAPE # E-172]

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