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SEFER SHEMOS - IN MEMORY OF R' SRULY MILLER A"H

GRANDSON OF RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"L, DEDICATED BY HIS CHILDREN

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פרשת וארא

WITH

R' AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"l

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

Seeing His Wonders

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Part I. Observing Miracles

Purposeful Plagues

When we come to *Parshas Va'eira* we should make an attempt at understanding the general purpose of all the plagues that came upon Mitzrayim. As we read about the remarkable events that transpired at that time, we shouldn't merely relegate it to being a Torah narrative; instead we should think about the following question: What was the intention that Hakodosh Boruch Hu had by staging such remarkable spectacles?

It's actually very important for us to understand this clearly because it occupies a great part in our history and it's a big part of our Torah. And for us it's important not only in connection with our *sedrah* this week; we'll soon see that its lessons are vital for our world outlook and our private everyday lives.

The Torah states as openly as could be what the *makkos* came for: וַיֵּרְעוּ מִצְרַיִם כִּי אֲנִי ה' - And Mitzrayim should know that I am Hashem

(Vaeira 7:5). It's said once, and again and again it's repeated: בַּעֲבוּר תִּדְרַע – So that you should know, כִּי אֵין כְּמוֹנִי בְּכָל הָאָרֶץ – that there is none like Me (ibid. 9:14). So once and for all let's get this clear – the purpose of the ten plagues, the motivation of the *makkos*, was to teach the lesson of the Creator to the world.

A Mixed Multitude

Did these plagues succeed in their purpose? Absolutely! They succeeded immensely! You know that the Jews were always a stand-offish and aloof people; from the beginning we were “a nation that dwells alone” (Bamidbar 9:23). We didn't intermarry; we didn't mix with the other nations. And yet we have among us, in our nation, admixtures of blood of other races. There are all kinds of races amongst Jews because very many people came from the nations throughout the generations and joined us – sometimes in big numbers.

But never in our history did such a big number of converts join our people as when we went out of Mitzrayim. וְגַם עָרַב רַב רַב עִלָּה אִתָּם – A great admixture went up with the Am Yisroel (Shemos 12:38). *Eirev* means admixture and *rav* means a great number. They were so influenced by the lessons of the *makkos* that they joined our people; it means that in addition to the twelve *shevatim* a great number of Egyptian *geirim* came up from Mitzrayim. And together they came to Har Sinai and they all said *naaseh v'nishma k'echad* – and they meant it seriously!

And many of them still have descendants among us today. We have among us more Egyptians than we have of any other race. Today already we are not capable of tracing back their path in our history but they are among us. There are *eirev rav* who have become greater than us. There is no question that we have *talmidei chachamim* and *tzaddikim*, famous *roshei yeshiva* in our history who are descended from them.

Understanding the Hagadah

Now, to better understand the significance of this, we have to understand that there were many *Bnei Yisroel* who did not leave Mitzrayim! There were quite a number of us who remained in Mitzrayim.

You know, we are accustomed to say that the *reshaim* were left behind. We say in the *hagadah shel Pesach* that when the son, the *rasha*, speaks up, so the father tells him, אַל־וּלֹד הָיָה שָׁם לֹא הָיָה נִגְאָל – “You wouldn't have left Mitzrayim if you would have been there.”

So we think that all those who didn't leave were *reshaim*. However it's an error; it's not true. It's only relatively that they are called *reshaim*.

They weren't as good as those who went out and only the best were permitted to leave. The ones who came out were called *terumah* – just like *terumah* is the special portion that is lifted up from the grain so too the *Am Yisroel* who came out of Mitzrayim were the *terumah* of those who were left behind.

But the truth is that had those who were rejected lived today, they would have comprised one of the finest communities. It would have been a Meah She'arim, and surely a Borough Park; we would have been proud of those so called 'wicked' ones. It's only that compared to the great generation that left Mitzrayim, they were considered unfit and were rejected.

Diligent Students

Now, if that's the case then you can begin to understand who the *erev rav* were. They were the flower of Egypt, the intellectual aristocracy of Egypt. Not like people think that they were some motley, ragged multitude recruited from the back streets and slums of Egypt. Oh no! The *Am Yisroel* didn't take any riff-raff with them when they went out of Egypt. They allowed only the very best to come along – the nobility.

How did such a thing happen? How did it happen that people gave up their estates and left behind their palaces to go out into the wilderness and choose to share the fate of a foreign nation?

The answer is, the *makkos*! The plagues were such a clear demonstration of the Hand of Hashem that many Egyptians were permanently transformed; it changed them from head to toe and made them worthy of joining us. These people went through a course of training; the first course was *dam*, and the second course was *tzfarde'a* – a more advanced form of awareness of Hashem. *Kinim* was another course; each one of the *makkos* was an education in itself and each time a new *makah* was visited on Mitzrayim, everybody got busy studying it.

Of course the *Bnei Yisroel* were the most diligent of the students. But in the palaces of Egypt, the intelligentsia were also busy discussing it. And those Egyptians who made the greatest progress in studies, those who graduated with honors, they were the ones who merited to leave Mitzrayim with the *Bnei Yisroel*.

Pharaoh the Fool

And yet, at the same time, we know that some of the nobility of Egypt did not gain anything from these lessons; Pharaoh and his chief ministers closed their eyes; they did not learn from these events. וַיִּחְזַק לֵב פַּרְעֹה וְלֹא

וַשְׁמַע אֱלֹהִים, Pharaoh strengthened his heart and refused to listen (Vaeira 8:15). *Makah after makah* they refused to see Hashem in what was happening around them. Others yes; the good ones saw and they were convinced. *Hayorei es devar Hashem*, those who were willing to open their eyes became aware of Hashem. They looked around and said *etzba Elokim hu* – it's the finger of Elokim (*ibid.*). But Pharaoh and his chief counselors saw nothing.

When the Nile turned to blood; all over Egypt, people were talking. "Look at that! The Nile is red! The Nile is red!" Men and women, boys and girls, were talking about it day and night. It was a remarkable sight!

So we think, if the Nile turned to blood then it's all settled. It's a miracle that convinces everyone! And what about Pharaoh? So we're convinced that Pharaoh was an obtuse fool! He and his ministers were just bumbling idiots, we think.

Pharaoh the Professor

But that's not the case. We know that in ancient Egypt there was a good deal of learning among the upper class. Pharaoh wasn't a simpleton and he wasn't blind either. Only that he said what many people say today – you read it in the modern books on the bible, the college editions from university professors – that it happens from time to time that a certain algae appears in the water, a red bacteria, that under certain conditions can multiply very quickly and it makes the water look bloodied.

Not so long ago, in the Middle Ages, we suffered from such things. You know, the Catholic Church has a doctrine called transubstantiation. They had certain wafers that were kept in the church and one of the principles that they teach is that the wafer is the flesh of *oso ha'ish* – that's his flesh that's being eaten. When the faithful come for communion and they munch one of the wafers, they think they're actually eating his flesh.

Bloody Wafers?

Now this doctrine was hotly debated among their scholars until finally they were able to "prove" it. Because sometimes when they arrived in the church in the morning they found that the wafers were red, they had a reddish tinge to them. "Oh my!" they said. "The wafers are bleeding!" It's a proof, they said, to the *shittah* of transubstantiation; it's *besaro mammash*, it's actually the *mamzer's* flesh.

Why did the wafer start bleeding however? What happened all of a sudden? Ahh; for this they had an explanation. Listen to this *chochma*

ba'goyim: They said that it must be that some mean Jew sneaked into the church in the middle of the night and he pierced the wafer with a dagger. That was his way of getting even with their savior – he stuck a dagger into the wafer.

You understand already how intelligent this is. A Jew would risk his life for this fun. Because the Jew 'believed' it also; they imagined that this *frum* Jew believed their foolish claims and that he was so convinced by the doctrine that this is the flesh that he stuck a dagger into it. And we suffered because of their foolish accusations. The Jews were given what they "deserved" – not only this one that they blamed, but the whole community suffered.

Revealing the Blood Libel

Subsequently, the matter has been investigated and now they know that there is a certain reddish microorganism that grows on the wafers and can multiply rapidly. And sometimes it even looks like blood. Today they keep the communion wafers refrigerated, but in the Middle Ages they were kept in boxes and therefore it's not surprising that such things happened.

Now, Pharaoh certainly had experience with things like that; he wasn't a fool. He said, "The Nile is red?! I'm not that gullible. It's just a reddish bacteria that multiplies quickly that has caused the river to be ruined." It's true – sometimes there is a reddish discoloration, a bacteria, that can be found in the seas.

Withstanding the Pressure

Now I'm an amateur at this; I'm giving a very juvenile explanation of what Pharaoh actually said. But don't think Pharaoh merely looked at the water like a dumb ox and didn't know what to say. Oh no, he had plenty to say. And he said to his officials, "Don't be taken in by this cunning fellow. Don't forget, Moshe grew up in our palace; he's an educated man. And he's not a youngster either – he's already eighty years old – and he knows these symptoms; he knows all the tricks. It could be he smelled or tasted the water and he knew beforehand that under these circumstances this would probably happen. He was able to foretell that tomorrow this would happen. Don't be fooled by this trickster!"

And therefore Pharaoh had an explanation and he was able to withstand the effects that were intended by the *makah* of *dam*. Look, you had to be a very big *akshan* to say that the Nile was red because of microorganisms but a very stubborn person could say it.

And every *makkah* was like that. Every plague could have been attributed, if you were really stubborn, to natural causes. *Tzefardeia*, frogs. Frogs are not a new phenomenon in a river. The fact that suddenly there are a multiple of frogs doesn't have to be a *neis*. We even have documented cases when frogs rained down from the sky on certain districts. There's a book called "Lo!" written by a *meshugeneh* – Charles Fort was his name – who went around collecting these types of stories. He wrote other books too; I have them at home. And he documents a case where a hail of frogs rained down in the thousands.

The Abarbanel and the Malbim

Now, if such things can happen, why shouldn't Pharaoh explain it all away? So *tzefardeia* was a natural result of the *makah* of *dam*. The river became spoiled, and therefore frogs developed. A river that is stagnant produces frogs. A river that flows freely and quickly, sweeps away all the tadpoles. They get lost downstream. But when there's stagnant water so the tadpoles increase and multiply.

The truth is that's what the Abarbanel says happened. He explains the sequence of the plagues in a plausible way. The waters become bloody and corrupted which caused the proliferation of frogs. Lice also resulted from the lack of water for bathing and washing clothes. The influx of wild animals into the deserted cities was caused by the maddening effect of rabies and other diseases from the infested waters and then from the lice a pestilence developed, followed by the terrible sores of *Shchin*.

Now, the Malbim is not happy with that, he doesn't like that idea. But if the Abarbanel said it, surely Pharaoh had even better reason to say it. And the truth is that both attitudes can be utilized to understand what happened. We certainly follow the Malbim that these plagues needed no support of cause and effect; and yet the Abarbanel is perfectly correct in the attitude caused to Pharaoh by the apparent plausibility of such a sequence and he surely utilized these arguments to remain stubborn.

Part II. Observing and Ignoring

Pharaoh and Me

Now, we should pay good attention to this story because we'll see that it applies to us as much as it did to Pharaoh. And it's very important for us to understand this clearly because it's not merely a matter of learning *chumash* – learning *chumash* is very important, it's our life breath

– but more than that, whatever is in the Torah is not merely an episode in the Torah; it's a *torah*, a teaching for the future. And we're expected to live with the teachings of the *chumash*.

And one of the teachings here is that you can witness incredible miracles, marvelous happenings, and remain obtuse and unimpressed. You have to know that we are lucky we weren't in Mitzrayim. Don't be deceived; if our generation had been there we wouldn't have been too impressed. For *dam*, we would have given the same explanation as Pharaoh. For *tzefarde'a* and *kinim* too we would have given scientific or pseudoscientific explanations; we would not have seen Hashem as clearly as we imagine.

Miracles in Medical School

Don't we do that always? Here's a medical student in the laboratory and he's being told by his professor that a piece of tissue has certain functions and it's able to do this and this. Now, if he would be willing to open his eyes and see, he would ponder this, he would think about it – how could it happen that this piece of tissue can produce secretions, enzymes, that are essential to the body?! We know of at least one thousand enzymes that are essential for our wellbeing – some of them actually keep us alive!

And they're formulated in precisely complicated formulas. If you would take all the elements in the world, all the combinations, and put them in a billion test tubes, and shake them up and down for a billion years under every conceivable condition of temperatures and pressures, it will not happen that even one enzyme would be created. And yet this medical student remains blind to it all, no less than Pharaoh was blind.

He hardens his heart. It's not a matter of him believing in evolution – I'm talking now about a *frum* boy; he laughs at evolution. But no matter, he doesn't let the *etzba Elokim* that's right in front of his face affect him. He doesn't see Hakodosh Boruch Hu in that enzyme or in that cell or in the microbe.

The truth is that a medical student today has before him in the school *osos u'mofsim* that are actually *bigger* than miracles of Mitzrayim! Not only a medical student. Every one of us, just by walking on the street one can see miracles that are no less than the *makkos*. The trees and the leaves and the snow and the rain and are no less the *etzba Elokim* than the *makkos*. Only that we don't bother looking; we don't bother thinking.

Natural Miracles

And that's what we say to all those who need proof of Hashem; they ask, "Why doesn't He perform the same demonstrations today just like back then? Then we would believe! Why doesn't He turn rivers into blood every day? Why don't frogs come pouring out of the Hudson River in Manhattan and make their way into the movie theatres and all the places of ill-repute in Times Square? That would be a sight! That way, every man in every generation will have a testimony to Hashem and His power.

But Hakodosh Boruch Hu says, "Look, I gave you the lesson already. I revealed Myself to you. It can't happen twice or three times, because it loses its edge, it becomes meaningless. How many times do you want Me to break My word that upholds nature?"

"Why don't you go out and study the world the way I made it?" says Hashem. "The laws of nature, that's what I want to follow! Everything has to go according to the laws of the nature that I invented. Rivers are supposed to be water, not a messy substance that befouls the fields and frogs are only supposed to be in a certain proportion. Frogs are very useful; frogs catch mosquitos, they're part of an ecosystem. But once you have too many frogs what are you going to do with them? How are you going to get rid of them?"

So what do you want? To bring more miracles? You'll spoil My whole business here. I know how to run My world! Nature! That's My word! Not like people think, that the miracle is His word. No; nature is His word! Actually there's no such thing as nature. It's all *briah*; it's all creation. And if it's created, it means there's a Creator. 'Nature' is just Greek word which the Greeks conjured in order to conceal the *Borei*. In order not to talk about Hashem they said nature (Kuzari 1:77).

The Secret World

But we're learning something now that might come as a surprise to you. Don't think it's only the Greeks. *Actually, that was the plan of Hakodosh Boruch Hu!* Listen now because you're going to hear the secret of creation.

The secret of everything in the world is *that it should be a secret!* That's why Adam Harishon came after creation; the first six days Hakodosh Boruch Hu created all the phenomena by supernatural means. There were no seeds, and Hashem caused the trees to appear. Grass appeared! Rivers appeared! Frogs appeared! That's the teaching of the Torah and you have to get any other pictures of the origin of life out of your head. Everything came *yesh meayin*, something out of nothing, and the 'nothing'

was Hashem's word. And then, after the six days of Creation, that's when Adam came. When Adam first opened his eyes he saw a ready-made world.

Easy Emunah

You know had we been present during those six days we would have been convinced of the power of Hashem without a shadow of a doubt. Every time you would see a blade of grass for the rest of your life, you would understand that it's actually the *etzba Elokim*. And the truth is that it's a question: Wouldn't that have been a better way?

Adam should have come around in the very beginning and he should have watched when Hashem said "*tadshe ha'aretz*" and "*totzei ha'aretz*." Ooh wah, would that have been a sight! He would have been convinced like nobody's business and he would have spoken about it to his descendants. "Seeing is believing" after all, and the whole world would be relieved of any possibilities of error.

But Hakodosh Boruch Hu's plan was that it shouldn't be that easy. He said Adam should come when it's all over and now he opens his eyes for the first time and he sees a natural world, a world that's functioning all on its own.

A Place of Error

Asher bara Elokim la'asos – Elokim created that from now everything would be functioning "by itself." The rain cycle and seeds and food and children and clouds and daisies and apples and roses and *everything* – *la'asos* means that the world seemingly functions on its own with Hakodosh Boruch Hu in the background. It means that Hashem created this world in order to deceive all mankind, to make it a secret they shouldn't see how this world came into being.

Hakodosh Boruch Hu wanted the world to be a place of error. That's an important point you're hearing now. *La'asos* is actually the most important fact that we're told about the *briah*; no matter how great is the principle that Hakodosh Boruch Hu made everything out of nothing, it's more important to know the principle that it's a secret.

You can't understand anything if you don't understand that. The intention was to make this world a place of error, where the truth is concealed; a place where day in day out you'll be tested: Will you make your heart hard and ignore everything around you or will you look and see the *etzba Elokim* in the *briyah*?

Our Lifetime Job

And so that's our subject for tonight. Actually it's our subject for life: What is man's function in this world? To see how much he can exert himself to discover the truth. That's the statement from the Mesillas Yesharim (Ch. 1): *Kol inyani haolam nisyonos hem leadam* – Everything in the world was created for the purpose of testing man.

Once you understand this thesis that the world was made in order to conceal the truth and that Mankind is being put to a test to see whether they'll be able to peer through this thick veil of deception that Hakodosh Boruch Hu put up and recognize the hand of the Creator, so now you're ready to go out into the world – you're ready to pass the test. The world is full of demonstrations that Hakodosh Boruch Hu is around, very much around, and you're prepared now to make use of all of them.

And even though the world is made to look like it came by itself – everything is *la'asos*, working in cycles that repeat themselves to deceive people who don't think – but if you study it in the right manner, you'll see wonderful demonstrations of the wisdom of Hashem, of plan and purpose.

Seeing and Succeeding

But the same phenomena, the wonders of plan and purpose that can make people recognize the *Borei*, that same phenomena can deceive those who are too lazy, too hard-hearted to see Hashem everywhere they go. Like a certain evolutionist once wrote; he said this world is full of the most complicated and wonderful design. You hear that? Design. But he never made the next deduction, that design means there's a designer. You can't have a design without a designer. They say, "Look it's natural," and that means that they're being deceived by something that is of the most wonderful contrivance.

But for those of us who want to succeed, we know that just by walking on the street one can see miracles that are no less than the *makkos*. The entire *briah* was made as an opportunity to recognize the *Borei* and anybody who wants to see Hashem, can see Hashem in nature. To see a daisy growing out from a crack in the street on a summer day, falling leaves in the fall or snow falling on a winter day is no less of the *etzba Elokim* than *makkas dam*. Spring time, summer time, winter time, it doesn't matter; you can see Hashem on all sides if you're really interested in seeing the truth.

Part III. Observing and Learning

Walking with Rabbi Miller

Now, if you can't do it yourself, meet me someday and I'll take a walk with you; I'll show you something that could open your eyes just the same as *dam*, *tzefarde'a* and *kinim*. I'll show you a rose bush. Now, don't be disappointed when you hear that – I was walking with some boys last week and we stopped by some rose bushes and I said, "Look at the thorns on these roses. The rose is a beautiful flower and as we pass by we might have the urge – perhaps not us, but some other person might have a *yetzer hora* to pull out the bush and take it with him to plant in his garden.

"But as he would try to take it, he would find that the rose is armed. All the thorns on the rosebush point downwards so when he tries to pull upwards, he finds the *kabalas panim* committee ready to greet him, just in the right position. He pulls up and the daggers push down into his hand and he changes his mind; he leaves the rose bush alone."

Now, it could be that many of us pass by rose bushes again and again and not once do we think about the *etzba Elokim*. We won't stop to notice that the daggers are pointed. It's an interesting thing because in nature nothing happens like that; pointed things don't happen by accident. If it's pointed, there's a purpose there. Even the *reshaim* understand that. They'll tell you the purpose is to defend the plant. But like Pharaoh they miss the point altogether. We're expected to think about *Who* is defending the plant. The plant has no *seichel*. It's Hakodosh Boruch Hu's design! It's the handiwork of the Designer.

Newton's Apple Tree

Just to notice the daggers and to marvel at the science without recognizing the *etzba Elokim*? You're missing out on everything. It's like what they tell about Newton. When Newton was sitting under the apple tree, an apple fell down on his head. So Newton started saying, "Oh! Why did it fall down – why didn't it fall up?" That's a *chochma* of a wise *goy*. He was interested in physics: Why didn't it fall up? So he discovered the law of gravity. The earth is bigger than the apple, so the earth attracts the apple to itself. Oh! A very great *chochma*!

Only that Newton made an error. He didn't go far enough! He should have asked, "Why did it fall at all?! It should have remained on the tree!" The branches don't fall off so why should the apple fall off? And why does it wait until it gets ripe? Why didn't it fall off when it was still green? It waited until it was ripe and sweet and soft and then it fell off by itself.

Newton should have thought about this miracle. How is it that for months and months, as long as the apple was unripe it held on tightly to the tree and then, as soon as it became ready to eat, it began to fall. It means the apple tree knows you have no wings, that you can't fly up to it. It means that you see Hashem in the apple tree!

Oh! That discovery would have made Newton a great man. But he wasn't big enough to do that. To discover the law of gravity, he was capable of but the law of *etzba Elokim* he didn't discover.

Where The Apples Grow

So the boys and I made sure we weren't going to make that mistake. We stood by the rose bush and we marveled at the creation of Hashem. That's what you're supposed to do. Don't pass by! Every rose bush you pass by is a glorious opportunity.

Not only roses! Everything! Did you ever see an apple hanging from a branch? When an apple appears on a tree, you should gasp: An apple on the tree?! How did that happen? I was forty years old the first time I saw apples growing on a tree. I was a city boy; I never saw apples hanging on a tree.

For a city boy, apples "grow" in the big bins in front of the store, that's all. But I was once in a shul, I used to daven in the morning there, and I was the only *kohen*. I didn't want to monopolize all the *aliyos*, so before *krias hatorah* I would walk out into the yard, so that I shouldn't be called up to the Torah. So I walked out on that first day and I saw a sight! A tree, and red apples were hanging on the tree! I was amazed! I never saw such a thing before! It was the *etzba Elokim* no less than the *makkos*. We have to get into our heads that Hashem is speaking to us too from the rose bush and the apple tree as much as *dam* and *tzefardei'a* were speaking in Mitzrayim.

The Bee and Her Factory

Now, as we were standing there by the rose bush, we saw a bee coming towards us because the bee wanted to draw some nectar from the rose. We watched the bee climb inside that rose to get the nectar. And pollen fell upon her wings as they brushed against the stamen of the rose.

So we saw a marvelous thing. The bee was only thinking about getting nectar to make honey, but while it was doing that, it was bringing pollen from a different rose because a rose cannot pollinate itself – it needs pollen from a different flower. And so, the pollen that the bee brought from elsewhere rubbed off on this flower and the pollen that it

took from this rose will be brought to a different place to be rubbed off there. That's how the bee is a *shaliach* of Hakodosh Boruch Hu.

And that's only part of the story. If you look carefully at the legs of the bee, you see she has little baskets on her legs and little brushes. It's a fact. It has baskets and brushes. Because she needs pollen too. Besides the pollen that he accidentally gathers, she needs it to take home. He makes pollen cakes for the larva in the beehive. And therefore she has brushes and baskets to collect the pollen. Did it happen by accident that the bee has brushes and baskets? It just happened that way?

Of course she doesn't know her purpose. She's out for honey but actually that little bee is pollinating a 100,000 different species of flowers and fruits. And that little be is also preparing pollen cakes for the larva. Of course, if you're not hard hearted yet you'll see that it's not a little bee at all – it's the *etzba Elokim*.

Dandelion Miracles

I picked a dandelion for the boys with whom I was walking last week. You know a dandelion has two stages. There's a yellow flower stage and there's a stage when it's in the seed ball; a colorless gray seed ball stage.

I showed them that the seed ball always grows higher than the yellow flower. The yellow flower, after it's pollinated it loses its yellow flower and it becomes a gray seed ball, and then it jumps up much higher than it was when it was a yellow flower. Why is that? Because when it's a seed ball, the little parachutes in the seed ball have to be blown out to go elsewhere and plant more seeds, more flowers. But if it would grow on the same level as a yellow dandelion, it's too low in the grass so the parachutes would get caught among the surrounding grass. So when it reaches the seed ball stage, it jumps high above the grass and now it has no grass surrounding it. It has a free field on all sides for its parachutes to float.

I picked up a seed ball and puffed on it and 100 parachutes were floating in the air all around us. They were marveling. The *yeshiva* men were marveling when they saw it. One puff and a hundred parachutes with little seed packages on the bottom were floating in the air, each one perfectly balanced in the wind.

Each one of them was ready for its mission to go off even miles away. They can even float across the ocean; the seeds are protected in a tough jacket that can withstand the salt brine of the sea, and if the ocean would wash them up on the shores of France or England then as soon as it smells the earth, the jacket opens up and it begins to grow. It puts a little root in the ground and a little stem up towards the sun and it begins a new career.

A Different Perspective

Now, once you open your eyes and start looking at these things, your mind opens up too, and you begin to see Hakodosh Boruch Hu in the whole *briah*. You see *ma'aseh yadav shel Hakadosh Baruch Hu* wherever you look.

Now, of course most people when you say all these facts to them, it makes not the slightest impression because they're so deadened by *apikorsus*. *Frum* men in black hats and *payos* can be *apikorsim* inside. They know, they know; they think they know everything. But it's almost nothing because they don't think about seeing Hashem around them at all and – it's the same as how Pharaoh saw everything, in one ear and out the other.

It's very hard to drive home to them that everything which we call nature is planned as a *nisayon*; it's a test, an opportunity for a career of greatness. And it's a career that is never finished. Because to be convinced once is not enough. It's a job that must go on all our lives.

Always and Everywhere

And therefore, if some observant Jew will say to you, "Why spend time studying all these things? If you're convinced, be like all of us and practice everything now and forget about looking for some more convincing." The answer is that's not the *shitah* of the *Rishonim*. The *Rishonim* say there's never too much proof! Because it's a *mitzvah* to see things more and more clearly till your last day.

And just like you will be an old man and you'll still be talking about the *makkos* of *Mitzrayim* – *afilu kulanu zekeinim*; even old men must sit all night and talk about the *makkos* – seeing Hakodosh Boruch Hu in the world around us is no different because each time it gets into your bones more and more.

So if you're an old man and tomorrow morning you'll look and you'll see there's a daisy growing out of a crack in the ground, you won't harden your heart. A daisy doesn't just appear. Where do daisies come from? You know how a daisy comes? It's miracles upon miracles. It's too late to start talking about this subject of daisies – maybe a different time. Or maybe you should think about it yourself the next time you see a daisy.

Miracles Forever

Now by listening to this, you're not prepared yet. You have to practice this *avodas Hashem* every day and you'll become adept in this art of recognizing Hakodosh Boruch Hu in the world. You don't need any

books; you don't need libraries. All you need to do is open your eyes and stop making your heart hard and you'll be able to discover Hakodosh Boruch Hu.

And for people who have eyes the world is full of such miracles. You don't need to see rivers turning to blood to be a *ma'amin*. The *makkos* in Mitzrayim serve only as a model to open up our eyes and let us know *nothing* will help for the person who doesn't want to see. But for the person who is eager for the truth, the world holds for him miracles without number! It's not an exaggeration to say that the miracles that Hakodosh Boruch Hu shows us in the world around us are no less than the miracles of Egypt!

Have A Wonderful Shabbos

LET'S GET PRACTICAL

Seeing and Being Impressed

Every detail in nature is intended to be an eye-opener, a mind-opener, and our opportunities to see Hashem hiding in nature are endless. Every time I pass by a tree or a fruit or a flower or any of the other millions of *niflaos ha'Borei* and ignore it, I am "hardening my heart" to the spectacles that Hashem is showing me.

The way to begin softening the heart and to acquire tangible awareness of Hashem is by making use of the opportunities around us. This week, at least once per day I will stop to study one of the demonstrations that Hashem is making for me and practice revealing the secret of Hashem in this world.

— This week's booklet is based on tapes: —

67 - We Wish to See | 118 - Preface to Pesach 2
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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

שאל אביך ויגדך ויקניך ויאמרו לך

Q:

How should a person know when to enjoy this world and on the other hand when to be a *porush*, an abstainer, from this world?

A:

And the answer is whatever is good for your health you should use and enjoy in this world. If you like to eat bread and butter and it's also good for you, or if you like to eat chicken and it's good for you, why not?! Eat! But eat it *b'simcha*. Don't say "I don't like to eat." No, don't say that. You have to have appetite; eat with appetite and the saliva will flow – it helps you to digest. The stomach juices flow and it helps you digest the food properly. Appetite helps you digest. Enjoy the food and at the same time *ואכלת ושבעת וברכת את השם אלוקיך*, say thank You to Him. Any enjoyment you get from food or anything else in this world, thank Hashem, thank Hashem, thank Hashem! That's the purpose of all enjoyment in this world.

However, sometimes when people become enslaved to certain things, it's a ruination. You must be a *porush* from things that will enslave you. Let's say he's enslaved to cigarettes; in the beginning maybe he just enjoyed cigarettes but he's enslaved to it now. That's a ruination of a life! Don't be a slave to anything except to Hakodosh Boruch Hu. A slave to cigarettes?! No. Anybody who becomes a slave, so Hashem says, "You're competing with My service." Not only cigarettes. You can become a slave even to things that are superfluous to eat; always wanting to nosh things. Don't be a slave to nosh – it's not healthy. Anything that is good and healthy however, you have a right to eat and you should enjoy it and thank Hakodosh Boruch Hu for it.

TAPE # E-229

— This week's Q&A sponsored: —

Mazel Tov to our parents upon the wedding of our sister to Benny Steuer

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