

Sefer Bamidbar

THE RAHMANI FAMILY EDITION

FOR THE HATZLACHA, HEALTH, AND HAPPINESS
OF OUR FAMILY AND ALL KLAL YISROEL

פרשת במדבר

WITH

R' AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"l

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

Armies of Glory

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Part I. G-d of Armies

Soldiers in the Army

In Parshas Bamidbar, as the Am Yisroel prepares for their journey into the Wilderness – actually it's their journey into the future of being the eternal nation of Hashem – we encounter an interesting description of our nation: כָּל יֵצֵא צָבָא בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל תִּפְקְדוּ – All those who go out for *tzava*, they should be counted *l'tzivosam* (1:3).

The word *tzava* denotes “army service” and it means that as soon as the Am Yisroel left Mitzrayim they were mustered for the service of Hashem; they became an army of Hashem. ... בְּצֵאת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם – הִיְתָה יְהוּדָה לְקָדְשׁוֹ – When they came out of Mitzrayim,

they belonged to their Holy One. In what way did they belong to Him? יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמְשֻׁלוֹתָיו – They became His regiments, His soldiers. Not merely that He took us out – He took us out to be His army.

That's what Hakodosh Boruch Hu Himself said – listen to His words: וְהוֹצֵאתִי אֶת־צְבָאתִי אֶת־עַמִּי – “I'll bring forth My armies, My people” (Ibid 7:4). So it means we are not private people. A Jew cannot just feel that he is a man of leisure, free to do as he pleases. He's enlisted in an army – he's a soldier.

From Civilian to Soldier

Now, the first question you have when you're drafted into an army is, what's my function here – “What am I expected to be doing here?”

Let's say you're a civilian and you're drafted into the American army – did you ever see soldiers being drafted into the army? I saw it. In 1940, I was in Boston and I saw how they took civilians together in the city square. I was walking by and I was listening; the sergeant was yelling at them: “March! You're going to the army now! You're all drafted into the army!”

As they walked, it was a pitiful sight to see. Tall men, little men, fat men, skinny men, wearing all kinds of clothing; they were all out of step, some walking here, some walking there. That's an army?! That's nothing yet! A soldier has to forget about his private interests and train himself to cooperate for the one purpose which that army is supposed to fulfill. אִישׁ עַל הַגָּלוּ לְצְבָאתָם – Everybody has to go in a certain place, a certain formation, according to his military regiment (Bamidbar 1:52).

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Learning from Prophecies

And that means that the most important step in being a soldier in an army is to know the function of the army. What are we doing here? What's our goal? The army of Hashem has a certain function in this world, a sense of mission that unites us – *al diglo* means that whether you're a physician or a pushcart peddler, once you're enlisted in an army all the soldiers are united in one profession. And so it's a question that needs to be addressed: What is the banner around which the Am Yisroel gathers?

Now, it's interesting to note that we encounter that same word, *tzava*, connected with the name of Hashem – the *malachim* call Him, "Hashem Tzivaos": the "Hashem of Armies". We usually say Tzivakos, but I'm saying the words *tzivaos* so there shouldn't be any confusion; the *malachim* are talking about a Hashem of armies! Now, if we study that *shem kadosh* it will give us the clue to what it means when the Am Yisroel is called the Army of Hashem.

We have in our Tanach two prophetic visions, one of Yeshaya Hanovi (ch. 6) and one of Yechezkel (ch. 3), and even though there were over a hundred years between these two *neviim* they both saw an identical vision of the angels standing near the throne of Hashem and saying *kedusha* – the *malachim* are depicted as praising Hakodosh Boruch Hu and they're calling Him by this name: "Kadosh, Kadosh, Kadosh, Hashem Tzivaos" they're saying. "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Armies."

Perfect Glory

Now, you have to know that *kadosh* means not what people think it means – forget about the word "holy" because it doesn't tell you anything. *Kadosh* means "perfect" – whatever standard of perfection you can imagine, perfection of wisdom, perfection in kindness, perfection in power, it's all included in the word *kadosh*. Actually much more is included because we think only according to our finite standards and Hakodosh Boruch Hu is *infinite* perfection, more than we can ever imagine. That's

what "Kadosh Kadosh Kadosh" means. The Sefer Hakuzari (4:3) explains that it's not three times – when three times are mentioned, it's a form of speech that means forever and ever.

But the *malachim* are not satisfied with that. They're not satisfied with saying that Hashem is perfect *ad infinitum* because in order to understand what's meant when you say that Hashem is perfect you have to see with your eyes examples of his perfection. Otherwise it's just empty words – you sign on the dotted line, "I hereby fulfill my duty of proclaiming Hashem's perfection," and you don't want to be bothered anymore. It's an easy way of getting out of your obligations.

And so after the angels say, "You are infinitely perfect!", they add a few words: *מְלֵא כָּל הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ* – *The whole world is full of His glory*. How do we know that He's *kadosh, kadosh, kadosh*, that He's All-Perfect? Because we see His glory everywhere! Everywhere we turn we see His glory and that's why we can continuously proclaim His perfection.

Glorious Armies

Now, we have to translate that into reality. Instead of just saying abstract words – "the glory of Hashem" – let's come down to reality. What are the *malochim* seeing that fills the whole world with His glory? People think it means that Hashem fills the world with some mysterious glory we cannot see, a secret glory that is everywhere. That's also true but the verse is saying much more than that.

The glory the *malachim* are talking about is described to us in the name they call Hashem in that *nevuah*: "The infinitely Perfect One, the Hashem Tzivaos, whose glory fills the world." Hashem Tzivaos! – it means armies. Why is Hashem called the Lord of Armies? Because He has filled the universe with His armies – thousands of armies, millions of armies, whose job is to proclaim His greatness.

So you'll ask me, what armies does He have? So you're going to hear now a new *peirush* on what it means Hashem Tzivaos; I think most of you never

heard it. Hashem's armies are all of His creations in this world!

Ants are one army. There are billions and billions of ants and they're organized around the function of feeding the world. If not for ants, we would all die of starvation, because the ant tills the earth; the ant burrows in the earth and aerates it. Beetles are armies of Hashem. Mice and mosquitoes and cows and birds; everything in the world. The winds are an army: עֲשֵׂה מַלְאָכָיו רוּחוֹת – He makes the winds His messengers (Tehillim 104:4).

Tiny Armies

Bacteria, that's another army. He has armies of bacteria, all kinds of bacteria. There are billions of billions of just one kind of bacteria. I say billions but that's ridiculous – there are trillions of one kind.

Bacteria are what make cheese. You know if not for these bacteria, you'd never have a piece of cheese. Bacteria make bread. They cause the gases that make bread leaven. Bacteria causes the soil to produce. There are billions of a certain bacteria that fix nitrogen. Otherwise, you'd never have beans. Another bacteria army are the ones that cause your food to be digested inside of you. Your stomach is lined with bacteria that are at work. You have a big population of bacteria that are helping you carry out your functions.

Now of course you'll say, "Where's bacteria in the Gemara?" The truth is the Gemara speaks about it. The Gemara (Berachos 6a) said if you could open your eyes, you could see that we're surrounded by *shaidim* on all sides, millions of *shaidim*. Open your eyes and you're surrounded by millions and millions of creatures that are active in this world.

Function of the Armies

And all of these armies are working on behalf of Hashem. The bacteria and the ants and the beetles and the bees and minerals and gases and plants and thousands of other armies are His soldiers fulfilling

a very important function in the existence of the *briyah*.

And yet as indispensable as they are, their most important function is not what I told you, that they're helping us live, that they cause food and cause the existence of people. Their *raison d'etre*, their most important function is: to proclaim the greatness of Hashem! Of all the good things that Hashem's armies do, the biggest of their function is that they are praising Hashem.

Of course, it doesn't mean the bacteria in this rug understands Hashem. Bacteria understand nothing. The bees and ants understand nothing – they're not singing any praises. But the fact that they're there is a great praise to Hashem because they are the glory of Hashem that fills this world – they are the armies of Hashem that cause the *malachim* to sing to Hashem.

Angels in Awe

And so the *malachim* don't just sign on the dotted line! They're very busy studying the armies of Hashem – that's their function as the *tzva marom*, as soldiers on high. And they have very good heads, these *malachim*; they are *ilu'im* and in one minute they can think more than you can think if you'd live a thousand years. And what do they do with their tremendous minds? They apply their gigantic intellect to this great function of studying Hashem's greatness. They survey the entire panorama of the Universe – all of His billions of armies – in their wonder and awe, they express their understanding of Hashem's perfection by exclaiming before the *kisei hakavod*, "Kadosh!"

They don't say it as coldly as I am saying it by the way. They say it with a רַעַשׁ גָּדוֹל, with the most tremendous clamor of enthusiasm that the world would ever see because in that one word "kadosh" they have summed up a tremendous depth of profundity of understanding of Hashem.

But then they look back on what they just said and they realize that they haven't begun the subject.

“That’s how we speak about Hakodosh Boruch Hu?!” they say to themselves.

Endless Praise

And so they gird themselves for a new effort. They begin from where they left off and they go more deeply into the subject of the Hashem of Armies. With a very great exertion, they utilize all of the facilities of their endless intellect – it’s not endless but it’s almost endless – and finally, with a new understanding, a vast new discovery of the greatness of Hashem, they come forth with another exclamation **בְּרַעַשׁ גְּדוֹל**, even louder than before: “Kadosh!” a word includes everything that they said before together with their new understanding.

How long does this continue? *Kadosh, Kadosh, Kadosh*. For ever and ever they’re studying His creations and adding to their praises of Him. And they’re only able to say those words because they recognize that He’s *Hashem Tzivaos*, the One who created all of these armies. It’s the *briyah*, that’s the glory of Hashem that the *malachim* are so excited about and it’s only by means of studying His armies, that the *tzva marom* fulfill their endless function of praising the greatness of *Hashem Tzivaos*.

Part II. The Army On High

Purpose of Angels

Now, the question is what was Hashem’s purpose when He revealed to the *nevi'im* this prophecy of the angels saying *Kadosh Kadosh Kadosh*? We have to know the comings and goings of the angels? What’s it our business what the angels are doing up there in *shomayim*?

And the answer is that the creation of the *malachim* who are busy praising Hashem was for us! That’s a secret that many people – even good people – haven’t understood. The angels who are studying Hashem’s glory that fills the world and praising Him are meant to be a model for us, for our function in this world.

Of course, it’s not because Hakodosh Boruch Hu is interested in the acclaim of humanity. That’s ridiculous! As mentioned a number of times here, all of humanity to Hakodosh Boruch Hu is no more than all the bacteria in this rug right here. If all the millions of bacteria in this rug would all come together and applaud one of us sitting here, that man wouldn’t be affected at all – it wouldn’t mean a thing to him. And that’s as much as Hashem needs the acclaim of humanity!

Preparing in This World

He doesn’t need our praises – it’s *we* who need our praises to Him! Not only we need it but that’s our success in life.

I’ll explain that. There’s a very important statement which sums up briefly all of the information that you have to know about this world. Now, it doesn’t mean that on the *smach* of this you can go and *pasken shailos*, but it’s a tremendous guide – it’s *kidai* to memorize that aphorism and repeat it to yourself always: *Haolam hazeh domeh leprozdor lifnei haolam haba* – this world is a lobby before the world to come, *hasken atzmecha befrozdor kedai shetikanes letraklin*, and therefore get busy preparing yourself while you’re still in the lobby in order to enter the main hall. That’s the hinge on which *Olam Hazeh* turns – we’re here for the purpose of preparing for the World To Come.

And how do we prepare? The answer is we prepare by singing the praises of Hakodosh Boruch Hu! *Amar Rabi Yehoshua ben Levi kol haosek beshirah baolam hazeh*, if a man is busy saying songs in this world. *Osek* means he is busy, and *beshirah* means singing His praises. So, if you’re busy singing in this world, what’s going to happen? *Zocheh veomrah leolam haba*, you’ll be rewarded that you’ll continue to say the song in the next world.

And he quotes a *possuk*: *Shene’emar, ashrei yoshvei veisecha*, happy are those who sit in Your house, Hashem, *od yehalelucha selah*, still more will they praise You forever. You want to live forever in

the next world? So get busy singing! Next time you say *ashrei*, think what you're saying because that's a program for you in this world. By singing His praises here we are practicing up for the great song that we shall sing in the World to Come.

Heavenly Singing Lessons

And from whom do we take our singing lessons? From the *malachim*! That vision of the army of angels who are forever saying “*Kadosh, Kadosh, Kadosh*” is given to us so that we should learn to get busy saying the same thing too.

That's why when you stand for *kedusha* the *halacha* is that you should put your feet together (Shulchan Aruch O.C. 95:4, 125:2): Why do we do that? Because we have to be like the *malachim* and by them it says *רַגְלֵיהֶם רִגְלָהּ יְשָׁרָה* – they have two feet together, like one straight foot. When *malachim* travel, they don't travel with their feet moving. They never separate their feet. They travel like this with their feet attached one to the other. They can turn and they can wheel. They can go up and they can go down. But their feet are always together.

And so we put our feet together for the purpose of showing we are like *malachim* – we're reminding ourselves that saying *kadosh kadosh kadosh* is our function too. *נִקְדַּשׁ אֶת שְׁמֶךָ בְּעוֹלָם כְּשֵׁם שְׁמֶךָ יְשִׁים אוֹתוֹ בְּשָׂמֵי מְרוֹם* – “We're going to make Your name Holy in this world, *kisheim*, just like the *malachim* are doing in *shomayim*.”

Rising Up

Of course, our *kedusha* is only a token of theirs. Whatever *kedusha* we're going to say, even if we'll make a *kedusha* in which we go to the extremes of meditation and we'll discover endless fountains in ourselves from which there'll flow forth torrents, rivers of enthusiasm for the greatness of Hashem, we could never even hope to approximate what the *malachim* do with their perfect intellects. The *malachim*, in one second, understand more than all Mankind forever, together, will ever understand!

But they're our model anyhow because the truth is that even what they accomplish is but a drop in the vast and endless ocean of His greatness and yet they never stop – they continue to say “*Kadosh Kadosh Kadosh*” forever. And so *kisheim* means that we'll try to do the same.

That's why when we're in shul and we say *kadosh, kadosh, kadosh*, we rise on our tiptoes. Of course *malachim* rise faster; they rise higher. *בְּרַעַשׁ בְּגוֹל מִתְנַשְּׂאִים לְעֵמֶת שָׂרְפִים* – *With a very great excitement they raise themselves up*. In their amazement, in their delirium of excitement, their great minds are lifted up and they catapult a million miles into the air, way way up to say *kedusha*.

We can't do that, otherwise we'll bump into the ceiling of the *shul*. So therefore we make a little motion; we get up on our tiptoes. But realize what we're doing now. We're trying to make a pale little imitation of *malachim* because that's their function, that's why they do it – in order to give us an example of dedication to this purpose for ever and ever.

The King and The Armies

You know someone in our history who understood that? Shlomo Hamelech. The wisest of all men understood that this was his function in the world. The Tanach tells us that he used to give speeches, lectures, and people came to listen to him from all over, even from foreign countries. And it tells us there what he spoke about: *מִן הָאֲרָז אֲשֶׁר בְּקִיר בְּלִבְנוֹן וְעַד הָאִזּוֹב אֲשֶׁר יֵצֵא בְּקִיר*. It means he spoke about the very tall cedar trees that grow in the Lebanon, down to the *eizav*, tiny pieces of moss that grow out between the stones in the wall. He spoke about all the plants, starting with the biggest down to the smallest and everything in between.

Now, is Shlomo HaMelech a botanist? He has nothing better to do than teaching the science of plants? No! He wasn't teaching about plants. He was teaching about Hashem, about how *כָּל הָאֲרָץ מְלֵא בָּל הָאֲרָץ*. He was showing how each plant speaks about the wonders of the Creator; how every flower, every

plant and every tree is another army of Hashem proclaiming His glory to the world.

The Peach Pit

You ever ate a peach before? When you finish with the peach, there's a pit. Don't throw the pit away. Wash it off, dry it, and put it in your pocket to carry with you at all times. And use it as a study. That's what the *malachim* do – they study the peach pit!

Why is it that it's so hard? There's nothing in the tree as tough as a peach pit. Actually it's not even wood – it's a natural plastic. Why did the tree just in this one instance produce such an extraordinary material? It's so tough that even the squirrel with its sharp teeth can't break it open.

And the answer is that tree knows that it's going to grow old and die one day and that there has to be a future tree. Where will the new trees come from?

So Hashem made seeds – an army of peach seeds – and He has to protect them more than anything else on the tree because that's the future of all peaches in this world; the pits are an army preparing peaches for the future generations.

The Great Chemist

Now, if you look at it (*the Rav took a pit out of his pocket*) you see that it's composed of two halves that are pasted together. And try as you can, in most cases you can't open it up. Even if you'll take a saw and try to saw it apart, you won't be able to do it; it's too hard. It's a miracle glue.

And if you look at it a little longer, you see that the rim around the edge of these two halves extends beyond the cavity. Why is that? In order to give it more space to join together so that the paste should make a stronger bond. It's remarkable to study that – it's worth looking at it closely and seeing how the rim juts out beyond in order there should be more space to join the two ends together; the paste has a bigger space to work and it accomplishes a stronger bond because of that. It's impossible to open.

And yet, when you put it in the ground it opens up 'by itself'. The two halves separate and the seed is now exposed to the soil to begin growing. How does that *nes* happen?

The answer is that Hakodosh Boruch Hu, the great Chemist with a capital C, knows what kind of paste to make. It's a paste that when you put it in the ground so the bacteria in the soil – you remember the army of bacteria – they get busy on that paste and they destroy it and it opens up by itself. Otherwise it wouldn't open up and we wouldn't have peaches.

And so, what is this little peach pit saying? What is the purpose of Hashem's army of peaches in this world? They're saying, "Look at us and recognize the greatness of my Maker." More than for making peaches their function is, *יְרוּדָה הַשָּׁמַיִם כָּל מַעֲשֵׂיךָ* – *Hashem all your works praise you*, *יְאָמְרוּ* – *they speak of the glory of Your kingdom*.

We Should Speak

"Why did I make a peach pit?" Hashem says to us. "Just to throw it into the wastebasket, in the garbage can?! I made it for the purpose you should look at it. *לְהוֹדִיעַ לְבְנֵי הָאָרֶץ גְּבוּרָתִי* – *to make known to man the mightiness of Hashem*, so that the Am Yisroel will spend their days praising Me."

Now the truth is that *בֵּן חוֹבֵת כָּל הַיְצוּרִים* – so is the duty of all creatures. *Kol hayetzurim* means that *everybody is mechuyev* to do that, even the gentiles. So an old grandfather in Norway has to call together all of his Nordish children and grandchildren and say, "Children, we have to speak about the greatness of Hashem." And an old Zulu has to call together all of his naked children and grandchildren and say, "Cover yourselves up for a minute and let's talk about the glory of Hashem in the world." And they'll be held accountable for not doing it.

But it's the Am Yisroel who are especially chosen for this service. Yeshaya Hanavi says that openly: *עַם זֶה יָצַרְתִּי לִי* – *This nation I have created for Me*, *תְּהִלָּתִי יְסַפְּרוּ* – *that they should speak My praises*"

(43:21). A remarkable statement! It says openly that Hashem made us for the purpose we should speak His praises!

Our Function

Now, I understand that most people, even *talmidei chachamim*, don't even dream that we have such an obligation. It's a big *chiddush* to many people but when you start studying *pshuto shel mikra*, that's the plain truth – “I have created this nation that they should speak My praises.” It's not merely some vacuous expression that you might hear from somebody with a literary tendency; this is actually the fundamental teaching of the Torah. We are in this world to speak about the Creator.

And therefore, it's a task for all our lives. And so when you're sitting in your house, when you're in your place of business, when you're walking on the street, you should never lose sight of that function of yours. That's why we were organized as a *tzava* when we left Mitzrayim, נִקְדַּשׁ אֶת שְׁמִי בְּעוֹלָם – *our function is to sanctify Your name in this world* בְּשָׁמַיִם מְרוֹם שְׁמִי בְּשָׁמַיִם מְרוֹם – *just like they are sanctifying Your name in the Heavens on High*. That's why He made this world; that's why He filled the world with His glory – so that we'd always see His armies and just like the *malachim*, we'll always be saying, “Kadosh, Kadosh, Kadosh, Hashem Tzivaos, Melo Chol Haaretz Kivodo.”

Part III. The Army Below

We've Been Drafted

Now, if you never heard this before, you might ridicule it – you think it's just a small thing to recognize that מְלֵא כָּל הָאָרֶץ בְּבוֹדוֹ. But now is the time once and for all to realize that it's not small at all: Iyov made a declaration, הֲלֹא עָבָא לְאִנּוּשׁ עַלֵי אָרֶץ – *Is there not a military service for men upon this earth?* (7:1), and that means it's a serious business. You've been inducted into an army and you have a function “upon this earth” that requires your attention.

And you can't just say “*kadosh, kadosh, kadosh*” in the shul and imagine you've fulfilled your obligation. “Certainly,” you'll say, “what is there to talk about?!” Hashem is perfect and that ends the discussion – you want to retire and take vacation from any more work.

Oh no, that's nothing yet! That's only the beginning – we have to actually learn the art of praising Hashem in order to be able to serve in His army. And the first lesson is that we must keep our eyes open and see the greatness of Hashem in this world.

The Lowly Soil

Now, in his *Emunas V'Deos*, Rabbeinu Saadya Gaon makes the following declaration. He says when you look at this world, you see that everything in the world is for the purpose of eating. It's a remarkable statement. *Olam Haze* is a place filled with armies of Hashem tasked with the purpose of creating food.

First of all, the whole world is covered with soil. Now, soil is a very queer material – there's nothing like it in the universe. There's no soil on the moon. There's no soil on Mars. And you can safely say there's no soil on any one of the trillions of heavenly bodies because soil is not an accident – it's a marvelous material, almost unmatched among all the chemical combinations, that is capable of producing all the necessities of mankind and all the bodies of mankind. Everything comes from the surface of soil that carpets the earth.

When you study soil – I don't know much about it but if you take one tablespoon full of soil you should look at it with *derech eretz*. You know why? Because it's alive! I said it's a complicated chemical combination but the truth is that the soil is more alive than inanimate; it's full of living creatures. You don't see it, but in one tablespoon full of dirt there are as many living creatures as there are human beings in all of Greater New York. It's filled with functioning organisms, bacteria and fungi, and

they're all busy **עוֹשִׂים בְּאַיְמָה רְצוֹן קוֹנֵם**. They're all busy serving Hashem.

The Lowly Earthworm

You know, sometimes if you look down at the ground when it rains you might see earthworms lying on the soil. They are being drowned in their holes, in their burrows, and now they're lying on top. Take a good look at that earthworm – look at it with the *greste kavod* (greatest respect) because you're seeing now the armies of Hashem. These earthworms are our saviors – they are constantly boring through the soil, swallowing the earth and excreting it. They're an army dedicated to aerating and fertilizing the soil; it's the army of earthworms that make the soil effective.

That's why when you see an earthworm on a rainy day crawl out, you'd be doing a good service if you'd pick it up and throw it back again on the soil; on the concrete it soon will dry up when the sun begins to shine and it's finished – but it's too good for that, it's too important. So if you want, pick it up and throw it back on the soil because that earthworm keeps you going. If there were no earthworms, we wouldn't eat. It's a fact – it's not my statement.

More Armies

I wish I could talk to you all night about Hashem's armies. The bees are a tremendous army – there are about two trillion bees in the world – and they cause more than a hundred thousand different species of plants and fruits to propagate; it means bees are for food. Ants are for food! The clouds are for food! Rain is for food. Can wheat grow without rain? Rain means that wheat is coming down, potatoes and watermelons are coming down.

עוֹשֶׂה מְלֶאכֶיךָ רוּחוֹת – Hashem makes His winds into an army. Wind is for food! We explained here many times that **אֵי אֶפְשֶׁר לְעוֹלָם בְּלֹא רוּחוֹת**, the world couldn't exist without the wind. I won't take up the time now to explain that again but the winds and the carbon dioxide and sunlight are all armies of Hashem and they are all speaking about one great

thing – they're all together saying, **פּוֹתַח אֶת יָדְךָ** – You Hashem are opening wide Your hand, **וּמְשַׁבֵּיעַ לְכֹל חַי**, and You supply food to all of the living.”

Your Ticket to the Next World

But what does it help if the armies of Hashem are hard at work proclaiming His greatness while the Am Hashem is quiet? And that's why we too have to get busy singing along with them all the time.

Everyone knows that the Gemara says **כָּל הָאוֹמֵר בְּלַיְלָה לְיָדוֹ ג' פְּעָמִים בְּכָל יוֹם מְבַטֵּחַ לוֹ שֶׁהוּא בֶן עוֹלָם הַבָּא** – If you say *Ashrei* three times a day, you're a *ben Olam Habo*, and it's because of that *possuk*, **פּוֹתַח אֶת יָדְךָ**, **וּמְשַׁבֵּיעַ לְכֹל חַי רְצוֹן**. If you'll take those words and proclaim them three times a day, that's your ticket to *Olam Habo*.

Now that's a big bargain! It's so easy! But like all bargains, you know, there's some catch to it. And the catch is that you have to put your head into it.

That's why we do something to remind ourselves. Some people touch their *tefillin* when they say these words. Sefardim, when they say **פּוֹתַח אֶת יָדְךָ**, they make like this with their hands. They do something to emphasize that this *possuk* is very important for us. All *pesukim* are important, but this *possuk* is the greatest because it gives you the right to go to *Olam Habo*. *Olam Habo* for a *possuk*?! Yes! Because you're fulfilling your function in this world of seeing the greatness of Hashem – the **מְלֶאכֶת כָּל הָאָרֶץ בְּבוֹדוֹ**.

Practice Up

Now since everybody is certainly eager to become a *ben Olam Habo* and the Gemara is offering us such a glorious opportunity – it seems not too difficult after all – so we should do our best to make use of it. It means when you're saying **פּוֹתַח אֶת יָדְךָ**, you should spend a little time thinking of the ideas that are included in that *possuk*. Let other people hurry and finish up and go home. It's alright – you can spend a minute; it's worth the investment. It's an investment for *Olam Habo*.

Only that if your mind is empty so there's not much you can invest in those words – you have nothing to think about. And so it's a good idea to prepare when you're not *davening*, to practice up as you walk in the street. Accustom yourself to seeing the מְלֵא כָּל הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ wherever you go.

Now, that's already a soldier! You're training yourself to be dedicated to your function even as you're walking on the city street. After all, even in the city you don't see only concrete, only pavement. Every block you see some soil. You see trees and grass and birds and clouds. Stop for a minute to think about what you're seeing. You're seeing the glory of Hashem in this world.

Sing It

You pass by a fruit store and see the wonderful colors, red and green and golden, and you're thinking of the apple seeds. Apple seeds are a tremendous army of Hashem. I'll tell you a good idea. Let's say you're eating a tomato or an apple; spit out the seeds and put them in your pocket. Carry it around with you from time to time. I do it. I keep apple seeds in my pocket, and when I'm walking down the street I take them out sometimes to look at them. I marvel at them. People write to me that I should send them some of my seeds. I go to the post office and I mail my seeds to people. Apple seeds are *nissei nissim*! That's something to think about while you're on the street passing the fruit store.

So now when you go back into the *beis haknesses*, because you practiced up outside, so now your *davenen* means something else. Now you can take these thoughts and you pack all your enthusiasm into the words – all the *lomdus* that you gained on the street you put into those words in *Ashrei* and it becomes full of all kinds of inspiration for you.

You're excited about Hashem now! פּוֹתֵחַ אֶת יָדְךָ – *Ayayayayayay!* You can sing a little bit. Some people sing when they say it; they remember it better that

way. Reb Yisroel Salanter used to say that when you learn *mussar* you should say, “*Ayayayayayay!*” The *yeshivas* when they learn *mussar*, they don't say just the words alone; they say “*Ayayayay!*” to impress on themselves how great a lesson that is. “You open Your Hand” – it means all of Your power! *Ayayayayay!* וּמִשְׁבִּיעַ לְכֹל חַי רְצוֹן – *Ayayayayay!* You're not yet singing like the *malachim* sing, but it's still something – it's a song that acquires for you *Olam Habo*.

Becoming an Angel

And when it comes to *kedusha* too, so the one who utilized the street, his *kedusha* becomes an entirely different *kedusha*. You're like a *malach* now; your feet are together and you're on your toes and you're reminding yourself about the glory of Hashem *Tzivaos*. When you say “*Kadosh, Kadosh, Kadosh!*” it means something now!

Now this may seem exaggerated, but the truth is if you do it even for one minute a day, it's a tremendous achievement. It was worth coming here just for that! So don't say, “Well, I can't have this in mind a whole day long. I'm not an angel!” So Hashem says, “What about it?! Do it for one minute and that's a very great success in life!” If you can spend just one minute a day thinking about what we spoke about here tonight so you're already a very big *tzaddik* – you're taller than anybody else! If you do it two minutes a day, *ashreichem*, you're a fortunate person.

You're fortunate because you've learned this lesson of what it means to be in the *tzava* of Hashem. נִקְדַּשׁ אֶת שְׁמֹךְ בְּעוֹלָם – Hashem's soldiers say, “We're going to spend our lives seeing Your perfection in this world and praising You without end. בְּנֶשֶׁם שְׁמֹךְ יִשִּׁים אוֹתוֹ בְּשָׂמֵי מְרוֹם – Just like the *malachim* say *kadosh, kadosh, kadosh* forever, *bli neder* we'll try to emulate them.

And Hakodosh Boruch Hu says to us, “You're fulfilling now your military service that I created you for. הֵלָא צָבָא לְאִנוּשׁ עָלֵי אָרֶץ – *Man is created to be a tzava on this earth.* “That's what I made this world

for, says Hashem, “so that you should see My glory wherever you turn. So not only the birds are praising Me, not only the bacteria are praising Me, not only *malachim* are praising Me, but the *malachim shel mateh*, the Am Yisroel are fulfilling their function in this world. And *kol ha’osek b’shira b’olam hazeh*, anyone who busies himself singing to Hashem in this world, *zocheh veomrah leolam habo*, he’ll be rewarded that he’ll continue to say the song in the next world. He’ll live forever because he’s the one who has fulfilled his function in the army of Hashem.

Have A Wonderful Shabbos

LET’S GET PRACTICAL

Joining the Army of His Glory

Being in the army of Hashem means that we’re expected to keep our focus on the function for which Hashem has drafted us – we are soldiers organized around the mission of seeing the glory of Hashem that He revealed to us by means of His creations.

This week I will spend one minute a day focusing on this function of mine as a soldier in the army of Hashem. I won’t merely focus on seeing the greatness of Hashem for that one minute but I will do it with the intention of fulfilling my duty in this world. And then at least once a day I will take that sense of mission and that inspiration and put it into my tefillah when I come to *poseiach es yadecha* or *kedusha*.

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

שאל אביך ויגידך זקניך ויאמרו לך

Q:

It says that *gedolah shimusha shel Torah yoseir m’limudah* – serving a talmid chochom is greater than learning Torah from him. But if *Talmud Torah k’neged kulam*, if learning Torah is better than any mitzvah, so why is serving your rebbe better than learning

A:

Shimusha shel Torah here means to serve *talmidei chachamim* and to be around them as much as possible in their daily activities. When you serve *talmidei chachomim* – I’m talking about the old ones who were called *talmidei chachomim* – so everything they did was Torah. The way they spoke, the way they walked, everything! So you saw Torah in practice.

When you see Torah *l’maaseh*, in practice, it’s more effective than when you hear Torah with your mind. In your mind, it’s just like a *chalom*, a dream; too often it’s just far off ideals. It’s imagination, a *yediah rechokah*. But when you look at a *tzaddik gamur*, a real *talmid chochom*, so everything he does is done according to the ideals of the Torah. Whatever he says is Torah. Even the way he looks at things is Torah; his *tenuos*, his motions were Torah.

Now, I won’t say that today that we have people who are exactly like that, but even today there are plenty of *tzaddikim* that by spending time with them, you’re going to learn things *l’maaseh*, things that you can never learn from *seforim*. You heard it once maybe, you read it once in a *sefer*, but it had a very weak effect on you. But *shimusha shel Torah*, when you learn Torah by means of being in contact with people who actually live the Torah, that’s a whole different way of learning how to live a Torah life. It’s so much more effective, and that’s why *shimusha*, coming in contact with *tzadikim* and learning Torah by watching them, is greater than learning from *seforim*.

TAPE # E-18