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R' AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"l

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

Covenant of Connection

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Part I. Made for Improvement

Diverted Instincts

The sefer Chovos Halevovos (Bechina 4) declares that Mankind is endowed with two sets of instincts. The first set, the ones that are most familiar to us, are those that enable him to survive physically; the instinct to eat, the instinct to sleep, to sneeze, to swallow. A little baby, as soon as he's born, has the instinct of suckling and swallowing; he doesn't have to be taught these techniques because Hakodosh Boruch Hu has already equipped him with the ability to survive. There are very many instincts like that,

natural faculties that ensure our ability to exist in Olam Hazeh.

But there's a second set of instincts about which not so much is known – much less attention is paid to them – and those are the instincts that are intended primarily for the purpose of our station in the Next World. Man is not born merely for his physical existence; he's not born just to survive in Olam Hazeh, and therefore there are some instincts that were placed in him by Hakodosh Boruch Hu for the purpose of constantly prodding him, encouraging him to accomplish what he needs most for himself – to perfect himself before coming to the Next World.

Only that what happens to most of us? Instead of understanding the true purpose of these instincts, we take them on side roads and divert them from the intended destination. Instead of going ahead on the highway to great achievement, these instincts take a plunge off the road and end up in small things, puny accomplishments.

The Executive Carpenter

That's why you'll sometimes find an important person, a man who manages very great undertakings in the business world, who comes home from his office and he goes down to the basement and takes a scroll saw and a coping saw, and he engages in woodwork. He'll spend hours there – he's sawing away and sandpapering and varnishing until finally he goes to bed in the wee hours of the morning.

And his wife is wondering, "What is he busy with there all night?" So the next morning, after he goes

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out to the office, she goes downstairs to see the products of her executive husband's labors and she discovers a little bookcase.

Now, his wife is very surprised. That bookcase that her husband created, as nice as it might be, he could have purchased a similar thing for a few dollars; and yet this busy man, this wealthy business executive, gave away hours of his expensive time to create a cheap little artifact.

Better at The Bakery

The truth is that his wife is no different. She's a wealthy matron; she has plenty of money and she can patronize the best bake shops in the city – she could buy the most beautiful and expensive pastries. And yet what do we see? She is seized by an urge to find a new recipe and spend time baking a cake in her kitchen.

Now what is it that drives her to create a cake of her own? What is it that drives her husband to build that little bookcase? Was it the need for a bookcase or a chocolate cake? After all, they certainly have the money to buy a better one than he can build in the basement or that she can bake in her kitchen.

The answer is that they're responding to the creative urge implanted in them by Hakodosh Boruch Hu. They want to be creators; they want to labor on something that they can call their own. There's an inborn instinct in Mankind whose chief purpose is to press us forward to create something eternal for ourselves, to build our eternal station in the next world; only that we don't understand the purpose of this urge that is fermenting and bubbling within us and instead we build a bookcase or bake a cake.

The Original Source

Now, in the beginning of the Torah we are told who is the prototype of this urge. You'll never believe who it is. Who is the example that serves for us as a model to emulate? בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים? – *In the beginning, Hakodosh Boruch Hu created.* Hakodosh Boruch Hu was the first Creator.

So you'll say, "What does that have to do with us? That's Hashem, not me!" The answer is that it has a

great deal to do with us because וַיִּפַּח בְּאַפָּיו נְשָׁמַת חַיִּים – *Hashem blew into a man the soul of life, וַיִּמְאֵן דְּנִפְחָה, מְדִילָה נִפְחָה* – *and the one who blows, blows from Himself.* And so the Borei breathed into man this yearning to be a creator just like He Himself is a Creator.

And if you want to substantiate this idea – maybe it's merely words; where do you find that it's so that the Creator made us to create as well? So you'll notice that at the end of the days of creation it says, כִּי בּו שָׁבַת, – *On that day that Hashem stopped creating, מְכַל מְלֵאכְתּוֹ אָשֶׁר בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת* – *He rested from all the work which He created to do* (Bereishis 2:3). What does that mean "which He created to do"? It seems like *la'asos*, "to do," is a superfluous word, hanging on like a tail at the end of the *possuk*. He created; that's all! What is meant by "created to do"?

Adam Takes Over

There's a Yerushalmi on this *possuk* and it gives us a *mashal*. מְשָׁל לְאָמֶן – It's compared to a craftsman, an artisan, who sits all day in his shop creating things. He takes pieces of wood and he creates from them all types of beautiful and useful utensils.

Now, while he's busy working, his little son is toddling around in his shop. And sometimes the little boy would like to take hold of the tools and imitate his father. But the father says, "No, no." He won't let him touch the tools; the little boy might hurt himself, he might destroy things. But finally when the boy grows up, when he matures, the father tells him, "Now is the time. Here are the tools and take over." That's what the Yerushalmi says.

It means that when Adam was created, when Man appeared on the scene, Hakodosh Boruch Hu said, "Now you take over." The Midrash (Rabbah 11:6) says that is what's meant by אָשֶׁר בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת. Hashem created that *man* should do. The instinct, the yearning to create that Hashem put into man is equivalent to Him saying, "You take over."

The Mystical and The Practical

Now let's immediately give this urge a name so we should recognize it; in the *seforim* it's called *tikkun* – that's the name of the instinct that pushes us

forward towards to create and accomplish, to be *misakein olam b'malchus Shakai*. Now in the language of *kabbalah*, we find the word *tikkun* very frequently used. There are great *tikkunim*, great improvements made in the world that are accomplished by our thoughts and our words and our actions. Maybe we'll talk about that someday but right now we'll focus on the simple meaning of *tikkun*, things that we can readily see. Man has an urge to create, an urge to improve the world.

Of course, you have to know how to improve the world. We'll speak about that later, but I want to say it right away, in case somebody is bored; he thinks he knows the whole subject already and he wants to go home; it's very important to learn *how* to improve the world, to learn what *tikkun*, what creation, Hakodosh Boruch Hu wants from you most.

The most important creation you can create, the thing in the world that deserves your greatest attention when it comes to *tikkun* is yourself! That's the real purpose of this instinct to be a creator; so that you'll make something out of yourself.

That's why the Midrash adds an important comment, אֲפִילוּ הָאָדָם צָרִיךְ תִּקּוּן - *even man needs improvement*. Which means that among all the improvements אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא אֱלֹקִים לַעֲשׂוֹת - *which Hashem created you to do*, don't forget to improve yourself! Otherwise, you'll think that you're a doer, a creator, and actually you're doing nothing.

The Tikkun Olam Professor

Don't you see so many people who think they are being *misakein olam* but actually they're busy ruining the world?! You go onto the campus of Brooklyn College, and you'll find a lot of "improvers," people shouting about *tikkun olam* and making the world a better place. But they're failures! They're failures because they want to improve everyone else. And meanwhile the one who matters most, the one who needs most improvement, that they forget all about.

But even those who do not imagine that they're fixing the world are being misled by this urge. That's why this executive is busy with his little bookcase. It's

true, he's 'creating' but that's not what he is really seeking. It's like a hungry man who chews paper. For the time being he deceives himself into thinking that his hunger is stilled, but after a while he discovers that he's still hungry. And his wife, who is baking that cake, will remain hungry even after serving and eating that cake. Because this instinct is really intended for greater things.

The Primary Purpose

Now, I'm not saying that it's wrong to bake or build bookcases. There's no question that this impetus to improve the world is not limited to one's own self; the instinct to take wood and to create a bookcase, or to take flour and create a cake is also a function of this inborn motivation. It may not be man's *purpose* in the world, but it's one of the byproducts of the instinct that is intended by Hakodosh Boruch Hu. He *wants* things to be produced from wood. He *wants* that the trees in the forest should be turned into implements of wood and to be used for firewood and to build homes. That's the *purpose* of the forest. And therefore when men take raw materials and create products, that certainly is part of their job in the world.

And so if your husband wants to build a bookcase to accentuate his Shas, very good. He should buy an expensive Shas and build a beautiful bookcase and let the *seforim* stand beautifully on the shelves that he built with his own hands. It will lend an aura of Torah to your home. Excellent!

And when your wife bakes *challah*, that's also a wonderful thing; that's using her creative instinct for a wonderful purpose. On Shabbos, when she puts those *lechem haponim*, the Showbread, on the table the whole family should admire the golden *challos*.

However, we understand that we are not created for the *purpose* of chopping forests and making bookcases; we weren't created for the *purpose* of turning flour and sugar and margarine into fancy cakes. Because no matter what, you have to know what is the most important creation. You! That's part of the job. It's not your only job in this world, but it's part of the job! And actually it's the most important.

Your Favorite Child

You remember when it tells us the history of Noah, it says אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדֹת נֹחַ אִישׁ צַדִּיק – *These are the generations that came out of Noah, Noah was a righteous man.* So the word Noah is repeated. And therefore the *midrash* says that you should read the *possuk* like this: אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדֹת נֹחַ – *These are the children of Noah, Noah.* It means the first and the best child of Noah was Noah himself. That's your most important job in this world, to create yourself; to fix yourself.

So all of you people, you're going to have fine children; all of your children should be *talmidei chachomim* and *tzaddikim*, very good! But make sure that the biggest *nachas* you'll have should be from yourself. Don't merely rely on your grandchildren that they're going to be *tzaddikim* and you'll *shep nachas* from them; because someday by accident you'll pass by a mirror and you want to be sure that you'll be looking at the very biggest *nachas* – yourself!

Part II. Covenant of Improvement

Better Than An Automaker

Now, that brings us to the mitzvah of *milah* in this week's *sedrah*. Everyone remembers when Hakodosh Boruch Hu commanded Avrohom Avinu to fulfill the mitzvah of *bris milah*, circumcision. זֶאת בְּרִיתִי אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁמְרוּ בֵּינִי וּבֵינֵיכֶם וּבֵין זָרְעֵךְ אַחֲרָיִךְ הַמּוֹל לָכֶם כָּל זָכָר – *This is My covenant which you should keep between Me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you should be circumcised (Lech Lecha 17:10).*

Now the mitzvah of *milah*, the command to remove something extraneous from the body, is a most unique phenomenon because we know that there is *nothing* in the body which is superfluous.

As was mentioned here once, when you pick up the hood of your car and you peer at the engine, you don't suspect that there's the slightest superfluous thing there. Even an untutored man from Bedford

Stuyvesant who's tinkering with his car and sees a bolt that doesn't seem to be doing anything important, he'll never say that it's not needed. One thing he knows – *the people in Detroit are not crazy.* He gives the manufacturer enough credit that he wouldn't waste a screw or a wire. Putting in a superfluous bolt is out of the question! And so we can surely give Hakodosh Boruch Hu the same credit – you can rest assured that everything in the body is purposeful.

Don't Trust The Science!

That's why we disregard the contention of the foolish evolutionists and the crazy professors in the universities who claim that certain things, certain organs in man, are vestigial; it means they're accidents left over from their fairy tales when man was changing from a monkey to a human being or from a rat to a human being! In the process, certain organs were left behind that should have 'evolved' out.

You know, once upon a time people who taught in the schools said there were a hundred and fifty vestigial organs. They claimed that a hundred and fifty parts of the human body were superfluous with no need for them at all. The tonsils? No need, they said. It was a great discovery in the world! The tonsils are superfluous, a vestigial organ left over from evolution from a previous state. And so, all over America they began making tonsils operations, taking out tonsils. The only operation that I ever had in my life, *boruch Hashem* the only one, was the tonsil operation. And to this day I cannot forgive the evolutionists because it was based on this erroneous conception of vestigial organs.

Today they've sobered up already – they're catching up to the man in Bedford Stuyvesant who knows that there must be a reason for every piece in the car – and they discovered now that tonsils are very important. They're part of the lymph system. If tonsils are inflamed, don't blame the tonsils and cut them out. No. They're doing their job of getting rid of some infections in the body.

Headlines Are Fake News

Now, will you find a headline anywhere where they'll admit that they harmed millions of people by removing their tonsils? On the front page of the science section of the New York Times, "We Were Wrong! Tonsils Are Not a Vestigial Organ." No, they don't do that. When they have a discovery which they want to use to make the whole world think that their theories are true, they fill the newspapers with it. But when it's discovered that it's nothing at all, not one word is said about it.

Same story with the appendix; it fell victim to the evolutionists. They said it's just an accident left over from some previous state of existence and therefore the first chance you get, cut it out. They didn't realize that the appendix is very important for the maintenance of our health. Like the tonsils it's part of the lymph system which protects the body against disease.

So little by little they're discovering the importance of everything. Of course, they still have some crazy theories about one or two things that they haven't figured out yet but eventually they'll discover there's no such thing as superfluous. More and more will be discovered as time goes on because in nature everything is perfect. Everything is made exactly, precisely for its purpose. Nothing in the body is superfluous!

Message of Milah

But then, out of the blue, we suddenly discover that there's one exception. וּנְמַלְתֶּם אֶת בְּשׂוֹר עַרְלֹתְכֶם – You should remove the flesh of the foreskin (ibid. 17:11). It seems like the *orlah*, the foreskin, is superfluous. And that makes no sense! If man's perfection required him to be without a foreskin, then that's how he should have been born. The Borei doesn't produce an imperfect organism; everything is exactly tailored for its needs. So why is it that in this one case, Hakodosh Boruch Hu made man imperfect?

And that takes us back to אֲשׁוּר בְּרָא אֱלֹקִים לַעֲשׂוֹת – Elokim created that man should do. And of all the things included in *laasos*, "to do," the most important one is *tikkun atzmo*, to perfect yourself. Like we said

before, אִפְלוּ אָדָם צָרִיךְ תְּקוּן – Man needs to be improved too. And the man you have to worry most about is yourself.

But how should a man be reminded of this? So at the beginning of his career, as soon as he's born, a public reminder is made and he is improved by means of the *os bris*. To remove the *orlah*, that's the sign of the covenant – and it's intended to let Man know that he's not perfect yet; he needs *tikkun*. And just as he needs *tikkun* in *milah*, he needs *tikkun* in everything else too. That's what the *bris milah* is telling us, that a person's job in life is to improve himself. It's an analogy. Just as he has to be improved physically, so too he must improve himself mentally; in *da'as* and in character. That's what the mitzvah of *milah* is telling.

It's telling all of us! Don't think it's only for the little boy. We make a big ceremony out of it because it's for all of us; for men and women, for boys and girls. The *os bris*, the ideal that the *milah* is teaching us, is a lesson intended for the whole Klal Yisroel because we're all expected to perfect ourselves.

The Original Waze

Now, that's a big demand of a person; to achieve *shleimus*, perfection, is no easy job. We need some direction for such a great endeavor. You know, if you're heading out on a trip, you can't get to your destination if you don't know in which direction to set out. It's not enough to just get into your car and start driving out of the city. Let's say you leave New York but you don't know which direction to go – north or south. Where are you going?! לֹא יָדַע לָלֶכֶת אֶל עִיר – He doesn't know to which town he has to go to (Koheles 10:15). If you don't know which road to take to perfection, you'll get lost; you'll end up in a lot of dead ends too.

And so we turn back to the *pessukim* in our *sedrah*. If you pay attention to the *baal korei* when he's reading you'll notice that the mitzvah of *bris milah* is introduced in the Chumash as follows: Hakodosh Boruch Hu is speaking to Avrohom, our father, and He says to him, הִתְהַלֵּךְ לִפְנֵי – Walk before Me, וְהָיָה תְּמִים – and be tomim.

Misunderstanding by The Simpleminded

Now, unfortunately the original meaning of *tomim* has gone lost. Many words in *lashon kodesh* are misinterpreted because they're used in colloquial Yiddish in ways that were not originally intended. That's why *tomim* is taken by most people to mean someone who is trusting and simpleminded. They think it's like the "Tam mah hu omer", the simpleton in the Haggadah shel Pesach; someone not too profound or cunning.

That's how it's understood but it's the wrong *pshat*. Pay attention now because it's good to know the true meaning of that *possuk*. וְהָיָה תְּמִיִם means "you should make yourself perfect." It's a command: Be perfect! Seek *shleimus*! *Tikkun*! Improve, improve and improve!!

And so when Hashem said "Walk before Me and become perfect," He was telling Avraham *how* to fulfill the great ideals of the *bris milah* that He was about to command him. "Avrohom," said Hashem, "You know how to become perfect? There are a number of ways but I'm telling you now the *best* way. Walk before Me! Practice up knowing that you are always walking in My Presence. Wherever you're *mishaleich* – whether you're working in the fields taking care of your *tzon u'bakar* or in your tent with your wife Sarah, whatever you're doing, you're always aware that it's לְפָנַי – I'm standing right there next to you. And that's how וְהָיָה תְּמִיִם – that's how you'll become perfect.

The Acid Test

And because our Avos lived for *shleimus* that's the way they lived their lives. It's a herculean task; a gigantic task! It's a struggle! It's very hard to think constantly that you're standing before Hashem! But they did that; they made it their career in this world. At all times they strove to maintain this awareness. The Rambam says that in Moreh Nevuchim (3:51). In Moreh Nevuchim – it's not a *drush sefer* – the Rambam states that the Avos were aware that they were standing *lifnei Hashem* twenty four hours a day! And they were transformed just because of that – they became perfect.

Now I want to share with you a statement from the *Mesillas Yesharim* on this subject. He says like this (ch. 16): *Vehineh be'emes zehu hamivchan ... – Behold the truth is this is the test by which our forefathers were tested.* The greatness of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov and their families, says the Ramchal, was not in the acts that they did. Of course, they did great acts. They did wonderful deeds. When Avraham went to sacrifice his son, it was a tremendous event. When he threw himself down at the feet of guests, that was tremendous. Those are all pointed out as very great achievements.

But the *Mesillas Yesharim* is telling us that if we'll measure our Avos merely by their great deeds alone, we're underestimating their greatness. *Because the greatness of our forefathers lay not in their acts but in their minds; their greatness lay in how much they thought about Hashem.* That's the *mivchan*, that's the test of true greatness.

Imitation Avodah

You know, when those three guests came to Avraham and he slaughtered an ox for each one of them, it was a glorious thing. There was no refrigeration in those days and that meant that the entire ox went lost for one guest. To give a guest the delicacy of tongue meant that a lot of good meat went to waste. And to honor each guest with a tongue meant you had to slaughter three oxen! To receive a guest with such lavish hospitality, that became a model for all generations. It's a marvelous phenomenon of kindness, of hospitality.

But that's not the true greatness of that story. The true greatness was that when Avraham was slaughtering this ox, it wasn't like we do it. We take out our best cold cuts and give it to a visitor, very good. But when Avraham brought out the cuts, he was walking in front of Hashem! It was exactly like the *kohen gadol* on Yom Kippur who was offering up a bullock. Actually what the *kohen gadol* did Yom Kippur was only an echo, an imitation, of the *kedushah* and the devotion that Avraham felt when he slaughtered an ox for a guest. Avraham was serving Hakodosh Boruch Hu the whole time that he was feeding his

guests. For a moment he didn't forget that he was standing in front of Hashem, doing it for Him.

That was the true greatness of the forefathers. Not only the heroic acts but even the simple acts that we also do, they did them with no other motive than the service of Hakodosh Boruch Hu; they always reminded themselves that they were walking, working, talking, in front of Hashem.

Awareness and Motivation

One who is constantly aware he's in the presence of Hakodosh Boruch Hu – whatever he does, he's going to be very careful. When he opens his mouth he is very careful what comes out of his mouth. If you're standing in the presence of Mayor Beame (New York City Mayor 1974-1977); he's not the biggest man in the world, but still, when you open your mouth, you're going to count your words. When a man is aware that he's standing *lifnei Hashem* that's going to motivate him to be perfect in his speech and in all deportment.

It takes idealism to achieve that; it requires a great deal of awareness of Hakodosh Boruch Hu! But that's what's expected of the nation that made the covenant of the *os bris kodesh* with Hakodosh Boruch Hu. **וְהָיָה לְפָנַי** – *Walk before Me*, **וְהָיָה תְּמִימִים** – *and that's how you'll become perfect*.

Part III. Thoughts of Improvement

The Luxury For Everyone

Now, I realize that this subject is very abstract for many people, especially so because in practice it's not being done. Even the *frumme*, the pious Jews, generally live according to pious habit, the humdrum of good habits, and to think about Hashem at all times seems to them a *middas chassidus*, just a luxury for the great men.

But the truth is that it's not just an idle conjecture of mine; it's a plain requirement of the Torah, a *possuk* in the chumash. **לֵךְ הַשָּׂמֶר לְךָ** – be on guard, **פֶּן תִּשְׁכַּח אֶת** **הַשֵּׁם אֱלֹהֶיךָ** – lest you forget Hashem Elokecha (Devarim

8:11) That's it! You can't quibble with a clear-cut *possuk*. Be on guard! Make sure you think always about Hashem!

But I'll tell you an even more open *possuk*. You know, *hishamer lecha* is a *possuk* that you might not say ever in your life unless you're *ma'avir sedrah*; but there's a *possuk* you say twice every day – you can't get away from it – that is telling you to remember Hashem always.

Duty of Devotion

וְאָהַבְתָּ אֶת הַשֵּׁם אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל לִבְבְּךָ – *You should love Hashem with all your mind*. You didn't know that's what the *possuk* meant, did you? The trouble is people don't stop to think what it means “heart.” They think “heart” is like you say in English, a good heart. No, no; “heart” in *Tanach* means mind, and that's all it means, nothing else.

You should love Hashem, not with half of your mind but with *all* your mind. All your thoughts should be directed at Him. *Uvechol nafshecha* means with all your desires. *Uvechol meodecha* means with all of your means. But *levavcha* means thoughts. And so we have here an open command that our thoughts should be devoted to the love of Hakodosh Boruch Hu; it means you're always thinking about Him.

That's what the Rambam says about this mitzvah: **וְהוּא שׂוֹגֵה בְּהַתְּמִיד בֵּין בְּשַׁבְּתוֹ בֵּין בְּקוֹמוֹ בֵּין בְּשָׁעָה שֶׁהוּא אוֹכֵל וְשׂוֹתֶה** – *He can't keep his mind off Hashem; whether he's sitting in his house or walking in the street, when he's eating or drinking, he's always immersed in thoughts of Hashem* (Hil. Teshuva 10:3).

Isn't it a pity that something so important is so rarely spoken about? It's in *krias shema*! How can anyone say such a *mitzvas eseh min haTorah* is merely a *middas chassidus*, something extra? It's as clear as could be, it's a duty for all Jews. It's a command upon us, upon every person, man and woman, at all times to be thinking about Hashem.

Strolling with G-d

That's the meaning of *es haElokim hishalech* Noach and *vayishalech Chanoch es haElokim*; we're told that the *tzadikim* always walked with Hashem.

How could you walk with Hashem? Take Him arm in arm and walk down the avenue? Yes, that's exactly it! Even better than arm in arm; He's in your mind. You think about Him constantly. That's the true career of man in this world. If you want to become a great man, that's the way to do it; thinking constantly about Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

Of course you have to know what to think about. If your head is empty so it's not going to be an easy task – you have to start planting seeds in your mind. You have to learn *Chovos Halevavos*. You have to learn what it means *bitachon*, what it means *bechinah*, what it means to see the wonders of Hashem, what it means to appreciate what Hashem is doing for you, the kindness He does every day for you; and you appreciate it. You have to think about the *nissim* He did for our nation in the past, what He's doing for us now. You have to think about how He's watching your every move; how He's watching your thoughts too.

Once you plant these seeds in your head beautiful things begin to grow. If you train yourself to be a thinker – I mean thinking about Hashem – little by little it'll begin to permeate all the facets of life. When you're walking with Hashem, every day becomes a great adventure; nothing is humdrum. Nothing is insignificant.

The Miraculous Peach Pit

I was walking today with a young man, and I saw a peach pit lying on the sidewalk. I said, "Look at that! A miracle!"

He said, "Where? What is it?"

I pointed at the peach pit but he looked at me blankly. It means he has a lot of work to do still.

First of all there's nothing in the peach tree as hard as a peach pit. "It's the hardest material in the whole thing," I told him. "Why is it the hardest material?"

He was a smart yeshiva man. He said, "Maybe to protect the seed inside."

Exactly! It's a remarkable thing. It's not wood; it's like a very strong plastic protecting within it the

future peach trees. Even animals can't bite through a peach pit.

Peculiarly Purposeful

I showed him that the peach pit is composed of two halves that fit together exactly. But when you try to pull them apart, in most cases you'll fail. You can't do it. The paste is extremely strong. It's a cement, an especial formula that is extremely strong.

But when you take the peach pit and put it inside the ground, it opens up by itself. The glue is made of such a material that it yields to the bacteria and the fungi in the soil and it opens up by itself!

There's a lot of design there, a lot of purpose. Whose purpose was it? Who designed that formula? So here you see a message from Hakodosh Boruch Hu, "Think about Me!" Don't just walk by and ignore it. If you see a peach pit on the street or in your kitchen, stop and look at it.

Open your eyes and you'll see *ma'aseh yadav*, the handiwork of Hashem, everywhere. On all sides, wherever a person is, he is able to see demonstrations of Hashem, the *nissim* and *niflaos* in nature. Apples and bread and trees and clouds and grass and leaves! Everything! And they're all intended to stimulate you to thoughts of the Creator. That's the purpose of creation; so that you'll be reminded always about the One who created, so that you'll always be thinking about Hashem.

Fame is Nothing

Now is anybody going to give you *smichah* because of that? You can't go into a *kollel* with this information. They won't give you any honor because of that. But no matter! The One who knows best, He sees that you're thinking noble thoughts, that you're walking with Him, and what He sees, that's what matters most in this world.

What does it avail a man if he becomes great in Torah and famous even among the Orthodox – about the others we don't care – but even to become great among the Orthodox, what does that help if he has not grown great in his devotion to Hakodosh Boruch Hu, if he rarely thinks about Hakodosh Boruch Hu?

Hashem is looking out for a man who is willing to walk with Him! *Hashem mishomayim hishkif* - Hashem is looking down from the heavens, *liros* - to see, *hayeish maskil* - "Is there a wise man down below? *Doreish Elokim* - Is there anyone thinking about me?" (Tehillim 14:2). He's seeking someone who wants to fulfill his purpose in this world.

Isn't it a pity? We live our whole lives without attaining an awareness that *Hashem mishomayim hishkif*, that Hakodosh Boruch Hu is looking!

Achieving Scopaeesthesia

Why don't you try that sometime? Let's say you have nothing to do. The truth is even if you have something to do, you could try it. If you want a good exercise to develop the muscles of your mind, practice the awareness that Hakodosh Boruch Hu is looking. Think "Hashem is looking at me!"

You're sitting on the bus. You're walking down the block. Practice feeling that Hakodosh Boruch Hu is looking. He's looking through the window of the house at you. So don't feel comfortable; don't relax until you turn the corner.

Then if you wish, you could imagine He's looking from another window. He's looking from all the windows. He's looking through the cracks of these walls. He's looking through these lights. He's looking all the time. Little by little it enters our consciousness that you're walking with Hakodosh Boruch Hu. *Whoo* is that an accomplishment! That's a big achievement.

For the Frustrated Founders

And so you frustrated people; you people who feel that your lives are ruined. Had you merited to be a *rosh yeshivah* you would have founded big Torah schools and you could have said big *shiurim* and *pilpulim*; you could have raised up many *talmidim*. Some of you maybe still have open dreams; you have ideas about how to spread Judaism. But meanwhile you're frustrated because you feel like you missed a great opportunity in life; you missed out on opportunities to do great things, to have a great career in this world.

Oh no! Don't say that because there is still a great career open for every person, a still greater career than all of that. And that's the career of *הַתְּהִלָּה לְפָנֵי הַיְיָ הַתְּמִים*. That's the greatest *tikkun* you can make because you're creating yourself and there's nothing as important as that. You'll make yourself perfect! That's what happens when you walk always with Hashem.

Let's say you're going to see a big customer. You want him to make a big order from your factory and you're in the waiting room before they let you inside to see the man. What are you doing? You're just sitting and twiddling your thumbs? No, you're thinking about Hashem. You're creating yourself!

Maybe you're in the dentist's office. You're waiting for your turn. Don't pick up a magazine and poison your mind with the *shtus*, with the wickedness and rottenness in the magazine. No. You're sitting in the waiting room at the dentist and thinking of Hashem.

Recipe for Importance

Now don't think it's easy. It's not only not easy to do, it's also not easy to know what to do. It's a subject that has to be studied. But it's a career that's available to everybody. A woman in her kitchen is going about her humble daily tasks. If she'd learn to concentrate on *emunah*, on *bitachon*, on *ahavas Hashem* and *yiras Hashem*, she'll foster and nurture these great ideals within her and she can become one of the greatest personalities in the entire Jewish nation. Nobody knows about it? No matter! The One that matters knows.

Even if you'll think about Hashem for just one minute, sixty seconds straight, you become great. You're walking in the street. There are crowds of people. You feel unimportant. You want to be important? The minute you think about Hashem, you shoot up and you become taller than everybody else in the street. A quick recipe for importance is to think about Hakodosh Boruch Hu. *אֵת הַשֵּׁם הַאֲמִרְתָּ הַיּוֹם*, make Hashem great today, *וְהַשֵּׁם הַאֲמִירְךָ הַיּוֹם*, and Hashem makes you great (Devarim 26:17-18).

Now, you young fellows whose minds have not yet been hardened are capable of hearing this; as long as you're not 90 years old there's a chance to begin a career. It's an entirely new thing, a new branch of endeavor. It's the career of thinking about Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

And a man who trains himself, a woman who trains herself, anyone who adopts this as a career in life is bound to succeed because that's the true greatness. That was the greatness of the Avos and that can be our greatness too. It's not the spectacular deeds that makes a man; it's the ordinary deeds, the day to day living, accompanied with the devotion of the mind that will truly make you great. That's how you create the perfect you! And that's the person who has used his creative instinct for the purpose intended by Hashem.

Have A Wonderful Shabbos

LET'S GET PRACTICAL

Improvement by Connection

We were created with an instinct to improve and the most important thing we can improve is ourselves. This is taught by the mitzvah of *milah* which is introduced by the dictum "Walk before Me, and thus become perfect". The way for me to improve and perfect myself is by constantly thinking of Hashem.

This week I will *bli neder* spend a minute each day walking before Hashem. I will remind myself that Hashem is looking at me and studying my thoughts and whatever I'm doing, I'll do it with the awareness that I'm doing it in front of Hashem. Wherever I am I will be walking with Hashem and growing perfect.

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

שאל אביך ויגדך זקניך ויאמרו לך

Q:

How can we stop people from talking during chazaras hashatz and kriyas haTorah?

A:

And the answer is that you have to read to them what is written in the Tur and the Shulchan Aruch. It says *kol hasach sicha beteila b'soch chazaras hashatz*, anybody who talks unnecessary talk – now unnecessary talk means, if it's something that's dangerous, so you have to tell someone watch out. Otherwise, you don't talk. And if you do talk then, *harei zeh chotei*, he's a sinner, *v'goarin bo*, and you have to scold him. All around that's how it should be; if you see somebody talking everybody should start shouting "Sha! Sha! Sha!" All around.

V'gadol avono m'niso, his sin is too big to forgive. That's a terrible thing to say. His sin is too big to forgive because it's a sin of *chillul Hashem*.

If everybody is standing or sitting in *shul* and the *shatz*, the leader, is speaking for them to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, and this nincompoop, this empty head, this *letz*, turns to his neighbor to exchange idle conversation, it means that he is negating everything that goes on. Nothing is worth anything in comparison to his little unimportant desires. And so it's *chillul Hashem*; he's profaning the glory of Hashem. *Gadol avono m'niso!* That sin can never be forgiven. Even if you want to do *teshuva* you cannot repent from *chillul Hashem*.

And you have to say it over and over in the ears of the people. Now don't say "Don't be *melamed chova* on the *Am Yisrael*", because the Shulchan Aruch says that, the Tur says that. So what you're saying is "Don't teach Tur to the people." People must be told! You have to throw it in their teeth again and again, until finally some people will listen.

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