

תורת אביגדור

הגאון ר' אביגדור מיללער זצ"ל

SEFER BREISHIS - THE CHOPP HOLDINGS EDITION

TORAS AVIGDOR

RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT" L

פרשת בראשית

Parnassah and Spiritual Growth

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Ari Rosenberg

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SEFER BREISHIS

THE **CHOPP HOLDINGS** EDITON

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As we celebrate this special milestone, marking the completion of two years of Toras Avigdor, it is time to publicly acknowledge and thank those who work so hard to make it possible.

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May you merit the fulfillment of the special brocha that is reserved for בצרכי ציבור באמונה עוסקים,

David Rosenberg

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פרשת בראשית

WITH

R' AVIGDOR MILLER זT"ל

Parnassah and Spiritual Growth

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Part I. Lesson of Work

EVERYONE IS HUSTLING

Everyone knows that the curse of **בְּזֵעַת אִפְיֶךָ תֹאכַל לֶחֶם** - *By the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread* (Bereishis 3:19), was imposed upon us because of the sin of *Adam Harishon*. Even a little boy in the *cheder* knows that because the first man transgressed the word of Hakodosh Boruch Hu and ate from the *eitz hadaas*, just because of that, the entire world is hard at work trying to make a living.

Some are working more, some less, but no matter what, there's always some sweating needed in order to make a *parnassah*. To put bread on the table and food in the refrigerator, you have to be a hustler. And all of this sweating and hustling, this necessity of Mankind to labor for its livelihood, is traced back to the *cheit* of *Adam Harishon*.

Now, before we begin, it's important to clear the decks, and to make sure we understand what it means when Hashem says אָרְרָהּ הָאָרֶץ בְּעִבּוּרְךָ, that *the land will be accursed because of you (ibid.)*. We have to realize one of the great principles of the Torah – that when Hashem punishes for a sin, it's not a punishment the way you think. It's like a physician who is giving a bitter medicine to his patient. Is he punishing the patient? Just because you got a sore throat I'm going to punish you now and you'll have to gargle this bitter medicine? No, the doctor doesn't do that. There's something there that's meant to help you, to heal you. It might taste terrible, but it's good for you.

HASHEM'S MEDICINE

And so too, every punishment that Hakodosh Boruch Hu gives is a medicine. That's how we have to understand it. And if you don't, you're considered an ungrateful fellow. It's like making an appointment by the doctor, and then when he prescribes for you a bitter medicine, so you get angry at him?! No; you even pay him for it!

And so, when we read in the Torah about the downfall of Adam Harishon and the sentences that were imposed upon Mankind by Hakodosh Boruch Hu, בְּזַעַת אַפֶּיךָ תֹאכַל לֶחֶם – *You're going to eat bread with the sweat of your brow*, and בְּעִצְבוֹן תֹאכַל לֶחֶם – *by means of toil will you eat food (ibid.)*, we understand that these systems of existence were planned for our benefit. If the Physician prescribed a system of labor and toil, so we understand that it's for the purpose of our success in this world.

Now, once we understand that the function of Mankind laboring in this world is a *refuah* for us, so we should take a little time to study the lessons that were intended by Hakodosh Boruch Hu when He pronounced this eternal "curse" on Mankind. Of course, when Hakodosh Baruch Hu does something it always has more than one purpose. He's not like the surgeon who might have one good intention, and even then maybe there are side-effects that might not be so good. Hakodosh Boruch Hu is big enough to give us one medicine that has many positive purposes and it would take us more than a few lectures to study these lessons. But at least a few of them we'll make an attempt at studying now.

MEN AT WORK

The first, the most *poshut* lesson that we are expected to learn is how we should react, what should be our first thoughts whenever we see people laboring for their livelihood. Let's say you pass by some Italian men on the street, men with big muscles who are digging holes in the asphalt; they're laying pipes. When you see that, you should take it as a direct message *min hashamayim*. There's sweat pouring from their faces and we are reminded of the *possuk* in the *parsha*, "By the sweat of your brow you will eat bread." The men at work on the street is Hashem reminding us about the tremendous results of a *cheit*.

Any kind of labor that we see in this world is a memorial, a monument to the terrible repercussions of transgressing the word of Hashem. It's an important lesson you're hearing right now. If you came here just to hear this alone, it's worthwhile. From now on, when you see people working hard at their jobs – it doesn't matter if it's a man standing behind the counter trying to make a sale, or a *melamed* standing over a class of wild boys trying to maintain order and knock some *aleph beis* or *chumash* into their heads – look at that and learn; that's what a *cheit* really means. It's all because once a person transgressed the word of Hashem.

A SIN IS AN EARTHQUAKE

Now, Adam didn't live a lifetime of sin. He was a virtuous man. He didn't murder, he didn't rob anyone. Only that one time he transgressed and ate what was forbidden. One time; one sin, that's all! But that one time brought upon the world a darkness, a sadness that would act as a memorial forever and ever until the end of history. You can call it a sentence, a punishment, whatever word suits you – but it's a lesson which all mankind must learn.

And the lesson is that a sin is not merely an error; it's not a minor disturbance in a man's life that can be overlooked or ignored. Any sin is an earthquake; it's a major tragedy in the history of the world. In order that we should understand that, we were taught in the beginning of history that the sin of one person, a transgression that was committed only once, is of such great consequence that it reverberates forever and ever throughout all history.

IT HURTS TO FALL OFF A ROOF

That's how to understand a sin; and that's what all the labor in this world is trying to teach you. Over and over again, day after day, generation after generation, we are experiencing what it means when a *cheit* is committed. Whenever we see someone sweating at his labor we are expected to utilize the opportunity to remember the *possuk*, בְּזַעַת אֶפֶיךָ תֵּאָכַל לֶחֶם, and the lesson that this "punishment" is trying to teach us.

It's like the danger of falling off a roof. How many times do you have to be warned? It's never too many times because even one fall is too much. You know, you can't say: "Well, I only fell off the roof once." And a *cheit* is worse than falling off a roof. And that's why the one *cheit* of Adam is reverberating forever and ever – so that we should always be aware of the danger of falling off a roof.

DON'T WASTE YOUR LIFE IN THE OFFICE

Not only the labor of others. When you go to the office, so you'd like to do better things than sit there all day long. You'd rather be in the *beis medrash*. If you're not a learner, you're not a *mivakeish*, so you're thinking about other things – maybe you'd like to be sailing out on the ocean somewhere. But instead you're wasting your life away in the office.

No; you're not wasting your life at all; you're accomplishing great things by working for a living. גְּדוּלָהּ קִלְאָכָה – "How great is work!" (Nedarim 49b). But if you don't add these thoughts intended by Hashem, so you're missing a great opportunity.

Any kind of exertion that people must use in order to exist is intended to be a lesson impressed onto the mind. If you're working in the shop or the office in order to bring home a paycheck, that's a result of the *cheit* of Adam Harishon. Even if you're laboring in the home to raise your children, it's because of that sin in the beginning of time. Here's a woman who's up at night with children – sometimes the husband too – they should be thinking, "This is the plan of Hakodosh Boruch Hu to remind me what it means to sin; to make me afraid of the tremendous repercussions of a *cheit*."

And so, whether you're laboring for your boss in the office, or struggling in the home with the children; whether you see the

melamed in the classroom trying to teach his students, or the Brooklyn Union gas man standing up to his waist in dirt and digging – he's holding a heavy riveting machine and it's shaking his body as he's trying to hold onto it; either way it's expected to be reminding you about the terrible repercussions of transgressing the word of Hashem.

DON'T IGNORE THE TORAH

Now, this is an important subject and it should be spoken about much more because it's not done. Even after saying it, I'm sure that listeners are going to forget it immediately. When we see Mankind laboring for their living we don't think about it at all. And that's a pity because that's not what Hakodosh Boruch Hu wanted when He said these words in the Torah.

That's why we read the Torah every year again and again, **בְּזַעַת** **אֶפְיֶיךָ תֹאכַל לֶחֶם**. Every year the same story – “By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread.” Because once is not enough. You have to go over it again and again. You have to learn it until finally when you walk in the streets, automatically you're thinking according to the thoughts of Hashem.

The great memorial of **בְּזַעַת אֶפְיֶיךָ** is here to remind us that a sin is not merely that little act that took perhaps a few seconds to commit. We must not look at the smallness that the sin seems to you – look at the greatness of the One whose words you are transgressing! Hakodosh Boruch Hu fills the universe with his glory. It's a greatness that is endless; it stretches into remote space without an end. Which means you transgressed a command of One who is infinite and whose words are eternally perfect.

No sin is small if it's a transgression of an infinite, a perfect Hakodosh Boruch Hu. That's how great it is. There's no such thing as small *cheit*. There's no such thing as, “OK, so I ate something I shouldn't have.” No; that transgression of the word of Hashem has eternal repercussions! And that's why we're still learning that lesson today. Forever and ever Mankind is memorializing the lesson of Adam Harishon's *cheit* and learning that lesson about how much we have to beware of committing even the smallest transgression.

Part II. Question of Work

THE SECOND LESSON

Now, we said in the beginning of the lecture that there are other reasons for the *gezeirah* of “By the sweat of your brow you will eat bread.” Besides for the never-ending testimony about the gravity of sin that it provides; besides the fact that we learn what it means to make such a tremendous misstep as doing something against the will of Hashem, there are other great lessons in these things. And we’ll discuss one of them now.

There's a remarkable fact that anyone can observe. I was walking down one of the streets yesterday and I saw a little sparrow hopping on the sidewalk. Now, sparrows are not as familiar with human beings as pigeons are; usually they fly away immediately when you come near them. But this one didn't and as I approached, I saw it was struggling with something. It was pulling on a little piece of paper with its beak trying to get it loose and fly away with it. Finally, as I was coming closer, it snatched the piece of paper in its beak and it flew away to put it in its nest.

ANIMAL INSTINCT

I was thinking to myself about how the sparrow has an instinctive knowledge of how to build a nest. Its mother couldn't talk; she wasn't teaching him anything. The mother laid eggs and hatched them and that's all. And still, when that bird came into adulthood, it already knew how to make a nest.

The Creator provided the sparrow with machinery encoded in his little brain and it knows to gather all types of odds and ends for its nest. It's remarkable – if you look in a bird's nest you find a piece of string, some pieces of straw, pieces of newspaper, sometimes a tiny piece of a rag. It's a pathetic little building but it serves the purpose. And then the bird lays its eggs. Now, this little sparrow has no knowledge of what it's doing. But Hashem encrypted in the little brain of that sparrow everything it needs to exist.

If we look in nature we see such marvelous arrangements everywhere. Hashem has provided instincts whereby fish and

animals and fowl and insects all are provided with the skills necessary to obtain their sustenance and care for their young. Every creature was provided by Hakodosh Boruch Hu the ability to care for itself.

Every creature except one! Only man was left out. Now that's a remarkable thing. After all, man is the most perfect of all beings. Man has the ability to speak, to pass down information. He has more intelligence and also many skills that other creations don't have. But he lacks the gift that Hashem has given to the rest of Creation. He has no natural instinct to care for himself, no means of providing *parnasa* for himself like all of the other creations.

Of course, if people would have any sense they would see immediately the biggest *kasha* – it's the biggest refutation of evolutionists. Because according to the evolutionists who claim that everything is the result of development, so the more a creature develops, the more its abilities and instincts should develop. So according to them Mankind should have been endowed with everything – and instead he is endowed with nothing. He doesn't even have claws. At least let him have good claws. Claws are remarkable; you can catch food with your claws. And if anything comes to catch you, so you can climb a tree. And the instincts of man should also be more developed. A man should know instinctively how to build a nest. He should instinctively know how to make traps and catch animals.

BURIAL SHROUDS AND REFRIGERATORS INC.

Why can't man at least be like a spider?! A spider, a little spider, doesn't have to learn from his papa. He goes out, he finds a corner someplace and he weaves a wonderful web. A web is a feat of architecture; there's intricate engineering there. Those who know exclaim in admiration at the wisdom and planning evident in a web. Also how it gets the material for the web; it's remarkable.

The spider makes his web using only a thread from his mouth. How the thread came out of his mouth, that's something wonderful too. As soon as it comes out it congeals into a string. Now, if it would congeal inside of him, he would get a stomach-ache. But it doesn't congeal inside of the spider. Only as soon as the spider spits it out, that's when it congeals and turns into a string. That's a marvel, it's a *neis*.

And then, the little spider sits in a corner and waits for a fly to get caught. And when it does, it starts struggling mightily; it might break the net and get away. So the little spider suddenly rushes out and it quickly spits out a sheet. I was once watching that. The spider didn't spit out a thread now; this time it spits out a sheet. And he quickly wraps that sheet around the fly – that's its burial shroud. And that's his refrigerator too because it keeps the fly fresh: it'll keep because it's preserved by the shroud that acts like a refrigerator. And now, the spider, at its leisure, whenever it wants, he'll visit that fly and suck a little bit out of him.

WHY ARE WE MISSING GOOD INSTINCTS?

If people would think about that, they'd see the *niflaos haborei*; they'd see the *yad Hashem* in a spider web. But I'm not speaking about that now – that's a different subject altogether. Right now I'm asking a question. Why didn't Hashem give man these abilities too? You never thought about it but it's a very good question. Just like Hashem gave the spider the ability, He could have just as well given it to Man. Imagine a person could make clothing for himself by spitting out thread; a man should also be able to spit out materials just like the spider does. It's not a silly question – it's not silly at all. Why shouldn't Man also have such instincts?

Why couldn't Hashem have given us the instincts of a beaver? Did you ever see a beaver preparing his home? People who watch beavers build their dams are full of admiration. A beaver can swim with a stick in its mouth and put it in the bed of a creek. Now, that one stick will float away, so the beaver jams it between two stones so it shouldn't fly away. Where did he get that *chochma*?

Sometimes, when you're making a *sukkah*, so you're looking for ways and means to support the weak wall; it's a *diras arai* and the wall is too loose. So somebody who knows tells you to jam in something to strengthen the wall. I learned this from a member of my shul. He saw me working on the *sukkah* and he said to me, "Jam it in." He taught me how to use jamming techniques to make your little weak walls strong.

CATCHING FISH TO FEED THE FAMILY

But the beaver has no instructor to teach him; he didn't have anyone in his shul to give him advice; and still he jams the stick between two stones so the river current shouldn't carry it away. Then he comes swimming with another stick and he puts it in there near first stick; he jams it in between the first stick. And after a lot of work you have a dam.

Now, what happens when you have a dam? The stream overflows, and goes further, but a little pool remains. And now the beaver, at his leisure, visits the pool where the fish come; the fish are trapped there – they can't swim any further because the shallow overflow can't carry them over the wall. And now the beaver can catch fish and feed his family. And down below, at the bottom of this pool, he digs a hole in the side where he makes his home. It's protected from outside predators who cannot go through water, and he has a place where air is imprisoned a little above the water level; he digs underneath higher than the water level, and that's where he rears his young. So he has his home, and his *parnassah*.

Now where did he get such wisdom? Hakodosh Boruch Hu gave it to him! Why don't we have such wisdom? Why didn't Hashem give us the abilities and the instinct to make *parnassah* like that? Why can't we build homes like that? Nobody would be lacking *parnassah*; nobody would be homeless; large families with many children wouldn't be crowded into small apartments. And yet, instead, the pinnacle of creation that Hashem is most concerned about, is born naked of wisdom, bereft of the *parnassah* instinct. It's a big question.

Part III. Working With Hashem

LIFE BEFORE SIN

In order to understand the answer we have to study what life was like for Adam Harishon before the *cheit*. Gan Eden was a garden filled with fruit trees. At that time, Hakodosh Boruch Hu provided all of Adam Harishon's sustenance by means of food trees: **מְבֵל עֵץ הַיָּדָן**

אָכַל תְּאֵכָל – “You can eat all the tree fruits (Bereishis 2:16), and that’s how you’ll live”.

So there were trees that had bread fruits, delicious fruit that tasted like bread. Among the trees of Gan Eden, Adam could find fruit that tasted like salami. Trees that tasted like eggs, trees that tasted like fish. Everything grew on trees. And there were trees that had fruit that tasted like fruits too. נְהוּמָה לְמִרְאָה וְטוֹב לְמֵאֲכָל – *They were beautiful looking fruit, and tasty too* (ibid. 2:9). Fruits that you'll never see in a most expensive fruit store grew there.

LIFE AFTER SIN

And now Adam committed the sin and he and Chava are expelled from Gan Eden. And a whole different form of existence began. Adam has to trudge with his hoe and dig; he has to plant seeds under the hot sun. And now, instead of the easy life in Gan Eden, Adam was forced to constantly turn to Hashem for help.

Now, we must know that this “new” system of existence for Mankind was planned from the beginning. From the beginning Hakodosh Boruch Hu wanted Mankind to live according to these rules of laboring for food, for *parnassah*. He knew that Adam would have a downfall and He prepared the future history of Man, and even his nature, in accordance with the principles that would result from the *cheit* of Adam Harishon.

What would have been if Adam wouldn't have done the *cheit*? It would have been an entirely different existence, a Gan Eden. But that’s only a matter of theory; what we have to understand right now is that Hakodosh Boruch Hu foresaw everything and therefore that’s how the world was created – in accordance with what He knew would be.

SWEAT BRINGS PERFECTION

And so when Adam began to labor in the fields, when the sweat would drip from his forehead and trickle down his face, he looked longingly back to his previous existence in Gan Eden, the easy street of all good foods growing on trees. But what he was supposed to realize was that the great Physician was healing him. Because Adam is being reminded now. Now that he's out of Gan Eden – that means

us – we must be reminded by means of labor that it's not easy to gain our livelihood. We must be reminded of the necessity to raise our eyes to heaven. And that's the greatest success in this world – to look to Hashem.

Now, if a man was born with the ability to walk out in the fields and eat grass like a cow or a goat it would be a pleasure. I walked outside today and I saw that wherever there's a telegraph pole, high clumps of grass are growing there. Everywhere, high clumps of grass. There's grass everywhere – on the sidewalks, up against the houses. If you had a goat with you, like in the good old days when it was permitted to have goats in the city, you could take your goat out for a walk, and the goat would enjoy it. It is delectable for the goat; a goat can utilize that grass – that's his *parnassah*.

WE CAN'T BE GOATS

But Hashem has better things in store for us than He has for the goats. Hakodosh Boruch Hu says, "I'm not going to let you have that! I won't let you find money growing on trees. You'll have to look through the windows of the grocery stores and see the things you'd like to buy. But you have no money, and you have to earn a livelihood; you have to work hard in order to bring some food to your table." "That's what I want from you," says Hakodosh Boruch Hu. You want a piece of bread? You can't find it in the street! You can't pick it off trees! You must labor – you must plow; it's backbreaking work before you finally produce a piece of bread.

You know, farmers are always praying to Hashem. They need rain. The rain can't be supplied by the government; you can't order it from Washington D.C. Sometimes they have artesian wells, irrigation ditches, different things that try to make them forget, but no matter how much they try, in most cases the farmer has to turn his eyes up to the sky looking for clouds.

And many times he looks higher than the clouds. If he's a wise farmer, then he looks above the clouds at Hakodosh Boruch Hu. The farmer thinks more about Hakodosh Boruch Hu than a city office worker because he is subject to forces that are in most cases beyond his control. Sometimes he looks out and sees a cloud coming, but it's not the kind of cloud he wanted. A cloud of locusts are coming. So he

falls down on his knees, and he importunes, he begs, he entreats, he cries to Hakodosh Boruch Hu for help.

SO MUCH TO PRAY FOR

And even if you're not a farmer; so you're a city worker. First of all you have to ask Hakodosh Boruch Hu, "Please! Help me find a job." And even if you have a job, many times you have to ask Hashem for a better job, a better boss, better pay, better hours. And then you have to beg Hakodosh Boruch Hu to help you be successful at your job. Everybody needs success in his job. Even a person who does menial tasks could be fired. Or maybe his employer might become bankrupt, or this commodity that they're manufacturing might go out of existence; maybe there'll be no need for it anymore.

That's one of the great purposes of the necessity to earn a livelihood – it's a remedy given to us to help us achieve perfection by means of having to constantly ask Hakodosh Boruch Hu for help. The need to earn our livelihood is an incentive to be *mispallel* and to ask Hakodosh Boruch Hu to give us our bread.

Whatever you're laboring in, you always must turn to Hashem for help. Let's say you're a lecturer in college. You have to ask Hakodosh Boruch Hu beforehand; it's not a bad idea you're hearing now. You should practice it. Walk in a corner for a moment, pull out your yarmulke if you don't have it on your head already, and say, "Hakodosh Boruch Hu, give me *hatzlacha* with today's lecture." *L'hadil*, if you're a *rosh yeshiva* saying a *shiur*, before you start the *shiur*, say a *tefillah ketzarah* you should have *hatzlacha*. Ask Hashem that no *bochur* should ask you a very difficult question that will explode your whole *shiur*.

You need help in anything you do; you always need *siyata dish-maya*. You're a salesman? So while you're waiting in the reception room for the big man to come out and accept you, say a *tefillah* you should make a good impression on him so that you should be able to sell him your goods. "Oy Ribbono Shel Olam help me, help me!" You should ask for it. And you should ask with a *krechtz*.

THE BLESSINGS OF WORK

So now we come back to our subject and we see that when Hakadosh Baruch Hu sentenced Adam, when he sentenced us, it really was a prescription for success in this world. It was a punishment that saved him and saved all the future generations and therefore we should be grateful for that *gezeirah*. And so, I'm going to review quickly, briefly, the two prophylactics, the two benefits we spoke about tonight that come from that sentence Hashem meted out to Mankind of having to work in order to earn our livelihood.

First of all, when we see others at work or when we ourselves have to toil, it's a memorial that reminds us to beware of the consequences of sin. It's an eternal monument to the tremendous repercussions of any sin that we might *chas v'shalom* do. Adam Harishon sinned and he brought a terrible misfortune on Mankind forever. And when we see the repercussions of that one sin; when day after day we see the eternal results of that sin, we become more and more aware of the danger of transgressing the word of Hashem.

And the second lesson of **בְּזַעַת אֶפְיֶיךָ תֹאכַל לֶחֶם** is the necessity to remind ourselves constantly we need the help of Hashem. Our *parnassah* won't come easily; money won't grow on trees. Unlike animals and birds and fish, we must toil for our *parnassah*, and that means we have to constantly turn to Hakodosh Boruch Hu for help. And that is all part of the great plan of Hashem; the great blessing of "By the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread." Because we must never forget that our mission in life is not merely to exist; we're here to seek perfection and to prepare for the great existence of eternity. And the greatest preparation for our eternal existence is to never forget Hakodosh Boruch Hu.

HAVE A WONDERFUL SHABBOS

A VORT ON THE PARSHA

Bereishis

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים הִנֵּה נֹתְתִי לָכֶם אֶת כָּל עֵשֶׂב זֶרַע זֶרַע ... וְאֵת כָּל הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר בּוֹ פְרִי עֵץ זֶרַע
זֶרַע לָכֶם יִהְיֶה לְאֹכְלָהּ

— And Elokim said, “Behold I have given to you every type of herb that yields seed...and every tree that has seed-yielding fruit; to you it shall be for food” (Bereishis 1:29).

It is with these words Hakodosh Boruch Hu introduced to Mankind, for the first time in history, the subject of eating food.

Now, there is something that seems to us out of place in this *posuk*: Why is Hashem mentioning that the vegetables and fruits are זֶרַע זֶרַע, that they have seeds in them? A few *pesukim* earlier when Hashem gave the command that the earth should produce these plants, תּוֹצֵא תוֹצֵא בוֹ אֲשֶׁר זֶרְעוֹ בּוֹ הָאָרֶץ ... עֵץ פְּרִי ... אֲשֶׁר זֶרְעוֹ בּוֹ – “The earth should produce trees with seeds in it” (Bereishis 1:11). So we understand that it was necessary to say it then; those words were the command of Creation.

But here when Man is being given *permission* to eat, why was it necessary for Hashem to mention that there are seeds in the fruit? What do we need this information for? That an apple has seeds? That a cantaloupe and tomato is also filled with seeds? What's important about that right now when I'm biting into the apple, or when I'm chewing on a piece of cantaloupe?

The answer is that in this *possuk* Hashem is not only giving Mankind permission to eat from His world, but He's teaching Mankind *how* to eat from His world. You know, a cow doesn't have to learn how to eat – she just heads out to the pasture and eats. But what Hashem is telling us in this *possuk* is that He wants much more from us than He wants from cows.

And so when Hashem, for the first time, gives Mankind permission to eat from His world, he teaches us the primary purpose of eating. And what is that purpose? Not to gain weight, but to gain wisdom!

וְנִחְמַד הָעֵץ לְהִשְׁכִּיל – “The tree is desirable as a means to wisdom” (Bereishis 3:6). The most desirable result of eating a fruit is that it should make you wise. You have to realize that not only the pulp and the juice is beneficial to you, but your mind is going to gain a great benefit from looking at the seeds.

Let’s say you’re eating a tomato. Hakodosh Boruch Hu wants you to eat not just a *pri*; He wants you to eat a *pri eitz zorei’a zera*. He wants you to utilize the opportunity to notice the seeds in the tomato. There are seeds there and each one is a miracle of miracles. Every seed has instructions for how to create a tomato plant. There are *billions* of instructions in one seed!

One apple seed is such a miracle it should be in a museum. A museum for just one apple seed! An apple seed has in it, on its DNA molecule, at least two billion bits of information encoded on the little helix – you can’t see it, it’s microscopic – that tells the little seed how to make a tree when it’s planted in the ground. And not only are these billions of bits of information coded there, but the apparatus to carry it out is also in that little seed. You understand that in order to carry out these complicated instructions a lot of machinery is necessary; laboratories and factories. And yet all of that is contained in the tiny seed.

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: “Ahh! Look at the miracle! This is why Hashem said those extra words in our *possuk!*” People write to me that I should send them some of my seeds. I send the miracle seeds by mail. I go to the post office and I mail my seeds to people.

And so the purpose of fruit is not like people think, that you should eat it. The purpose of fruit is so you should *see* it. That’s the main purpose. Of course, after you take a good look and labored a little in the *avodah* of Awareness of Hashem, so you deserve to have a little refreshment too. So you make a nice *bracha* and you can eat it as well. But to eat it without looking at it, without understanding its lesson, that’s a waste of an apple. Hashem didn’t make apples for us to eat. He made apples for us to eat so that we should become aware of the One who made those remarkable fruit.

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

שאל אביך ויגדך זקניך ויאמרו לך

Q:

When I take my child fishing is it better to emphasize the idea of tza'ar ba'alei chayim or to emphasize the concept that it is a zchus for the fish to be eaten by an oived Hashem who will use the energy obtained, to serve Hashem?

A:

First of all, who takes children fishing?! I never did! It doesn't say that Yankev Avinu took his children fishing. Recreational fishing is only an imitation of the gentiles. Gentiles go fishing so you're also a Gentile who goes fishing too. No, it's not right. There are better things than going fishing.

You can take a walk with your child and look at the grass. And say to him, "This is your wool winter coat." "My coat?" he'll say, "What do you mean?" Yes, the sheep eats grass and turns it into wool. Can you imagine such a machine? You put in grass and it produces wool for you. Actually, you are grass. Your mother ate meat which came from animals that grew from eating grass. Yes, a cow is a miracle. You put in grass and it produces meat and milk. All that grass becomes meat on your plate and the milk in your refrigerator. So your mother drank milk and ate meat. And your mother made you. So if you explain it to your child and explain it again to your child slowly, he begins to hear the nifla'os ha'Boirei.

But to go fishing? The whole concept is an imitation of the gentiles. So you'll have to think of a better idea than going fishing.

[TAPE #E-255]

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In honor of my dear wife Leah

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