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פרשת תרומה

WITH

R' AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"l

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

Artificial Man, Golden Heart

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Part I. Deception Is Something

Deceptive Chassidim

I want to begin by telling you a true story. Right now it will be just a story but I hope that by the time we finish tonight you'll understand it very well.

Somebody was once talking to the Lubavitcher Rebbe; I think it was the previous one, Rav Yosef Yitzchak, *zichrono livrachah*. And he was complaining to him. "Your *talmidim*," he said, "are deceiving everyone. They're putting up a front as if they are very *frum* Jews, the way they dress and act. But I don't think it's so true. I know some of them and I think it's a deception."

So Rav Yosef Yitzchok told this man, "The Mishnah (Peah 8:9) says that if someone deceives the public in order to get charity – for example, he acts like he has a swollen belly, like he's suffering from starvation; or

if he acts like his foot is chopped off, he bends his knee up to make it appear like he's one-legged – so the Sages tell us that someone who does that, he presents himself with an artificial behavior on the outside, so he's guaranteed that **עַד שֶׁיִּהְיֶה בְּאַחֵר מָהֵם** – *the end will be that's how it will turn out*. One day he'll be in a smash up and he'll lose his leg. Or he'll be stranded somewhere with no food and he'll suffer from starvation. The way you behave on the outside to deceive people, that's how it's going to turn out in the end.

“And so,” Rav Yosef Yitzchak said, “Let my students, my *chassidim*, keep faking their *tzidkus*, their piety. Let them act that way on the outside until it actually happens to them. The way they behave, that's how it'll turn out in the end.”

The Heilige Pnimiyus

Now before we go on, I must give credit to one of the Chachomim of two *doros* back; he made a statement that is an introduction to the subject. Rav Simcha Zissel *zichrono livrachah* said that when studying the Torah it's necessary **לְהַפְשִׁיט אֶת הַצִּוְרָה** – *to take off the outward form* and see the *pnimiyus* of the subject. Again, **לְהַפְשִׁיט אֶת הַצִּוְרָה** – *to take off*, be *poishet* the outwardliness, the *chitzoniyus*, and see what the *pnimiyus* is about.

It's a principle that we apply to many things. It means that when you're learning about the mitzvah of *korbanos*, you should want to uncover what the *korbanos* are all about. When you're studying the details of *hilchos tzitzis*, you should understand what the *tzitzis* are teaching. When you learn about Pesach, about the *matzah* and *marror*, you should make sure to peel away the outside layer and understand what's doing underneath, That's called **לְהַפְשִׁיט אֶת הַצִּוְרָה**. Instead of only thinking about the externality of a mitzvah, we should peel back the layers of the *chitzoniyus* and see what the *pnimiyus* is telling us, what the core of the commandment is.

The Heilige Mishkan

Now, we can't in one night peel away the outer layer from all of the various parts of the Mishkan – it's too much to do. But there's an interesting idea that our Sages tell us about the Mishkan; they say that the Mishkan symbolizes the structure of the human body.

The whole Mishkan was like a body. Outside, on the roof, there were special hides covering the building like the skin that covers the body.

And the pillars of wood, the *kerashim*, were like ribs, like bones, that hold up the body. And there was a separation between the *heichal* and the *kodesh hakodoshim*, just like there is a diaphragm in the human body that separates between one part of the body and the other part of the body.

There are so many details in the structure of the Mishkan and since each one relates to the body and its organs, so each one involves lessons that have to be uncovered. The *menorah* symbolizes important ideals and the *shulchan* other ideals. There's the *mizbeiach hanechoshes* and the *mizbeiach hazahav* and all the *keilim* and procedures associated with them, and they're all teaching lessons.

But there's one *keili* mentioned in our *sedrah* that, if studied properly, will reveal to us a very important way of living successfully. I'm sure that the lesson we talk about tonight is not the only one, but there's no question that it's one of the very valuable examples of how being *mafshit* the *tzurah* will open up for us a new insight into the service of Hashem.

The Heilige Aron

“וַעֲשׂוּ אֲרוֹן עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים ... וְצִפִּיתָ אֹתוֹ זָהָב טָהוֹר מִבֵּית וּמִחוּץ תִּצְפְּנֻהוּ.” We are commanded to make a wooden ark and to cover it with gold inside and out. Now, the *seforim* say that the heart of a person – it means his essence, the *neshamah* – is symbolized by the *aron habris*. That's not what I say – the *meforshim* explain it so – only that I'd like to tell you something from my poor little head; maybe together we'll be *mafshit* the *tzurah* a little more.

You know, we're all born with a *neshamah*. But that's not the same *neshamah* you're expected to bring back at the end of your time here in this world. If you come back to the One who sent you with the same *neshamah* that He sent you into the world with, that's a failure. And therefore the *possuk* here is telling us to get busy. We have to take our fleshy hearts, our minds, our *neshamos*, and cover it inside and out with pure gold.

How do you do that? How do you transform your mind? So the Torah is telling you here. You have to start covering it, pouring on layers of gold, inside and out. Gold on the inside means we must be genuine, we must have true ideas in our hearts. Every person has to cover the inside of his mind with the truth of the Torah ideals and attitudes. He

studies Torah and mussar and changes his *pnimiyus* – that's pure gold. That's מְבִית תְּצַפְנֵנוּ, covering it with gold on the inside.

And yet, you can't ignore the outside; the *chitzoniyus*. How your feelings and ideas are expressed outwardly should also be gold. As much as you have to inlay the underside of your heart with pure gold, the Torah is teaching us here that it must be overlayed with pure gold too. The outside of the heart you have to cover with perfect behavior too.

And what happens when you do that? The box made of wood, a material that should be perishable, is protected now by gold, and now it will last forever. The human soul, when it's coated *mibayis u'michutz* with *zohov*, becomes eternal.

The Heilige Chitzoniyus

But there's a secret here, a secret for how to cover your heart with gold. According to the Sages, when they made the *aron habris* they first covered up the outside of the wooden box with gold and then afterward they covered the inside (Rashi Terumah 25:11). It was gold-plated inside and out but there's a lesson here, a lesson about what comes first. The way to do it is first by means of the outside.

Of course, what matters most is what's doing inside. הָשֵׁם יִרְאֶה לְלִבְּךָ – that's what Hashem is looking for; your *pnimiyus*, the inside of your heart. But how to change your inside, that's the question. And that's what the Torah is telling us here. Get started by covering up your *outside* with gold. Be artificial!

You know, our Sages tell us (Yuma 72b) a rule for proper living and if we study their words we'll see that this is the advice they give: לְעוֹלָם יִהְיֶה אָדָם תּוֹכוֹ כְּבִירוֹ – *A person should always make his inside be like his outside.*

Now the question is why say 'your inside like your outside'? It should say *baro ketocho*; his *outside* should be like his *inside*. You should make yourself a *tzaddik*, an *eved Hashem*, and then, once you're an authentic servant of Hashem then you can be one on the outside too. Then you can reveal yourself to the world. Otherwise you're a fraud. You're going to make believe you're good when really you're not so good yet?

The answer is, absolutely! *Chas veshalom* if a person will make his outside like his inside. Whatever he feels inside, he should show in public? *Chas veshalom*!

The Natural Failures

People think it's a virtue to be 'natural'. It's not. When you live *unnaturally*, that's the way to become naturally good. That's what it means *tocho kebaro*; you make your insides follow your 'unnatural' outside. And therefore the number one thing is to get this out of your head. Forget about being natural. To be 'real', to be 'natural', that's a failure.

The truth is that everyone can see that people who live naturally are failures in life. I'll tell you about natural people. Here's a person; he's sitting in public, at the bus stop, and he puts his fingernail into his ear and then he inspects the results of his mining expedition. Very natural!

What happens to natural people? Oy oy oy! I can tell you stories of natural people, what happened to them. A natural woman, she became angry at her husband and she was natural. What a downfall! What a disgrace! Tragedy of tragedies. And she had to be divorced because of that. A stain on her name and a stain on her *neshamah* forever and ever and ever! Such a thing should happen in a *frum* family?! That's because she was natural.

The Unnatural Success

Now listen to this. I'll tell you now about an *unnatural* woman. Her husband gave her a slap. He was natural, a natural wild donkey. Terrible! A terrible *avlah*! But then he went out and bought her a box of candy. It's a very small apology. He gave it to her. He didn't say anything; he was ashamed to say anything. He just handed it to her.

You know what she did? She took it! She accepted it! It's very unnatural what she did. If she was natural she would have taken that box of chocolate and broken it over his head. But she was too smart to be natural. I'm sure she was still angry at him, but she knew it doesn't pay to be natural. It doesn't pay to break up.

When I told this story two years ago, somebody wrote me a letter. "Why didn't she take him to court?! She should have called the police on him!" That person who wrote me is a natural person, a failure. This unnatural woman, she ended up walking her children and grandchildren down to the *chuppah* together with her husband.

And therefore, the first thing you have to know, you can't be natural in this world. You'll save yourself a whole lot of trouble, a whole lot of

heartache. Even if you're not looking to purify your heart, to cover your mind with pure gold, don't be natural. Be artificial! Be unnatural! You'll be happier and more successful in this world.

Part II. Deception Is Everything

Layers of Gold

But that's not the most important thing. We have to understand this subject of living artificially in a broader and more important sense. It's not merely a way to get along with others and to succeed in Olam Hazeh. That too, but it's much more than that, much more than success in Olam Hazeh.

We're learning from the gold covering of the *aron* that if you want to be authentically good, then you *must* start by being artificial. You can't be natural in this world and make something out of yourself. That's a big *limud* we have to get into our heads – if you want to be authentic, if you want to be a good Jew, *you have to start by being artificial*.

Living unnaturally, being artificial on the outside, that's how you change on the inside eventually. You have to start layering up the outside of your heart with pure gold. And little by little your outside is going to change your insides.

The Golden Grocer

Let's say you are a grocer and you have customers that come in all day long, and many of them are big nuisances. They're bothersome. One of them wants to return an open can of sardines. "It's not the ones I wanted. Take it back and give me my money."

What will the poor grocer do with the can of sardines? It's a loss. You know what he's thinking? He wants to be natural. He wants to take the open can of sardines and pour it onto her head. But he knows that it would be a big mistake. He has to make a living and this is part of it. So he takes it and puts it in the garbage can. He gives her the money and he keeps quiet.

He's always saying, "Yes, yes." Women always come in and bother him and complain. But he smiles at all of them and he's agreeable to everything because they patronize his store and he needs them.

You should know that this grocery business of his is not merely for *parnassah* in Olam Hazeh. He's making a living in Olam Habo as a result. Because the more he acts that way – artificially – on the outside, the more it's changing him on the inside. After years and years, he becomes a patient man. He trained himself to be a *mentch*. He's gaining good *middos*. He's quiet, and he's *kovesh es yitzro*. He's being *koneh shleimus*.

The Golden Rebbi

That's why I say it's good to be a *melamed*. If you're a *melamed*, a teacher, so everyone knows that *לֹא הַקֶּפֶן מִלְמֵד* – if you're angry you can't be a teacher (Avos 2:5). He wants to keep his job; maybe he can get a raise too, so he's nice to all the boys. They're kicking their feet under the table to each other and making all kinds of trouble for him. He'd like to take a strap and give them a beating; “ooh, would that be good”. That's what he's thinking. But he can't; he'll lose his job. So he smiles and caresses the little boy's cheek. He's patient and he's *koneh shleimus*. He becomes better and better each time he acts unnaturally. And so, more than the salary that they give him in the yeshivah is what he's giving himself in perfection of character.

Rabbonus too. *Rabbonus* is wonderful because you have to act better than you are. And you eventually *become* better than you are. I'm telling you from experience. It works.

That's the secret the Torah is teaching us as we study the *aron*. Hashem wants you to change yourself. Our purpose in life, the function of being created, our entire success is based on changing ourselves, our character. And the way to change your insides is by means of your outside. Even if you don't mean it but you act artificially. You must be artificial!

That's a surprise to many people. To the American ear it's especially grating because it means we are not born in this world to live a natural life. We're here to live an unnatural life. And the quicker we get this into our heads, the more we'll be ready to start on the journey towards *shleimus*. The success of a human being is not in being natural.

Fake It and Make It

Now, this subject of pretending to be better than you actually are is the great principle enunciated by our great teacher in the Mesillas Yesharim (Ch. 7). We've said it here a number of times but it's never too much. And that is the principle of *הַחֲצוּצוֹת מְעוּרָרִית אֶת הַפְּנִימִיּוֹת* – the

outwardliness stirs up the inwardliness. What you do outwardly affects what you are inwardly. Behave as if you are good and little by little you'll become what you pretend to be.

And so, that's the principle involved in being an artificial man. In order to make some progress in life, it is important to go one step ahead of what you actually are now. You cannot 'be yourself' and make any progress. To become better than you are, you must start acting as if you actually are already good right now. *Tocho kebaro* – cover yourself with gold on the outside; keep pouring gold on the outside until little by little your inside follows along.

Now one of the areas in which a person can make tremendous progress by being artificial is in the area of *bein adam lachaveiro*, how we act with our fellow man. If you're ambitious to make something out of yourself, to be a good person in your *tocho*, the first step is to be a good person on the *baro*, on the outside. And even though you know you're a fraud – you know that it's not you; you're a faker – it's a mitzvah to be a faker.

So when you deal with people, you're dealing with your wife or with your husband or with your neighbors or with the man on your street, with anybody you talk to or look at or deal with, think, "I want to get that person to have a good opinion of me. I want to fake it until I make it." And if you're serious about it, you'll make it. I guarantee you'll make it.

Fake Love

Let's say you go out of here tonight and on the sidewalk outside you see someone who is not your friend. Naturally, you'd like to ignore him. But you remember what you heard in the lecture and you figure you might as well try it, so you smile and let out a big "*Shalom aleichem, Berel!*" In your heart, you might despise that man. You didn't learn yet how to love your fellow Jew, *וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כָּמוֹךָ*. You didn't think about that yet. But right now it doesn't matter because tonight you're being artificial. "*Shalom aleichem*, it's so good to see you," you say to him. "Oh," you're thinking, "it feels so unnatural."

"No matter," Hashem says, "That's My boy! Finally you're getting started. Finally you're going to make something from yourself." And even though it's not real, you're only an actor, you're putting on a show, nevertheless, you should know that these things are for your benefit.

Now don't think this is *stam* talk. You should know it's *avodas Hashem*. Hakadosh Baruch Hu says, "I'm giving you the right, I'm giving My permission; you have permission to do that." Because once you start out on such a career of making believe you're a good man, what's going to happen to you? You're going to become a good man. Absolutely you'll become a better man because of that.

If day after day you'll meet people and you'll say, "Oh, I'm so happy to see you again." You're not happy to see them. But if you say that a thousand times, after a while, a little bit comes into your mind. One day you might even become an *ohev Yisroel*.

Throw in a Blessing!

You want something else? This is extra credit. It's for the serious ones, the ones who mean business. When you meet somebody and he says, "*Shalom aleichem*," and you're a natural man so you say, "*Aleichem shalom*." That's natural; you're not going to ignore him after all.

But after he finishes talking, he goes away, so now you become artificial and you say *noch a mohl*, "*Aleichem shalom*." After he went away. He's not listening anymore, he doesn't hear you. After he went away, you say, "*Aleichem shalom*, a blessing of *shalom* on him". Who is listening? Only Hashem is listening. That's unnatural. That's artificial.

Now you really don't mean it. He went already but you're saying it anyhow. "*Aleichem shalom!*", because you're interested he should have *shalom* in his life. And if you're not interested yet, keep saying it, eventually, you'll be interested.

"Good Shabbos," a person says. You say, "Good Shabbos." That's natural. But now you want to be artificial. He walks away, so you say, "You should enjoy the *cholent*. You should enjoy the Shabbos *seudah* and you should sleep *geshmak* on Shabbos. Everything should be nice and quiet in your house." Give him *brachos* that his family should all be healthy. Say these words. Say these words. Yes! It's false. It's absolutely false. You don't think it at all. But do it anyhow. Say it anyhow.

Fool Your Spouse

Why not deceive your wife? It's a good idea; deceive your wife. Let her think you're a good fellow. You can't deceive your mother or father; they know who you are. But your wife you can deceive. Put on a good face. Compliment her that she cooked a good supper, that she's a good

wife, that you're proud of her, you're happy with her. You're not proud and happy with her, but say it anyhow. And she should say it about her husband too. Say it. Say words. And the more you say it, the better you become. One day you'll mean it too.

Smile too! Practice it tonight when you get home. Practice it on your wife, on somebody you'll meet in the hall. Practice it on the street. Here comes your neighbor from down the block. Now you're not interested in that person. You're interested in getting home as soon as possible and that person means nothing to you. Oh, what an opportunity that is! You're not interested but you're going to be artificial now. Ooh wah! You're already a different person.

And that's what it says in the Mishna **הוֹי מְקַבֵּל אֶת כָּל אָדָם בְּסִכָּר פָּנִים יְפוֹת** – Greet every person with a pleasant countenance. **כָּל אָדָם** means every man. Now how can you do that to every man? Sometimes you're bored from this fellow; he's a *nudnik*. Sometimes the fellow likes to talk a lot and you're in a hurry to get rid of him.

So how is it possible to greet every man? The answer is *panim yafos* – you can do it with your face; it's not necessary to do it with your heart. With your face, you can smile at everybody even if you don't feel it in your heart. And if you do it frequently enough with your face, then some echo of that will be represented in your inner feelings.

A human being, by means of his external behavior can change himself. Ok, so you're not so good. But right now, act like you're good. Always try to gain honor in the eyes of people, don't worry that you're doing it for your *kovod*. If you're doing it because you want to cover yourself with gold in order to eventually cover your inside with gold too, then absolutely there's nothing better than that.

Part III. Deception In Everything

Dishonest with Hashem

Now, I have another about five hundred examples I could give you, ways of encouraging your insides by means of your externality. I have a lot to speak on this subject and I can keep you up until one o'clock at night. But since you don't want to stay that long, and I also want to go upstairs to sleep – we're going to turn now to a new part of this subject.

I'm going to reveal to you a secret now, that you have to be artificial with Hashem too. You hear that *chiddush*? If you want to inlay your heart with gold you have to be artificial with Hashem too.

In the Shulchan Aruch (OC 231) it states a *halachah*; when you eat, you should eat *l'shem Shomayim*. So here's a man with a hearty appetite and he sits down to a table of food and he says, "I'm eating *l'shem Shomayim*." It's *sheker*, 100% false. But he's saying it anyhow. "I'm eating these delicious pancakes *בְּרִי לְהַבְרוֹת אֶת הַגּוּף*, to make my body healthy, *בְּרִי, שְׂאוּכֵל לְעֵבֹד אֶת הָשֵׁם*, in order that I should be able to serve Hashem."

That man is a liar. He's eating because he likes pancakes. He's hungry and the food tastes good and smells good. But he's a *chochom*. He's training himself by saying a falsehood.

Training for Mitzvos

Now imagine he says it every day; he wants to train himself well, so every day he says it. His wife shouldn't hear it by the way. She'll laugh at him. But when she walks out into the kitchen, he should say it. He should say it *b'peh*, with his mouth. *הִנְנִי אוֹכֵל בְּרִי לְהַבְרוֹת אֶת הַגּוּף בְּרִי שְׂאוּכֵל לְעֵבֹד אֶת הָשֵׁם*. He should say it again and again, again and again. And he should know he is accomplishing something solid, a real achievement, because little by little, someday a little bit of *l'shem Shomayim* will creep into his mind too.

Now that's a *klal* in many things. It can apply to very many things. Tomorrow morning you could even say, "I'm putting on *tefillin l'shem Shomayim*." It's not true. You're not thinking anything. But you started now. You put a layer of gold on the outside of your heart – it's a flimsy layer, a very thin layer but it's the beginning

Another example: when you see a *mezuzah*. In the *mezuzah* it says, *וְאָהַבְתָּ אֶת הָשֵׁם אֱלֹהֶיךָ*. Now we have to know that *ahavas Hashem* is a *mitzvas asei min haTorah*; it's openly stated more than once. And all the *monei hamitzvos* enumerate love of Hashem as a *mitzvah*. It means you have to *learn* to love Hashem. And it's not so easy. You have to admit, it's not easy. Because to love what you don't see with your eyes openly – even though you have *emunah shleimah* – it's very difficult.

Training for Love

And now, as you pass by the *mezuzah* and you remind yourself, "It says in there that I have to love Hashem. I don't yet but maybe I should

try out this method I heard in Rabbi Miller's lecture." So you stop for a moment; if nobody's listening you say, "I love you, Hashem." Nobody should hear that. They'll think you're *meshuga*. But say it anyway! "*Ich hob dir lib, Ribono Shel Olam.*" Say it when you pass by the *mezuzah*. You never did it once? It says **וְאָהַבְתָּ** in the *mezuzah*.

"Oh, I'm not on the *madreigah*," you're going say. "If I learn all the 10 *she'arim* of Chovos Halevavos, when I get to the last *shaar*, *Ahavas Hashem*, that's when I'll do it. The Chovos Halevavos is like a ladder. You climb up. When I climb up, if it'll ever happen that way, I'll reach the top *madreigah*. I'll do it for real."

No! Don't wait! Don't wait! Who knows how long it'll take? Start right now and say, "I love you, Hashem." And don't think it's wrong because it's not natural. Sure it's not natural. Say it anyhow. And keep on saying it every time that you can, as much as possible, and little by little, you become different. You'll change. It's guaranteed.

Go Bananas!

Another form of being unnatural, artificial. Whenever you see a fruit, an orange, a banana, a grape, don't be natural. Natural means, "I want to eat it, that's all." No. Be artificial. Admire it. Stop to admire it. *Peiros* are made beautiful, not only to make them attractive to eat. Hashem wants you to look at it and admire *maasei yodov shel Hakodosh Boruch Hu*.

Now you have to know this is something that's not done, and if it is done, people think it's exaggerated, it's false. And I'm telling you it is! It is exaggerated and false. But only at the beginning. Later it's not so.

I passed a fruit store today. Outside was a huge tub full of watermelons, huge watermelons! It looks like it came from a factory, artificial watermelon. But no, it grew by itself. Watermelons grow by themselves. It's a *nes*. A huge *peiri* and inside delicious red meat, colored red to make it look beautiful and more luscious, more appetizing. Inside there are seeds and every seed has a million plans, blueprints for how to reproduce a watermelon plant.

If you teach yourself to stop and be amazed, you're a wise person. Yellow bananas! Beautiful oranges! Blue grapes! And green grapes! And red grapes! Plums! Red plums! And blue plums! And purple plums! All kinds of apples! Delicious apples! Every kind of beautiful and luscious *peiri* and you're looking at it and you're admiring it.

Now, at first, it's not sincere. You're not interested at all. Adam Harishon, when he saw Gan Eden, it was נֶחְמַד הָעֵץ לְהִשְׁכִּיל, the fruit was desirable to him, he understood that it would make him wise. Don't wait for that. Even though you're not getting wise right now, start saying it. "The fruits are so complicated, so full of *chochma* and wisdom". Of course, you don't know anything about it, so you have to be artificial. And so, even without appreciating it, say it anyhow, "How beautiful are the fruits, Hashem. I admire those *peiros*. How beautiful they are and I thank You Hashem for creating such beautiful things in the world!" And little by little, it starts coming into your mind that way; little by little, you learn to admire the *peiros*.

Health and Wealth Wishes

Another detail in this department of artificial *bein adam l'makom* is this: לְעוֹלָם יִבְקֶשׂ אָדָם רַחֲמִים שְׁלֹא יַחֲלָה – Always be mispallel to Hashem that you shouldn't become ill (Shabbos 32a). You're in perfect health. You're young and robust; you're not even thinking of illness. You have to be *mispallel* to Hashem anyhow. Always! It means even if you don't mean it. Even when you're young, ask Hashem *rachamim* not to become ill.

Here's a healthy boy, sixteen years old. He heard this *shmuess*. He walks out on the street and says, "Ribono Shel Olam, keep me well." Now he thinks he's perfectly well forever and ever, for the next 100 years. He should say it anyhow, "Ribono Shel Olam, keep me well."

You have to do that. *L'oilam*, forever. We have to ask Hashem always, "Please keep us well!" Again and again. You'll be changed on the inside. You'll grow in your *emunah* and *bitachon*.

One more. לְעוֹלָם יִבְקֶשׂ אָדָם רַחֲמִים עַל מְדָה זוֹ שֶׁל עֲנִיּוּת – A person should always ask Hashem that he should never become poor. It's a Gemara (*ibid.* 151b). It's like a commandment. You have to ask Hashem never to become poor.

Now every day you say it in *birkas hamazon*, אֶל תַּצְרִיכֵנִי לֹא לִיְדִי מִתְנַת, בְּשׁוּר וְרָם, but nobody's thinking about it at all when they're saying these words. It's a very artificial thing. Your father has plenty of money and you have enough food in the house and you never thought of poverty. But no. Even the wealthy man, the millionaire, has to say that. You have to ask Hashem every day, a few times every day, "Please, Hashem, I shouldn't become a beggar."

Improving With Age

Now you will say, “You brought us here to tell us these things? To be fakers? You’re wasting our time with fakery?” And the answer is yes. You have to learn to be artificial. The way to greatness is to be an artificial man. You’ll be artificial and artificial and artificial, again and again and again, until you become real, a real servant of Hashem. Hakodosh Boruch Hu says, “Do that and you’re going to see what’s going to happen to you. You won’t be the same man.”

וְתַלְמִידֵי חֲכָמִים כָּל זָמַן שֶׁמֻּזְקָיֵנִן חֲכָמָה נִתְּסַפֶּת בָּהֶם – *Talmidei chachomim*, the older they get, the better they get (*ibid.* 152a). Why? Because they’re always working to make themselves act good and therefore they become good. They’re always acting like they’re decent people and they become decent people. But זָקֵנִי עִם הָאָרֶץ – an old *am ha’aretz*, what happens to him? He gets worse.

Who’s an old *am ha’aretz*? He doesn’t learn Gemara. He doesn’t learn Mesilas Yesharim either. Just an old man that works, that’s all. He works. He works and he eats. Maybe he *davens*, but he *davens* like an *am ha’aretz*. He’s natural! כָּל זָמַן שֶׁמֻּזְקָיֵנִן – the older he gets, the worse he gets. You become more and more natural. Naturally you’ll be a *beheimah*. Every person who’s natural is an animal. And so, when a man is a natural man, he’s going to miss out on all the good things in life. And of all the good things, what’s the best thing in life that he’s going to miss out on? Becoming better; he will never improve.

Tale of Two Tzaddikim

And so we come back to the story that we began the lecture with, the story of Rav Yosef Yitzchok’s *chassidim*. But I’ll say a similar story with another *tzaddik*.

In Slabodka someone asked the Alter *zichrono livrachah*. He said, “Do you know that your boys are deceiving you? Your boys act as if they were *ba’alei mussar*. They act like they are men with great ideals of ethical behavior and attitude. They act as if they have *mussar* but they’re deceiving you.”

So the Alter said, “They’re trying to deceive me. They’re busy deceiving me and deceiving me more until I deceive them. I deceive them because eventually they become the *baalei mussar* I want them to be.”

So it's עַל פִּי שְׁנֵי עֲדוּתִים יָקוּם דָּבָר – with two stories, two different *tzaddikim*, that's a good *eidus* that this is the way. Automatically, you'll never become a *tzaddik*. Forget about it. It's only the result of hard work to become a *tzaddik*. And Hakodosh Boruch Hu says, "Keep deceiving Me – of course you're not fooling Me but keep going through the motions and you're going to see what's going to happen to you. You won't be the same man. One day you'll find that not only did you overlay your heart with gold but inside as well, your *tocho*, that also became pure gold."

Have A Wonderful Shabbos

LET'S GET PRACTICAL

Acquiring A Golden Heart

The *aron* symbolizes the human heart, which must be inlaid with gold inside and out. The procedure for doing this, is by starting with the outside. This principle is set forth by the *Mesillas Yesharim* – "The exteriority influences the interiority".

We must become artificial people in order to grow.

This week I will *bli neder* set aside a moment each morning to plan out three artificial actions I will take that day. Whether it's an artificial expression of love towards Hashem, and His Beloved Nation, Yisroel, or an artificial compliment towards my spouse. Perhaps it will be an artificial declaration of *l'shem Shomayim* intent or an artificial prayer for health, wealth, or artificial exclamations of awe and wonder at Hashem's Handiwork. Whatever it is, each day I will take at least three artificial actions on my road toward acquiring a golden heart.

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

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שאל אביך ויגדך זקניך ויאמרו לך



It says that in the month of Adar we have to be *marbim b'simcha*. How does one acquire more happiness during this month?



So the question is where do you go to get *simchah*? Does it mean you have to order it from Kedem Wine Company? No. The answer is that it's right in here; you have it in you. You have to know that Hakadosh Baruch Hu has made in each person a fountain of *simcha*, a very deep fountain of *simcha*. Only that the pump has to be primed. Once you open up the fountain and it starts gushing forth you'll be surprised how much *simcha* there is in us. We are born with the ability to be full of happiness.

Now, once you start thinking how good it is this month of Adar when Hakadosh Baruch Hu showed us a picture of *l'asid lavo*, of what the future holds for the Am Yisroel – Haman is hanging with all his sons! That's what's going to happen *l'asid lavo*. That's the real truth – that's how it's supposed to be; all the *reshaim* should be hanging and the *tzaddikim* should be looking up and enjoying the sight. We have so many enemies today – we always had enemies but we have enemies today too – and the time will come when our enemies will be hanging. I'm not saying we will do it, but Hashem will do it for us. They'll be hanging and it will be a pleasant surprise.

That's what happened then. They took a look. "Who is hanging there? Haman is hanging!" It was a surprise, a shock. They went out of their minds with happiness. So utilize that happiness; think about what happened then and about what's going to happen again in the future and experience that happiness.

In addition to that, enjoy the fact that spring is around the corner. We'll have nice balmy weather soon and soon the trees will have green leaves. You can also think about how good it is to be alive. Oh what a pleasure it is to be alive! It's a big *simcha* to be alive! So keep on thinking happy thoughts and Hakadosh Boruch Hu will open up the fountain of happiness that's in your mind and it will start gushing forth in the month of Adar.

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