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פרשת וישלח

WITH

R' AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"L

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

**Living With Intent**

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*Part I. Examining Your Thoughts*

**The Protected Family**

When we study the history of the Avos, we see how the yad Hashem protected them throughout their lives. There was a special hashgacha of Hakodosh Boruch Hu that watched over our forefathers in their encounters with others. Like the novi said about them, **לֹא הִנִּיחַ לְאִישׁ לְעֲשׂוֹתָם** – Hakodosh Boruch Hu didn't allow any man to wrong them, **וַיּוֹכַח מְלָכִים** – and He rebuked kings concerning them (Divrei Hayomim 1:16).

Everyone remembers how Hashem intervened when Pharaoh took Sarah: **וַיִּנְגַע הָשֵׁם אֶת פַּרְעֹה נְגַעִים גְּדֹלִים ... עַל דְּבַר שְׂרַי אִשְׁתּוֹ אַבְרָם** – He afflicted Pharaoh because of the matter of Sarai, Avram's wife (Bereishis 12:17). And when Avimelech Melech Plishtim tried the same thing, Hashem came to

him in a dream and warned him, “Behold you’re going to die because of the woman you took” (Bereishis 20:3).

And if you look through the entire history of the Avos, you’ll see that Hakodosh Boruch Hu stood guard over His chosen ones. He “didn’t allow man to wrong them” – there were no unfortunate incidents of strangers, outsiders, who contaminated the holy family.

### **Shechem Takes Dinah**

Except for one incident. There was one exception to this principle and that was the incident of Dinah, when Shechem violated her. That’s the one time when the purity of the family was violated. That’s the one incident, the one tragedy in the history of the Avos.

Now this matter deserves some study because actually Dinah was blamed for what happened. וַתֵּצֵא דִּינָה ... לְרִאוֹת בְּכָנוֹת הָאָרֶץ – *Dinah went out to look at the daughters of the land* (Vayishlach 34:1). She went out to see and therefore וַיֵּרָא אֶתָּהּ שָׁכֶם, that’s why Shechem saw her. Our sages make a point of telling us that her going out was the cause of her debasement in the hands of a goy.

Well, to go out and to look at the people of the land never has beneficial results because there’s nothing good that you can see. The less you see of the people of the land, the better off you are.

### **Seeing Wickedness**

I remember when I was a yeshiva man in Slabodka, one Shabbos morning I was walking before *davenen* and I stopped near the bridge between Slabodka and Kovno to see how many Jews were going to work Shabbos morning. And it wasn’t just a few. When I came to Slabodka in 1932, every half hour a busload of Jews left for Kovno on Shabbos. But by 1938 *every five minutes* a bus left full of Jews! Working on Shabbos! It was unheard of not long ago. But now every five minutes a bus left full of Jews going to work.

That’s the Eastern Europe, the Lithuania, that people wonder, “Why did it happen? What did Hashem have against those great *tzaddikim*?”

Well, I was standing there looking at the *tzaddikim* going to work on Shabbos morning.

And then the old *mashgiach zichrono livracha* came along – he was coming back from the *mikveh* Shabbos morning – and he says to me, “What are you doing?”

I said, “I’m looking at people going to work.”

So he said, “עס איז נישט גוט צו קוקען – It’s not good to look.”

It’s not good to look! That’s what he told me. Now, I’m sure he meant more than I intend, but those were his words: “It’s not good to look.”

### **Good Intentions**

And so when Dinah went out to look, that’s when this misfortune happened. That’s why the incident occurred. Now, the truth is that when Dinah went out to see the daughters of the land, it wasn’t because of idle curiosity. She had good intentions. She was walking in the footsteps of her great ancestors. Remember, שְׂרָה מְגִיֶּרֶת אֶת הַנָּשִׁים. Dinah’s great grandmother, Sara Imeinu, used to speak to the women.

That was how the household of the Avos thought, to spread the *emunah*. That’s how Dinah went out, to size them up, to see what the situation is and to understand, “How could I teach them the principles of the *emunah*?” She did it for a virtuous purpose; she was thinking, “What could be done for them?”

But, Sarah Imeinu, she didn’t go out in the street; Dinah made the mistake of going out. Now, she didn’t go out to look at the boys of the land. No question about that. She went out לְרֹאוֹת בָּנֹת הָאָרֶץ; it was only the girls. But when you go out to look at the girls of the land, it just happens that they have boys of the land also around them. And that’s when the trouble began. That’s when a certain boy saw her and the trouble took place.

### **The Unwanted Son-In-Law**

Now, although it may seem to us that we understand now a little bit the reason why such a tragedy happened, but our *chachomim* give us a reason that’s a little more abstruse, something a little more delicate than that. And that’s what we’ll study now because it will be the *hakdamah* to what we’re going to speak about tonight.



The *chachomim* say this incident was a punishment for Yaakov Avinu. It doesn't mean it wasn't a rebuke to Dinah. Dinah also was rebuked by this, but it was also a punishment for her father.

Why did it happen to Yaakov Avinu that his daughter was violated by *goy*? What did Yaakov do that he deserved to see such a tragedy in his home? After all **וְכֵן לֹא יֵעָשֶׂה** – *Things like that didn't happen among Jews* (Vayishlach 34:7).

So the *chachomim* tell us as follows; they give us some background information. Eisav, Yaakov's brother, was in the market for a wife. Now he had plenty of wives, but he was always in the market for another one. And as Yaakov was coming home from Padan Aram, he had a beautiful daughter, and he was thinking that if my brother puts his eyes on my daughter, Dinah, I'm going to get an unwanted son-in-law.

### **Perilous Company**

Now this you have to know, when a man marries somebody's daughter, according to the Torah aspect, he is marrying her father too. It may not sound romantic, but that's the truth.

That's how you young fellows have to think. You look at the pretty face of your wife, then you look at your father-in-law's face and he looks almost like your wife. It's a little of a different face because your wife has a fancy hairdo but it's very similar. And sometimes you're thinking, "What is this? I didn't marry *him*." But it's a bond now; a son-in-law is part of the household now.

And so if Eisav would have married Dinah, it means Eisav would have been joined forever with Yaakov and that's one thing that Yaakov couldn't afford. You remember when Yaakov came back and Eisav was so 'kindhearted' and he offered again and again to escort Yaakov. But Yaakov apologized with all kinds of tricks and stratagems to get out of this 'honor' because he didn't want such company! The company of Eisav is perilous!

### **Yaakov is Punished**

And therefore, when he knew Eisav was coming, he put Dinah into a trunk and she traveled with the baggage. But a trunk sometimes can be opened. Eisav, the friendly brother, might try to look into the trunks too.

So Yaakov, the **הָכֵם הָרוּאָה אֶת הַנוֹלָךְ**, nailed down the lid. I'm sure he put some breathing holes there but he did what had to be done. And so Dinah was riding in the trunk on the back of the camels and the lid was nailed down to keep Eisav's prying eyes away.

Now, listen to what our sages say about that (Medrash Rabah 76:9):  
**לֹא בִקְשָׁתָּ לְהַשְׁיָאָהּ בְּרִדָּה הִתֵּר** – Yaakov, you didn't want to marry her off permissibly,  
**הִרְי נִשְׂאָתָּ בְּרִדָּה אֶסוּר** – so now she'll be taken in a forbidden way.  
You could have married her off to Eisav. Who knows? Maybe she would have had a good effect on him. Maybe he would have done *teshuva* as a result of such a good wife. You didn't want to marry her off permissibly, so now you're going to get it. And that's why she was seized by this gentile boy. It was a punishment for Yaakov, a punishment because he denied his daughter to his brother.

### **Permission to Be Rude**

Now we have to understand what was taking place. Yaakov knew Eisav well. He lived with him together from the beginning. If anybody knew Eisav, it was Yaakov. And if Yaakov had thought that Dinah could reform Eisav, he would have been the first one to propose the *shidduch*. But he was convinced that it would be nothing but a tragedy for Dinah, a ruined life for her to wed Eisav. And he could never do such a thing to his daughter, to give her over to a husband who would ruin her.

And therefore, to us it seems that Yaakov Avinu was fully justified in slamming down the lid and putting in the nails of that trunk. Not only justified – he was doing a *mitzvah*, a *mitzvah rabbah*! He was saving Dinah from Eisav! Let's say a man would come to propose to your daughter and you don't like the man, he's not a *frum* enough Jew; you can slam the door on his face and don't worry about it. You have my permission. If need be, you can nail the door shut too. And yet our sages tell us that Yaakov was punished because he concealed Dinah! That's something we have to understand.

### **Imperfection: In Thought Only**

I'll tell you what they said in Slabodka on this *kashe*. In Slabodka they said that Yaakov *was* fully justified! There's no criticism at all about

the action he took. He had no alternative! He was forced to conceal Dinah from Eisav.

But what did he do wrong? So in Slabodka they said that when he was banging in the nails, he was banging them with too much force! Now, a nail into wood, you *have* to hit it in. Wood is not butter; you have to bang it in hard. But in Slabodka they said that it depends how much you put into it of your feelings.

When he was banging in the nails, he should have been thinking. “Ah! If only I could have married off my daughter to my brother, it would have been the happiest day in my life. If only my brother would have been worthy! But the poor fellow forsook the straight path and now it’s impossible for me to allow this to take place.” Every time he banged down with the hammer he should have said, “Ouch! It’s like a nail in my heart!”

Yaakov Avinu was punished for refusing to allow his daughter to marry Eisav?! No, no. That’s not true. He wasn’t punished for that. Yaakov had to conceal his daughter, only that he should have done it with sadness, with sorrow that he was forced to do it. Yaakov Avinu, the quintessential *ish tam* who wanted to perfect himself, understood that Hashem was looking at him with a magnifying glass and the smallest amount of imperfection *in his thoughts* was considered a blemish.

**Degrees of Thought**

Now whether you accept this Slabodka explanation or not – you’re not *mechuyev* to accept anything that you hear here – but the idea is the very important lesson that we’re going to discuss tonight. We’re told this story because we’re expected to know that in Heaven a man’s thoughts are measured with degrees. The Torah is teaching us that it’s not enough to just *do*.

Now that’s a big *chiddush* to us. We would think it’s enough if you do what has to be done. That your thoughts are going to be examined too, it seems to be extreme. But that’s the lesson here. Even though the thing is fully permissible – it could be a mitzvah too – but if the intent is not fully kosher, it makes the act a different kind of an act. And



therefore the greater you want to be, the more you have to examine your thoughts.

## Part II. Serving With Thought

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### **Your Primary Income**

Now, in order to understand this subject a little better we're going to read a quotation from the Chovos Halevovos. It's in Shaar Yichud HaMaaseh, in the sixth perek. This section is where the Chovos Halevovos concentrates on what he considers a very important subject and that is the subject of 'purity of thought'.

Now, purity of thought doesn't sound like much of a subject; you might even think it means something else. And that's why it's so important to hear what he says about this subject.

רָאוּי לָךְ שְׁלֹא תִתְעַלֵּם לְפָקֹד מִחֻשְׁבוֹתֶיךָ וְרַעְיוֹנֶיךָ – It's important not to neglect to examine your thoughts and the inner motives of your mind, כִּי רַב הַהֶפְסֵד וְהַתְקוּן בְּמַעֲשִׂים לֹא יִהְיֶה כִּי אִם מִחֻמָּתָם – because when you do acts, in most cases your acts are valued only according to the amount of intent that accompanies them.

Now that's a very important statement. The value of your act depends on how much intent you invested in it. Even a beautiful deed can sometimes be rendered deformed, almost meaningless, by the lack of proper intent. It could be your act was perfectly correct, nevertheless in Heaven a great deal depends on the inner motivation.

### **Searching For Motives**

And that's why the Chovos Halevovos takes out time to tell us it's of the utmost importance whenever you do anything, to examine your motives. עַל כֵּן יֵשׁ לָךְ אֲחִי לְהַשְׁתַּדֵּל לְהִיּוֹת בָּל מַעֲשִׂיךָ מִיְּהִידִים לְבוֹרָא – “Therefore my brother,” he writes there, “you should make an effort at all times to examine your thoughts and see how much of Hashem is in your mind when you're doing something.” Otherwise you *chalilah* may be losing the entire virtue of the act.

Today anybody who *does* good things, we embrace him. Who needs more than that? Even though your motives are rotten, we're so happy

that you keep mitzvos that we're not going to examine your mind. We're looking for allies and therefore anybody that comes to us and wants to do mitzvos, we say, "אַחֵינוּ אַתָּה – You're our brother! Who cares what your motives are?!"

But you have to know that in Heaven it's not so. In *Shomayim*, it's the motives that are most important. The intent is the heart of the deed – and whatever you do is transformed tremendously by your mind. When something is done without the participation of your mind, the chief part of your personality is missing. A man has two parts, his body and his mind, and if his body is present but his mind is absent he's not really there.

### **Working for Nothing**

That's why when we pray every day (Uva Letziyon) וַיִּשֶׁם בְּלִבֵּנוּ אֱהָבָתוֹ וַיִּרְאַתוֹ, that Hakodosh Boruch Hu should put into our hearts the fear of Him and the love of Him, we add: לִמְעַן לֹא נִיָּגַע לְרִיק וְלֹא נֵלֵךְ לְבַהֲלָה – Please Hashem fill our minds with fear of You and love of You so *that we shouldn't toil in vain and we shouldn't give birth for nothing.*

For nothing! It means that without the proper intention, without the purity of the heart, without enthusiasm, if it's done by habit and without any thought, it lacks all the merit and we are laboring in vain. It means that the value of the deed depends on the type of heart that is standing behind the deed. And the more heart in it, the more potent and the more precious the deed becomes!

### **Banging the Nails**

We'll take a few examples, just for the sake of explaining it better. Let's say you're nailing a *mezuzah* to your door. Of course you're doing it because the Torah commands you to do it. And of course, you must be careful that it should be kosher. You paid good money to be sure of that. And now you're doing the mitzvah properly – you discuss with the rabbi where it should be placed, on which side of the doorway, how far away from the lintel on top. Everything you discussed, and now you're standing with the hammer putting in the nails, one on the top, one on the bottom. Very good!

But what's doing in your head? Are you thinking anything? Oh no! A pity. It matters what you're thinking while you bang the nails! Once you're doing it, you might as well invest some intent and think about what's in the *mezuzah*. What's a *mezuzah* for? To protect your house from *mazikim*? Forget about it. The worst *mazikim* are, if you neglect what the *mezuzah* is telling you.

### **Mezuzah's Message**

A *mezuzah* is a reminder of the beloved One. That's what it says in there – וְאָהַבְתָּ, you should love Him. And בְּכָל לִבְבְּךָ – with all your heart. With all our hearts, with all our thoughts, with all our emotions, we love Hashem. And even if you don't, but that's your ideal at least. And putting up a *mezuzah* means that you're on board with that ideal. At least you *want* to love Him!

Even if you put up your *mezuzahs* already; you banged in the nails a long time ago, long before you heard this lecture. No matter! It's never too late. As you walk in and out of the doors of your home, you can remind yourself constantly. Now some people kiss *mezuzahs* but that's not enough. You have to think. Not only when you're going somewhere; even when you're sitting in the house, take a look at the *mezuzah* over there. Isn't that a noble way of living instead of merely putting it on the door and forgetting about it?

### **Women With Tzitzis**

You wear *tzitzis*. Many people will have their *tzitzis* hang out. They remind other people of Hakodosh Boruch Hu, but sometimes they themselves fail to get the benefit. Wouldn't it be good if sometimes you look at your own *tzitzis* and reminded yourself: וְרֵאִיתֶם אֹתוֹ וְזָכַרְתֶּם אֶת כָּל מִצְוֹת ה' – You will see it and remember all of Hashem's *mitzvos*. Think about the *mitzvos*, there's no end to what you should think about when you see *tzitzis*!

The mothers too, when they put the *tzitzis* on their little boys, they should be reminded. They should see it and remind themselves of the great ideals. “How happy I am that I'm a Jew! How fortunate we are that Hakodosh Boruch Hu chose us! וּבָנוּ בְּחֵרָתָּ מִכָּל עַם וְלָשׁוֹן – He chose us from all nations from all languages!” It doesn't take long but even in a flash, as

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these thoughts pass through your mind, you have transformed the mitzvah into a different mitzvah altogether.

### **The 25 Cent Heist**

And therefore, it's so important to remember that *intent* is one of the most important ingredients in the nobility of your achievements. How many times do you hand a quarter to a poor man and you do it because you can't refuse; you're embarrassed. You see him coming, so you try to walk around the corner fast. But another one comes from the other side. You're stuck. It's a holdup! You have to give away a quarter.

But imagine what would be if you'd put a little thought into it. "I'm giving him this coin because אֱלֹהֵינוּ אוֹהֵב עֲנִיִּים, *Hakodosh Boruch Hu loves the poor* and I am His emissary to help this man." Oh, that's already an entirely new mitzvah. You're transforming that deed into something great.

Now, of course, הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא אֵינוֹ מְקַפֵּחַ שָׂכָר כָּל בְּרִיָּה – *Hakodosh Boruch Hu doesn't take away reward from anyone*. He'll pay that man too. You hung the *mezuzah* without much thought? You'll get reward for that. You gave *tzedakah* because the *meshulach* held you up? You wear *tzitzis* because you know you have to? Ok, very good. But it's nothing compared to the greatness you achieve, the reward that will be waiting for the one who adds thought to all of the things he does.

### **The Life Changer**

Now, I want to add another layer to this subject; it's even more important than adding intent when you're doing a mitzvah because it's something that applies to us always. That's really what I'm driving at. It's not merely a question of perfecting our mitzvot; it's a question of perfecting our entire lives.

The Rambam makes a comment. When it says in Pirkei Avos (2:12) וְכָל מַעֲשֶׂיךָ יִהְיוּ לְשֵׁם שְׁמַיִם – *all your deeds should be for the sake of Heaven*, the Rambam (Shmoneh Perokim, 5) says it's a remarkable statement. He says that many books wouldn't suffice to explain it!

Now when we learn it, we don't see anything remarkable. Certainly everything should be done *l'shem Shomayim*. We agree with that. But the Rambam is *nispo'el* from this statement! Why is he so excited?



It's because that short statement is the heart of our lives. It's one of the most important elements in the program of making something from ourselves. **וְכָל מַעֲשֶׂיךָ** – everything! Now, that's not easy to do but as much as possible we have to learn this principle because it will transform our lives.

### **Get With The Program!**

When a man begins looking into his daily program he sees that only a very small part is devoted to the service of Hashem. If you're learning Torah all day long, *nu*, a different story. But suppose you're a person who has to make a living, so you *daven*, that you do, then you go to work. Let's say you work from nine to five. Now from nine to five where's the *avodas Hashem*? Of course, at lunch time you wash your hands, you make your *brochos*, but most of the time what are you doing?

That's why everyone has to get on board with the program of **וְכָל מַעֲשֶׂיךָ יְהִי לְשֵׁם שְׁמַיִם**. Everyone has to begin living a life of *l'shem Shomayim*.

### **Adding Intent**

It doesn't mean you can't enjoy life! Enjoy! You can be happy! You can make a lot of money! Nothing wrong! Where do you find in the Gemara, anyplace that it's wrong to make money, it's wrong to be rich, it's wrong to be happy? It's a fundamental error to think it's wrong. A man can marry a pretty wife. He doesn't have to take the ugliest wife he can find and say, "I'm marrying only *l'shem Shomayim*." It's a big mistake people make in *pshat*. You can marry a pretty girl. You can make money. You can eat a big lunch and fall asleep on a comfortable pillow. Why not? Only that you should add some intent. While you're doing it, you shouldn't waste your life. You add the intent *l'shem Shomayim*.

So you say, "Well, he's a faker. He's not doing it for *Shomayim*! He wants to make money. He wants to eat a good lunch." No! That's a mistake! It's a mistake! You can add an intent even though it's not your sole intent.

And therefore, whatever you are, wherever you are, you could transform your life with a little bit of thought. It's not hypocritical. Hakodosh Boruch Hu doesn't expect you to give up your livelihood, your

good life, but while you're busy living that life, why not add the intention of doing it for some noble purpose, for the end of serving Hashem. And therefore everything you do becomes noble; it becomes sublime and your life is packed with accomplishment.

## *Part III. Living With Thought*

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### ***Supporting the Kind Liberals***

The question is how do we take such a great and sublime ideal and incorporate it into our daily lives? In this place we like to say practical things, things that we can implement, and therefore we'll study a few examples of how to apply this principle. And if you're interested in success you'll grab onto it with both hands and make it a paramount part of your life.

So suppose you're a businessman or a factory worker and you're slaving away. It's not easy making a living today – especially when the IRS is taking away so much of your money. Today you're working mostly for the government. Taxes take a quarter of your income – more than that – which means that of the twelve months in the year, you're working three months, maybe four months, for the government, for government programs.

It means that your money goes to support other people who don't work. The silliest thing is welfare. What does welfare spending mean? It means you're inviting all the poor to the big cities. Welfare is an incentive for them to come and settle in your cities where they can loaf all day. So they come and now the politicians have votes and you have to pay taxes so these people can loaf and live on welfare checks. All these kind hearted things that the liberals are doing to encourage criminals, they're doing it with money they take out of our pocket.

### ***The Best Profit***

And so a factory worker who doesn't think, that's what he's doing; he's working for the loafers, for the liberals, for the wicked politicians. When a father slaves all week in the factory or in his office, and he doesn't think at all, he's practically wasting his life.

But now you want to transform your life into *avodas Hashem*; how can you do it? The answer is what we're talking about now. Practice up on working *l'shem Shomayim*!

What does that mean "*l'shem Shomayim*"? Do you have to change what you're doing? No. No change. You go through all the motions of your workday; you're making phone calls, you're laying down carpet or painting or installing pipes. Whatever it is, you're trying to make some profit. But you're adding some thought to it. That's the best profit.

### ***Serving Hashem in The Shop***

What type of thought? Number one, you're thinking "Hakodosh Boruch Hu wants me to do business". שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲבֹד וְעַשִּׂיתָ כָּל מְלַאכְתְּךָ – "Six days you should work," Hashem says. Hakodosh Boruch Hu expects us to work to support ourselves and therefore when you do it because it's the will of Hashem you should know that this is called *avodas Hashem*, as surprising as it may seem.

You can add another thought too, "I'm doing this in order to raise up a generation of *shomrei Torah*." You made a *kinyan* when you got married. You committed yourself. "*Ana eizan*." I am going to support my wife. You're *michuyav* to go to work to support your family.

And therefore start off with one customer. When the first customer walks in the door, remind yourself – if nobody's around say it with your mouth – "I'm dealing with this customer *l'shem Shomayim*. My dealings with him are for the service of Hashem."

And think about it as frequently as you can. When you open up the office or the store in the morning, think that. And a couple of times during the day to refresh your memory. In the middle of the day you say, "The next customer I'm going to deal with him *l'shem Shomayim*. I'm going to buy or sell, I'm going to stock the shelves, whatever it is, but I'll do it *l'shem Shomayim*."

### ***Lessons for Butchers***

Imagine a butcher, a butcher is standing behind the counter and is passing meat out to customers. You know that butcher is wasting his life? All he gets is money. If he would stand behind the counter and think, "Let Jews enjoy life; let them enjoy a good piece of meat," that's a

successful business deal. As you hand the meat across the counter, you're doing it with the intent that you want to feed kosher Jews, you want to nourish *frum* people.

Wouldn't that be a wonderful achievement? Isn't it a pity that all butchers don't come together from time to time to take lessons on how to serve their customers?

Instead they're wasting their lives. Just for money? That's **למען לא יגיע לריק**!

I was talking today to a man who has a chain of stores, a delicatessen chain and he was telling me how he's working hard to keep it kosher. He wants high standards of *kashrus*.

I said, "That's good, but you should keep in mind also that you're giving many Orthodox Jews a good time. You know what a big thing it is to make Orthodox Jews happy?! They're eating salami and barbecued chickens because of you! You're giving a good time to many Jews!"

### **Whom Are You Working For?**

And the mother at home is no different. Let's say you are the mother *kein ayin hora* of a big family and you're doing a great deal for your family. All your days are devoted to their welfare. So it seems that you are a great servant of Hashem; and it's true, you are.

But suppose you do it exactly with the same thought that a gentile mother has? If you're toiling in order to have healthy children, in order to have happiness from your family and all the other materialistic ends for which the world toils to bring up children, then why are you different from the nations of the world? What is your merit? Have you done anything for Hakodosh Boruch Hu? Have you invested any labor in your service? It was all for yourself. It was all for the purposes that any materialist would look forward to.

### **Materialists and Mothers**

Of course, it's a better purpose when a materialist raises children than when a materialist lives for himself or herself. There's certainly no question that the career woman living in a studio apartment in Manhattan and her whole life is centered only on her own ambitions and she does

nothing for others unless it redounds to her benefit or her pain, certainly she doesn't come close to the achievements of a woman who decided to devote her career to bringing up a family. There's no question that her contribution is tremendously greater than that of a career woman who thinks only about herself. A Jewish mother is one of the building blocks of society, and the world stands upon such people. They uphold our world.

And yet if it's not done with the intention of serving Hakodosh Boruch Hu, of raising up Jews who are going to be *mamleches kohanim vegoy kadosh*, who are going to be *avdei Hashem* and maybe even *talmidei chachamim*, then you lost out on a greatness, a perfection, that was available to you every day.

When a Jewish woman feeds her child because she is an emissary of the one who is **פֹּתֵחַ אֶת יָדָהּ וּמַשְׂבִּיעַ לְכָל חַי רִצּוֹן** – He opens up his hand and He satiates all the living, so a mother opens up her hand and she feels that her hand is the Hand of Hashem, you know what that means? She has taken a simple act that everybody does and she has elevated it into one of the great forms of service of Hakodosh Boruch Hu!

### **The Tzadik Who Ate Like A Horse**

Not only in the matter of feeding your children. When you feed yourself too, you can't eat like a horse eats, with an empty head. You have to eat *l'shem Shomayim*. Only that you have to learn how to do it.

I once spoke about this and there was a *tzaddik*, a young man, who tried to do it. So he never chewed his food. "How can I eat for the sake of Heaven if I enjoy it?" he said. "So I'll swallow whole pieces without chewing it so I won't enjoy it. Then it'll be *l'shem Shomayim*."

Until finally he became ill and the doctor told him to stop. Do you know why he became sick? He was being punished. You think Hashem wants you to swallow food without enjoying it, in order to eat *l'shem Shomayim*?

The sake of Heaven means you should sink your teeth into that food and enjoy it. *V'achalta!* Let the saliva run. Let the stomach juices run. Enjoy it. *V'savata!* Go to town! It doesn't mean you have to spend money; even a piece of bread with a glass of water. Enjoy it!

But while you're enjoying it, add the intent that you're doing it to be healthy in order to serve Hashem.

### **Speak at Supper**

Try it out tonight when you go home; if you didn't eat and you're going to have supper tonight, as you sit down at the table it wouldn't be a bad idea not to rely just on your thoughts, but say with your mouth, "I'm going to eat now in order to make my body healthy I should be able to serve Hashem."

Now don't let your mother hear you. She'll think that something happened. She'll try to take you to the psychiatrist. That's what mothers do when they see the boy is getting *frum*. But say it quietly under your palm, הִנְנִי אוֹכֵל כֶּרִי לְהַבְרִיא אֶת הַגּוֹף כֶּרִי שְׂאוּכַל לְעִבֵּר אֶת הַשֵּׁם – I'm eating this piece of chicken now, this browned potato, in order have the strength, the health, to serve Hashem".

If you sit down with the intention to eat in order to be strong to serve Hashem, to have power to do good deeds and to carry on your career of idealism then that meal is transformed into a noble endeavor; and you get reward not only for the *ma'asim tovim*, the good deeds that you will eventually do, but immediately you will earn reward because eating supper turns into a virtuous deed.

### **Building Capital**

Sleeping too. Every night before you go to sleep say something; nobody should hear of course. "I'm going to sleep *l'shem Shomayim* in order to have *koach* to serve Hashem." That kind of statement is going to revolutionize your character in the course of time. You never said it even once in your whole life? Try it once. You'll shoot up into the sky – you're a head taller now than anyone else.

And imagine then how important you are if you say it frequently. And finally you'll become accustomed to the idea that it's actually so. Say it and say it and say it until after a while it becomes self-understood that sleeping is considered a service to Hashem. Imagine that – a man is convinced that to go to sleep it's the *ratzon* Hashem and he's doing what's considered necessary in order that tomorrow he should carry on the service of Hashem.



After a while you'll be capable of expanding the area of this program; you start adding other areas of your life where you can add this thought to the things you're doing anyhow. And it's possible for a person who lives with introspection to invest some thought and transform his entire life into a career of achievement. Because, that what's intended by that statement **וְכָל מַעֲשֶׂיךָ** – everything you do should be *l'shem Shomayim*.

It's a pity to do and do and do, and not bother infusing your doing with thinking. Because once you add thought and intent into your life you're acquiring something very valuable. Anything that's done with the right intent becomes so much more valuable. There's no question that you're building up capital, tremendous wealth, for which there's a very great reward – a very great happiness awaits people who live by such a program; happiness in Olam Hazeh and in Olam Habo.

### **Have A Wonderful Shabbos**

## **LET'S GET PRACTICAL**

### ***Living Life L'Shem Shomayim***

This week I will try to internalize the lesson that it is not only our deeds that must be perfect, but our thoughts as well. *Bli neder* before I go to sleep each night I will say “I am going to sleep in order to have energy to serve Hashem”. Additionally, before at least one of my meals I will say “I am eating now in order to be healthy and serve Hashem”.

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# QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

שאל אביך ויגדך זקניך ויאמרו לך

Q:

**How do I best deal with a child who wants to go to places that the Rav doesn't approve of, like the circus or baseball games?**

A:

You give him substitutes. One that is a little more kosher than the other. So let's say he wants to go to a circus. So, if there is no other way, then take him to a baseball game. If he wants to go to a baseball game, then take him to the park. If he wants to go to the park, then try to bring him to a farbrengen at a Rebbe instead. Always try to find something a little better than the thing he wants.

Of course, there will be some times that you won't be able to give him anything that he wants. But in general, look for substitutes. Many times a dollar or a bigger bill will serve as a happy substitute. There are ways and means of making children happy with kosher toys and kosher pastimes. Of course, it's not always easy and it will take some planning and ability, but that's the job of a parent.

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