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OF OUR FAMILY AND ALL KLAL YISROEL

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פרשת פינחס

WITH

R' AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"l

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

Greatness of Jewish Women

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Part I. Hidden Heroes

Hidden Tzadikim

When it comes to the Dor Hamidbar, the Generation of the Wilderness, we imagine that we are familiar with the names of all of the great people of our nation who lived then. Moshe Rabeinu, Aharon Hakohen, Miriam, Yehoshua and Kaleiv, the Nesi'im and so on. The more someone studies the Chumash, the more he or she becomes acquainted with – and connected to – the great people of our past.

But the truth is that as much as we know, we understand that it's not a complete list; we know that there are many names, names of great people, that were never recorded. After all, don't we know that there were *shivim zkeinim*, seventy elders, who led the nation? And we don't know their names. We know Eldad and Meidad, that's all. They're mentioned because they happen to be part of a story being told. But the others we don't know; the rest of the *shivim zkeinim* were great men; at that time

they all became *nevi'im* – temporarily at least – and still we don't know their names.

And the truth is that besides for them we know that there were many *tzaddikim*, many very great *talmidei chachamim*. We're talking now about the greatest generation in our nation's history. They came out of Mitzrayim! They witnessed all of the miracles of Yetzias Mitzrayim. The Yam Suf split for them! They stood at Har Sinai and heard the voice of Hashem!

A Glorious Kollel Life

And what did they do for forty years in the Midbar? They sat all day long in the *kollel* and learned the Torah that Moshe taught them. They had the best Rosh Kollel! A Rosh Kollel who came down from Har Sinai to teach them; you couldn't ask for better than that. And so they sat in the *kollel* for forty years and they learned; and they were transformed because of that.

Not only the men – the families were transformed. Even today, a *kollel* home is a different home. When a girl marries a young man who sits in the *kollel* and learns, you have to know that home is not an ordinary home anymore. It's a *kollel* home; it's influenced by the spirit of Torah. And eventually, when he'll take over the earning of the livelihood, the family will be established on a *kollel* basis. The children will already be established as *kollel* children. The children have the attitude of *kollel* life and that'll remain all their lives. It's a beautiful beginning.

But in the Midbar it was more than a beginning. It was forty years! And it wasn't one family or two or even a thousand. It was a *kollel* nation! And so once upon a time, it was “*kol haeidah kulam kedoshim*.” You can believe Korach; he wasn't saying a falsehood when he said that. Don't mind what your *rebbe* told you in *cheder* about the *dor hamidbar*. כִּי כָּל הָעֵדָה כֻּלָּם קֹדְשִׁים וּבְתוֹכְכֶם הָשֵׁם

Honorable Mention

And so you can be sure that in the *Dor Hamidbar* there were thousands, hundreds of thousands, of people worthy of being mentioned in the Torah. Only that it would be impossible to name everyone – *hagbah* would be very difficult on such a heavy scroll! And so, only the most conspicuous names are mentioned. But all the rest of the great men? No, their names are not mentioned at all.

And then suddenly we're hit between the eyes with a very big surprise. Five little girls, the daughters of Tzelafchad, are named openly in the Torah (Pinchas 27:1). וְאֵלֶּה שְׁמוֹת בְּנֹתָיו מִחֲלָה נָעָה וְחִגְלָה וּמִלְכָּה וְתַרְצֵה, These

are the names of Tzelafchad's daughters: Machlah, Noah, and Choglah, and Milkah, and Sirtzah.

A remarkable thing! Machlah, Noah, Choglah, Milkah, and Sirtzah. They had a certain question about the Torah laws of inheritance and so they came to Moshe and their names are recorded in black on white!

And it wasn't even necessary to mention their names. It could have said, "The daughters of Tzelafchad came and they put their case before Moshe." That would have been enough. But the Torah is not stingy here; it mentions their names! And later the Torah repeats their names again; Machlah, Sirtzah, Choglah, Milkah and Noah (Masei 36:11).

The Funded Amendment

You know what it means to have your name recorded forever in the *Sefer Torah*? Suppose you have a *frum* Jewish millionaire, he's a *tzaddik* too, and somebody would come to him today and say, "I'm coming to you as a messenger of all the *roshei yeshiva* and all of the *gedolei Yisroel*. They made me a *shaliach* to come to you and we're making an offer to you. If you'll give fifty million dollars for the cause of building *yeshivas*, we'll add your name to the Chumash; we're going to make an exception and we're going to add your name into the *Sefer Torah* that's read by Jews all over the world – a permanent addition."

Immediately from all sides other people will offer more! "Fifty million dollars?! I'll give a hundred million dollars!" Absolutely. Some people would give their lives; they'd *mamesh* kill themselves to have their name in the Torah. It's worth it! To have your name in the Chumash?! Hashem's *sefer*?! It's a *kovod* that has no equal!

And these five girls were *zocheh* to it; they merited to have their names mentioned openly in the Torah. It's a remarkable thing that five young girls should deserve such an honor.

Now, exactly what these girls did to deserve such an honor I cannot tell you. The truth is I'm not so interested right now in what exactly it was but there's no question they were *tzidkaniyos*. They were quite young, that's true, but they were brought up properly and they were righteous; they had *yiras shomayim* and good *middos*, no question about it. And so they deserved the honor, absolutely.

The Unexpected Great Ones

But we have to know that the Torah is demonstrating something here. Because so many great ones, their names aren't recorded. So many

tzadikim, we hear nothing about them. And yet these five girls, their names are enumerated. We have to know that there's a reason for that.

Hakodosh Boruch Hu wants us to know that it's not like we think down here below that if we have a long beard, a black hat and a long kapote, that's the only one who's important. "Oh no!" Hashem says. "Black hats and long coats are very good. Very good. But don't forget that even a little boy or a little girl is also important in My eyes. As much as the public tzadikim are in My thoughts always, I've chosen to record the name of these five girls so that you should know who else is important in My history. If a little girl, a young woman, has good character and is devoted to Me she can be just as important as Moshe and Aharon; just as important as Yehoshua and Kaleiv."

Out of The Headlines

Now, we can say those words but actually it's a surprise to us. A frum little girl is so important? We appreciate her, but really... "No!" Hakodosh Boruch Hu says. "I'm showing you now that these girls are important to Me. Even though down below, when you talk about important people, you never think of young girls as being in the headlines, but I chose to yes put them in the headlines in order that you should know that with Me, I don't care what people think. I have My own yardstick of measuring character and greatness."

And very often it's the anonymous ones, the ones who stand in the background serving Hashem as best as they could, they're the ones who are written in the headlines of Hashem's eternal history book.

Now, that's an important rule in understanding the history of the Am Yisroel. Don't be fooled by the headlines! And I'm not talking about the New York Times. That you know on your own. If your name is in the headlines of the New York Times, so we know right away that you're probably a nothing, a lowlife. But I'm talking about the Jewish newspapers, the good headlines, the Torah headlines. Even there, many times great people remain in the background.

The King and The Maid

You remember when Dovid Hamelech spoke in tefilah to Hakodosh Boruch Hu he said the following. He said **אָנָה הַשֵּׁם כִּי אֲנִי עַבְדְּךָ אֲנִי עַבְדְּךָ בֶּן אֲמָתֶךָ** – "Please Hashem answer me, because I am your servant; I am your servant the son of your maidservant."

Now, we say that so frequently that it pays to know what Dovid was saying there. It seems like he's giving two reasons why his prayers should be accepted. First he says, "Because I am Your servant." It means "I belong

to You; everything that I have is for You and therefore hearken to my entreaty.”

And then it looks like he’s adding a second consideration: “I am Your servant, the son of Your maidservant.” It means “I had a mother who served You too.” So it seems like he’s saying “For the sake of me and also for the sake of my great mother, You should hearken to my prayers.”

But that’s not *pshat*. Dovid is not invoking his mother’s *zechus* – you see that he’s invoking his own merit because in both cases he emphasizes *ani avdecha*, *I am Your servant*. That’s the only consideration: “I am Your servant.”

So the question is why mention “My mother, Your maidservant”? Mentioning his mother is not necessary here at all.

Making Of a Gadol

And the answer is that Dovid was saying like this: “Do you know why I am Your servant? Because of Your maidservant who served You – that’s my mother. She did a good job on me. She’s the one who made me into Your servant.” And therefore when Dovid was entreating Hakodosh Boruch Hu, he said, “Please answer me because I am Your servant. And I’m not just any servant of Hashem. I am an *eved Hashem* that was made with very much care by my mother.”

Like when you’re describing a tool, an exceptional tool. So you say “Look at this remarkable tool!” And then you repeat, “It’s a remarkable tool that’s been produced by this and this factory that puts out only the best.” *Ani avdecha* – I’m your servant, *ben amasecha* – my mother was an expert and she trained me; and that’s how I became Your servant.”

Now, it doesn’t mean that we can overlook his father. Dovid had a great father too. Yishai, the father of Dovid, was one of the very great Torah teachers. The Gemara tells us that Yishai, when he came to preach Torah he was followed by six hundred thousand disciples. And after his lecture they wanted to follow him home too. So Yishai was a very great man. And yet here we see that Dovid is mentioning his mother; *ani avdecha ben amasecha*.

Invisible Superheroes

Now, Dovid’s mother, most of us don’t even know her name; she’s hidden away in the background of our history. If not for Dovid mentioning her we would have forgotten about how important her role was in creating the Am Yisroel. We would have not realized the greatness of this woman whose service of Hashem included creating a Dovid. She trained him to

serve Hashem. She trained him in character, in outlook on life. She trained him to be great.

It's a very important lesson we're learning here. By 'chance' – because of a few words that Dovid said – we get a glimpse behind the curtain and we hear a hint about someone who would have remained more or less anonymous, someone whose name wasn't recorded. And that's intended as a model for us; just like the Bnos Tzelafchad were picked out of anonymity because they were important in the Eyes of Hashem, many others were never recorded. And it means that recorded or not, to Hakodosh Boruch Hu there are millions of heroes who are prominent in His eyes.

Part II. Happy Heroes

Mother Yourself

And this will bring us now to our subject. For a long time already I wanted to speak here about how to be a successful Jewish mother. And who better to learn from than the mother of Dovid, the one whom Dovid credits for his success?

Now, before we begin it's important to make one thing clear: you should not feel that this is a lecture only for women. What you're going to hear tonight is important for fathers and children too because to a very big extent we have to be our own mothers. Even if our mothers did a good job on us, we have to continue the work. And therefore whatever will be said tonight about the mother, we're talking to everyone.

But the best thing of all is when you still have a mother, when you're still young and plastic. That's the best time to be shaped with the right attitudes. And so we understand that whatever a child is going to become, the best results come when his mother walks in the footsteps of the mother of one of the greatest men in our history, Dovid Hamelech.

Channeling Prophecy

You know, we think that when the spirit of Hashem came upon Dovid he took out his harp and he started strumming the strings and the words came out by themselves; all those words of *ahavas Hashem* and of seeing the Glory of Hashem in nature that we find in Tehillim, we think they came pouring out on their own. No, no, it doesn't work that way. You must realize that a *navi* is first a man, a young man, with noble ideas; and as his thoughts begin to develop, subsequently the prophecy flows in according

to the channels that he created. The inspiration flows from above along these emotional and intellectual channels that he created.

Now, who created those channels? So you'll say it was Dovid himself. Yes, to a great extent that's true. What about Yishai, his father? Absolutely; him too. But we have to remember Dovid's testimony. *אֲנִי עַבְדְּךָ בְּן־אִמִּיךָ* – I was made into your servant because of my mother. How did Dovid become Dovid? Because he was raised by his mother.

Now, Dovid's mother didn't have a yeshiva. She didn't have a shul. But she had a kitchen! And when little Dovid used to totter into the kitchen, she spoke to him and she inspired him. The kitchen! That was her yeshiva.

Everything Brings Happiness

What did Dovid's mother teach him? Well, we see the results in the Tehillim. She taught him to see the beauty and wisdom in Hashem's creations. Whenever she had a chance she was teaching what Hakodosh Boruch Hu Himself said (Bereishis 1:31): *וַיִּרְא אֱלֹהִים אֵת כָּל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וְהִנֵּה טוֹב קָדָר* – Hashem saw everything that He made, that it is very good. And that must be taught. Otherwise, because of habit people will overlook the tremendous benefits they are used to.

And so Dovid's mother listened to that *possuk* and she taught it to Dovid. She taught him to see the happiness and kindness in the world. When he woke up in the morning she taught him to admire the sun. "We have light, Dovid! And it'll keep us warm all day today!"

And all day long too. "Dovid'l, isn't this world good? Don't these grapes taste good? Hashem did that for you! Look at the street. Aren't these beautiful trees? Isn't it a beautiful white cloud that you see up there. That's going to bring us the water we need." She taught him to admire the trees and the grass and the wind and the bees. And when she was putting little Dovid to bed she pointed at the moon. "Isn't that a beautiful moon, Dovid?"

And what was the result? When he saw a moon for the next seventy years, he saw a beautiful moon. Dovid's heart sang within him when the wind was blowing through the trees. His heart sang with happiness when he saw the sunrise. When he was in the fields shepherding his father's sheep he sang about the grass and the sheep's wool.

Isn't Rain Fun?

Dovid's mother trained him how to look at the world and see the beauty in it; she taught him to admire the world that Hashem created, and she thereby created the channels of optimism and happiness. She was

digging the channels of *emunah* and *bitachon* and *dveikus* that filled Dovid's life and were later expressed in the Tehillim. That's why you have that beautiful song, *borchi nafshi es Hashem*. Of course it's *min hashomayim*, it's *ruach hakodesh*, but the channels were first dug when he was a little boy.

And so, a wise parent who wants to build a home digs channels in a child's mind and pours the foundation of the mind with happiness. A mother could instill happiness in the child when it rains; she says, "Look Chana'le! Look at the beautiful rain that's coming down. We'll have water to drink! And all of our food will be growing now. The peaches and grapes we'll eat in the summer are because of this rain. And you'll be able to take a bath on *erev Shabbos* because of the rain. Isn't rain fun?"

Now, Chana has no sense but she says, "Yes, it's fun." After all, her mother said so. And if her mother will be persistent then all of Chana's life rain is going to be happy times.

Don't Ruin Rain

And why not? What a blessing rain is! These raindrops eventually turn into food for us. Apples are mostly water. All of our food is from water. Even the meat we eat is from water. The rain becomes grass for animals to eat. And the animals take the grass and make it into meat and we'll eat the meat. So rain means that meat is coming down from the sky. Happy times!

But if the mother looks out of the window and says, "Oh Chana'le, I wanted to go out but it's raining. Rain spoiled all our fun today," so Chana'le whenever she'll see a rain come down so without even thinking, even if she forgot what her mother said, her instincts will hark back to that pattern that was first molded on her young plastic *neshamah* and she knows that rain is a disappointment.

When a mother constantly repeats complaints against the weather in the morning – "It's going to be nasty today" – and then three times in the afternoon and three more times in the evening, so all day long the child hears preachings against Hashem and therefore all his life, this is the foundation for his thoughts. That becomes his *hashkafah*, his outlook on the world. And therefore whenever there will be a rainy day in his life, even if he'll be seventy years old, it's going to be an unhappy day because we think with the thoughts that are at the bottom foundation of our careers. And there will be so many rainy days in life. Isn't it a pity for a child to be molded in the wrong way?

The Soda Lesson

And therefore, teach your children the truth. You have to teach yourself the truth too! But don't forget to repeat it in the house always. And first they'll hear it and they'll just listen mechanically, but don't think they're not hearing it. They're human beings and their minds are registering it. And someday, instead of being disappointed, they're going to be happy with rainy days and sunny days and windy days and cloudy days. Every day is *tov me'od*.

Imagine what you're doing to them! All their lives, they'll have a certain feeling of optimism when they see raindrops. You planted a seed in their mind and that seed will take root and produce a beautiful tree with fruits of happiness.

And the more you plant the better. Wise parents should exert effort on training a child to love a glass of plain water from the tap. Sometimes a child demonstrates an interest only in drinking soft drinks, things that are colored and filled with sugar, and so it takes training.

I had an older brother *alav hashalom*. I always remember him; he taught me a great lesson. When I was a little boy I went to the refrigerator to take some soda water. He said, "Wait! First drink a glass of water. Water is the best drink. Then you can get the soda." So I drank a glass of water – I didn't want the soda afterwards. I always remember that lesson. I learned that a glass of water is the best thing.

The Joys of Drinking

I'm not even talking now about quenching your thirst. That's only the beginning. Water is going to put a sparkle in your eyes! And water causes your blood to be liquid and have a consistency that it could flow freely to bring nourishment to all parts of the body. It's water that is the most important element in the blood.

Water is everything for us! *Boruch Hashem*, for a glass of water. When your child is in the room hold the cup of New York City tap water in your hand and say, "Lechaim!" This is the real *lechaim*, it brings life! And then make a loud *bracha*, *שְׁהַכַּל נְהִיָּה בְּרַבְרוּ*. It's the same *bracha* you make on whiskey. But water is better than whiskey.

And when you teach a child the happiness of a glass of water, you're giving him a gift better than money! All his life, he's going to enjoy that experience. Whenever he's an old man and he'll take a cup full of water in his hand, he's going to think, "My mother taught me the happiness of enjoying life!"

The Joys of Siblings

And therefore it's so important to start him out in life that he should look through rosy glasses at everything, to see everything in a happy light. "Chaim'l, isn't it a good thing that you have a little sister?"

Now he didn't think so until now, but since his mother suggested that to him, he'll remember that. It's good to have a sister. It's good to have a brother. And the more you have, the more good it is.

But if you don't speak on the subject so he'll follow his nature and everybody in the house is a competitor with him and you know what happens to competitors. Nobody likes them. So he grows up thinking that every brother and sister is an added disability. But if you talk to him, you suggest to him and say, "Look, you have five brothers. Aren't you lucky? You have another five sisters! Aren't you lucky?"

Home Sweet Home

You teach them to enjoy their home. There are so many things in the house. Let them appreciate a sink. First we ourselves have to appreciate it. You walk over to a wall and you turn a handle and pure water comes flowing out as much as your heart desires. Where did you have such a thing in the olden days? If a mother won't tell that to a child he'll never appreciate it. You'll have to wait until he comes to these lectures. But all that time in the interim was lost.

Teach the children to be happy with a piece of bread. Eat the bread and enjoy it. Chew the bread and thank Hashem. Ah, ah! We thank you, Hashem – you made such a good world! It's so important to bring that happiness into the heart of Jewish children.

Now, that's only the beginning of the list of building the home. You know, if you ever watched a house being built, you see how they put in the supporting girders and the beams and then there are pipes and wires and walls; gradually it takes the shape of the house. You see that there are thousands of details that were needed in order to make the finished house. Same thing, there are thousands of details of happiness when it comes to building a home. And that's one of the great functions of a wise mother; to make a happy home, a home where the simple gifts of Hashem are extolled and accentuated always.

Part III. Home of Heroes

Don't Worry!

Now a home like that, where Hashem is appreciated, needs a foundation of optimism to support it; you can't build a happy home on the foundation of worry and anxiety. And therefore included in the obligation of a mother and father is to make the home a place of confidence and optimism.

Of course if you can tie the confidence up to the attitude of *emunah* and *bitachon*, that's the best thing. If you can teach a child that Hakodosh Boruch Hu is in charge and everything will turn out right in the end because there's a Father in heaven; if you can always repeat and emphasize that whatever Hashem does is for the good and thereby bring an optimistic attitude into the house, that's the best approach – but whatever the approach is, it's certainly important that worry should never appear in the home because it's implanting germs that are going to multiply as life goes on.

Here's a home where the father and mother are worried; they're sitting together at the table, sitting and worrying. "We can't pay so much for the tuition." "We can't afford the rent here." And while they're talking the little child is sitting under the table. He's so little they think he understands nothing. But actually he's listening and he's worried along with them. "What's going to happen?" It's the truth. The child is under the table or in the next room sitting there helplessly and the cold hand of anxiety grips his little heart.

And don't think that it passes by. It becomes a sickness which he will be unable to rid himself of all his life. Anxiety is not something caused by facts; it's an emotional state, an attitude. And if it's an anxious home, a worried home, then the worry will remain with that little boy even when he's a big boy of sixty years old. Even when he'll be prosperous one day, he'll be sitting in his office and without even thinking the anxiety will grip him and he'll suffer from it.

We're A-OK

And therefore such talk – if it's needed – is only in privacy, *b'chadrei chadorim*. The father and the mother must appear before their children like actors on a stage. You can never be natural. No matter how you feel you have to be to your children a hero. No matter what you come onto the stage with a smile.

You know, if you ever saw a politician you know that he never appears in public acting like he really feels. He's knocked out. He's been traveling all night to get here. He spoke just before someplace else. Now he's here and he has no energy. But he gets up on the stage and he's wreathed in smiles. He needs votes; what can he do?

A parent needs the votes of his children and therefore he should always appear confident. Always happy. Always as if he knows what to do. He's never desperate, never worried. Everything is under control. We are A-OK.

The Eternal Optimism

Now, one of the most important ways of instilling optimism in the Jewish home is when you introduce into your childrens' minds the confidence that we are to be here forever. No other nation is guaranteed eternal existence. The *navi* says, *בִּי הַהָרִים יִמוּשׁוּ* – *the mountains will move away*, *וְהַגְּבָעוֹת תִּמְוֹטָנָה* – *and all the hills will disappear*, *וְיִחְסְדֵי מֵאֲתֶרְךָ לֹא יִמוּשׁוּ* – *but My loving kindness with you will never change* (Yeshaya 54:10). Which means, Am Yisroel is going to continue as long as there'll be a world. We are the Am Olam – we'll be here forever.

Tremendous nations have already disappeared - it's a fact of history. People never dreamed that Rome would someday be driven off the map. All over the habitable world, the legions of Rome marched everywhere; even up to Scotland. All of Europe was under Roman rule. They built bridges, buildings and cities everywhere. Roman law was introduced everywhere; the language too. And then Rome went underground and it disappeared entirely. Rome is wiped off the map already. Of course, it's history, archeology, but it's no longer a nation that continues to exist.

And all the nations are the same. Once upon a time, who dreamed that Bavel would someday disappear. They would laugh at you in the days of Yirmiyah Hanavi if someone had told you that. Bavel?! Disappear?! It was a powerful nation! Great cities! Huge buildings! And today Bavel is nothing at all! If you want to know Bavel, you have to go underground with bulldozers and take it out from underneath.

Tell that to your children. Talk to them about these big empires that went lost. "But *kinderlach*," you say to little Moishe'le and Chana'le, "we are promised to exist on this earth forever. As long as there will be earth, the Am Yisroel is going to exist. We will walk on the soil forever."

Eternal Life

Not only that, but we'll continue when there's no more world too. *כֹּל יִשְׂרָאֵל יֵשׁ לָהֶם חֵלֶק לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא*. All of us, the loyal Am Yisroel, will live on in the

next world! The *tzaddikim* are there right now; even those who passed away this year, they're all alive right now in the place of great happiness. And they'll be there forever and ever.

And therefore, no matter what happened, even when they were being put into gas chambers in Europe and being burned, the confidence doesn't waver. Because we're forever and ever; we'll continue to exist. Our children, our grandchildren, our relatives; the Am Yisrael will never disappear no matter what.

Now this confidence must be implanted in all the Jewish children. You have to speak about it always and let them know that we are the ones that are going to endure forever. It should be a topic of conversation in the home; table talk. We have to remind ourselves and our children about this promise of Hakodosh Boruch Hu. And He's demonstrating it. It's already thousands of years without a country, without a land and we are still here. And we're increasing and multiplying. We're spreading everywhere. Torah communities are spreading out everywhere! All over America, Australia, England, Russia. The world will always have Torah communities and in the end, they will be the ones who will survive.

Gates of Happiness

Once a child feels that his people is forever, it gives him a confidence, an optimism that can't be shaken. You can't feel down or depressed when you know that your cause, your ideals, and your family will exist forever and ever; nobody can ever be discouraged. Whatever happens, we're living for a great purpose; we're living for a purpose that will be forever.

Now once a child is instilled with that confidence in the nation he belongs to, the Hashem he belongs to, so all of the things connected to Hashem and His loyal people become more important. On that foundation you can teach a child to love *mitzvos*. When he passes a *mezuzah* you can teach him not merely to look at the *mezuzah* and to kiss it but to *love* it. A *mezuzah* reminds you that you belong to the forever nation, the nation that Hashem is watching over.

Even when you go to the *beis haknesses* it becomes a place of pride and happiness. Go with a child hand in hand to the *shul* and tell him, "Aren't we happy that we're going now to the house of Hashem?" There's a *shul* that has a big sign outside *בְּאוֹ שַׁעְרָיו בְּתוֹרָה וְחֵצְרָתָיו בְּתוֹרָה*, "Come into His gates with thanksgiving, into His courtyards with praise." That's how it should be. Tell him, "Aren't we lucky we can go into a *shul*, this beautiful place, a place where Hashem is? Aren't we happy that we are the one nation of Hashem?" The child says yes and you've laid down a foundation for the future.

Good Yom Tov!

That's also how parents should train their children in *simchas Yom Tov*. "You know what *Yom Tov* means? It means we were chosen!" אַתָּה אָתָּה! בְּחַרְתָּנוּ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים That's the way to make *simchas Yom Tov*. Now, I know that some parents think *simchas Yom Tov* means taking out the children *chol hamoed* for a ride to go to the park. There's nothing wrong. But that's *simchah*, not *simchas Yom Tov*.

Make a little *mesibah* for them. It's more important than two hours in the Bronx zoo or who knows where. Sit down and make a little *mesibah*; even a five minute *mesibah lekovod Yom Tov*, a little gathering. Wednesday afternoon, Thursday, Friday afternoon. Sit down and talk for a couple of minutes about *Yom Tov* and tell the children, "Let's sing a song about how Hashem chose us to be His people." And you'll sing *Atah bechartanu* or something else. And then tell them, suggest it, "*Kinderlach*, aren't we having a great time? They all chime in, "Yes. But can we go to the park now?" That's excellent. These few minutes have laid a foundation.

Good Shabbos!

Teach them the *simchah* of Shabbos. One of the reasons Shabbos is fun is because it's the day we're celebrating that tremendous declaration of Hashem, בֵּינִי וּבֵין בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל – *Between Me and the Bnei Yisroel* אֹתָּה הוּא – *it is a covenant forever*. Shabbos is a sign, a covenant, that we will be with Him forever. Hashem said, "We are together forever. Like I am forever, you are going to be forever too."

And therefore no other nation has received this gift. The gentiles are told, "Keep working even on Saturday. Because Shabbos is a special day between Me and My nation." Of course, it's good for their health too to be busy always. But the reason why they're forbidden from keeping Shabbos is because it's a special *bris* between us and Hashem. That's what you have to tell the children every Shabbos.

Of course, you can enhance the fun of Shabbos by buying *migdanos* and *ma'adanim*. You have candies and cakes and *noshere* and ice cream in honor of the Shabbos. But it's very important to emphasize to the children, to suggest to them that Shabbos is intrinsically fun because it means that we – 'we' means the little children too – will be forever. That's the great happiness, the great optimism, that is the foundation of our homes.

The Other Chumash

Now, when a mother and father build a home like that – nobody can build a perfect home, but when parents make this *avodah* a focus in their lives, so they have to know that as anonymous as they are, they're being

written down in the Torah. Just like the Bnos Tzelaafchad are written forever, so too will that mother and father be recorded forever.

So you'll say, "Bnos Tzelaafchad?! What does this have to do with us? We are born too late to be included in the Chumash. No matter what we accomplish it can't be jotted down."

But we have to know that there is another Chumash, another Torah, that is being written as we speak. And at the End of Days another Torah will be read, a Torah that tells a tale of our entire history. And that's the Torah that matters most.

There's still time and there's still opportunity for all of us to be written up in this great Chumash. When this great *sefer* will be read so all of a sudden Rebbetzin So and So's name will pop up. Or maybe even a little girl will be mentioned. The opportunity to achieve this greatness is within our reach. And when that great Torah is read and our names are mentioned – with all the details of what we did in this world to build up the Jewish home; and to build ourselves too – that will be the greatest happiness we could ever imagine, the happiness of being written in Hashem's book forever and being with Him forever and ever.

Have A Wonderful Shabbos

LET'S GET PRACTICAL

Creating Foundations For Life

Being a parent means you have the opportunity to be written in the eternal Torah by pouring a foundation and building a skyscraper from every child you have. This week I will *bli neder* focus for one minute a day on what I can do in my home to walk in the footsteps of the mother of Dovid Hamelech and dig channels of happiness, confidence and optimism in the minds of my children. And if I don't yet have a family I will spend a minute a day thinking about building up my own mind with these Torah attitudes.

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שאל אביך ויגדך זקניך ויאמרו לך

Q:

Do we gain the maximum benefit by staying to ourselves, separate from the goyim? Wouldn't it be beneficial for us to gain from what the nations have to offer to us?

A:

When you see an airplane take off for Eretz Yisroel, and inside there are many people going to yeshivos to learn in Eretz Yisroel, that's an example where we are taking advantage of what the gentiles have to offer us. R' Akiva Eiger didn't invent an airplane, and neither did the Vilna Gaon invent the airplane. The *goyim* invented it. So we say, absolutely; utilize all that we can from the inventions of the *goyim*. Even the scientific knowledge that the *goyim* have discovered we use. Make use of everything; whatever we can we take it for ourselves.

Now, I think that when Moshiach will come, we'll still use automobiles; we won't give up automobiles. The world will continue to run like it does today. The Gemara says that. And if there will be automobiles, so there will have to be traffic lights too. Traffic lights were invented by the *goyim* but there will be traffic lights too in the time of Moshiach. On the contrary, there will be *halachos, takanos chachomim*: If a person passes a red light, he'll get *malkos*, lashes. No question about it. There will be very severe penalties. That's very important for us – for safety, *piku'ach nefesh*.

We'll make use in Moshiach's times of all the good *takanos*. I'm sure they'll use radio to let people know *dinim, halachos*, other important information; and people will listen to Torah on the radio. And in those days there will be a kosher TV. Kosher TV means people will sit in their homes and will look at the TV and they will see *tzaddikim* teaching Torah and explaining things – *halachos*, and *middos tovos*, and even *halachos* of Yom Tov and *halachos* of Shabbos on TV; and it will be much more effective than merely words or printed pages. I'm sure all the modern inventions will be utilized in the days of Moshiach. Therefore, certainly we want to make use of the benefits the *goyim* bring to the world.

This week's Q&A sponsored:

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