

TORAS AVIGDOR

AUTHENTIC TORAH THOUGHT FOR LIFE

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PARSHAS EIKEV

WITH

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BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

REMEMBER THE ROAD

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Part I. The Mitzvah to Remember

Great Obligations

Rabbeinu Yonah, in his Shaarei Teshuva (3:17) lists ten examples of “מַעֲלוֹת שְׁעֵבוֹרִים נִבְרָא הָאָדָם – *great and virtuous ways of living, for which man was created.*” And each one is a big subject by itself. But as one of them he quotes a *possuk* from this week’s *parsha*: וְזָכַרְתָּ אֶת כָּל הַדֶּרֶךְ – *You should remember the entire journey in the midbar*, וְאֵשֶׁר הִלִּיכָה יְהוָה אִלֶּיךָ – *that Hashem led you*, וְזֶה אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה – *forty years He led you in the midbar* (Devarim 8:2).

Now when we read that *possuk* it doesn’t make much of an impression on us; surely we don’t see any especially virtuous way of living in those words. After all, Hakadosh Baruch Hu is speaking not to us but to the generation of the Wilderness. It’s the end of the forty years in the Midbar and He commands them to spend time reminiscing, remembering their travels: “In the Midbar you traveled from one station to another; look back and study what happened in all the places you stopped. Think back to all the

journeys you made in between those stations. Study what happened to you and how I provided for you.

“Sometimes you couldn’t get any water and then water was found. You were worried about food but then I sent you food from the heavens. You were in danger from enemies – the four-legged ones and the two-legged – and I saved you constantly.

“Look at what could have happened,” Hashem tells the generation of the Midbar. “And you’re still around to tell the tale. So you’re *mechuyav* to tell it to yourselves; to look back and ‘remember the entire road’, all of the kindnesses that I did for you.”

Remember the Road of Life

Now, we read that and it’s interesting maybe but we move on; there’s a big *parsha* to read after all. Our forefathers had to remember; very good. We have to read about it every year, also good. But וְזָכַרְתָּ אֶת כָּל הַדֶּרֶךְ doesn’t have much to do with us.

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But that's a mistake, a tragic mistake even, because Rabbeinu Yonah is telling us here that this *possuk* is talking to us. "It's not just a story," he says. "It's a *mitzvas ase*. It's a model for us and a *chiyuv* upon us to remember our own journey through life. 'Remember your whole road that you traveled'"

And then Rabbeinu Yonah quotes Dovid Hamelech; he backs it up with a *possuk* from Tehillim (107:42): וְיִתְבּוֹנְנוּ חֲסִדֵי ה' – *Let them meditate on all the kindnesses of Hashem*. It means that a person is obligated to be *misbonein*, to think about it with details; to look back on the whole journey of your life; when you were a boy what Hashem did for you; when you were a young man what He did for you; when you were married; when you needed to get a job and make a living.

Who knows what could have happened? You were saved from accidents. There were illnesses. Sometimes you had a *chashash* about your health; you went to a specialist and he told you it's nothing to worry about and so on. Or maybe sometimes it *was* a problem and you were rescued.

Before My Eyes

And so every person has to look back on his life; he can't just be an *am haaretz*, an ignoramus who doesn't bother remembering his past. You have to look back on your whole lifetime – of your experiences; thousands of experiences – and remember the kindness of Hashem. And not just once; Rabbeinu Yonah quotes Dovid Hamelech, בְּכִי חֲסִדֶיךָ לְנֶגְדִי עֵינַי – "Your kindness," he says to Hashem, "are before my mind's eye always" (*ibid.* 26:3). It means that you're always considering not merely what Hashem does for you now but what He did every step of your

biography; every chapter and every sentence in each chapter.

Once you were a little boy about to be born, a little girl about to be born. You know it's very dangerous to get born. The first minutes of getting born are the most dangerous minutes in your whole life; the smallest thing might *challilah* spoil you. There are ten thousand things that could *challilah* go wrong and each one would be a tragedy. But you came out all in one good piece. *Baruch Hashem!*

The Wise Dermatologist

I once went to a *goy*, a skin doctor, for a pimple. I told him, "You know I have a new daughter; I had a daughter born just recently".

"Is everything alright?" he said.

I said "Yes".

"It's a miracle!"

That's what the *goy* said. He called it a miracle. Now, if a *goy* said that, we should surely say it. Everything is alright? It is a miracle! *Nisei nissim!* And you should remember that; it's part of your journey in this world.

Back In Time

I'll tell you a *chiddush* now; don't laugh, but even the time before you were born you have to think about. Now if I said that on my own it could be you'd reject it; you think it's too much, too extreme. But I'm saying this from a source that you can't argue with: Dovid Hamelech! Dovid! He's already a *baal deiah* – him surely you can listen to.

Dovid Hamelech said בְּרַכֵּי נַפְשֵׁי אֶת ה' וְכֹל קִרְבֵּי – *I give blessings to Hashem and all my insides bless His holy name*. And the Gemara (Brachos 10a) explains, דָּר בְּמַעְיָ אָמוֹ – *He dwelt*

inside of his mother, וְאָמַר שִׁירָה – and he sang to Hashem about that part of his life.

Now when he was still inside his mother he wasn't capable of saying *shirah* yet. But when Dovid was born – of course even when he was born it took time, but later in time he looked back on that period and he thanked Hashem for what He did for him

A Dangerous Journey

You have to know that those days, all the stages of the development, one after the other, were of the greatest concern for you – not only at that time but for the rest of your life. The slightest mishap *chas v'shalom* before a man is born would leave him a *ba'al mum*. He would be blemished forever; sometimes so seriously that he'd be incapable of living normally. *Chas v'shalom* sometimes a person's entire life is ruined by just one wrong development before he was born.

It's a remarkable miracle what you experienced then. Here you were a little blob of protoplasm which had to go through a tremendous metamorphosis; it had to mold a human body with billions of parts to it. It's one cell and it has to become trillions of cells and they're all specialized; they're not all the same kind.

Imagine that this cell has to have the foresight to look ahead and think that some of us will become eyes. Some of the cells in the eye have to become transparent; it's like a crystal clear lens. There also have to be nerves from the eyes to the brain in order that the pictures that the eyes take should register on the brain.

Now that's a tremendously complicated apparatus! No camera is as complicated as the eye, but this little blob of protoplasm that was

to become Dovid was looking ahead and planning these details. And if there was the slightest snag in this procession of development, then Dovid would have remained blind.

When Everything Grew

And that's only one of millions of details which means millions of miracles. And there are opportunities for millions of snags because before one cell can become a trillion-cell human being, it has to pass through millions of stages. And any one of these stages is so complicated that the slightest mishap could have spoiled the final product.

And therefore, when Dovid later looked back on that, he said *shirah*. דָּר בְּמַקְטֵי אָמוֹ – As part of his greatness he reminded himself of all of those details, those months when he dwelt inside of his mother's womb and he sang about it all his life. And not only once; Dovid HaMelech, when he was sitting in his palace, when he was walking in Yerushalayim, he was thinking about his journey even before he came into the world; and of course about the the great peril of the few minutes before he was born, the most dangerous minutes in a man's life. That's how Dovid spent a lot of his time, thinking about his journey.

Urge Yourself Forward

Does that even enter your mind? Did it ever enter your mind to look back and thank Hashem for the very first stage of your existence before you were born? Let's say you're a *tzaddik* and you thank Hashem for your daily food. You thank Him sincerely. You thank Him for your clothing. You thank Him for the success you have in your career. But to remember yesterday's kindness, or last week's? Last year's? Usually it departed from your memory entirely. And to

look back before the time that you were aware of anything and to praise Hashem for what happened before birth?!

And therefore Dovid said, בְּרַכֵּי נַפְשִׁי אֶת ה' – “My soul, bless Hashem.” He spoke to himself and urged himself. “Dovid, wake up and don’t be forgetful of that. וְאַל תִּשְׁכַּחַי כָּל גְּמוּלוֹי – Don’t forget all that He bestowed upon you.” ‘All’ means everything; the whole road of your life, from the beginning.

So now *tzaddikim*, you can test yourselves. Are you grateful to Hashem for that period of existence? It never entered your mind? It’s good you came here. That’s the most essential of all the periods in your life because whatever happens then affects you more. It affects you much more than anything that happened subsequently. And therefore don’t be negligent; don’t say, “I never remembered. I wasn’t aware at the time.” That’s no excuse. It’s a Torah obligation: וְזָכַרְתָּ אֶת כָּל הַדְרֹךְ.

Part II. Remember the Good

The Road of Life

So you see now that you were just born and there’s already so much to remember. You understand now what a big obligation it is because that’s only the beginning. As old as you are, if you’re twenty two or ninety two, a person is obligated to look back on the whole journey of his life.

There were all kinds of bumps, all kinds of potholes and twists in the road. You were looking for *shidduchim* for your children and you were pulling out your hair in worry. And now they’re married; they’re married with a house full of children. Your daughter is making her own *shidduchim* now!

All those things you have to look back on and not just forget about them. It’s a mitzvah – and not just any mitzvah; it’s one of the great achievements: Look back on your whole lifetime and remember the kindnesses of Hashem. *Kol haderech* means everything that you experienced in your lifetime you have to look back and see how Hashem, *holichacha*, how He led you through the wilderness of life.

Yearly Installments

Now, when can you do the whole thing? All at once, your entire life? You can’t. So you do it in installments. Let’s say you’re sitting in a waiting room for a dentist. Sometimes you have to wait a half hour. Why waste the time? If you have a *sefer*, look in the *sefer*. If you don’t have a *sefer*, think “I’m going to be *mekayem* one installment now of the *mitzvah vezacharta es kol haderech*. I’m going to look back on my life, how Hashem led me all these years.”

So sometimes think, let’s say, the first year of your life. A different day, maybe you’re sitting on the city bus doing nothing, think about the second year, if you can remember. The third year, fourth year, and so on.

Now, just to say ‘a year’ that’s also too wholesale. It’s wholesale, a whole year at one time. Because a lot of things happened when you were two. Many things happened!

You know you fell out of the crib once; other things maybe. Somebody in our shul; their little baby had a cold, so they put near the crib a bowl of hot water with some menthol in it so the baby should breathe the fumes of the menthol. What did the little baby do? He stuck his foot out between the bars of the crib into the hot water. Oooh! Emergency! Ambulances! The baby stuck his foot into boiling hot water! These things happen constantly.

Then you began crawling. You were crawling once on the floor and you found a needle or a penny and you wanted to taste it. Ay yah yay, what could have been! How many things you swallowed or almost swallowed!

The Terrible Twos

And then when you started walking? Did you take the time to think about when you started toddling as a little boy. You know how many windows you could have fallen out of?

A grandchild of mine fell out of a window once. It wasn't two stories. It was a story-and-a-half, but still there was a fall! They picked him up gently and carried him to the doctor. *Baruch Hashem*, nothing happened! **יְזַכְּרָהּ**! You shouldn't forget that. You shouldn't forget it!

Look back on your life and think how many times, *chas v'shalom*, in your childhood, you could have been subjected to crippling illnesses? How many times as a child, you ran into the street without looking. You were romping around in the street – you know how many accidents could have happened?

Bullets and Boards and Knives

Let's say when you were a little boy you once found a bullet. It's a true story – I once found a bullet when I was a little boy. I wanted to experiment so I took the bullet and stuck it between the boards of a wooden fence. Then I took a hammer and a nail, and I banged it against the back of the bullet. It exploded in my face. My face was full of blood. Full of blood! I *chalilah* could have lost my eyes. I have two eyes still! Two functioning eyes!

Remember when you were climbing up on boards on the side of your house and you fell down and the board had nails, rusty nails, in them. I was three years old when it happened to

me. They were building something near my house and I was playing there. And I fell off a pile of wood and landed on my face and I had to have stitches. I have a scar here to this day, a scar right here. But that nail could have poked into my eyes. A rusty nail *chalilah* in the eye, stitches wouldn't help. How could I ever forget such a thing?! Hashem saved me!

How many times were you a little child sitting at the table holding a knife and or a fork and you fell off the chair and nothing happened? It wasn't only once! Little children by the way shouldn't be allowed to hold forks, because if they fall off the chair, it could go into the eye, *chalilah*. You could have lost your eyes, *chalilah*. It has happened – and not once. But you've done it and you have survived; most of us still have both of our eyes, *baruch Hashem*.

Staying on the Derech

Various things could have happened to you. Why are you sitting here today? Why shouldn't you be someplace in the movies now? Some of you were in a very alien environment. Or even if you were born in a *frum* family, don't you know how many of your cousins went lost? So many people strayed from the path. *Baruch Hashem*, Hashem watched your steps. He protected you.

Very strong influences could have happened; maybe they did but still you're a *frum* Jew today. Hakadosh Baruch Hu is leading you in the right direction all the time.

You went through adolescence, a *bachur*, a girl, you became marriageable and you married. Many people fell by the wayside; even friends that you knew didn't survive. **יַפֵּל מֵצִדְךָ אֶלֶף וְרַבְבָּה מִיְמִינְךָ** – *A thousand have fallen on your left side and ten thousand on your right have gone lost.* But you persisted; Hakadosh Baruch Hu protected you all the time. Various people or

seforim or *rebbeim* were sent to you to save you. Hakadosh Baruch Hu was leading you all the time. You have to think about that from time to time.

Just the fact that you're still alive today. You're here? I remember people; when I was fourteen a friend of mine passed away. A very strong boy; he passed away. What happened to him didn't happen to me, *baruch Hashem*. Hashem protected me. Look back! If you're sitting here that means you've survived.

Traffic Troubles

It's a big job to remember the whole journey – all the way down till today. You remember this morning you stepped out into the street and you were distracted. Just that moment, a car came near you and he stopped suddenly because you stepped out unexpectedly. And he was cursing at you. He rolled down his window and yelled at you. I don't blame him. Why didn't you look where you were going? You stepped out in front of a car that was moving?! And you were saved! Oooh wah!

I was crossing once and a driver turned around the corner quickly and he missed me just by one inch! Always missing you by one inch. This is *nisei nissim*. *Baruch Hashem*. If *chalilah* he wouldn't have missed you, what would have been then? A big difference.

You have to think back to all the years of your life – and every year is made up of days. How many days passed by without anything serious happening to you? Thousands and thousands of days that you didn't have any car crashes. Thousands of days you didn't have any serious illness. Days and days with no litigation in court.

How many days went by without a broken bone? Thousands and thousands of days! And even to the doctor you didn't have to go too often. Even if you're a hypochondriac who likes to give business to physicians but still, in between, there were days you didn't go. And most of us, sometimes months or years pass without going to a physician for anything serious.

Ordinary Days

And not only that you were saved from mishaps; just the ordinary road of life. How many days you went to your job and you succeeded! You did business. You made some money; some days more, some days less but you did business. *Baruch Hashem!*

Not to mention all the laundry that you used up; all the days when you were able to put on fresh clothing, fresh underwear and socks. How many apples did you eat in your life? How many cherries? How many peanuts? How many herrings did you consume? How many eggs did you eat? How many tomatoes, how many chickens? Mountains of food you ate!

All of these things, these details, have to be considered in your mind. It's a *mitzvas aseï min haTorah* to think. I'm saying all of these examples out loud because we're talking together but actually the *kiyum hamitzvah* is the thinking of it; just the thoughts.

It's so precious this achievement, thinking such thoughts in your spare time; let's say a time you wouldn't be learning Torah anyhow. You're eating or you are going to work or you are walking to the *yeshivah*, whatever it is, in that time you are thinking these thoughts. Many times you wake up in the middle of the night – sometimes for a few minutes you can't sleep, think about this until you fall asleep again.

It's a remarkable opportunity to fulfill a *mitzvas aseï d'Oraisah* and it's so easy to do. The *מַעֲלוֹת זְכוּרֹן הַסְּדִי וְהַתְּבוּנָה בָּהֶם*, the virtue of remembering *kol haderech*, your entire journey, is one of the great obligations in life and it's accessible to all of us.

Part III. Remember the Trouble

The Father's Chastisement

Now, when the Shaarei Teshuvah tells us about this mitzvah he adds an important point that we shouldn't leave out, something included in 'remember your journey in life'. Because he quotes there the end of the *possuk*: *וְנֶאֱמַר וַיִּדְעַתָּה עִם לִבְבְּךָ כִּי בְּאִשֶּׁר יִיָּסֵר אִישׁ אֶת בְּנוֹ ה' אֶלְקֶיךָ מִיִּסְרֶךָ* – As it says, 'You should know with your heart that just as a father chastises his child, Hashem your G-d chastises you' (Devarim 8:5).

A young man has to look back and be grateful to his father that he criticized him when he was a child. Sometimes he wanted something but his father said 'Nothing doing!'. Sometimes his father hit him. Now, this little boy, he didn't appreciate it at that time; he was immature yet for such understanding. But when he grows up and gains some *seichel*, he looks back and recognizes that his father saved him from becoming a bum.

Hashem's Chastisement

And so the Torah here is telling us that included in the mitzvah of *אֶת כָּל הַדֶּרֶךְ* is that we have to look back at the things in our lives that seemed to be misfortune; when our Father in Heaven chastised us, and we have to study how it was for a good purpose.

Of course, the good things you can easily see what was the benefit – when He saved you from accidents and illnesses; when He gave you

a wife and a home and children and a *parnassah* and so on, that's easier to reminisce about. But here the Torah says that every individual in his own life history should acquire also an attitude of looking back and realizing how things that once seemed to him a setback actually turned out to be a blessing; how our lives were changed for the better by misfortune. Sometimes we were even rescued from destruction, physical destruction and many times spiritual destruction, by things which at the time seemed to be a misfortune.

Fainting Into Failure

The truth is, even if a person's life is overturned entirely because of a misfortune, it could be he is being saved from worse misfortunes. Here's a young man working in an office, a young man who has no connection with Torah and *mitzvos*. And so he's sitting there thinking about which date he should take out tonight. That's his life, dates and fun. A true story – I know the man well; he told me the story.

And suddenly he faints; he falls on the floor in a faint. And he's hurried to the hospital and he is diagnosed, most surprisingly, as a sufferer from tuberculosis. He never expected that! His life turns black on him now because he must leave home to go to a sanatorium to recuperate.

For six months he lay on the porch in the cold weather – that was the treatment in those days, to breathe fresh air – and he had nothing to do; no more business, no more dates, no more fancy car. So there he lies on the porch of the hospital for months and months and he thinks. He thinks!

Fainting Into Success

And when he returns to Brooklyn cured, he is also cured spiritually. He comes back with a resolve to change his life. Instead of becoming a nobody who wasted his life, he became a *shomer Shabbos* and he entered a yeshivah. In the end he became a rabbi. A rabbi! He conducted a congregation for many years. And he was *zocheh* to have good children; his children are *mefursamim*, *talmidei chachomim*.

Now, at that time, when he collapsed in his office and the world turned black on him, it was to him the biggest misfortune. But now, when he fulfills this mitzvah of זָכַרְתָּ he remembers that at that time Hakadosh Baruch Hu was saving him; Hashem was saving him and his children and his grandchildren.

Autobiographical Studies

Now this is a *mashal* to many things that happen in our own lives. Not only big events like that; if you look back on your life you'll see many incidents when you thought it was unfortunate that this happened to you and later you discovered it was for your benefit. Only that it needs a certain amount of concentration, of dedication to fulfilling this mitzvah, and people are lazy; they're loathe to take the trouble to think into them. But you have to; everyone is obligated to make time to think about their own biography until they gain this attitude, this awareness.

I did that and I discovered at least a dozen times in my career when I was disappointed and I discovered later it was a *chesed Hashem* that it happened that way. I was once thrown out of the Hebrew school. When I was a little boy I was sent to the Hebrew school, the old time Talmud Torah, and something happened that I was thrown out. Now, all the other boys in the

Hebrew school were good boys; they weren't thrown out and all of them graduated at *bar mitzvah*. They graduated from the Talmud Torah and they succeeded in becoming nothings; nothing came of them.

But I, because I had some trouble, I was thrown out and I had to look for another place. I found a private *rebbe* who wanted to teach me and he made a *mentch* out of me. And finally he sent me to a real yeshivah. I look back now and I understand that it was the Hand of Hashem that was sending me on to a career of Torah.

The Factory Worker, Artist and Teacher

When I was fourteen there was very little money at home and I thought I'd help; I'd apply for a job in a factory. So I went downtown to a factory that needed a worker. When I came to the place, just that moment a man went out of the factory and took down the 'Boys Wanted' sign. No more boys were wanted, so I couldn't get the job.

Now, had I succeeded I would have left the yeshivah. It was the greatest good fortune for me when that sign was taken down because I had to go back to the yeshivah. *Baruch Hashem*, I kept on going to the yeshivah. I wouldn't be sitting here tonight if I had gained that job.

A different time, when I was fifteen, I thought I'd be an artist maybe. I used to draw pictures all the time and people admired my illustrations – they told me I could be a real artist – so I went downtown to the Institute of Art to see if I could register. When I got there I found out that you have to go on Shabbos too. I was so disappointed. *Baruch Hashem!*

When I was twenty one, I thought, "I'm not a public speaker. I'm a bashful boy; I'm not the

type to talk to people in public. I won't be able to get a *rabbanus*. What should I do?"

I decided I'll try to become a public school teacher. *An einfal!* I'll teach in the public school. So I went to the Board of Education and I applied.

The man sitting at the desk said, "What are you doing now?"

"I'm a rabbinical student," I said.

He said "Go back to your business; go back." A *goy* told me to go back and I listened to him. A *malach min haShamayim*.

Rescued From Hebrew School

When I was twenty-four, I was already going out in the world; in those days you were a finished man at twenty four. I wanted to find a job teaching in a *yeshiva*. Now, I had a *rebbe* when I was a young boy and I was his favorite *talmid* and this *rebbe* had now become the head of all the Talmud Torahs. I knew that if I would go to him he'd give me a job for sure.

I was sitting in the waiting room to interview and there was another person who came there for the same job. I knew him from my days in the *yeshivah*. This person never learned; he played ball at the time. I used to learn *Tanach* while he played ball. I knew *Tanach* well when I was a boy; I knew *lashon hakodesh* well. This boy didn't know anything; he was a ball player. And this man wasn't even his *rebbe*. He came there to apply for the same job.

He got the job, not I. It was beyond my comprehension. But *baruch Hashem* because of that I made it to Slabodka. I look back and I thank Hashem that it turned out that way. Hakadosh Baruch Hu rescued me again and again and again.

Write Your Own Book

There are more stories. I'd like to tell you the stories but I don't want to take up the time now, but it pays to spend time looking back at your life. No matter how young you are, you'll find incidents when Hakadosh Baruch Hu stepped in and seemed to disappoint you, and actually He was doing you a great benefit.

So everybody should know in his lifetime, there are thousands of things you should remember. Not only the jobs that turned you down; you should remember also the girls that turned you down. How lucky you were! You see them thirty years later and you say, "*Baruch Hashem* I didn't marry her."

No question about it! Hakadosh Baruch Hu stepped in at just the right moment and said, "No, that's not the right one; the right one is waiting for you yet," and so she turned you down. You were brokenhearted. Nothing to be brokenhearted about. Not only you're not brokenhearted; it's included in the *mitzvah* of looking back and remembering all these good things that happened to you.

The Mitzvah to Remember

And so we come back now to what we began with, the *mitzvah* of **וְזָכַרְתָּ אֶת כָּל הַדֶּרֶךְ** - You should remember the entire journey, **אֲשֶׁר הִלִּיכָה ה'** **אֱלֹהֶיךָ** - that Hashem led you. Rabbeinu Yonah considers these words of Hashem as a *mitzvas asei*, which means it's a command just like *tefillin*, just like sitting in the *sukkah* and keeping Shabbos. Like any other duty of the Torah, you're obligated to think back about your journey.

שְׂמִיּוֹת עֲשֵׂה לְזֵכֶר חֲסִדֵי הַשֵּׁם - It's an obligation upon each one of us to remember the kindness of Hashem. Listen to those words - he doesn't say it's a *middas chassidus*, an especial way of

serving Hashem that *tzadikim* should take upon themselves. It's a *mitzvas asei*, he says; we're obligated to remember our own life journey. And the fact that you never heard of it before doesn't decrease the obligation one whit.

And not only it's a *mitzvah asei d'Oraisah*; it's a *mitzvas asei* of the highest degree. Of course, no *mitzvah* is small, but among all of the commandments of Hashem, this one is considered from the most important. זְכוֹרֶךָ הַסְדֵּיךָ וְהַתְּבוּנָה בְּהֵם – *To remember the kindnesses of Hashem in your own biography and to study them, היא מן המעלות העליונות – is one of the highest of ruchniyus achievements a person can accomplish in this world!*

Have a Wonderful Shabbos

Let's Get Practical

Remembering my Journey

The exhortation in our parsha to “remember the journey in the desert these forty years” takes on profound significance for us today, thanks to Rabbeinu Yonah's insight. He reveals that reflecting on our life's journey and acknowledging Hashem's guiding Hand is one of the most elevated *mitzvah* achievements. This week, I commit, *bli neder*, to dedicating three minutes daily to introspective review, tracing my life story from before birth to the present. I will contemplate the moments of salvation and challenge, recognizing that every experience, collectively, has led me to where I am today, all with Hashem's benevolent guidance.

This week's booklet is based on tapes:

503 – Five Worlds of David | **520** – Looking Back: Messages From Hashem | **937** – Aspects of Bitachon | **E-266** – Alone With Him Shaarei Teshuvah 4

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QUESTION

Why didn't Moshiach come yet?

ANSWER

The answer is he wants to give you a chance to accomplish something.

When Moshiach comes then you should know most people will no longer be able to accomplish anything. Right now it's so easy to accomplish. Here, walk in the street. You have a beard. Maybe you have *peyos*, a black hat. Everybody hates you. That's wonderful. That's wonderful! The more they hate you, the bigger the reward. It's so good.

Walk in the subway. In case you don't have any car, you walk in the subway. As soon as you walk in nobody wants to look at you. Everybody hates you. *Baruch Hashem!* It's a wonderful thing.

That's in this world. When Moshiach comes you'll walk in the subway and they'll get up for you. There won't be any more *sechar*. There will be no reward for being a good Jew. It will be so easy.

And therefore *l'fum tzaara agra*, the reward is according to the difficulty. Now it's difficult. Now is the time to want to live.

What are you in a hurry for Moshiach for? He'll come. We can't help ourselves when he comes. You can't stop him from coming. But you enjoy life right now! It's so good to be a *frum* Jew right now.

TAPE # E-239 (July 13, 2000)

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