

TORAS AVIGDOR

AUTHENTIC TORAH THOUGHT FOR LIFE

RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"L

PARSHAS RE'EH

WITH

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BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

PARALLELS IN THE WORLD

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Part I. Learning From the Close Ones

Idols Far and Near

In this week's *sedrah* the section of the *meisis u'meidiach* (one who attempts to persuade a fellow Jew to worship idols) begins like this: כִּי יִסְיִתְךָ אָחִיךָ בֶּן אִמְךָ לֵאמֹר נִלְכֶה וְנַעֲבֹדָה אֱלֹהִים מֵאַחֵרִים - *Let us go and serve other gods, from the gods of the nations around you, the nearby ones or those that are far-off* (Devarim 13: 7-8).

Now, because the Sages know that every phrase in the Torah is measured they were bothered by what appears to be superfluous words: לָמָּה פִּרְט קְרוֹבִים וְרְחוּקִים - *What's this business about 'idols that are nearby or far-off'?* (Sanhedrin 61b). What difference does it make whether the instigator wants to persuade you about an idol in the mountains of Tibet or a fortune teller in Bensonhurst? Just say 'the false gods' and finished.

A Dark Creation

Now, we'll get to the answer soon; the significance of those extra words will be our subject for tonight. But first we must examine a Torah principle that will help us understand what we're going to talk about.

One of the great secrets of creation is that this world is night time; even when it's day, that's just a mirage - actually it's night. That's what the Torah tell us: תְּשֶׁת חֹשֶׁךְ וַיְהִי לַיְלָה - *You, Hashem make darkness and it becomes night* (Tehillim 104:20). And the Gemara says תְּשֶׁת חֹשֶׁךְ - *You make darkness; זה העולם הזה הדומה לַלַּיְלָה - Those words are talking about this world: Hakadosh Baruch Hu made Olam Hazeh a place of darkness* (Bava Metziah 83b).

Not only in Africa is it dark. It's dark in Sweden and Switzerland too. It's dark in America. It's dark in the White House and the Congress and in the Department of Education. It's dark in the libraries and TV stations. Wherever you go, it's dark.

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Nighttime Vision

It means that Hashem intentionally made this world that it should be like the night, a place of deception. **תָּשַׁח** means ‘He made it so, purposefully. What’s the purpose? So that we can succeed and become great by seeing through the dark. Our function in this world is that despite the darkness, we should exert ourselves to see the truth. That’s our success in Olam Hazeih; that’s how we’ll be *zocheh* to see the light in Olam Haba.

You know, the Gemara (Shabbos 77b) tells us that’s the reason for an interesting law of the Torah. Among Jews, we have the practice of beginning the day with the night before. We start the day as soon as the sun sets; that’s the system of the Torah. **וַיְהִי עֶרֶב וַיְהִי בֹקֶר** – *It was evening and it was morning.*

Only Jews have that system. To tell a *goy* that on Saturdays you can’t come to work, so he says, “Alright, stay late on Fridays.”

So you tell him, “No, our Saturday starts sundown Friday.”

He doesn’t understand that! He thinks you’re trying to get out of doing your work! But it’s true! Our day starts with the night.

Night Comes First

The question is what’s the purpose of this? Why does the Torah follow that system? We think, “It’s a *gezeiras hakosuv*. That’s how it has to be; the Hebrews begin the day the night before without a reason.”

Oh no! This Torah law that the day begins with the night before has a very great symbolism. The purpose is to be a *mashal*, a daily reminder that this world starts with darkness; first it’s dark and then the Next World is the place of light! Only that the preparation for the Next World is

this world; you can’t get to the day unless you pass through the darkness of this world.

Isn’t it a pity we don’t know that? It’s a *halacha* that’s supposed to impress upon us our function in this world. Every day starts with the preceding night to remind us that in this world – even at twelve o’clock in the afternoon – we’re feeling our way in the dark. And our function and success in the world is that despite the darkness, despite the false religions and the empty ideals and all the isms, despite the high schools and governments and scientists and libraries and televisions and radios and all the institutions that are spreading darkness in the world our job is to fight back against the darkness.

Get Inoculated

But to ‘fight’ doesn’t mean only to write letters, to make a protest. Sometimes that’s important too but the first thing is to be fortified; you need vitamins to be able to see in the darkness. It means that you have to know that it’s false. *You yourself have to know that it’s dark outside!*

That’s what the Chachomim tell us: **דַּע מָה שֶׁתִּשָּׁיב לְאַפִּיקוֹרִים** – *You should know what to reply to an apikoris.* And Rav Isaac Sher, the Slabodka Rosh Yeshiva, used to say that it means, “Know how to answer up the *apikoris* right here, inside here.” (*The Rov pointed at himself*).

Because inside of everybody there’s a *yetzer hara* that’s talking. The darkness – the false ideals and isms, the *sheker* of the religions and all the attitudes of the gentiles – are always whispering in your ear. And therefore you have to answer yourself first.

Don’t think it’s unimportant. The Chovos Halevavos in his *Sha’ar Yichud Ha’maaseh* warns the reader: “Do not ignore the promptings of the *yetzer hara*.” Because it’s like a snake bite – you

can't just ignore it and let the poison spread. And if you will turn away your ear from the persuasions that you feel the *yetzer hara* is generating within you, so it begins to gain a foothold.

No Emunah Peshutah

It happened. I've seen it. People came from Europe who learned in yeshivas and they learned well in the yeshivas. They came over in America years ago when on all sides atheism was like a roaring fire. In the 1910s and 1920s, the Jewish street was a street of atheism. And the yeshiva men that came over, very many of them collapsed.

It's unbelievable but I saw it with my own eyes. A Telzer; a good yeshiva man! How could a good *ben Torah* like that fall so far? The answer is he knew Gemara. He knew Tosfos. He knew Ketzos HaChoshen! But he had never bothered to learn the Torah advice how to answer the *apikorsim*, how to fortify his faith.

Now how to be fortified, there's more than one method. Of course, some will say that our answer to all of the *apikorsim*, the response to all the false attitudes of the outside world is one: "We the Am Yisroel rely on our rock-solid historic tradition." That's it – we don't have any questions! "I'm loyal to the Torah and that's it!" And that's a very valid and very strong answer; it's the answer that should stand always at the forefront of our minds – because it's true.

But because one of the functions of a Torah Jew in the world, one of the successes of a Torah Jew, is to strengthen the *emunah* that we have the truth – that the Torah ideals and principles are the light and everything else is darkness – Hakadosh Baruch Hu provides us with other methods, other supports, as well.

They're All the Same

And that brings us back to the question that we asked in the beginning of our talk: When the Torah tells us about the persuader, the one trying to introduce into our heads the ideas of the outside world, why does it take the trouble to enumerate that there are "false gods that are nearby and those that are far-off"?

And the Gemara there answers like this: מְטִיבֵן שֶׁל קְרוּבִים אֲתָהּ לֹמֵד מֵה טִיבֵן שֶׁל רְחוּקִים, בְּשֵׁם שְׂאֵין מִמֶּשׁ בְּזָה – *From the nature of the nearby gods, you can learn about the nature of the far-off ones. Just as there is no substance in these, so also is there no substance in those.* It means that the Torah inserts these words in order to give us direction for how to refute, *in our own minds*, all the persuaders of the world: *Just as you know that the nearby gods are nothing, so too you can understand that the far-off ones are also worthless; they're just the same.*

So if someone tells you that someplace in a far off country, there's a shrine that if you go in and pray there to this idol so it works. Let's say they tell you it'll give you fertility. Well, people don't want that today so imagine they say it'll make you rich.

So the Torah says, "Forget about it! There's no need to investigate; there's no reason to think there's any truth to it." Because we look at the ones nearby, the ones we're familiar with that we know are *fakerei* and מְטִיבֵן שֶׁל קְרוּבִים אֲתָהּ לֹמֵד מֵה – *from the nature of the near ones we can know about the far-off ones.*

Torah Policy

And that's the policy, the *eitzah* of the Torah. You want to fortify yourself in this world? You want to see through the darkness? Get into the habit of saying, 'Just like the near ones are

nothing, the far-off ones are also nothing. We know all about it and we know it's baloney.'

Now, don't say, "Could we do such a thing?! Can we make blanket judgments about whole groups of people, about ideologies that we know *nothing* about, just because of one thing that we do know"?

And the answer is a resounding yes! Yes and yes! Because *that is the intention of Hashem!* Hashem is supplying these lessons to us to encourage us, so that we should make these general judgements and dismiss the ideals of the outside world.

It's a Torah way of rejecting all of the ideals and isms of the darkness. The falsifiers whom we do know are intended by Hashem to serve as examples of the falsifiers who are unfamiliar. The emptiness of even one ideal is intended to demonstrate the emptiness of all of them.

And so we don't have to study the details in order to disprove it all. We could – we could sit here for hours and talk about the foolishness of their ideas; we could show endless examples – *but we don't have to*. The lesson from this week's *parsha*, **מְטִיבֵן שָׁל קְרוּבִים**, tells us to study the few things that are already known to us, and to use those as parallels to understand that everything they have to offer us is mixed with *sheker*.

Part II. The Close Ones of Yesterday

Tzaddikim and Saints

Just to begin the subject, so we should better understand the idea here, we'll give an example. Let's talk for a minute about the saints, the Christian saints. Here's a religion that took over the world; the whole Western world was taken over by Christianity. And they claim to have

tzaddikim too – they have saints; everybody knows that.

And so when you hear of a saint about whom you know nothing and you're told that a cathedral was built in his honor, so without knowing anything about saints, you might think, "Well, maybe he *was* something. We have our *tzaddikim* and *l'havdil* they have their saints." It doesn't mean you'll be a Christian *chas veshalom* but a little seed is planted in your head; they have something too.

After all, there are big cathedrals, tremendous buildings, named after these saints; something it must be. That's already a weakening of your *emunah*. And so we make use of this Torah principle of drawing parallels, of looking at the one or two we do know about and saying **שְׂאִין מִמֶּנּוּ בְּזָה כֶּן אֵין מִמֶּנּוּ בְּזָה**.

Not So Saintly Saints

So let's see the saints we know something about. In Rinn, Austria, there's a big cathedral that was erected in honor of a certain saint, Blessed Andrew.

Now, how did this Andrew acquire sainthood? By what virtues did he distinguish himself? He hid away in a room for many years praying and studying? He did some great deeds of kindness, so much so that finally the Vatican recognized him and said he's the model Christian for others to follow?

No, nothing like that. He earned his sainthood in a more expeditious way – when he was still a young boy he was found slain. Two *shkutzim* got into a fight and one of them knifed the other. Poor Andrew was stabbed to death. And when they found his body he became a saint immediately.

The Matzah Saint

So any goy who's found dead becomes a saint? No; here was something different. Because attached to his death there was a canard, a slander on the Jewish community. The Christians began to spread the word that this boy had been killed in order to have blood for *matzos* for Pesach. That's an official statement of the church (Papal Bull *Beatus Andreas* February 22, 1755): Andrew was killed by the Jews for their 'Passover pastries.'

Oh, if that's the case so the whole process of sainthood was sped up. Instead of years of fasting and praying in a monastery, he took the shortcut and was immediately elevated to sainthood. Because anybody who's killed by Jews, he's walking in the footsteps of the first one – you-know-who. And he was declared forthwith, to be a saint – officially! He's an official saint in Christian theology!

That's why they built a great cathedral in his honor in Austria. It's still standing there. When you walk in there's a big inscription telling you that it was built in honor of this-and-this saint who was murdered by Jews for his blood. It's still there.

Fiction Stories, Non Fiction Lessons

Well, we know the whole story. We know that it was *sheker v'chazav*. Never in history did Jews do anything even slightly, even faintly resembling it. Jews won't even touch a drop of blood in an egg. It's as ridiculous as the most silly fairytale, and yet this fairy tale is a great lesson for us. Because you can know now how much weight to give to the church dogmas and their canonized saints.

It's meant for us as a lesson so we should know what it's all about. We look back and see that they were sent for a purpose. And the

purpose was to let us know who the great men, who the church saints are. Because if that is the basis for big cathedrals – it's not a small place by the way; it's a huge cathedral, one of the most impressive buildings in Christendom – if that's the basis for sainthood, then we have to know that it's a parallel to all the cathedrals. More or less they're all the same.

You're obligated, it's your duty to take the lesson of Blessed Andrew *alav ha'shnubbel*, and say, *בְּשֵׁם שְׂאִין מְמֵשׁ בְּקִרְוּבִים* – just as he's nothing; he's not much of a saint; he's a plain bum who was killed by other bums; *כֶּךָ אֵין מְמֵשׁ בְּרַחוּקִים* – that's the same amount of holiness and sainthood in all of their saints and cathedrals.

Now you're going to say, "Well, it doesn't prove anything." No, it doesn't prove anything, but we're supposed to use that as a parallel. *הַמּוֹצִיא מִחֲבֵרוֹ עָלָיו הָרֵאָה* – If they claim somebody's a saint, they'll have to prove it to us. Because we are *muchzek* that it's not so; we know already how others achieved sainthood.

Two More Close Ones

I'll tell you about two more saints. There was a fellow named Saint Simeon the Stylite. Why Stylite? A stylite means a pillar. What were his good deeds for which he was elevated to the sainthood? For thirty years he sat on top of a pillar and didn't come down. You understand how that pillar smelled. For thirty years he sat on top of that pillar.

Now why didn't he do it in a forest? He could sit on top of a tree? The answer is no publicity in a forest. If a saint sits on a tree in the woods does it make a saint? So he picked out a pillar in a public square in Rome where there was plenty of audience to admire him and he climbed up to the top. And naturally after a while, you attract a lot of attention. Even today people sit on

flagpoles sometimes to attract attention. In those olden days it paid more than it paid today.

Burning Jews

Now don't think he was sitting quietly wasting his time. He was doing 'good deeds'. He was preaching that it's a big mitzvah to burn down Jewish synagogues in Rome. And some of the pious were obeying him. So he has to his credit some synagogue burning. You understand already how he became such a holy man. Sitting on a pillar and burning shuls! A saint!

And another one; you ever heard of Saint Ambrose? So you might think he was a man who went around giving charity to the poor, picking up stray dogs and taking them home, doing other kind deeds. No, he didn't have time for that. Saint Ambrose was giving sermons to big masses of people and telling them they should get torches and go to the nearest synagogue because all synagogues are dens of devils. "They are dens of robbers," he said, "and it's an especially great deed of virtue to take a torch and set a fire and burn it down."

Now, at that time the Jews in Rome were alarmed. Two demagogues, two evil-mouthed rabble rousers, were inciting the multitudes against the Jews. All you had was the honest pagan king who was opposing them. There were still some pagans left; the good pagans were opposing them. But the Jews were very much frightened.

But now we look back and see that they were sent for a purpose. And the purpose was to let us know who the great men of the church are. And don't think it's an unimportant piece of information because these two are among the fathers of the church! They're listed among the saints of the church!

A Reliable Method

And the Torah *eitzah* is we're supposed to learn from them. If these are the fathers we know about then all the rest of the fathers, even those about whom we know nothing are all in one boat. That's how we're supposed to judge them – כְּשֵׁם שְׂאִין מִמֶּשׁ בְּזָה כִּד אֵין מִמֶּשׁ בְּזָה. That's how Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants us to think as we make our way in this world of false ideals where it's hard to see the truth. This is one of the great methods of strengthening our *emunah* and seeing through the darkness.

And so don't let anybody tell you *bubbeh maisahs*; "But what about Saint Francis of Assisi or this one or that one?" We have our way, the Torah way of looking at the world. הַרוֹצֵה לְשַׁקֵּר – *Anyone who wishes to tell a falsehood tells you about a far-off affair you don't know about.* If we had lived next door to Saint Francis of Assisi, we would have known a little different about him. We would have been afraid to walk out in the street.

This Sect and That Sect

And it's not ancient history. You want to know about priests and pastors? The last Alshtuter Rav, in Alshtut in Hungary, wrote in his book *Lo Tishkach* about his brother-in-law, the Ziditichover Rav. The Ziditichover Rav was in the Grosswardein Ghetto under the Nazis, and he tried to escape by sneaking out of the ghetto. But the Hungarian priest, the Catholic priest, seized him by the arm and he handed him over to the Nazis for execution. That's a Catholic priest for you.

And don't think the Protestants were any better. I just happened to speak about these but if I speak about those, כְּשֵׁם שְׂאִין מִמֶּשׁ בְּזָה כִּד אֵין מִמֶּשׁ בְּזָה – these are an example of the others. You know, when Hitler sent his *Einsatzkommandos*,

men with machine guns who went ahead of the army as they invaded Poland and Russia and they shot down the Jewish populace, it's interesting to note that among the members of the *Einsatzkommandos* were many pastors. Protestant pastors were standing there, machine-gunning down men and women and children.

Their 'rebbe' after all, Martin Luther, may he rest in pieces, I can't repeat what he said about the Jews because it's *nivul peh* – you can't say it in public. So what do you expect from a pastor, his *talmid*?

But the purpose of these stories is not for them alone; it's so that we shouldn't be prejudiced and say only him and only him. They're all the same. That's how Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants us to think as we make our way in this world of false ideals where it's hard to see the truth. This is one of the great methods of strengthening our *emunah* and seeing through the darkness.

Part III. The Close Ones of Today

Saints, Shmaints

Now the truth is I have to apologize that I already took up so much of your time and I didn't even begin yet. Because I didn't intend to talk about their saints; saints, shmaints. We know it's nothing.

But it's an example of this principle that Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants us to use when we contend with the darkness of the world. After all, do we have time to study all of their lies, to read their books and disprove them one at a time? We're a busy nation! We're busy raising the next generation! We're learning Torah! We're doing *mitzvos*. We're busy with *chessed* and *maasim tovim*! We have time to read papal bulls and to study the lives of their saints?

And so Hashem gives us this rule of 'From the ones you know about you can learn about the ones you don't know'. And He tells us it's reliable. That's why He wrote those extra words in our *parshah*; to encourage us to see through the darkness of this world.

University Training

Let's say the colleges, the professors. You know, people imagine that universities are places of truth and wisdom. The unthinking masses are under the impression that they are places of virtue; places of higher learning, of intellectuals.

So here, we look at the *kerovim*. A man just shoved this into my pocket, a list of subjects in a college health course; the student is given a wide choice of twenty two subjects. I needed to wash my mouth with soap after I finished the list. It was called 'health' subjects. It was all subjects that make a person sick.

Or the courses in black English. There are courses in black English you know. A supreme court judge *paskened* that you have to teach black English in the colleges because after all it's one of the languages in America. Away with the fancy English of old England. The English as it's spoken in the black ghettos is just as good, and they want college credit for it. And so the students who go there and take these courses and graduate you understand that they're not great possessors of wisdom.

So that's enough already for us. We know now what it means a college course. From the little we know we see that it's all garbage. Biology is nothing but one course of lies today. And other courses too. It's very hard to find the small bits of truth that are scattered among mountains of falsehood – you have to do a *bedikas chometz* to find them. Of course if you go to the college and you graduate let's say with a degree in

mathematics, and you learn that one and one make two, that's true. But from the *kerovim* we see that overall it's a dismal picture of degradation.

Studying the Isms

And what about all the movements, all the ideals? Always new isms, new fads and we're told, "This is it!"

So we say we already know. We know from the *krovim*. You know, when I was a boy Socialism was the wave of the future. I had a fight when I was a young boy with somebody. I was for socialism and I was beaten up by the other one. I came home bleeding from my nose.

Everyone thought that in the course of time it would conquer the world. Even rabbis, old *rabbanim*, used to speak on the *bimos* and say 'socialism *min haTorah minayin*' to prove that the Torah also approves of it.

A Failed Movement

Now, what happened to that great movement? Nobody dreamed Socialism would turn out to be nothing as it is today. Everybody is enjoying it so much in the Communist countries that they're all trying to get out! Everybody is trying to leave Russia! But it's such a happy land that nobody can leave. It's a great prison.

If you open your mouth and say the wrong word, they take you to a psychiatric hospital because anybody who speaks against the government is known to be a lunatic. Right away, you're condemned to a psychiatric hospital; and they don't give you there treatments to make you feel good. They give you the kind of treatments that if you survive you're a lucky man.

In the Siberia labor camps, millions have died under the Communists. Millions! Don't think that it was Hitler only, when he killed six million. When the Chinese Communists conquered

China, they killed more than six million Chinese! It's a well known fact!

So what do we do? We just look at history like dumbbells who don't learn anything? No; we take out our rule and we say that we're ready for all the future isms that the world will throw at us. Feminism? Liberalism? Humanism? Environmentalism? Whatever they say, we're ready. Because we already know; we learned our lesson already. We're not impressed by the *rechokim* because we learned already from the *krovim*.

The Joke of Evolution

That's why we laugh at evolution too. The whole world today screams 'Evolution! Evolution!' Among the so-called educated, evolution is a given, it's an axiom. It's one of the foundations of Western society today – accidental evolution. The government, the colleges, the high schools, are all beating the drums for no Creator *chas veshalom*. It's a big propaganda machine; the government and the universities and the high schools and the literature.

But it's like water off a duck's back for those who come back to the *eitzah* of the Torah; we're not knocked off our feet. We know already from the *kerovim*. Because in Yale, in the Museum of Natural History, there was for many years a collection that was the pride of the evolutionists: The genealogy of the horses.

The Horse Proof

The horses! That was the *yichus* that was able to trace the rise of a small organism to what it is today. They had there little animals the size of rats. That was the original great-great grandfather of the horse; the *ehippus*. And then there was the *Orohippus* and then *Epihippus* and *Mesohippus*; every one finally became bigger

and bigger and lost its claws and developed hooves.

Now they couldn't find such a *yichus* one after the other in other kinds of animals so this was a prized collection. I think it's called the Marsh Horse collection. It was one collection where they had what they called the gradual transition; for generations that was the mainstay of evolution.

The Horse Proof Undone

What happened eventually to that 'conclusive' demonstration for evolution? Along came Professor Westall in Oxford University and he gave it a kick in the belly; he proved that the whole pedigree of the horse is untrue. Every species in that collection that's cited as one of the ancestors of modern horses is actually unrelated to the horse; not one of them was the ancestor of the other.

Which means the whole horse genealogy is bunkum! It was always a lie! The big boast of evolutionists, the proof that was cited by all the textbooks, the proof that all who are against creation rejoiced in – "At least the horse demonstrates gradual development!" – the whole thing was a big fat bluff.

Westall said this a long time ago, but now the evolutionist, Professor S. J. Gould, is saying it openly and it finally made it in the New York Times. Now, to get into the New York Times, it takes a long time for any truth to seep in there. And finally they had to admit it too; the one proof of slow and steady transformation is *sheker*.

The Piltdown Man Hoax

Or the Piltdown Man. For fifty years the Piltdown Man was the proof of the development of a man from an ape. They discovered the bones of a bent-over fellow who looks like half monkey

and half human being. Oh, that's a proof we're descended from monkeys! And so replicas, castings of the Piltdown Man, were put in three hundred museums all over the world. All the textbooks showed pictures of the Piltdown man, half man half ape.

Then it was discovered that the Piltdown man was a hoax. It was a trick. Somebody put together some bones – it was bent over because he had arthritis – and he colored them to look old. From these bones and a filed down tooth they built up a whole story of a different kind of a person, half human and half ape. It was later discovered the tooth came from an extinct pig. Goodbye. And today nobody even mentions the Piltdown man any more. Today it's gone. No more.

Some Truth in Every Lie

Now, we don't say that everything that the *goyim* say is false; we wouldn't say such a thing. But the parallels that Hahem shows us, make us aware that the foundation of the outside world is *kulo sheker*. When you see such *sheker* why do you have to look further? **בָּא זֶה וְלִמְדוּ עַל זֶה** – This one detail that we do know comes to teach us about all the other details that we're not aware of; **כָּשֶׁם שְׂאִין מִמָּשׁ בָּזָה כִּדְ אֵין מִמָּשׁ בָּזָה** – the whole thing is a *sheker* and it's as silly as can be. There's nothing even to talk about. This proof is on the surface – it's *krovim*.

There will always be new and spectacular claims; new attitudes, new ideals, new isms and new desires that arise to mislead Mankind. But we've been in this business for thousands of years and just like we've already weathered many such *meisisim* and *meidichim* who tempt us to "Come and serve the gods of others," we'll continue to weather the new ones too.

Preparing For Eternity

And one of the most important methods we use is the one Hakadosh Baruch Hu teaches us in this *possuk*: מְטִיבֵן שֶׁל קְרוֹבִים אֶתָּה לֹמֵד מֵה טִיבֵן שֶׁל רְחוֹקִים, כְּשֵׁם שֶׁאֵין מִמֶּשׁ בְּזֶה כִּי אֵין מִמֶּשׁ בְּזֶה – From the nature of the nearby gods, you can learn about the nature of the far-off ones. Just as there is no substance in these, so also is there no substance in those. That's the lesson; that's how to approach the whole problem of "What does the gentile world say?" It's a very important way of seeing through the darkness.

And one day, when this world's history comes to an end, there will begin a new period of history which will be all light. The time will come when the truth of Hakadosh Baruch Hu will shine and the world will realize that they have been bamboozled all along. And at that time the *Am Yisroel* will be established as the nation chosen by Hashem forever!

Have a Wonderful Shabbos

Let's Get Practical

Illuminating the Darkness

In this week's parsha we learn one method of seeing through the darkness of this world. We understand that we live in a world of parallels and "just as this one is meaningless", so too, its parallel is meaningless as well. This week I will *bli neder* spend a half minute each day reflecting on the darkness of this world and hoping for the day when the light of truth is revealed in the world.

This week's booklet is based on tapes:

R-2 – Evolution: A Fraud | **2** – The Refutation Is at Hand | **82** – The Facts Speak | **490** – You Live but Once | **E-3** – The Upside Down World | **Chapter 8 "PARALLELS"** from the Rov's sefer *Awake My Glory*

Q&A WITH RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"L



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QUESTION

How could one utilize Elul?

ANSWER

Elul is a great opportunity to prepare for the Yom Hadin. And how to prepare? First and foremost to learn *sifrei mussar*. There's no question that that is the method.

Of course, if a person will stop putting on *tefillin* let's say or stop saying *kriyas shema* because he wants to learn *sifrei mussar*, we understand that he's frustrating what's written in the *seforim*; but it means that as he continues doing all the things that he does – learning too – and he even does it better and he learns even more, he also adds the element of learning *mussar seforim* that's how to utilize Elul.

It means learning *Mesillas Yesharim* – *Mesillas Yesharim* is tried and proven as one of the great influences in people's lives. It means learning also *Shaarei Teshuva*, especially the second and third *shearim*. Also learning *Rambam Hilchos Teshuva*.

Of course if you're fortunate enough to be in a yeshiva where they have *shmuezen* in *mussar* it's very important to pay attention and take them to heart but *sefarim* of *mussar* are the most important ingredient that you could add to the month of Elul.

Of course you won't do it. I'm just telling it to you just as a curiosity. *Lema'aseh* I know people won't listen to me but I'm saying it anyhow to answer your question: Elul is the month for meditation and for stirring up one's mind with *inyanei mussar*.

Tape # 377 (August 1981)