

TORAS AVIGDOR

AUTHENTIC TORAH THOUGHT FOR LIFE

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PARSHAS VOESCHANAN

WITH

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BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

DESIRING THE UNATTAINABLE

CONTENTS

Part I. Loving the Mitzvos - 1

Part II. Desiring the Mitzvos - 4

Part III. Desiring the Nechamah - 7

Part I. Loving the Mitzvos

Three and Three

When Moshe Rabeinu was told that his days were numbered and he was going to pass away without crossing over into Eretz Canaan, so the Torah tells us what he did: **אז יבריל משה שלש ערים בעבר הירדן מזרחה שמש לנוס שמה רוצח אשר ירצח את רעהו בבלי דעת** – *He set aside three cities on east side of the Yarden, for the unintentional killer to flee there* (Devarim 4:41-42). That's the Torah law; when someone kills by accident, he flees to an *ir miklat*, a city of refuge, where he's safe from any of the victim's family members who might want to take revenge on him for his fatal carelessness.

Now, according to Torah law there are six primary cities of refuge – three in Transjordan and another three in Eretz Canaan – and they only function together, as one unit. “*Until the three cities in Eretz Yisroel proper are established, the three in Transjordan don't protect*” (Makkos 9b). It means that the three in *Eiver Hayarden* are not effective until you set aside the parallel three in Eretz Canaan.

A Waste of Effort

Now this raises a question because in Moshe Rabbeinu's time the people were not yet crossing the Yarden and so there was no purpose in setting aside the three cities on this side. It would anyhow have to wait until Yehoshua crossed the Yarden and set aside the other three – in the meantime they wouldn't function as *arei miklat*; they would be just regular cities. And so, if it was us, we would have left it for Yehoshua to fulfill. He's the one taking the people into Eretz Canaan – it's his obligation, his opportunity.

So what did Moshe our Teacher do? Did he lean back and say, “Well, there's really nothing I can do”? No; **אז יבריל משה שלש ערים בעבר הירדן** – *He went ahead and he separated three towns on Eiver Hayarden*. He did what he could.

Working for Nothing

Now, he didn't merely say the *possuk*. We say it; it's a few words, seven words, so we're not impressed. Oh no; it took a lot of work, a lot of time. Moshe had to find the right location because a city has to have certain qualifications to be an *ir miklat*. He had to see to it that roads were built;

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you have to have convenient roads. If it's a winding road that goes through woods or hills where the *goel hadam* can hide in ambush and kill him on the way so that wouldn't be fulfilling the mitzvah properly. You have to make straight roads, shortcuts, so that the *rotzeach* can reach the city as safely as possible.

And Moshe Rabeinu did that job; he did it perfectly. *אז יבריל*; *yavdil* means he did a perfect job. It wasn't effective but he did as much as he could while he was still alive.

Moshe and Money

Now about this endeavor, the Gemara (Makkos 10a) attributes to Moshe Rabbeinu a certain characteristic – you'll be surprised when you hear it so don't walk out until it's explained. The Chachomim quote a *possuk* about Moshe as follows: *אוהב כסף לא ישבע כסף* – *When someone loves money he's never satisfied with what he already accumulated* (Koheles 5:9). That's a rule; once you fall in love with money it's a romance that lasts forever. The more you get accustomed to collecting money, the more your appetite grows.

Many years ago I read a book about a rich man and it described there how he would come home at night and pull down the shades; nobody is looking now. And he takes out from behind the stove a brick from the wall and he pulls out batches of hundred dollar bills wrapped in rubber bands. And he counts them. Ah! He loves counting those bills.

Sometimes he even takes the bills and he spreads them on the floor. He checks to see that his family is fast asleep and he lies down on the floor and he wallows in his money; he rolls in it. That's his *taanug Olam Hazeh*.

He really loves his money. And when he's able to add – another bill, another packet – it adds to his pleasures. He loves to add on to his stash of

cash. His eyes shine a little brighter. He smacks his lips with pleasure.

Moshe Rabbeinu?!

Now who is the best example of that? So the Chachomim tell us it's Moshe Rabbeinu. Imagine that! Moshe Rabbeinu! He's the example of the *oihev kesef* who can't be satisfied with *kesef*.

Now, Moshe, you have to know, had plenty of money. He was a rich man, by the way. People don't know that; Moshe Rabbeinu was a wealthy man. But he loved money? No, he didn't love money; you can be sure of that. The answer is '*he loved kesef*' means *he loved something, a form of 'kesef*'.

You know what the word *kesef* means? *Kesef* means desire. Like Lavan said to Yaakov, *נכסף נכספתה לבית אביך* – *You desired to go back to the home of your father* (Bereishis 31:30). That's why money is called *kesef* – it's something desirable.

That's something agreed upon by everyone. In all languages, all countries, money is desired because Hakadosh Baruch Hu made it that way. Money is fun! You never dreamed that you were sitting in a bathtub full of money? I did. I remember years ago I dreamed I was sitting in a bathtub full of money; a dry bathtub packed with money. It was quite a pleasant dream.

Money Makes the World Go Round

That's pretty much all of us. Money is desirable; it's a truism. Now, I know that the good yeshivah boys think, "He's talking about the business people, the lower characters. We're yeshivah men! We're pure!" A *nechtigeh tug* – as soon as a yeshivah man gets the taste of accumulating money he's no different. It's *boduk u'menuseh*; they go head over heels. They become those same people they snickered about; they love the clanging of coins, the cha-ching of the cash register opening and closing.

And so *everyone* loves money; not only 'loves' – they just can't get enough of it to be satisfied. After you make your first million, right away it's on to the second. What does this *meshugas* mean? There has to be something behind it.

And the answer is we're looking for something. *Nichsof nicksafti* – we're yearning for something. Hakadosh Baruch Hu gave man the urge, the instinct, to accumulate. It's a true instinct – only that it has been short circuited.

The Rich Uncle

You know the Gemara says that **ינוקא מקרבא זוזי** – *a child's mind is close to money* (Gittin 40a). Children love money. You want to win out with your children or your nephews and nieces when they're little, and when they're big too? Hand out money. Hand out money! It will make you popular if you hand out money.

And jingle it! **מקרקש ליה זוזי** – The Gemara says you should jingle the money. Not only the child should *see* the money but he should *hear* the sound of the money. A child loves that sound. Let's say it's a handful of pennies – a lot of pennies is better than a quarter; take twenty five pennies and jingle them up and down in your palm before you give it to him so that he's enjoying the sound too.

Only that what happens? The older he gets, the more he practices this quality, so he loves money more and more. But that's not the final destination for that urge, that instinct. It's in his soul to make money! It's not merely an acquired desire; it's at the root of a man's character to accomplish, accumulate! But to accumulate what, that's the question. Because money is only a *marshal*; the desire for money has to be a spur for bigger things, for the real *kessef* of life.

The Marshal of Money

And so when you see people who love money – when you see yourself – so you have to think, "What good is that money? Can you take it with you?" **בשעת פטירתו של אדם** – *When a man leaves this world what kind of kessef does he take along?* **אין מלוין לו לאדם לא כסף ולא זהב** – *He doesn't take along his silver and gold;* his Chase savings account and even the money he has under the mattress that the IRS doesn't know about, he can't take that with him; **אלא תורה ומעשים טובים בלבד** – *The only thing he takes with him is his Torah and his good deeds.* That's the only *kessef* that lasts (Avos 6:9).

When you go into the Next World, you leave behind all of your 'this world' money; and your sons will take it and spend it and have good times. You denied yourself pleasures in order to accumulate the money and now your sons will splurge on foolish things; they'll travel around and buy expensive things. All the money you worked so hard to save! So what did you get out of it?

Moshe: The Money Executive

Now, Moshe Rabbeinu had a well-developed mind, and therefore he loved the right type of *kessef*. He loved it so much, just like the rich man who's never satisfied; like the old money madman, the old money executive. He's lying on his deathbed and in his last words, he gives orders to his secretaries, "Did that deal go through yet?" Now he's never going to enjoy the fruits of that deal, but it's a drive within him.

Moshe Rabbeinu, however, wasn't the misguided and blind businessman who tries to satisfy himself with a cheap little substitute. He understood that the biggest money he could make is mitzvos: **לעשות רצונך אלקי חפצתי** – *My greatest desire is to do Your will* (Tehillim 40:9). He knew that everything else is cheap *ersatz*, a cheap substitute, because there's no other currency

that you could take with you from this world into the Next World. And so Moshe Rabeinu made himself busy with hard money, with what would be legal tender in the Next World.

And therefore when he was stopped at the shore of the Yarden and Hashem said **לֹא תַעְבֹּר אֶת הַיַּרְדֵּן הַזֶּה** – “You’re not going cross the Yarden, into Eretz Canaan where you’d be able to fulfill the *mitzvah* of setting up *arei miklat* that are effective,” it made no difference. Moshe Rabbeinu just couldn’t let go of the opportunity to make a little more money. That’s why he is the example of a man who really loves money; the money of perfection, the money of serving Hakadosh Baruch Hu, the money of *mitzvos*. That’s the real *kessef* that Moshe Rabeinu desired!

Part II. Desiring the Mitzvos

Let’s Get Shteiging

Now the *seforim* tell us that in the matter of coming close to Hashem in this world, there are all kinds of degrees, higher and higher degrees. I use the word ‘degrees’ but I’ll rephrase that: We should call it ‘steps’, or even better, ‘rungs’. You remember when Yaakov Avinu beheld in his dream a ladder that was **מוֹצֵב אֶרֶצָה** – *standing on this earth*, **וְרֵאשׁוּ מִגִּיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִמָה** – *and the top went all the way up to Hashem*? Among the lessons of that ladder is the doctrine that this world is for the purpose of not standing still, but climbing.

That’s an important principle. We call it *shteigen*; *shteigen* is a Yiddish word which means ‘climbing up the steps, up the rungs’. Everyone, every man and woman, every boy and girl, has to *shteig*.

Even you yeshivah men, don’t think that after you leave the yeshivah, from now on you should merely continue in the ideals that you gained in your yeshivah life. No. The truth is you gain very little in your yeshivah life; you’re too young to

have any sense. Of course yeshivah men won’t admit that, but actually they’re very young; they don’t understand anything. It’s like a dream, whatever they hear and they learn. It’s a rung on the ladder, absolutely, but it’s only the first rung in the ladder; and like everyone else all your life you must continue to climb. That’s the only purpose of being alive, for improvement. And so you must continue *shteigen*, climbing the rungs of the ladder.

Slowly But Surely

Now *shteigen* means climbing, not flying. You don’t grow wings and fly. You cannot ascend to the higher rungs of the ladder unless first you put your feet on the lower rungs. And so, if we want to become lovers of *mitzvos*; *we want to achieve the high rung of כֶּסֶף לֹא יִשְׁבַע כֶּסֶף*, we must start from the ground. At least *do* the *mitzvos*.

Now, some people do *mitzvos* because they like Jewish things. They love the Jewish people, the Jewish ways; they’re proud of their people. And you shouldn’t scorn that motivation: “I do *mitzvos* because it’s Jewish.” That’s also something.

Now, it doesn’t necessarily mean that you love *mitzvos* yet. Because Polish people, let’s say, are proud of being Polish; they do Polish things. Ukrainians are proud of being Ukrainians; they do Ukrainian things. And so if a Jew does *mitzvos* because he’s proud of being a Jew is it a very big achievement? No; but it’s a good thing and we have to encourage it. There’s nothing wrong with putting your feet on the lower rung first. You like Jewish things, alright. You like Jewish food, kosher food? Fine! Very good. You like Jewish practices, *mitzvos*? Excellent. Who cares why you do it? Do it anyhow.

Just Do It

It’s a good idea by the way to encourage people in that way: “Look, you’re a Jew, why don’t you do *mitzvos*? Pesach is coming. Get all the *chametz*

out of your house. It's a Jewish way." Encourage them. "Keep the Shabbos. It's the Jewish way; it's the way of our forefathers for thousands of years."

And the truth is you should encourage yourself too! Don't scorn that motivation. Talk to yourself: When you sit down at the table say, "I'm happy that I'm eating kosher now. I'm proud that I'm walking in the ways of the Jewish nation." If you're giving a quarter to a poor Jew, say, "Don't all Jews give charity? So I want to do the same. I want to do *mitzvos*."

Absolutely you should say that. When you're trying to climb, you're not going to disdain the lower rungs. If you can put your foot on them and it helps you climb higher, anything goes.

Climbing Higher

But we want more than that; we want to love *mitzvos*. And therefore it's important not to stop there; it's not enough to do מצוות אנשים מלומדה, just because you're a Jew. We want to climb and therefore it's a good idea to think more about your motivation, what you're about to do.

Once in a while – as often as possible – before you do a *mitzvah*, it's important to make sure to prepare yourself. That's why some people have a *minhag* to say, *hineni muchan umezuman* or *l'sheim yichud* before they do a *mitzvah*; to remind ourselves that we're doing something now – that we're busy with the real money of life!

Here's a man; instead of just 'doing' he's thinking first: "As soon as I do this *mitzvah* I'm going to have a different personality!" That's the truth; a *mitzvah* transforms you. "How lucky I am that I'm able to do this *mitzvah*!"

Mitzvos Transformers

The fact that you put on *tefillin* makes you a different person. The fact that you're going to *daven* now or put a nickel in the charity box will make you different. You're not aware of it? Many

times people are not aware of what's happening to them – you're subjected, let's say, to the sun rays; as the sun hits your skin, it creates a certain vitamin. Do you know about it? You don't know about it, but it's there anyhow. Many benefits people acquire even when they're entirely unaware.

And so, why shouldn't you make yourself aware? Of course, the more you think about it, the more you love what you're doing; the more you become hungry for more. And so you can add more and more love by thinking of this lesson, how great the *mitzvah* is, how a *mitzvah* changes you. You're changing your nature, your mind, your *neshama*; you're gaining in perfection. That's something to think about before you do a *mitzvah*. Absolutely that's a rung on the ladder towards being an *oheiv mitzvos*.

Legal Tender

But what we're learning tonight is that you're also becoming wealthier, you're acquiring *kesef* when you do a *mitzvah*. Don't disdain that desire for wealth! Make use of it! It's not easy in the beginning but little by little, the more you think these thoughts, you'll feel it. You did a *mitzvah*? You're much wealthier now! It's money in the bank.

There's no end to the reward for a *mitzvah*. שכר מצוה בהאי עלמא ליכא. A *mitzvah* is so great – any *mitzvah* – that it's too big for this world here to repay. It's a check that can't be paid off in this world. All the banks of this world don't have enough money to pay for one *mitzvah*, a single deed of virtue.

Of course, it's not visible now because then there would be no use living; there would be no test. You would never stop doing *mitzvos*; you'd quit your job and you would never stop amassing the money of *mitzvos*. Not only you; the Italians and the blacks and the Chinese, all the gentiles,

would be knocking down the doors of the Mirrer Yeshiva, begging to be accepted as *geirim*. “We want to do *mitzvos* too!” They would pay everything they have to be able to do a *mitzvah*, a small *mitzvah*.

Ignorant of Mitzvos

The pity is that we don’t understand there’s no such thing as a small *mitzvah*. Suppose every time you did a *mitzvah* you’d find a bag of gold coins; you wouldn’t have left the shul last night. You’d move into shul and pay rent for a whole year so you could be closer to the *seforim*; you wouldn’t miss a *shiur*.

That’s what the Mesillas Yescharim tells us in the beginning of his sefer: כל הפרש קטן – *Every small difference in this world, even doing a little mitzvah, a tiny mitzvah, תבחן תולדותו בברור ודאי* – *its result is going to be discovered with a clarity that’s beyond any doubt*. You hear that? You can’t see it now but the time will come when you’re going to see what a wealth you acquired with every *mitzvah*.

That’s the great lesson; it’s the secret of the greatness of a *mitzvah*. A *mitzvah* is measured not by our measurements, by this world measurements of *kesev v’zahav*, of hundred dollar bills. That’s play money; it’s not the real thing. The value of a *mitzvah* is measured by Hakadosh Baruch Hu. And that means it’s more valuable than any value, any gold and silver, that you could imagine in this world.

Changing Your Appetite

When you begin to understand that, then your appetite becomes whetted. When you make your first million so now you want the second; you become more and more hungry for *mitzvos*. You’ll never be satisfied.

Of course if you never think about that, it’ll never enter your consciousness. You’ll sleepwalk

through life acquiring the wrong form of wealth. But there’s no question that if a man conditions himself, he’ll fall in love with *mitzvos*. If a man tries to acquire a sweetness in *mitzvos*, Hakadosh Baruch Hu helps him and after a while he becomes so acclimated to the *mitzvah*, he actually feels happiness in it; he begins to have a pleasure in doing *mitzvos*. It’s an accomplishment; you feel you did something. You made good money today.

Rejoice in Commandments

That’s one of the most important thing people have to learn in their lives, to rejoice with a *mitzvah*. אשריך ישראל! How fortunate we are, that we’re commanded to do *mitzvos*. And though it’s a *mitzvah* you do every day – putting on *tefillin* every morning, covering your hair, giving *tzedakah* – every time you do it should you think, ברוך אתה ה' אשר קדשנו במצוותיו וצונו – *How happy I am that He commanded me*. Not only when you’re *bar mitzvah* at the age of thirteen; all your life you’re rejoicing with the *bar mitzvah* because you’re gaining riches.

That’s how a person should live; הנחמדים מזהב, that the *mitzvos* and Torah are more precious than any kind of money. When a person tries to know another *blatt Gemara* and to know it well; he’s like the rich man who counts his money. When he goes to sleep at night he’s so happy: “Today I gained one more *blatt Gemara*. I added more to my store of wealth.”

Or the woman that does good things in her house. She’s kindly to her family and she does it *l’shem Shomayim* and she keeps her mouth closed. When the telephone rings, she picks it up and listens and watches what she says. These people are gathering *mitzvos*. They’re accumulating real money.

Moshe Climbs to Perfection

Now, Moshe Rabbeinu spent his life thinking these thoughts. He thought much better thoughts,

much higher, but there's no question he thought also about what we're saying here. Moshe Rabbeinu wasn't born a *malach*. He was an *oheiv kesef* like other children; but he didn't remain a child. He utilized that instinct to love the real money of life. He started out; he began climbing the ladder and as he progressed in life he loved it more and more intensely. And he fell in love with *mitzvos*; he couldn't get enough. He wasn't satisfied.

And therefore when he was stopped at the shore of the Yarden and Hashem said **לא תעבור את הירדן הזה**, you can't cross the Yarden, so Moshe Rabbeinu should have said, "I'm *patur!* Finished! I give up."

No. He didn't give up. **אז** – Even then, when he heard he can't cross, **יבריל משה** – he got busy separating the cities. They won't be effective yet? It could be done later after the nation crosses over the Yarden? No matter! Moshe did as much as he could while he was still alive because he had already fallen in love with the right type of *kesef*. Even what he couldn't do, what he couldn't accomplish, he did it anyhow.

Part III. Desiring the Nechamah

The Imaginary Security Blanket

And this brings us to a subject that's repeated constantly throughout our lives and therefore requires our attention. You know, there's a Torah rule called **אונס רחמנא פטריה**. It means that if there's a *mitzvah* that you can't do because of something beyond your control so you're absolved; it's not your fault after all. It's a principle used by us all the time – and in most cases rightfully so – as a reason to be exonerated from certain obligations. What is it our fault, after all, if there's no *Beis Hamikdash* for us to bring *korbanos*? What can we do? It's against our will and so we're absolved.

And yet we are learning now that it's not that simple. Because if we love *mitzvos* then we wouldn't react so flippantly; a good moneyman doesn't let a good deal slip out of his hands so easily. **אונס רחמנא פטריה** means *it has to be actually against our will*. And so we are hiding ourselves under an imaginary security blanket of *oness* that doesn't protect us as much as we imagined.

Love Means Desire

We have to *want* it at least! That's a responsibility. That's what Moshe Rabbeinu is teaching us; that's what we're aiming for, to love *mitzvos* so much that it overflows into wanting to do even what's beyond our reach. Even if it's not going to have practical results, if you love *mitzvos* then you just can't get enough. That's what it means **אזהב כסף לא ישבע כסף**, to want more and more; that's the truest expression of love, *when you want to do more*.

This ideal is included in the great rule that the Chovos Halevavos teaches: **מה שלא יוכל להשיגו במעשה** – *What you cannot accomplish with your deeds*, **ישיגוהו בדיעה** – *you should accomplish at least to know about it*, **ויתאוהו** – *and you should desire it* (Shaar Cheshbon Hanefesh 8:2). Whatever you can do, you do. And whatever you can't, you have to know it and desire it.

We spoke about this once. It's an important principle that has ramifications in very many areas of our lives; it opens up new vistas, new doors for us, because there's so much that we can't do in our lives that we have to desire. But we'll choose to talk now about one thing, a *mitzvah* that's important for this time of the year.

Nachamu: A New Beginning

You know, Shabbos *Nachamu*, for many people it means we're finished worrying now about the *Beis Hamikdash*. We fulfilled our obligations – *Shivah Asar b'Tamuz*, three weeks, nine days and

finally Tisha B'Av – and now you're off to the races; to the mountains, to vacations.

But it's not so. Because just because we can't do it, that doesn't absolve us from *desiring* the *mitzvos*. That's what we're talking about tonight. An אוהב מצוות is לא ישבע מצוות – if you love *mitzvos*, you're never satisfied.

You know, Dovid Hamelech desired with all his heart to build the Beis Hamikdash but when he finally told his ambition to the *navi*, the *navi* came back to Dovid with a message from Hakadosh Baruch Hu: “You will not be able to build the Beis Hamikdash because you shed much blood in your lifetime.”

Now Dovid when he shed blood he did it in the wars of Hashem. He was דוד עבדי, a loyal servant, and certainly he was devoted to *avodas Hashem*, even in battle. Nevertheless *l'maris ha'ayin*, the way it looks to people, it would be incongruous for a man who shed much blood to build the Beis Hamikdash. And so Hashem said, “Not you. Instead, you're going to have a son, Shlomo – a man of peace, not of war – and he shall build the Beis Hamikdash.”

Don't Lean Back

So Dovid was an *ones*; he was forced to desist. And so אונס רחמנא פטריה; he can lean back and be satisfied. He can forget about it; he can't do the *mitzvah* anyhow.

No; he didn't forget about it. What did he do? He got busy. Dovid drew up plans, blueprints. He got busy accumulating all the materials. He worked years and years gathering the lumber, collecting precious metals, lining up all the artisans for the Beis Hamikdash. Actually he did almost everything except build it. I'm sure Shlomo did a great deal of work – he gave orders, he managed the process – but he had everything ready for him.

That's the *pshat*, that's what it means you're absolved because of אונס רחמנא פטריה. That's called *patrei*, when you desire it so much that you do whatever you can.

A Burning Desire

Now there's not much we can do today. You can't be *dochek* the Moshiach. אם תעירו ואם תעוררו את האהבה עד שתחפץ – It's a *shevuah*. You cannot cause the love of Hashem to bestir itself until Hashem desires it (Shir Hashirim 2:7; Kesuvos 111a). Is someone going to say he's going to do something that will make Hashem bring Moshiach or he'll build the Beis Hamikdash now? Of course not; that's *dochek es hakeitz*. We have no right to take such power to ourselves. When the time comes and we get the signal, then we'll be able to do it.

But up until then it should be a burning desire. Absolutely! If you love *mitzvos* you won't be satisfied. If you love *mitzvos* then ישיגהו בידיעה! And so if you cannot build the Beis Hamikdash now because Hashem said לא תעבור, at least you should *desire* the Beis Hamikdash; you should gain a burning desire to serve Hashem in the Beis Hamikdash.

You should have a burning interest in the whole business – what it looks like the Beis Hamikdash, what benefits the Beis Hamikdash brings to you, the glory of serving Hashem in the Beis Hamikdash, of seeing how the Kohanim serve Hashem with fear. The *simcha* of hearing the Leviim together singing inspiring praises of Hashem that would elevate the spirit. If only I could bring a *korban* into the *azarah*. If only, if only. So at least the *yediah*; ישיגהו בידיעה – you should achieve it in your mind; learn about it.

Study With Love

It's a big job too by the way. If you desire it you'll learn *Mesichta Zevachim*, *Mesichta*

Menachos; you'll learn all about the Beis Hamikdash. Let's say you learn *Pesachim* in the yeshivah. Most yeshivahs skip *Tomid Nishchot*, *Hilchos korban Pesach*. Let's say you're older and you learned *Pesachim* up till *Tomid Nishchot*; so now, on your own, you learn the *perakim* of *korban Pesach*. And you're thinking, "Ah! If I could practice this! If I was able to bring a *korban Pesach*, how happy I would be!" Right now that's the extent of your abilities, the *teshukah*, the desire.

You have to want to see the excellence, the greatness of all the Am Yisroel being brought together again; they should come from Williamsburg and Crown Heights and from Lakewood and from Flatbush and from Texas, wherever they are, back to Eretz Yisroel. How long are we scattered in *Golus* among the *goyim*? How long? How long? We want to be the *Am Echad* in our land that Hashem gave us where we'll be able to fulfill the mitzvos of Eretz Yisroel, of Yerushalayim, of the Mikdash. You have to work on that; it's a project, a program of practicing up that desire.

The Prayer Practice Program

Now, if you're serious about this, you have to know that *tefillah* is one of the best opportunities. Davening is the place where you can express the desire for those tremendous days when we'll be once again together doing all the mitzvos that are beyond our reach today.

In the *davening* you have to ask for that with a feeling as if you were really sincere about it. "קבצנו יחד מארבע כנפות הארץ ושא נס לקבץ גלוייתנו – *Raise up the banner to collect all of our exiles together.*" We'll be one nation, together on the land, fulfilling Your mitzvos *b'shleimus*. We'll be able to come and serve You, Hashem, in the Beis Hamikdash. You should ask for it. You should pray for it. והשב את העבודה לרביך ביתך – *Hakadosh Baruch Hu! Please bring back the avodah to Your Home. Your Home! We want that You should once again live with us!*"

If you say it with the right intention, it means you want to bring *korbanos*. "I want to come to Yerushalayim and be *makriv* all the *korbanos*. Ribono Shel Olam, help me."

Dovid Hamelech expressed this in words that we always say in *Hallel*. He says פתחת למוסרי – "If only You would loosen my bounds." Dovid was bound because he was hiding in caves from his pursuers. So he couldn't come out and serve Hakadosh Baruch Hu as he desired. He said לך זבחה תודה – I would like to bring to You a *zevach todah* for all the miracles You did when You rescued me from the hand of Shaul all these years but I can't come out of the cave. פתחת למוסרי – "Please open up my bounds so I can go and bring offerings to You." That's an expression of real genuine desire to serve Hakadosh Baruch Hu; he's not able to do it but he expressed great sorrow.

An Important Part

That's why one of the most important parts of Shemoneh Esrei is when you finish: יהי רצון מלפניך בית המקדש במהרה בימנו ה' אלוקינו שיבנה בית המקדש במהרה בימנו. That's so important! Many people have finished Shemoneh Esrei and they just mumble that off. It's finished; it's not important, they think. It's very important. It's a glorious opportunity to practice loving mitzvos. You can't do it but you're not satisfied with that; you have to show that's what you want!

Isn't it a pity you finished Shemoneh Esrei, you're saying the last three *pesukim*, you're not thinking what you're saying? ושם נעבודך ביראה – *There we'll serve You again in fear, כימי עולם וכשנים, קדמוניות – as in the days of old, וערבה לה – and it should be sweet to Hashem once more the service that we served in the Beis Hamikdash.* "I want to serve You again. Ah ah ah! I want! I want! I want!"

And so we'll conclude with that, with wanting, because that's the crux of the subject. You're in this world to *shteig*, to climb the ladders of

greatness, and one of the most important ladders is the one that takes you up to being an אוהב מצוות לא ישבע מצוות.

We're here in order to accumulate the real *kesef* of this world; and we do that by fanning the flame of desire to accumulate. That instinct to gather money, to make millions and to never be satisfied; as much as possible we direct it at the real wealth, the money we'll take with us into the Next World. And if a man reaches that rung on the ladder that leads up to Hashem then he has achieved perfection: אשרי איש ירא את ה' במצוותיו – חפץ מאד – Praiseworthy is the one who is aware of Hashem and desires His mitzvos very much (Tehillim 112:1)

Have a Wonderful Shabbos

Let's Get Practical

Acquiring the Desire to Acquire

Moshe Rabbeinu built up an incredible desire for 'currency', the type of currency that is valuable in the next world. We are all hardwired to desire currency, but we need to emulate Moshe Rabbeinu and strive for the correct desires. This week, I commit *bli neder* to a daily practice: before performing a mitzvah, I will pause and reflect on the significance of my actions, recognizing that I'm accumulating spiritual wealth. Furthermore, during Shemoneh Esrei, I will focus on sincerely longing for the rebuilding of the Beis Hamikdash and the opportunities it brings to fulfill additional mitzvos.

This week's booklet is based on tapes:

16 – The End is Important | **49** – Pursuing Real Money
592 – Loving the Mitzvos | **715** – Desiring the Unattainable
865 – Parallels for Eternity | **E-192** – Deep Truths in a Shallow World

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QUESTION

Would you equate the pursuit of the dollar to idol worship?

ANSWER

And I say no. I say it's very important to pursue dollars. My personal opinion is everybody should be interested in making money.

Let me explain that to you.

Everyone should be ambitious to have a big family and therefore you must earn money to support a family. Tuition in the *yeshivos* is quite expensive. And even shoes and even rent; everything costs money.

And that's why it's a very big error for people who become idealistic loafers – some have big beards, some have *kapotes*, and they act like *tzaddikim* and they sit all day in the *shtiebel*. Most of the day is *devarim bateilim*; they tell stories or just loaf. A little bit they look in the *sefer*. But otherwise they don't accomplish anything for themselves and don't accomplish anything for Am Yisroel. And they're disappointments. Their lives are wasted.

That's why it's important to learn a *parnassah*, to make a living and raise a family and make a *nachas ruach leYotzro*.

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