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RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"l

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PARSHAS TERUMAH

WITH

RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT" L

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

IMAGES OF YOUTH

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Part I. Energy of Youth

Sinful Images

There's a remarkable thing in this week's *sedrah* that I'd like to point out; but first, in order to appreciate how remarkable it actually is, we'll begin with a short introduction.

We know that the Torah insists that there shouldn't be any *pessel*, any image at all, among the Am Yisroel. It was one of the first things we heard from Hashem at Har Sinai: **לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה לְךָ פֶסֶל** – To fashion any type of image is a terrible sin.

Not only an idolatrous image; even a kosher image – there's no such thing as a kosher *pessel*. Everyone who learned a little bit remembers the story of *pessel Michah* (Shoftim 17); a man named Michah made an image

for serving Hashem. It says that openly. When he completed it he said, “Now, Hashem, Yud Kay Vav Kay, is going to bless me because I made a *pesel* in His honor.” And so absolutely Michah did it *l’sheim Shamayim*. And yet it was considered a very serious sin. You cannot make any kind of image, no matter what your intentions are.

Cherubic Images

But in our *parshah* (Shemos 25:18-22) we see a tremendous contradiction to that. Because in the *kodesh hakadashim* on top of the *aron Hashem* there were two *keruvim* – a *keruv* is an image, a figurine of a *malach* with wings – attached to the *kapores*. That’s something unbelievable! An image! And where? In the *kodesh hakadashim*. Two images in the most holy place! That’s a puzzle. A very great puzzle.

Now, before we go on I’m going to add one more piece to the puzzle. The Gemara (Mesichta Chagigah 13b) asks, what did the *כְּרֻב* look like? *כְּרֻבִיָּא* – It looked like a little boy; that’s what the face was, a child’s face. Now, that’s a strange thing because if you’re going to make an image, why not old men with long beards, *ziknei Yisroel*? If it was me, I would have said it should be a figure of an old *talmid chochom* with a long white beard with his hands upraised to Hakadosh Baruch Hu in *tefillah*. Oh! That would have been some image to have on top of the *aron habris*! But little children?

Now I’m not going to answer this puzzle entirely but I’ll tell you what a certain *adam gadol* once remarked about this. Rav Yisroel Salanter said that the *keruvim* were made in the form of young boys for the purpose of teaching us a certain lesson. And the lesson that we’re expected to learn from these images is so important, so fundamental, that it’s worth it – Hakadosh Baruch Hu made this one exception to the law of making images because He wants us to study these images when we come to serve Him.

Youthful Days

In the book of Koheles (12:1), Shlomo urges us and says: *זָכוֹר אֶת בּוֹרְאֶיךָ בְּיָמֶיךָ בַּחוּרִיתֶיךָ* – Remember your Creator in the days of your youth. Now that has to be understood because we know that we’re expected to remember our Creator when we’re middle-aged too. And even when we’re old, when someone is already near the end – he’s 119 years and 364 days old – he still has to remember his Creator. And the truth is that’s when you should remember Him most – because you’re going to be seeing Him soon!

And so we have to understand what these words mean, “Remember your Creator in the days of your youth.” Why mention the ‘days of youth’?

So we'll explain it as follows: **זָכוֹר אֶת בּוֹרְאֶיךָ** – *Remember your Creator*, **בְּיָמֶי בְּחוּרֹתֶיךָ** – *in the days of your youth*, because that's the time when it has the biggest effect; that's when a person who wants to remember his Creator can have the most success.

Mature at Eighteen

Listen to what Rav Yisrael Salanter, *zichrono levracha*, said when he was already an old man. "All my *yiras Hashem*, whatever fear of Heaven and piety I have right now," he said, "I gained by the time I was eighteen."

Now the truth is that we don't believe him. We don't take his word for it because we know stories about Reb Yisroel – he was a famous servant of the Almighty all his life and we know he was gaining *yiras Hashem* on his last day too. So it's not exactly true, but it means that already at the age of eighteen, a wave raised him up and the crest of the wave was still carrying him forward; that impetus of his younger years was pushing him forward all his life.

Youth has a certain vitamin in it. No, I take that back; vitamin is not the word. It's more than that – it's an enzyme, a catalyst. Youth has a catalytic agent, a dynamo that can transform all things into idealism, into true achievement. And that's why the best time to make progress – *especially in remembering the Borei* – is then; **זָכוֹר אֶת בּוֹרְאֶיךָ בְּיָמֶי בְּחוּרֹתֶיךָ**. The days of your youth are when you have the most enthusiasm and energy.

A Gift with Purpose

And that's why Hashem gave it! The gift of youth is given to us because we're in this world for a purpose. Take a bee for example. Everybody realizes that bees have a purpose. You sit down on Rosh Hashana night with a piece of apple and you dip it in the honey and you're reminded about that. "Where did this honey come from? Oh right, that's what a bee is for!"

The bee is for the apple too, by the way. If it wasn't for the bee you wouldn't have apples. A bee is for a hundred thousand things. Apples and peaches and cherries and plums and flowers – without the bee, we wouldn't have any of them. One hundred thousand species of fruits and flowers are produced by the little bee and its miraculous function of pollination.

Now because bees have a purpose, the Creator Who made it for that purpose has equipped it with all the apparatus it needs. You know he has tools on him. If you could look at the bee's legs under a magnifying glass, it's remarkable. The bee has brushes on his legs, real brushes, and it has

baskets on its leg, built-in baskets. I'm not exaggerating. And when it gets to a flower it brushes off the pollen with the brushes and pushes it into the pollen baskets on its legs. Then the bee takes this pollen to its hive and it takes the nectar and it mixes the nectar with the pollen. In addition, the bee has a little factory in its body and it produces beeswax.

The bee has many other pieces of equipment and many instincts to assist him in fulfilling his purpose. And so we see that the bee was created for a certain purpose and is superbly equipped by its Creator to carry out that purpose.

Purpose of Humanity

Now, if that's true for the little bee then how much more so is it true for ourselves? You must say that we're here for a purpose too. Are we for nothing? You're going to tell me that a bee has a purpose in the world and a man doesn't have a purpose?

And so the first thing we have to settle is: what is a man supposed to produce? If bees are here to produce honey, what are we here for then? Certainly man has to produce in this world! Certainly he's expected to fulfill a certain function! What is a man's honey? Where are the fruits that he pollinates?

Now, some people will say, money, property. A paycheck at the end of the week. No, that's not a man's fruit. It's useful – nothing wrong with making money, but that's not what you're here for.

So you'll tell me children, a family. No, that's not it. Of course, children are very important. The more children you can have, the more successful you are. But that's only a byproduct.

The true fruits of a man's efforts are self-improvement. That's what we're here for. To make something out of yourself, that's the reason that we're here! That's our function. That's our honey. We're here to spend our days pollinating ourselves, producing the honey and sweet fruit of self-perfection.

Equipped to Succeed

Now, if our purpose is self-perfection, so you'll have to say that just like the bee, we are also equipped to fulfill our function. We are superbly equipped by the Creator to achieve. We don't have pollen baskets and brushes but He has given us a set of tools and instincts to help us achieve our purpose.

Now, among these instincts — there are many instincts and they have to be discussed — but among them is the enthusiasm of youth. The 'days

of youth' are an important tool given to us for the purpose of self-perfection. It's intended to be used for the purpose of throwing ourselves into the great Torah ideals with all our energy.

And that's why Hakadosh Baruch Hu gave youth a great gift of enthusiasm. You need energy to succeed with Hashem! You need youthfulness to fight against yourself too. You have a big enemy within yourself; the yetzer hara is always on the job and you have to fight against it.

Our Military Service

Like Iyov said (7:1): הֲלֹא צָבָא לְאַנָּשׁ עַלִי אֶרֶץ – Isn't it military service for a man on this earth? Every man in this world is in military service. We're waging a battle in our service of the Almighty. And to win battles you have to have guts, you have to have fire in you. If a man is a namby-pamby, a Mr. Milquetoast, what kind of battle is it going to be? You have to have 'fight' in you. A weakling is like a washed-out rag; he won't accomplish anything in life.

And so, you young fellows who still have this energy in your system, be happy about it and make sure you make use of it. That is the way to have the spirit; and that is why youth is given to you.

Don't Grow Old

Now, as soon as somebody hears this, a young fellow of sixty years hears this, so he settles back now and decides it's too late. He thinks he's justified in retiring; he heard already that it's no use. No, no. It doesn't mean that a man cannot start even at an advanced age.

You need never surrender that youthfulness. Of course it won't be so easy but there's no question that everyone can draw forth from his reserves of youthful energy and throw off the artificial lassitude which elderly people adopt when it comes to good things.

After all, a lot of that weakness is nothing but a *pitui ha'yetzer*. Why is it that when it comes to money-making a man is never too old? Why is it when it comes to *ta'avos*, to looking for fun, he's never too old? When it comes to going fishing, you'll find elderly people put on white pants and a seagoing cap and they're going out to the ocean. For deep-sea fishing, for good times, they're young.

Selective Energy

Here's an old fellow in the shul; he's washed out, he has no energy. Shabbos, he barely goes to *Minchah*. He has no *koach* to come out to our

shiur. But Sunday morning I see him in his driveway. He has his sleeves rolled up and he's washing his car; he's ready to go out in the world!

The answer is he's only old when it comes to certain things. It's nothing but a persuasion of the *yetzer hara*. It's only for good things that they're already too old and played out.

And therefore, whether you're a young man of eighteen or a young man of eighty – whatever it is, it's the quality of youthfulness that makes a man go ahead in life. That's the lesson that the *keruvim* are teaching us. Hashem speaks from between the *keruvim* because He wants us always to draw from that youthful energy in order to serve Him best.

Part II. Benefits of Youth

Early Chinuch

Now, as much as a person can still accomplish in his old age but we should always keep in mind what Koheles said that the best time is when you're young because then it will go into the bones. And the earlier the better. We shouldn't wait even one day! Don't postpone!

It's reported that a woman once came to Reb Simcha Zissel for an *eitzah*; she wanted advice from this old sage about raising children. Reb Simcha Zissel was a *talmid* of Rav Yisroel Salanter, and so who better to go to for such a question?

And the first question she asked was this: "At what age should I start teaching my little boy *derech eretz*?"

"How old is the child?" Reb Simcha Zissel asked her.

"He's three years old."

So Reb Simcha Zissel said, "Go home! Hurry home right away because you're very late. The age of three is late already so hurry up and do whatever you can."

Every Day Counts

Now, if you know anything about Rav Simcha Zissel you'll know that his words were measured – everything he said was important. And so, if he said, "Hurry up because you're late," he wasn't just cracking a joke; he meant business.

And so we have to ask ourselves: Why is it that three years old is already late to begin teaching a child? You can do a lot of good things with

a three-year-old! He's still a young child! Did you ever see a precocious three-year-old boy? He's a sponge; he can absorb a lot of ideas still!

But there's a very important lesson that Rav Simcha Zissel is teaching us. Every day of our youth counts! Those are the days best suited for achievement; the summer flowers of achievement can only grow in the heat of youth. It's the best time to plant all of the Torah ideas into the garden of our mind.

Rejecting and Accepting

Now, it doesn't mean only if you're three years old. Thirty-three is good too. It's better than forty. And forty is still better than fifty. As early as possible we have to plant all the Torah ideas into the garden of our mind because even the shortest delay is too long when it comes to *avodas Hashem*.

You know who taught us that? Abayye. I'll tell you a little story from the Gemara (Shabbos 21b). Abayye was one of the sages of the Talmud and it was once reported to him a Torah teaching that had been made by Rabbi Yirmiyah. Now, Rabbi Yirmiyah was an important man – he's famous in the Gemara and his words have weight – but Abayye refused to accept the statement. He didn't agree with it, and so he rejected it out of hand.

Now some time elapsed and at a later date the same statement was again said to Abayye and this time he saw its truthfulness and he accepted it. He accepted it and studied it well until it became part of his repository of Torah knowledge. And yet, our sages tell us that whenever Abayye recalled this incident, he would express regret as to why he didn't accept it the first time. Now that he saw it was true he was sorry that he hadn't accepted it the first time he heard it. And he said, "Had I been worthy, I would have learned it the first time."

Relatively Young

So the Gemara asks, what harm was done? He learned it now – now he knows it, so what's the difference anyhow? And the Gemara answers *nafka minah l'girsu deyankusa* – it makes a difference to have learned it when you were young. Learning when you are young is an entirely different thing, and therefore Abayye regretted that he hadn't accepted it the first time around.

Now young here is only a relative word because Abayye was not young when he heard it the first time. He must have been in his prime at least. Otherwise, who would he be to refuse to accept what Rabbi Yirmiyah said? Rabbi Yirmiyah was one of the great men of the preceding generation. And

so you must say that he wasn't a youth — he was younger but he wasn't a child.

And still Abayye always looked back with regret at the fact that he hadn't learned this statement when he was younger because it makes a big difference. The sooner you get into your head a truth, the bigger is the benefit to you.

Diamond Seeds

I'll explain this briefly. Imagine you put a diamond or some other piece of jewelry into a box and you hide it away in a drawer. And now after many years let's say you open the box — all you'll find there is what you put in. It's not going to have any babies. At best the diamond will still be there.

But let's say you're eating a watermelon in your garden and as usually happens one of the slippery seeds eludes you and flies out and lands on the soft earth. Now, if no one will trample that garden and you'll revisit it thirty years hence, you'll discover that it is overgrown with melon vines! Because a seed properly planted produces generations and generations of results.

And that's what a thought is — when a thought is put into a human mind, it's not going to remain there without progeny like a diamond does. That thought is going to take root and as long as it's watered and cared for, it will grow and produce fruits with seeds of their own; and those seeds will produce other plants. It will branch out. That one thought becomes so complex. It branches out into all fields of your thinking and it becomes a part of your entire personality. A thousand thoughts result from one. Not only *dinim*; every Torah thought, every Torah attitude and ideal, is a seed that over time will branch out into beautiful fruit. And the earlier you plant, the more it'll develop into a garden of Torah ideals and attitudes.

No Time to Lose!

Now I understand that most people are satisfied to do the minimum, to just fulfill their obligations and that's all, but the wise person understands that his whole future in the Next World depends on his mind, and therefore he wishes to build up in his head a beautiful garden full of delightful fruit. That's the perfection of mankind — to create a more perfect mind — and if you start in your younger years you're much better off.

Now when we talk of younger years, it includes people who are sixty five years old — they're in the young years if they're starting out. Of course, it's better to start at sixty. Fifty nine is still better. But even sixty five or sixty six, there's still a lot of hope for you. If you pay attention to what I'm

going to tell you, you'll see that a sixty five year old man can accomplish a tremendous amount in his life – even if he won't live a hundred and sixty five years.

So if you're a young fellow of sixty, hurry up and don't wait. Boys and girls, men and women, no matter what age, take yourself in hand. There's no time to lose. If you're an old man of eighteen, you've lost a lot of time already. Hurry up and see that the right seeds are planted because by eighteen you could have had a wonderful luxurious garden. You could have had a garden growing with strawberries and watermelons and sunflower seeds and sugar corn. You could have had apple trees and peach trees and pear trees and cherry trees if you had planted the seeds at the proper time.

Ideas You're Not Used To

Of course you have to know what to plant. Most people – even yeshiva men – don't do that in their youth. And it's mostly because they don't know what to plant. Even if you go into places where they talk Torah, it's remarkable that today it's very hard to find a place where people speak straightforward Torah.

They'll take a *possuk* or a statement from Chazal and the whole wisdom is to twist it to mean what it doesn't say. In most places that's the whole wisdom. And that's why in one week, just this past week, two people came to me in the street to tell me something about a sentence in the Torah that means one thing and both of them twisted it to mean something else; *chassidische peshetlach*. Both of them ignored what the *possuk* really wanted to say – and the *possuk* had a lot to say. And what do they learn from it? Nothing new. It's a plain commonplace idea they were telling me. But the *chochma* is in the twisting. That's what's interesting to people.

And therefore to learn straight Torah ideas, true Torah ideas, is not simple at all. You have to look for it. You have to want to hear it. That's why at our meetings here you're going to hear things that are not always an echo of what you yourself think. Whether you are an ordinary citizen or whether you're a yeshiva man or even if you're a rabbi, don't expect to hear the same ideas that you think. And if you hear things that are opposite to your accepted ideas then you should know it's worth coming. That's what you're here for.

Disappointed With Toras Avigdor

I know from experience; some people have left because they were displeased with the ideas they heard. It has happened. People who lost the

plasticity of youth and they can't change. They came here and they asked questions and they were disappointed because they didn't like the answers. They wanted to hear something else, something that fits in with their preconceived notions. That's not Torah. Torah means you take ideas and you plant them in your heads.

The truth is that most of the ideas that people bring in are wrong because even yeshiva men, *talmidei chachomim*, didn't plant properly when they were young. You know, if a person puts no time into the Sha'ar Habechina then he knows nothing about *bechina*. If he didn't plant the seeds of seeing Hakadosh Baruch Hu in the *briyah* then he's missing something very important – and it'll be very difficult to start planting when he gets older already. The energy is not there anymore; he's not plastic anymore and it's very hard to mold a head that's already hardened in its ways.

I once had an *adam gadol* in my house for a Shabbos morning. He was visiting from Eretz Yisroel and he was sitting in my house. So I took out all of my old merchandise and I was talking about an apple. All my old customers know about the apple but he never heard it. He looked at me politely, but such things he had never heard; he never encountered it. He had never looked in the Chovos Halevavos Sha'ar Habechina. He doesn't think it's important. Maybe, it wasn't his fault. Nobody taught it to him when he was young.

The Biggest Achievement

And therefore the biggest of all achievements is to acquire correct ideas. All great truths of the Chovos Halevavos, the Mesillas Yesharim, the Rambam and the Kuzari; all of the great truths of the *rishonim* and the *achronim* who were our great teachers.

That's our big job in life, to put good seeds in our heads and to plant gardens – and to do it as soon as possible. And when a man does that in his younger days he's able to draw forth from that reservoir of youthful energy and the rest of his life he is nothing but a self-operating system of nature. All the seeds that he planted with the energy of his youthful enthusiasm; all the ideas that he took into his mind with enthusiasm, take root and they grow and produce fruits and flowers and seeds and they multiply, and that's how he develops into the perfect man.

Part III. Happiness of Youth

The Secret Ingredient

Now, just to conclude the subject we will discuss one example of a seed that is best and most easily planted with youthful enthusiasm. There is one ingredient that is almost instinctive to youth and is especially important for the success of an *eved Hashem*.

And if we had to say it in one word it would be *simcha*. Happiness! That's the secret to living successfully! That's why Koheles said (11:9): **שִׂמְחָה בְּיָמֶיךָ לְבָךְ לְבָךְ בְּיָמֶיךָ בְּחַוְרוֹתֶיךָ** – *Rejoice O Youth in your boyhood, בְּחַוְרוֹתֶיךָ לְבָךְ לְבָךְ בְּיָמֶיךָ* – *and let your mind make you happy in the days of your young-manhood*. That's the advice of Shlomo Hamelech: when you're young, learn how to enjoy life!

Enjoy life? It could be that you won't hear such things in other places. But that's why you have to come here. In this place we say that you have to learn how to enjoy life; it's a very important seed that yields luscious fruits.

The Joys of Youth

You're walking down the street? Enjoy it! You're effortlessly cruising down the street on your two healthy legs? No hint of arthritis yet? Learn the happiness of having healthy joints that function so smoothly as if they were lubricated with oil in between the moving bones. Ahh, is that a pleasure! That's happiness!

You have to learn to enjoy the fact that you can hear. Hearing is a miracle. Even today nobody can explain this wondrous process whereby sound waves travel from here to your ears. But more than a miracle, it's a happiness. It's fun to hear your friends, your children. We live by hearing. Hearing is life! Like the Gemara (Bava Kamma 85b) says: If you made your fellowman's slave deaf, you have to pay him for the entire slave. If you make a man deaf, you have to pay his total value because the deaf man is like he stopped existing.

And it's when you're still young and healthy, when you still have your teeth and your hearing, when you can still walk without any effort, that's the best time to enjoy life. When we're young, in the morning of life, the whole world appears to us more beautiful; everything seems so much more glamorous. Even without money and without fame, you're happy.

Purposeful Joy

Now, if you'll just be a happy fellow, that's not enough. There's a purpose here. And it's not what most people are doing with it. The purpose

of youth is not merely to live more happily; to drive around in cars and eat and play games. That's a very big mistake that many people make; they think that youth is given to us merely as a commodity to enjoy. Oh no, that's a waste – it's like a bee who goes to the salt mines and gathers salt with his pollen brushes. He fills up his buckets with salt; a big waste, a disaster.

Simcha is the high octane that lets you get off the ground. With *simcha* you can travel in *avodas Hashem*; you can pick up speed and accomplish. And that's what Shlomo Hamelech is telling you: "Rejoice O Youth!" he says; because that's the fuel that makes a man succeed! This happiness and energy is the catalyst for great achievements!

Purposeful Sorrow

And that's why the *yetzer hara* is hard at work fighting it. The *yetzer hara* says "What happiness?! You're not happy now. All you have is functioning joints. All you have is three meals a day and some underwear and a few suits and a roof over your head and a house that's heated in the winter and a bed and pillow. You have cold water and hot water. You have toilets in your house. Everybody else has it too. That's not happiness. That's nothing!"

Nothing? So what is happiness? He doesn't tell you what happiness is. Happiness is something that you don't have now. That's the important point he's telling you. And that's why mankind is unhappy.

Here's a man who is in the hands of the *yetzer hara*. He goes around feeling unhappy; he feels that life is nothing but disappointment and all his days are spent in sorrow.

Now "what is so wrong with that?" you ask. Everything. Everything is wrong with such an attitude because living happily is the foundation of all your *avodas Hashem*. It's not merely a catalyst – it's actually the foundation of everything. The whole Torah is based on feeling gratitude! In return for all of the kindnesses that Hakadosh Baruch Hu bestows upon us, we're inspired to serve Him. But if we're unhappy and we don't see any kindness, so why should we serve Him?

Basis of the Torah

The whole Torah stands on gratitude. From the beginning all the way to the end the Torah is based on the attitude that we have to thank Hakadosh Baruch Hu and serve Him because of what He did for us. And so, because that's the foundation of *kol haTorah kulah*, just because of that, the *yetzer hara* is hard at work fighting that. The biggest attack that the

yetzer hara can make on a man – even bigger than the attack on Torah and mitzvos – is to persuade people that they're not happy right now.

But if you can teach yourself to enjoy the now – when you're eighteen years young or sixty years young – it'll last you into your older years too and you will be successful in making something out of yourself.

Advice For the Elderly

In his Shaarei Teshuva, Rabbeinu Yonah tells us something that's connected to this subject and it's very important. He says that when a man is old he sometimes becomes dispirited; he's discouraged and despondent because he no longer has all the fun of his youth. Many of the youthful pleasures are unavailable to him now. Even eating! In the days of Rabbeinu Yonah when you got old you didn't even have enough teeth to eat well. You couldn't buy false teeth. Maybe your digestion wasn't so good either. And so much of the happiness of life departed.

But that cannot be, Rabbeinu Yonah says, because if you don't enjoy life, you can't be an *eved Hashem*. You must have a certain *simcha*, a certain energy to serve Hashem. An old man also needs some lubrication, some fuel of happiness and gratitude, in order to travel and to achieve. "So what should you do?" he said. Pay attention to his words.

He quotes for us a statement in Koheles (11:7): וּמִתּוֹק הָאוֹר – *How sweet is the light*, וְטוֹב לְעֵינַיִם לִרְאוֹת אֶת הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ – *it's good for the eyes to see sunlight*. Rabbeinu Yonah asks what's the purpose of this possuk? Shlomo Hamelech wouldn't say things that are *devarim beteilim*.

So he says it's connected with the previous possuk. Before that it says וּלְעֹרֶב, בְּבֹקֶר יִרְעֶה אֶת זֶרְעוֹ – *in the morning of life is when you must plant seeds*, אֲלֵ תַנַּח יָדְךָ – *but you shouldn't rest your hands from planting even in the evening of life*. All the way till the end you must be active in serving Hashem.

Enjoying Sun

And so Shlomo is speaking to the old man, encouraging him. "Enjoy the sunlight!" And even though your happiness is more limited now – you have aches and pains and illnesses – but you should utilize all the opportunities that are still available. And so he tells us, "Learn to enjoy the light!"

You know daylight is fun? People don't know it's fun to see daylight. I'll tell you when you can find out. You should never find out this way. But when you'll pass by a hospital and there's a man lying in the window in a bed and this man's days, his hours, are numbered and he's looking out of the window into the street. I'm talking about the dismal streets of Brooklyn;

no trees, no gardens, but still that street is so alluring to him. It's so lovely, so delicious. He sees the light of day and he knows he won't have it long. Then he realizes how good it is to be alive and see daylight.

Now of course it's better to start when you're young and study the happiness of light. If you'll try and start enjoying the sunlight when you're eighty five you're out of luck – it's a little late now. When you're old and your bones are aching from arthritis and your days are numbered, it's a little late to start appreciating the sunlight.

The Pool of Gold

But if you start practicing up when you're young, you learn to enjoy the *chasdei Hashem* now, you'll learn to be happy with sunlight! As you walk through a section of sidewalk that's bathed in sunlight, you feel that you're wading through a big swimming pool of golden coins, golden sovereigns and ducats; it's a lot of fun!

It's a lot of fun wading through such a pool. Imagine a big pool like this room and it's full of golden coins, and they tell you: wade through it and pick up all you can. That's how you should learn to enjoy wading through the sunlight. You see the sun shining, a bright day, and it's a pleasure! A happiness!

Of course you look at me with blank faces, like I just fell off the moon. But Koheles says it's because we're spoiled! We want ice cream! We want *nosherei*! Well, if you think the whole fun of life is only chocolate cake then when you get old and you can't take it anymore, your stomach doesn't take these things, then what is life?

There is Fun to be Done

But if you learn to enjoy the sunlight – other things too besides sunlight; you should learn to enjoy your eyes. Seeing is fun. You're wearing a pair of camcorders, taking pictures all the time with these eyes; color pictures, motion pictures. It's a pleasure to be able to see. And if you don't think so, you'd better hurry up and get busy practicing enjoying your eyes.

The pleasure of sleeping! Sleeping is a big *ta'anug*! You put your head on the pillow and you drift off into slumberland. Ahh! Not everybody can fall asleep right away. If you can, you're a rich man. It's a luxury to sleep!

The fact that your heart is beating all the time; it's working, pit-pat-pit-pat. A very great pleasure! Only when does a man realize that pleasure? When he feels something is wrong, *chalilah*, and a doctor tells him, "We have to make an angiogram." Hooohoooh! Now he looks back at the good

old days when he was enjoying a good heart. “Oh! Why didn’t I enjoy it when I had it?!”

Now is The Time

So a person has to learn when he’s young and happy to appreciate the things that take place every day. Don’t wait until the time will come and you’re dreaming that you’ll retire and you’ll be in your palace, let’s say, in Florida or someplace else and you’ll have a lot of money and you won’t have to work, then you’ll enjoy. Aaaach! Who knows first of all if you’ll ever reach that time? And secondly, by that time you’ll have so many illnesses. You’ll be busy going to the doctors every day. Who knows what’s going to happen then? The time to do it is right now. Right now is the time to learn happiness! And what better time to begin, than this month, the month of *marbim b’simcha*.

And if you start in your youth – even if you’re a young man of sixty – if you practice up on this business of being a *sameach bechelko* there’s no question that the genuine youthful happiness and enthusiasm will last you all your life. That’s the person who has learned the lesson of the *keruvim*, the images of youth, that stood above the *aron bris* teaching that eternal lesson to the Am Yisroel.

Have A Wonderful Shabbos

Let’s Get Practical

Learning from the Keruvim

The *Keruvim*, the apparent source of Hakadosh Baruch Hu’s voice, were made to resemble children. This teaches us the importance of youthful energy in His service. The earlier we begin planting Torah thought seeds, the richer the fruits they will yield. This week I will *bli neder* spend one minute each day appreciating the light of day. As a youthful joy wells up in my heart I will be ready to serve Hashem with enthusiasm.

This week’s booklet is based on tapes:

R-6 – Evening of Life | **R-31** – Hurry to Learn | **R-76** – In the Evening Don’t Rest
483 – Bringing Up Children | **E-45** – The True Truth

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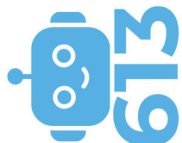
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QUESTION

It says that in the month of Adar we have to be *marbim b'simcha*. How does one acquire more happiness during this month?

ANSWER

And the answer is that you have to know that Hakadosh Baruch Hu has made in each person a fountain of *simcha*. Only that the pump has to be primed. Once you open up the fountain and it starts gushing fourth you'll be surprised how much *simcha* there is in us. We are born with the ability to be full of happiness.

Now, once you start thinking how good it is this month of Adar when Hakadosh Baruch Hu showed us a picture of *l'asid lavo*, of what the future holds for the Am Yisroel – Haman is hanging with all his sons! That's what's going to happen *l'asid lavo*. That's the real truth – that's how it's supposed to be; all the *reshaim* should be hanging all the time and the *tzaddikim* should be looking up and enjoying the sight. We have so many enemies today – we always had enemies but we have enemies today too – and the time will come when our enemies will be hanging. I'm not saying we'll do it but Hashem will do it for us. They'll be hanging and it will be a pleasant surprise.

That's what happened then. They took a look. "Who is hanging there? Haman is hanging!" It was a surprise, a shock. They went out of their minds with happiness. So utilize that happiness; think about what happened then and about what's going to happen again in the future and experience that happiness.

In addition to that, enjoy the fact that spring is around the corner. We'll have a nice balmy weather soon and soon the trees will have green leaves. You can also think about how good it is to be alive. Oh what a pleasure it is to be alive! It's a big *simcha* to be alive! So keep on thinking happy thoughts and Hakadosh Baruch Hu will open up the fountain of happiness that's in your mind and it will start gushing forth in the month of Adar.

February 25, 1999

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