TORAS AVIGDOR
AUTHENTIC TORAH THOUGHT FOR LIFE
RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"L

SHMINI ATZERES
WITH
RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"L
BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

THE GREAT RAINY DAY

CONTENTS

Part I. Inviting Rain - 1
Part II. Understanding Rain - 4
Part III. Enjoying Rain - 7

Part I. Inviting Rain

Passionate Prayers

On Shemini Atzeres, when the *chazzan* stands up at the front of the shul to say the special prayer for rain, in some places he sheds tears; I've seen that. In better places, he's crying as he's begging for rain.

Now, it could be that all of those tears are genuine – I imagine they are. And yet I'm suspicious that he's thinking not only about rain. Maybe he's thinking about *parnassah*, good health, yes. Other things that we sometimes include in the *tefillas hageshem*, yes. But rain itself? He's *davening* for a rainy day? I'm not so convinced.

But the truth is that it's all prayers for rain. And we go all out for it! On Hoshana Rabbah, we see the *chazzan* stand up – he even wears his *kittel*! – and he's praying plaintively, הוֹשַׁעְנָא, הוֹשַׁעְנָא! He's crying out, אָנָּא הוֹשַׁעְנָא הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא! Please save us, Hashem! He's talking about rain; that's the theme of the day.

Even the mysterious custom that the *Neviim* instituted of striking the ground with the *aravos*, that's also for rain — it's a form of praying for rain! People have no idea what's taking place! They're thinking about everything else except for the most important thing. So much time we're walking around the *bimah* and saying words, only that we don't begin to know what we're talking about. That's why it happens that the same person who *davened* all morning, as soon as he finishes *davening* he walks out of the shul and he sees that it's raining and he says, "Uch, what a nasty day!"

Inviting the Nuisance

Imagine this: Suppose you called up your friend on the telephone, once and twice, again and again, and you said to him, "Please answer me. הוֹשַׁעְנָא! Please come to me! Please come to visit me. Please. Please. Please answer me. *Aneini*! I need you. Please come over. Come! Come! Come! הוֹשַׁעְנָא!"

And so, finally he gives in. You're begging incessantly, so finally he comes over to your house and rings the bell.

You stick your head out of the window and you see your friend is here. "Ugh! What a nuisance!" you think. "Just as I was getting comfortable, he has to bother me!" So you go to the door and you tell him, "Stop bothering me already!"

You asked him to come! You asked him ten times, a hundred times! You bothered him so much until

THE CHOPP HOLDINGS EDITION
IN HONOR OF THE CHOPP & NUSSEN FAMILIES

CHODESH TISHRE
לעילוי נשמות מרת פאגלא בת מורינו ר' ישראל ע"ה - Lowenthal
ומרת בראנדל בת ר' משה דוד ע"ה - Steif

EasyPrint Sponsor
An aliyos neshama for our dear parents
R' Yitzchak ben Chaim & Frimsche bas Shraga Faivish z"l
Mark & Phil Halpern Toronto, Canada
WEALTHinsurance.com

he finally acquiesced, and this is how you welcome him?

Same thing over here. Hakadosh Baruch Hu is being bothered by us so much for this great gift of rain and then when it finally comes, there are complaints. You're shouting and praying about rain, rain, rain, and then when the rain comes, you stick your head out of the window and give a *psak*, "Nasty day. What a nuisance." How could that be? You just got through asking for it!

Public School Songs

The answer is that we don't know what we're saying. It could be we're saying the words carefully; could be we know what the words mean, the *teitch*, but actually we don't know what we're saying because we don't appreciate the rain.

Now, it could be we're not to blame. We've been trained from childhood to do the wrong thing. In America the children are taught a song, "Rain, rain, go away…" I don't know about today, but I remember that's how they used to teach in the schools. It was a song; when we saw rain coming down, so that's what we sang. It was in the public school but I'm afraid that it's sung in the *yeshivas* and *Beis Yaakovs* too. Even in a good Jewish home a mother might look out the window at the rain and say, "*Kinderlach*; it looks nasty out there. It's going to be bad weather today." And so our minds become polluted; we acquire American minds.

Learning From the Muslims

That's why we have to learn from the Mohammedans. Mohammedans have a prejudice; they never criticize the weather. There's not much to learn from them but this, yes. We have to learn from them that you don't criticize the weather. There's not good weather and bad weather. Weather is good! As long as there's weather, it's good.

But as good as all weather is, Hoshana Rabbah and Shemini Atzeres remind us that more than anything, the best weather is the rainy weather we have right now. Rain is good! It's very good!

And if we're committing ourselves these days to pray for rain – and all winter long too – so we should at least feel some sort of responsibility to appreciate the rain! Tomorrow morning (*Hoshana Rabbah*, 1975) I'm sure all of you will spend a long time praying for rain – it takes hours in some places; and so the first step is to realize that rain is a great gift, a tremendous happiness.

So that's our job tonight. Tonight we're going to spend some time studying מַשִּׁיב הָרוּחַ וּמוֹרִיד הַגֶּשֶׁם. It's an important subject and therefore let's do it at least once in our lives. At least once in history Hakadosh Baruch Hu should see that we appreciate His gift of rain at least a little bit.

Be Bored!

Now, I understand that you think I'm exaggerating. "He's going to talk now about rain?" you're thinking, "It's boring." Well, sometimes in order to learn important things you have to be bored. You don't come here to be entertained; you come to acquire a mind. And sometimes you have to hear things you're not accustomed to, things that don't fit with your own ideas. And so it's worth it to be bored. Only don't fall asleep because then you won't hear anything.

And so we begin: if we would look at rain through the eyes of our Sages we would be very much excited about it. גָּדוֹל יוֹם הַגְּשָׁמִים –*How great is the day when it rains*, יוֹתֵר מִיּוֹם שֶׁנִּתְּנָה בּוֹ תּוֹרָה – *bigger than the day of Matan Torah* (Taanis 7a). It rained all day today. It means that it was Matan Torah today; no, it was *bigger* than Matan Torah! First the Gemara said, כְּיוֹם – it's *as* big as the day when the Torah was given. But then it was discussed by the Sages and Rava said it's a mistake, an understatement. It's מִיּוֹם! It's bigger! The day when it rains is bigger than the day we stood at Har Sinai.

Today was even greater than the day that Hashem will revive the dead! גָּדוֹל יוֹם הַגְּשָׁמִים מִיּוֹם שֶׁל תְּחִיַּת הַמֵּתִים – *The day of rain is greater than techiyas hameisim* (*ibid.*). How is that?! *Techiyas hameisim*?! All the dead will be reconstituted! It will be the most

exciting day. No, when it rains that's even more exciting.

Daily Miracles

When you look out the window and you see the water coming down, by logic you have to be *meshuga* with excitement; it deserves more excitement than Matan Torah. Only that naturally, you can't expect that of us. How much can a man be excited already? After all, we're human beings and our nerves would wear out. We don't have the nerves to get excited all the time. And yet as much as possible we have to excite our minds, our thoughts, our *daas*, and try to raise ourselves up to the truth of what a rainy day means.

The fact that it happens frequently doesn't mitigate its greatness. Suppose it would have rained only once in history. Imagine such a thing! One time in history drops are falling from the sky giving us drinking water and bathing water and fruits and vegetables and grains and flowers. Then we would really be excited. It never rained before! Why should it rain? Do you find packages of biscuits coming down from the sky? When it rains, it is no less than if biscuits were falling down to feed us. That's what it is.

You know when the *mann* fell from Heaven it was a *neis* of the first magnitude. Food falling from heaven! But imagine a child was born in the Midbar and from the very beginning that's what he saw. Let's say you were born a few years after the *mann* started; so you're in the Midbar now, you're thirty years old and you have had *mann* every day in your life. You're not excited about it. You think it's nothing. If it would rain water! *Ooh wah*, that would be something!

So you see that the biggest miracle is no longer a miracle to you. If it happens every day for years and years, forty years, so you think that's how it has to be. Our habit overcomes our reason. But if we would gain some sense, some *daas*, we would look at the street from the doorway and leap with excitement. "Look what's taking place outside!" That's how a *frum* Jew is supposed to react to a rainy day. And therefore we should study it. It's a great pity that we should live all our lives and not understand what it means *gadol yom hageshamim*.

Ice Cream in Your Ears

But before we begin, we have to remind ourselves of the purpose. Some people get excited about 'nature' but they're missing the entire purpose. You see sometimes a person will say, "Ahh! Isn't the wildflower a beautiful thing. Ah yah yay!" Or some will go and make an Audubon society and become enraptured over birds, the various beaks and wings and colors. But if you're not becoming excited over Hashem – if your excitement stops with the birds or the rain or the wildflower, then it's nothing; it's a big zero.

And therefore whatever we say tonight we can never forget the underlying premise and that is *daas*; we are excited about rain because the purpose of rain is to give us *daas Hashem*. When we look at the rainfall we're expected to become more and more aware of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. We'll talk soon about how to accomplish that, but the first thing is to know that *this* is the ultimate purpose of rain: *daas Hashem*.

It doesn't mean you have to go out into the rain and get wet. I always say, rain is like ice cream; ice cream is also good, but ice cream in your ears is not comfortable.

And so whether you're under the umbrella or you're standing inside your house by the window looking out at the rain, make sure to enjoy the rain and give a compliment to Hashem. That's the purpose of the raindrops. A person who has *seichel* doesn't say, "It's a pity that it's raining." He's so happy that it's raining. Every drop on the window pane is a *simcha*. He looks at the diamonds on the window pane. "Isn't it beautiful?" he says.

The Silly Sad Poet

I once told you about a Hebrew poet in Europe, who wanted to make a poem. It was raining outside and as the rain was hitting the window, he was

imagining that it was like tears of sadness falling on the window pane. So this '*chochom*' wrote a poem like this: מַאי קָא מַשְׁמַע לָן הַגֶּשֶׁם – *What does the rain teach us?* מָה בָּא הוּא לְסַפֵּר – *What is it coming to say?* טִיפּ טִיפּ עַל חַלּוֹנוֹתֵינוּ – *Drip, drip on our window panes,* כְּאִישׁ בִּבְכִי מְמָרֵר – *like a man weeping bitterly.*" That's what this *shoteh* saw in the rain. He was a good poet but he was a *shoteh*. H saw raindrops pattering on the window pane, so he said, "It's rain of tears. It's a weeping of sadness."

Now if he would have come here, he would have learned to be a happy man instead of a depressed fool. He would have learned that rain teaches us that Hashem is a *tov u'meitiv*! He would have learned *daas Hashem* from the rain. Every drop is a pearl, a diamond.

Say that to your little children, by the way. Train them when they're little children to look that way. "Chana! Come to the window. You see those diamonds on the window?"

"What diamonds?" little Chanale says. "Where? I don't see any diamonds. Those are just water drops."

"The drops are diamonds! They're so precious!"

Part II. Understanding Rain

Don't Skip the Words

Now, isn't it a shame that we see drops of *daas* all winter long and yet we're not learning the lessons they're trying to teach us? And that's why when the great opportunity comes along every year at the end of Sukkos, when we start saying again the words "מַשִּׁיב הָרוּחַ וּמוֹרִיד הַגֶּשֶׁם" in our Shemone Esrei, we should make sure to think about what we're saying.

Now, the *frum* Jew, he becomes a bit apprehensive because he's afraid he might skip it; he might skip those four words and then he's going to have to repeat the Shemone Esrei. There are even some Jews who, for the first thirty days, put a pencil in their *siddur*, or a key or something else to mark the place, as a reminder they shouldn't skip. They're worried about it, and rightly so.

But it's a pity to say the words and skip the meaning; even if it's not raining outside — there will be a lot of beautiful sunny days in the winter — when we say those words it's an opportunity to acquire some of that *daas* we were speaking about before. It means you have to think about these words, "You cause the wind to blow and You cause the rain to come down."

The Grand Architect

In English we say, "It's raining." What does that mean "It's raining"? It doesn't rain by itself! Even in Yiddish, you hear a good Jew say, "*Es regent*." *Es regent gornisht*! The wind too. Here a *frum* man is walking down the street and a wind blows in his face and he says "A *vint blozt*." A wind blows?! Winds don't blow on their own.

מַשִּׁיב הָרוּחַ וּמוֹרִיד הַגֶּשֶׁם means *He* blows the wind and *He* brings down the rain. Hashem is the One doing it. In *lashon hakodesh* it doesn't rain and it's not windy. That's in *goyish*. In the Torah language, *He* blows the wind and *He* makes it rain.

Now, it doesn't only mean He sends rain down. It's much more complicated than that. Rain is a phenomenon that requires the participation of many forces of 'nature.' Before those precious drops finally come down, there is a great deal of wire-pulling on the part of the great Designer and Architect Who stands behind the scenes.

The Giant Conveyor Belt

First of all, before the rain can fall down, it has to come up. It had to get up there some way. How did that happen?

So we understand that the sun was busy pumping by means of evaporation. The sun is pouring millions of tons of energy every day — I should say every minute — onto the surface of the earth and to a very big extent that energy is used up in the work of evaporating water from the surface of the oceans. Tremendous masses of water, millions of tons of water daily, rise up from the surface of the ocean in the form of vapor and become clouds.

Now, that's nothing yet because what good are the clouds when they're suspended over the ocean? Most clouds form over the ocean from where they originated but what good is it if it will rain down in the ocean again? Nobody is going to plant in the ocean. It's the continents that need the rain.

And so before *morid ha'geshem*, first Hashem is *mashiv ruchos.*The winds are called in by the Borei Olam. עוֹשֶׂה מַלְאָכָיו רוּחוֹת – *Hashem makes the winds into His messengers* (Tehillim 104:4), and the wind begins to blow these masses of water vapor and the clouds are blown inland over the continents.

It's a remarkable miracle! There are special breezes, special winds, that are always blowing inland from the ocean. And like a huge conveyor belt they take these tremendous masses of vapor that hover over the ocean and they blow them inland over the continents. And instead of uselessly falling into the oceans, the rain falls instead onto fields where it turns into apples and pears and pineapples and bananas and oranges and all good things.

Mystery of Gravity

Because what does Hakadosh Baruch Hu do after מַשִּׁיב הָרוּחַ, after the clouds are blown over Nebraska and South Dakota? Then He's מוֹרִיד הַגֶּשֶׁם. The water becomes heavier again; it condenses and it begins coming down.

But why should it come down? Why can't the water fall towards the moon or towards the sun? Why does it fall towards the earth? So this every child knows; it's the force of gravity. It's a certain force that everybody speaks about, but nobody understands – even the greatest savants don't know what that is. They can tell you mathematically how the force of gravity is expected to work according to the mass and according to the distance and so on, but what the force of gravity is and why it works that way, nobody knows.

It's a mystery; a mysterious miracle. Hakadosh Baruch Hu made the water become heavy and by the force of gravity it comes down. And so when you see the rain coming down that's the miracle of gravity pulling the water down to the earth for our benefit.

Thirsty Sailors

But actually we're just beginning the subject because how can that salty ocean water be a benefit to us? You know when the water was in the oceans, it wasn't clean. Sailors have died from thirst while surrounded by seawater. Sea water is not potable. You can't drink ocean water.

But when it rains, all of this seawater comes down pure in the form of clean rain. How did that happen? When it evaporates, doesn't a salty taste go along with it?

The answer is, it went through a distillery. When the sun evaporates the ocean water it distills it and the water vapor doesn't take along any impurities; all the impurities were left down here and only pure water vapor goes up into the clouds.

And that pure water vapor, as clean as it was *b'sheishes yemei bereishis*, or almost, comes down again for a new cycle of pure water, to give life to the earth.

Environmental Recycling

It's important to consider that when you look at the rain. This rain coming down now is the same rain that came down at the beginning of *maaseh bereishis*. When the world began, this rain, the same rain came down.

It's been coming down again and again, only it's been recycled. It's the same clean water that our forefathers drank, that's the plain truth – you're drinking second-hand rain. A lot of the water was already in the bodies of animals and humans and was passed out of their bodies again. All the runoff water, dirty water, makes its way down the mountains and rivers and streams and it goes back into the sea. Water that was in the carcasses of animals that died, water that was in decaying plants, eventually it all made its way to the ocean. Billions of gallons of sewage are emptied into the oceans every day.

Don't worry about it though; it tastes just as good. Mr. Shelby reminded me of that. As he was driving me here tonight he remarked, "Just as good as it was in Avraham Avinu's time." He's right – it's the same taste. But more than that, it's the same water! We're drinking second-hand rain. That's the truth. Only it's purified. It's one of the great *nissim* of Olam Hazeh. The world is a wonderful machine of cycling, recycling.

A Puzzling Gemara

And so when we come to the prayers for rain on Hoshana Rabbah and Shemini Atzeres and all winter long when we say מַשִּׁיב הָרוּחַ וּמוֹרִיד הַגֶּשֶׁם and וְתֵן טַל וּמָטָר —whenever it rains too — let's keep in mind we are marveling at the first and the greatest recycling process: the rain cycle that keeps the world sustained. It's foolproof. It's going to continue until Hakadosh Baruch Hu says stop. And that's one of the great features of מוֹרִיד הַגֶּשֶׁם.

I want to talk now about another feature of *geshem*, something that's included in the gift of rain but a little more hidden from the eyes.

In Mesichta Kesubos (10b), the Gemara enumerates the benefits of rain and one of the benefits is stated as follows: מָטָר מְזַבֵּל – *Rain fertilizes.*

Now when I was a boy and I learned Mesichta Kesuvos, I didn't understand that. A lot of things even today I don't understand but I remember at that time being puzzled. If you want to fertilize your garden, will you pour water on it? You have to take manure or potash; the soil needs chemicals to help the water grow the food. Water on its own is not enough. I couldn't see how *matar mizabeil*, how water fertilizes.

Chemistry and Relationships

Many years later I discovered how true it is. Listen to this. It's another thing to think about when you're praying for rain or when you're stuck in a downpour.

Above every acre of ground, there is a tremendous amount of air. And air, as you know, is about 70% nitrogen and a bit less than 25% oxygen and then some other smaller ingredients. That's what air is.

Now this nitrogen and oxygen in the air are the ideal fertilizer. If we could get the nitrogen and oxygen in the air down in the ground, we would solve all problems of fertilizer. The problem is that the oxygen by itself is not a fertilizer and the nitrogen is also not a fertilizer. In order to be a fertilizer, they have to combine. But they won't. If you know basic chemistry then you know that nitrogen is an inert gas; it hates to combine. Oxygen is a very congenial element, very friendly, and it's willing to combine with anything. But nitrogen is not interested – it's a loner.

The Lightning Shidduch

And because no *shidduch* is made that's why you don't have any fertilizer. Instead you have to bring in your own fertilizer; you have to buy bags of ill-smelling stuff and pour it out in your garden. Or in the olden days, you had a goat. You tied the goat to a fence in the garden and he got busy fertilizing your vegetable patch. And all the time, you're looking up at this column of unused fertilizer and you're thinking, "If only they would combine! Isn't it a pity?"

Hakadosh Baruch Hu, however, has pity on us and He sends lightning. When the lightning streaks through the air, it creates a path that is so hot that even the lazy nitrogen can't resist. The nitrogen refuses to enter this *shidduch* with the oxygen but lightning is such an effective *shadchan* that it forces the nitrogen and the oxygen to unite and it becomes nitrates. Nitrates! That's fertilizer! Now you know why Hashem created lightning. Every time there is lightning, He's creating great amounts of fertilizer for you.

The problem is that it's in the form of a gas. Bags of fertilizers don't fall down after lightning. It's a gas. It's waiting in the air doing nothing. How does it come down?

The answer is *morid hageshem*! As the rain comes down it dissolves the gas and brings them down to the earth. Every raindrop becomes fertilizer

too. And now we understand what our Sages said. מָטָר מְזַבֵּל – *Rain is actually a fertilizer.* Not the water. If you take water out of your well, it won't fertilize your field; but rain as it comes down and it dissolves the nitrates and it brings them down, it fertilizes the field. And because of this wonder plan, that's why the earth is constantly being fattened and replenished.

A Deluge of Kindliness

And that's why we say מַשִּׁיב הָרוּחַ וּמוֹרִיד הַגֶּשֶׁם and right away we say מְכַלְכֵּל חַיִּים בְּחֶסֶד – *He supplies life with everything in kindliness.* Because that's what we think about whenever we think of the rain cycle; that Hashem is feeding us with *nissei nissim.*

And so when we say מַשִּׁיב הָרוּחַ וּמוֹרִיד הַגֶּשֶׁם wouldn't it be worthwhile, at least once in our lives, to stop a little bit in our gallop towards עוֹשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם בִּמְרוֹמָיו and contemplate what we'resaying: "מַשִּׁיב הָרוּחַ! *Ay yah yay!* וּמוֹרִיד הַגֶּשֶׁם! *Ay yah yay!*" *B'shaas hadchak* you can even say it twice if you want. Rebbes have done that; they've said it twice or three times. It's a good idea to stop and think what you're saying; for once in your life, wake up and acquire some *deiah.* Thank Hakadosh Baruch Hu for this great blessing of the wind and the rain.

Part III. Enjoying Rain

Your Watery Friend

Now, included in the attitudes that we have to acquire when it comes to appreciating the mystery of rain is one very important attitude and that is that *we too are rain* – people are made up of raindrops.

It could be that when you hear these words for the first time it seems foolish and therefore in order to understand the greatness of rain, we must go back to the study of chemistry. Chemistry, you have to know, is a factual subject. It deals with mathematics, with things you can measure. That's what chemistry is. Today, unfortunately, even within chemistry they introduced theories. Wherever they can put some poison, they put it in, even chemistry. But in reality, it doesn't belong there. Chemistry is not a theoretical science. It is a mathematical science – it's exact.

Now, chemistry tells us that the human body is composed of almost three-quarters water. Look at your neighbor; if you look at yourself you won't believe it, but take a look at your neighbor. He's a bag of water; he's around 70% water. And no matter what you'll say, you can't get away from that fact; it's a mathematical truism. I am water and you are water. And that water came from someplace. It came down from the clouds on a rainy day.

It's Raining Lubavitchers

I know it sounds ridiculous. It takes a long time to get these things into our numb skulls because we're not accustomed to thinking. But no matter if you'll smile or grin or laugh or chuckle, it won't help. You cannot wave off the fact that you came down from the clouds in the form of rain. You'll say, "It wasn't I. It was only rain." But you are rain! If 70% of you isn't you, then what are you? You're only the other 30%? The truth is that even that 30% is a result of rain. It's all the result of rain, but 70% is nothing but pure H2O, nothing but water. And it had to come from *someplace*; and we know it comes from only one place.

Think that over. It means that one day in the past you drifted down from the clouds and you settled on Ocean Parkway. Probably you settled on a field in North Dakota and people were walking by, cowboys with their big boots, and they were trampling on you. But you turned into wheat eventually and the wheat was milled and shipped here and it became bread and matzos. And your parents ate them and that's where you come from. Chemically it's true. If someone would undertake to make a chemical analysis of you, you couldn't refute that. Because you're almost 70% snow and water and ice.

I was speaking to my friend, Mr. Shelby, just now coming in the car. I hadn't intended to talk about this subject but as we were driving it was raining

and as we were admiring the raindrops I decided it's a timely subject. And as we drove past the Mirrer Yeshiva I was thinking, "The average age of Mirrer Yeshiva in the *beis hamedrash*, is let's say about 22, 23. So it means that about twenty years ago they all came down in the rains. It was raining in Ocean Parkway, raining in Brownsville, wherever they lived, and that's actually when the whole yeshiva came down. And it's not an exaggeration; it's chemically true. The whole Shaarei Tziyon came down in the rain. The whole Lakewood, the whole Lubavitch, the whole Satmar, they all came down from the clouds.

Puddles and Bochurim

And so if you're driving home tonight, as your car plows through the puddles on Ocean Parkway and big splashes of water are spurting up, have *derech eretz*. That's the future of our people. And it's not a fantasy. There is nothing as true as this statement.

But just to make it a little more enjoyable let's go away from the *bochurim*. We love the Mirrer *bochurim* and the Lakewood *bochurim* and Shaarei Tziyon *bochurim*, *but even more*, we can appreciate things that are a little closer to us. Like what? I'm talking about apples and pears and bananas and peaches. We like them too. And they're also coming down with the rain. Because it's nothing but rain that creates them.

What a miracle a tree is! What we call an apple tree or a pear tree, it's more correct to call it a water tree. We don't because we look at the final product but really they're water trees. I explained this recently. They once planted a tree, an apple tree, in a big tub full of earth and left it outside. They weighed the tree and they weighed the earth. And every year, the tree produced apples, year after year. And they weighed the apples every year and added it up. Bushels and bushels of apples. After ten years they had gathered more than a thousand pounds of apples.

Rainy Apples

At the end of these ten years, they again weighed the tree and the earth and they discovered that the earth had diminished only a couple of ounces. The earth was only a couple of ounces in weight lighter than it had been years ago.

So the question is: Where did the apples come from? For ten years, many pounds of apples had come off this tree and the tree had drawn its nourishment from the earth. But the earth is still there! And the answer is that the apples actually take out very little of the earth. It's important, this little bit it takes, but by weight it's only a tiny fraction of the fruit. The fruit is almost entirely water. It's the rain that becomes apples.

How does rain become apples? By means of miracles. Rain is hydrogen and oxygen. And in the air, there is carbon dioxide. The tree, every plant, has the ability to take these simple materials, carbon dioxide and water, and break them down and then reassemble them. And it's a marvel how many different combinations can be made from these elements. You know there are many hundreds of carbohydrates and each one looks different and tastes different and has different properties.

And all of these materials, the tree is able to make from nothing but water and air. Sunlight helps out and a tiny trace of materials from the soil but if you'll analyze by weight, most of the fruits are nothing but water. And therefore when it rains, not only is the next generation coming down, but all the fruits and wheat and rice – all food is coming down.

Gifts Are Descending

So imagine we're looking through the window now. The rain has no color but in our minds' eye it's especially colorful. We know red cherries are coming down right now, red cherries. Apples too. Delish apples and Cortland apples and McIntosh apples, Winesap. Every kind of luscious fruit. Pears, green pears, Seckel pears, pears with a red blush on their cheeks. Golden oranges and apricots. Blueberries and bananas. They're all coming down. Watermelons

are coming down. What are watermelons? At least there you hear the word water so it gives it away. But really everything is water. Fruit is actually physically coming down. It's not a *mashal*. And of course cabbages and lettuce; they're all water. And potatoes. Every imaginable fruit is coming down right now.

Besides the fact that water is also coming down. Water to drink, water that becomes soda, water that gets into grapes and becomes wine, and this water turns into the tears that wash our eyes. It turns into our blood. It turns into the liquids that lubricate our joints. It turns into every part of our body. This water that comes down now will turn into us.

Now, if you'll tell me that you listened well tonight but you're still not so sure you'll be able to overcome the habit of not thinking, I'll say that you're right. It's not so simple to rid ourselves of the habit of not seeing the greatness of rain. Coming here and talking about these things is only the beginning.

Get to Work on This

Don't disdain it, however—it's an excellent beginning. It's tremendous! There's one little place in Brooklyn where people are sitting like philosophers and they are studying the *chasdei Hashem* of rain in its little details. It could be that we're the only ones tonight speaking about this great subject. This place might be the only one in all of Brooklyn, maybe in all of America, maybe in the whole world; one little place where people are preparing to say מַשִּׁיב הָרוּחַ וּמוֹרִיד הַגֶּשֶׁם.

And therefore don't be sorry you came tonight. It's a very good thing you came despite the rain outside because we learned a lot about this important subject. But still it's only the beginning of the rest of our lives. We have to think about these ideas while we're walking on the street. We think about them when we're sitting down to eat. When it rains, you surely should make sure to think these thoughts.

You have to keep on working until it becomes part of your thought routine because complaining comes easy. By ease, all you do is follow the habits of the multitude. If you 'lean back and relax' like it says in the taxi, you'll fall asleep and you won't see the scenery; you'll miss all the great lessons of life. You have to work hard to become great. It means that you have to get busy talking about the rain. Talk to others about it. Let them know what you heard tonight.

Talk To Yourself

However, I must tell you that it won't be so easy to tell others. When you got married you thought you married an idealist, so you might start telling your wife about the rain. So for the first couple of days she'll have to be polite and listen to you but after a while she says, "Stop, please. Stop! I heard this stuff already. You already told me last week about how we are all 70% water!"

So maybe you'll try it on your friends. But they're not interested either. They'll take you for a fool. They're going to think you're eccentric and after a while they'll stop listening to you. They'll smile at you, blank smiles, but that's the best you'll get.

And so, you'll have to talk to yourself. There's nobody else to talk to, after all, and so we might see you walking down Ocean Parkway, muttering to yourself about the rain. Don't be disheartened! You've got to realize you're becoming a great and successful person, only don't expect company in your success. As you go higher on the mountain, there are fewer and fewer people, less and less company. When you get to the top, there's no company at all.

The Most Sane Person

It's hard to be an idealist; it means you have to be different, you have to be a little bit of a *meshugener* in the eyes of others. But מוּטָב שֶׁיִּהְיֶה שׁוֹטֶה כָּל יָמָיו בְּעֵינֵי הַבְּרִיּוֹת – *it's better to be a lunatic all your life in the eyes of mankind*, וְאַל יִהְיֶה רָשָׁע שָׁעָה אַחַת לִפְנֵי הַמָּקוֹם – *in order that Hakadosh Baruch Hu should approve of you.* And you can be sure that the more you study

this subject, the more sane you'll become. There's nothing like the sanity of *daas Hashem* and there's nothing like rain to encourage that acquisition.

The truth is it's one of my favorite topics and I wish we could speak longer; only that we're running out of time for tonight. We have to get some sleep tonight and that way tomorrow morning we'll be able to get up early for *davening*. And this time we'll have a successful Hoshana Rabbah because we know what we're *davening* for. We'll have a successful Shemini Atzeres too and a successful winter and a successful rest of our lives because we're acquiring *daas. Daas Hashem*! That's called living successfully! Our time is up, so I wish you all a pleasant yom tov. וְשָׂמַחְתָּ בְּחַגֶּךָ וְהָיִיתָ אַךְ שָׂמֵחַ.

Have a Wonderful Yom Tov

Feeling inspired & uplifted?
Help spread that feeling to Jews everywhere!

Join this movement NOW!

torasavigdor.org/give ***732-844-3670***

Let's Get Practical

Getting Excited Over Rain

As we begin praying for rain we must keep in mind not to disdain it when it actually comes. This week I will *bli neder* stop for 5 seconds before I pray for rain, and think about what I read in this booklet. Additionally, next time it rains, I will speak to someone, perhaps even myself, about the great kindliness Hashem is showering us with.

This week's booklet is based on tapes:
R-32 – Rain and Snow | **215 –** In David's Footsteps | **845 –** Praise the Righteous | **E-152 –** The Wine Of Hashem's Kindness
E-177 – And Behold It Is Very Good

Listen to the original lectures of Rav Miller zatzal on the Mipihu Phone Line
USA: 718-400-7220 | Israel: 778509304 | UK: 3303505768
Mipihu is a project of Yeshiva Gedolah Beis Yisroel – Rav Miller's Yeshivah

Q&A WITH RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"L
שאלו אבותיך ויגידו זקניך ויאמרו לך

HOSTED BY BULK SOLUTIONS
FOR ALL YOUR TELECOM NEEDS
www.bulkvs.com
1.855.906.0901

QUESTION

How would the Rav say we should best use the dancing and singing on Simchas Torah in order to serve Hashem?

ANSWER

On Simchas Torah we get together and we dance and we sing. But you have to know that for most people, this singing is a wasted opportunity. Let's say they're singing כי מציון תצא תורה ודבר השם מירושלים. (The Rav *zatzal* sang the *niggun* here.) And they're dancing, singing; it's a pity, it's a waste of time. No; it's not a waste of time – it doesn't have to be a waste. The fact that you're repeating the words should be utilized by you. Each time you say it you're thinking "From Tziyon someday will come forth the Torah." And each time, you say it with conviction, with the intention that it should be deeper and deeper impressed into your *neshama* that כי מציון תצא תורה – a time will come when the Torah will come out of *tziyon*. You'll see what's going to happen one day. It will be tremendous. A whole torrent of Torah will flow out of *tziyon*, and the *dvar Hashem* will come forth from Yerushalayim.

Again and again. Again and again you say the words. But this time you'll say the words with a different intent. Not because you want to hear the *niggun* again; not because you want to maintain the tune. No, you want to maintain the words! You want to put those words into your mind; you want it to go in so deep that you become a new personality. So you say the words over and over again. And so too all those songs which are *shirei kodesh* – you have to get those words into your head. That's why it's not good to have a *niggun* without words. No, it should be with words. And you say the words over and over again. And each time, as you walk and stamp and dance, you're stamping the words into your heart. With each stamp, you bang it into your heart deeper and deeper. That's the way to celebrate Simchas Torah, so that when Simchas Torah is over, you're not just tired and worn out, but after Simchas Torah you're not the same person anymore! You're a *ben aliyah*. You have practiced that great principle of making your mind follow your words. September 1990