

תורת אביגדור הגאון ר' אביגדור מיללער זצ"ל

Rav Avigdor Miller on the Parsha

Adapted from his Tapes, Seforim and Writings of Talmidim

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פרשת נשא

With Rav Avigdor Miller ztz"l

Blessing His Beloved People

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Part I. Bless and Be Blessed

EVERYONE IS BLESSED

This past *Shavuot*, like on every *yomtiv*, the whole *Am Yisroel* was *zocheh* to stand before the *kohanim* in shul and receive the *birchas kohanim*. Even those who couldn't make it to shul - the women who were at home taking care of the children, and the patients stuck in the hospitals, they also received the blessings. It's a *gemara* (Sotah 38b) - אֲהִיָּהֶם שְׁבִשְׂרוֹת - if you're an *oness* and can't be in shul, so the *birchos kohanim* come to you as well.

And so, the whole nation together, without exception, receives the *brachos* from the *kohanim* who raise their hands *b'ahava*, with love, and bless all the people.

Except for one group. And that's the *kohanim* themselves. It seems like they're left out from this great privilege of receiving the *brachos*.

WHO BLESSES THE KOHANIM?

It's a tremendous opportunity for the *Am Yisroel* to stand before the *kohanim* and receive the blessings of Hakodosh Boruch Hu: וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ הַשֵּׁם וְיִבְרַכְךָ הַשֵּׁם, Hashem's blessings and Hashem's protection, וְיָאֵר הַשֵּׁם פְּנֵי אֱלֹהֶיךָ, that the face of Hashem should shine

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upon us, וַיְהִינָךְ, that He should be gracious to us, וַיִּשֶׁם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם, and that He should bring all types of peace into our lives. There are a lot of good things in those *pesukim* - and the *kohanim* are missing out on them all.

But a *kohen* also wants to be blessed. Just because he is the one privileged to be the conduit through which the *brachos* flow to the *Am Yisroel*, does that mean that he has to lose out on receiving the *brachos*? Where is the *yashrus*, the fairness, in that?

It's not *my* question by the way; it's a question the *gemara* in Chullin (49a) asks: "Hashem affirms the *bracha*, וַאֲנִי אֲבָרְכֶם - that means, "I'm going to listen to the words of the *kohanim* and bless the *Am Yisroel* with all the good things the *kohanim* proclaimed. But מִי מְבָרַךְ אֶת הַכֹּהֲנִים, who is going to bless the *kohanim*?"

THE AGE-OLD PROMISE

Now, we should pay attention well to the answer of the *gemara* because it opens for us a new horizon in *avodas Hashem*. Chazal tell us that the *kohanim* don't need any special *bracha* because they get the *brachos* from somewhere else altogether.

Way back, in the beginning of *Parshas Lech L'cha*, Hakodosh Boruch Hu declared to our father Avraham: וַאֲבָרְכֶה מְבָרְכֶיךָ - "I will bless those who bless you" (Bereishis 12:3). Anybody who blesses you, I'm going to bless him, that's a *passuk*. And therefore, says Rav Nachman bar Yitzchok, the blessings upon the *kohanim* comes from that age-old promise that was made to Avraham. "If you, the *kohanim*, are blessing the *Am Yisroel*, then I'm going to bless you" says Hashem. "I'm under contract to bless all those who bless the *Am Yisroel*."

Now, there's something new that we're learning from this *gemara*; because we're being told now that when Hashem said to our father Avraham "I will bless those who bless you," it was a covenant that He was making with our nation forever. It was a contract that He made *not only* with Avraham personally, but with the *zera Avraham*, all of Avraham's descendants, *forever*.

THE POLITE GOY

The *gemara* (Chullin 49a) tells us that Rabbi Yishmael was once walking on the road with his disciples, and a gentile who was passing by said, "*Shalom*." He greeted him, "Peace to you."

He saw a lot of Jews coming - Rabbi Yishmael had a company of *talmidim* with him, and this gentile was traveling alone on the road, so probably he thought it would be more diplomatic to bless Rabbi Yishmael. Whatever it was, this *goy* greeted Rabbi Yishmael politely.

So Rabbi Yishmael said to him: "I don't have to answer you. Your answer is already said; it's done." What did Rabbi Yishmael mean? And it's explained there: "The answer, the blessing for you, was already said by Hakodosh Boruch Hu to Avraham Avinu." וְאַבְרָהָם מְבָרְכֵיךָ - "I'm going to bless all those who bless you." So Rabbi Yishmael was saying, "As soon as you blessed me, you were already blessed by Hakodosh Boruch Hu."

A GENTILE'S LUCKY DAY!

What that means is that when a Jew is honored by a gentile, if a gentile says 'Good morning', or 'Thank you' to a Jew; if he opens the door for a Jew and says, "Have a good day," it's a lucky day for that gentile. Anybody who honors a Jew - even superficially - is going to receive a reward. Because we understand that the *bracha* the *goy* gave to Rabbi Yishmael probably wasn't the most genuine of blessings. He didn't put his hands on Rabbi Yishmael's head and shed tears praying to Hashem that Rabbi Yishmael should be blessed. No; it was more or less a formality. The gentile said *Shalom* to him; that's all. That's what the gentile says to everyone on the road. He's being polite and wishing him well.

Nevertheless, we are being taught here that any blessing that is said to a Jew - even to one individual *Yisroel* - will be paid back in full. And it's all because of the promise that Hakodosh Boruch Hu made to Avraham so many years ago, וְאַבְרָהָם מְבָרְכֵיךָ - "I will bless all those who bless you, no matter what." And it's a gilt-edged certificate; it's as sure as could be.

VERDICT: A SMASHUP OR A BAR FIGHT

And so we can read these words now as an eternal promise to the *Am Yisroel*: וְאַבְרָהָם מְבָרְכֵיךָ - "Anybody who blesses *anyone* from the *Am Yisroel* is going to be blessed by Me."

And you shouldn't forget about the end of that *possuk* as well: וְיִמְקַלְלֶיךָ אָאָר - "Anyone who curses you, or makes light of you, I'm going to curse." The word *יִמְקַלְלֶיךָ* comes from the word *קל*, to

make light of - even to make light of a Jew is already very dangerous. So if a non-Jew says an impolite word to you - he'll call you some kind of a Jew, so you should know that he is out of luck because something is going to happen to him. It may not happen soon enough to please you, but it's an unfailing promise: he's going to get it in the neck.

Maybe on the next block his car will smash against the pole. Or maybe when he gets home his wife will give him a bitter evening and he'll have to run out of the house to the bar and get drunk. And then he'll get beaten up in the bar and come home in the morning with two black eyes. Whatever it is, something is going to happen to him. There's no question that anybody who speaks ill of a Jew, if he insults or makes light of a Jew, he's going to get it. It's a promise that was made to Avraham Avinu.

I was once walking across the street and an Italian bum was sitting in his car waiting for the red light to change. So in order to frighten me he pressed on the gas so that his car would quickly jerk forward toward me. To frighten me! I looked at him and he was acting as if he didn't see me - making believe. And his wife is sitting next to him and she is laughing. They're both laughing because they scared an old Jew. So I said quietly to myself, "*Ribono Shel Olam*. I don't want You to do *too* much harm to him. His leg should come off right above the knee - that's all. More than that I don't want." And I want to tell you something: He'd be lucky if that happens; because if he waits for *gehenim* it will be a pity on him. It would be a very big *chesed* for him if he loses his leg right now. And make no mistake about it; you can rely on Hashem's promise - He's on the job and He'll take care of it.

GIVING AND GETTING BLESSINGS

But we're going to let go of this aspect now and return to the first part of the *possuk*, the subject of those who speak well of Jews. And we have to pay attention to this very great opportunity because it opens for us a new vista, a *derech chayim*. It's a lifetime system of living - the system of wishing well upon your fellow Jews. And so let's take some time to speak about some very much neglected opportunities which can be utilized by us as part of this *derech*.

We'll begin with one example that I learned from my *rebbeim* more than fifty years ago. In Slobodka they used to say that when you get an *aliyah*, and you say to the *gabbai* - "*Yasher koi'ach*" afterwards, it shouldn't be a formality. You should say it with *peirush hamilos*, with the meaning of the words. "*Yi'yasher koi'chacho*" means "May your strength increase." You're davening for him!

MUSCLES AND CALCIUM FOR THE GABBAI

Oh, that's a big difference now. You're getting an *aliyah* and you're saying to the *gabbai* - you're saying it in *lashon kodesh*, but you're saying, "May your strength increase." You should have bigger muscles! You should have enough calcium in your bones! Your eyesight should be sharper! Everything about you should become more powerful!

That's what you're saying when you say *yi'yasheir ko'chacho*. If you're thinking it, then those words now have an entirely different power. And we're learning now that it's not going to remain unanswered - *in your own life!* You're going to get a blessing for that too. In the measure by which you bless others, that's how much you will be blessed.

Now, even if you didn't put anything into your blessing, it's still a blessing. Even if you said "*Shkuyach*," without giving it too much thought, it's still something. Like this gentile who passed Rabbi Yishmael on the road. He wasn't thinking too much about what he was saying. He just said it - a formality. But even that is included in "I will bless those who bless you."

And so, even if you say it superficially, you have already done a wise thing; you have made a very good investment. Because Hakodosh Boruch Hu is listening and it's going to come back to you. It'll come back surely in the smallest manner - you're going to be greeted by others. Don't disparage that! Didn't it ever happen to you that you pass people on the street and you are offended because they don't seem particularly interested in looking at you, even though you are acquaintances? And you're thinking, "What's wrong with this grouchy fellow?!" Well, maybe it's because you didn't greet them! That could be! Because that's the very lowest level of compensation - if you bless others, then others will bless you. And even that is valuable for a person. To be

always greeted happily by others is a boon for living happily and healthily.

HASHEM ALWAYS DELIVERS

But you should know that there are much greater benefits to come. Anybody who will take the trouble to say words of blessing to a Jew must know that Hakodosh Boruch Hu is now mortgaged to him; and He's going to deliver. The man who makes the effort to bless the *Am Yisroel* should know that Hakodosh Boruch Hu is under contract to deliver the goods.

It doesn't mean that the man will be a *ben Olam Haba*, or that he'll know Shas. It doesn't mean that he'll become a millionaire. But there are a lot of blessings beneath that, that we'd like to get as well. And he is promised *min hashomayim*; because from the outset of the career of our nation, when Avraham set out from *Charan* to begin building the *Am Yisroel*, he set out with this contract in his hand: וְאַבְרָהָהּ מְבָרְכֶיךָ - "I will bless those who bless you."

DON'T SAY HELLO!

Tonight as you walk out and you meet somebody you know, so you'll say to him "*Shalom aleichem*." Not "hello" - you say "*shalom aleichem*."

There was a Rosh Yeshiva in America, Harav Gustman, he should be well [*zatzal*], who once heard somebody say "Hello." So Rav Gustman said, "*Vus epess 'hello'?! 'Hello' doesn't mean anything*," he said. "Say *shalom aleichem*, a real greeting."

So imagine that when you walk out and you see this friend, instead of saying meaningless words like "Hi" or "Hello", you'll say *Shalom Aleichem!* However, that's only a start - that's the first rung of the ladder. Because if you'll apply your mind to what you're saying and you'll actually mean the words, then you're making use of the opportunity of וְאַבְרָהָהּ מְבָרְכֶיךָ the way Hashem really intended.

NO SCOLDING FOR YOU TONIGHT

When you say "*Shalom aleichem*" you should put a little thought into it - add some commentary in your mind. Think: "When you come home you're wife shouldn't scold you for coming home so late. She might say, 'You're running out to Rabbi

Miller's lectures so late at night and I'm here all by myself at home with the children.' " And then there might be a squabble and everything might be ruined for the next few days.

So you're you blessing him, "*Shalom aleichem*," and you're thinking, "When you get home everything should be quiet." And *shalom aleichem* means much more than *shalom bayis*. There are many things you can have in mind when you say those words and you should practice them up. Every time you say *shalom aleichem*, think of something else. "The whole *briyah* should be at peace with you - you shouldn't have any enemies - even the microbes, the bacteria that would like to invade your body and cause different types of trouble - they should all make peace with you." *Shalom* means good health too.

Next time you say it, you're thinking something else: He shouldn't have bad neighbors - bad neighbors sometimes make life miserable. So many things are included in that greeting! And therefore, something as 'small' as greeting a friend is an opportunity for a tremendous amount of achievement.

WHAT 'GOOD NIGHT' REALLY MEANS

And it's not only when you say *shalom aleichem*. Even when you say good night to someone it's a glorious opportunity. Those two words should come along with a lot of commentary in your mind. Good night means you should come home safely. It means that your back shouldn't suffer from sleeping in the wrong position on a mattress that's too soft.

Good night means that your family at home should be found in the best order - there shouldn't be any fire tonight in your house. The toilet pipe shouldn't burst suddenly! Oh, if such a thing happens - a flood in the middle of the night! You have to run into the bathroom in your pajamas and wade into the pool of who knows what, with your bare feet. And now you're trying to get a plumber in the middle of the night.

And so, when you say "Good night," you put in your mind all these things - that he should sleep well and get up in the morning refreshed, and in the meantime nobody should come into his house uninvited. There are a lot things included in a good night.

SURPRISE YOUR WIFE IN THE MORNING

In the morning you say 'Good morning' to people; you're saying it anyhow, so why not think about what those two words mean. First of all, it's important to say it - many people neglect to say it. It wouldn't be a bad idea to surprise your wife and say good morning to her when you come back from shul in the morning. That would be a nice little gift! Even if you're not putting any intention into it - even if you're an actor and you're deceiving her.

And surely if you put some thought into it; if there's *peirush hamilos* and *kavanah*, that's a great achievement. Good mornings are very important. We want to have a lot of very good mornings in our lives. And we want our mornings to be *really* good mornings, not just empty and hollow good mornings. And therefore it should be a principle of ours to think about the meaning of the words that we say. We'll begin to train ourselves in forgoing all of the meaningless good morning greetings that fill our lives, and to actually bless our fellow Jews.

SOMEBODY IS LISTENING

"Your breakfast should be digested well," you're thinking as you greet an acquaintance. "Your wife shouldn't anger you." "You shouldn't miss the train." "You should find a lot of orders waiting for you on your desk when you come to your office." "You should have a smooth and happy day." Now *that's* a good morning greeting! And he doesn't know what you're thinking - that's not important right now. Because there is Somebody who *does* know.

Now I know that this idea may seem ridiculous to people who never thought about this. It may seem exaggerated and far fetched. It's always that way. Anybody who is good, is a fanatic to somebody who is beneath him. If you eat kosher, you're a fanatic to a lot of people. If you eat glatt kosher, so you're a fanatic to people who eat kosher. And so, if you say *shalom aleichem* the right way, you're also a fanatic - to the people who do everything else. The people who don't think are always surprised at the better ones. And therefore we should try to rise above the multitudes and take advantage of this glorious opportunity - no matter what others think! If you want to be an "extremist," try to utilize these

opportunities we're speaking about here and it's going to be a *derech* for you to succeed.

As you go through life saying good morning and good night to your fellow Jews, Hakodosh Boruch Hu will be listening. And He'll be echoing your words and He'll say good morning to you וְאַבְרָהָהּ מִבְּרִיךְ. And when He says good morning He really means it. It's going to be a very good morning. And the more you thinking about what you're saying, the more heart you put into your *brachos*, the greater of an achievement it is.

Part II. How to Bless

CHAZERING BRACHOS

Now, when you meet someone, and you want to wish him "*Mazel Tov*," often it's just going through the motions. In general, that's what greetings are - just formalities, niceties. Of course, you should be as enthusiastic about it as you can; at least you should *act* enthusiastic in order to make a good impression. And there's nothing wrong with that - we should all want to make good impressions on everyone we meet.

By the way, that should be one of your goals whenever you meet someone - you should act in a way that will make him think well of you. That's what we should all want. I want people to say, "You know Miller? He's a good fellow, a nice person!" So be enthusiastic with your greetings, add a warm smile to them - try to score some points.

But now, we'll walk up to the second rung of our ladder: Suppose you do this. After you greet him, after you wish him *Mazel Tov*, so you take leave of him. And after you walk ten steps; now he doesn't see you anymore, he can't hear you. And now you repeat those same words again, when he's not listening. "*Mazel Tov!* You should have a lot of *nachas!*" Now, nobody should hear you talking to yourself! Be careful about that because most people don't understand greatness - they scorn greatness. But don't let that stop you from doing it.

And you should even add something. The more the better. "Hashem should help you find all the money you need to pay the *chasunah* bills. And your daughter and her new husband should

get along with each other *b'shalom*. And you should find good *shidduchim* for your other children too." Oh, now you're talking! You're not saying it just to flatter him or as empty words of formality. You're saying it because you actually want Hashem to bless him. And you're practicing the great principle of how Hashem directs this world: וְאַבְרָהָהּ מְבָרְכֶיךָ - "I will bless those who bless you."

THE COMMENTARY ON 'GOOD SHABBOS'

This is a practice that true *ovdei Hashem* can do without any effort. And it's a practice that's available to you all the time. You're walking on the street on Shabbos and you say, "Good Shabbos, good Shabbos." All day long you're passing by people and wishing them well. And then you pass by and forget all about it. It's a tragedy to waste the opportunity! So five paces later say "Good Shabbos" to him again. This time he doesn't hear it. But this time *you* mean it more.

And under your breath you should add the *peirush hamilos* - with a few *peirushim*! How much thought, how many blessings could be included in a good Shabbos! "Your meals should be *geshmak*; your wife's *challah* and *kugel* should taste exceptional." "Hashem should help you enjoy your family." "You should have a good Shabbos nap and be *matzliach* in your learning over Shabbos." "You should get *shlishi* and it shouldn't cost you too much money!" There's so much to think about when you wish somebody a good Shabbos.

HOW TO REJOICE FROM AFAR

Another example of turning ordinary opportunities into diamonds: Here's a *chosson* or a *kallah* who send you an invitation - they're almost strangers to you. It's a distant relative or a very remote acquaintance and you have no intention of coming. So first of all, when you write out the card, when they request the *favour* of your reply, don't merely say "I won't be able to come." Write in, "Oh, thank you for your invitation! I wish you the best of happiness!" Put in a *bracha* for them; don't waste their fifteen cents. Put in a blessing there for them when you send it back. Here, you can write like this: "I regret that I will not have the honor of attending your simcha, but I shall rejoice with you from afar." That's how to do it - even if you don't feel it. Hakodosh

Boruch Hu will treat you no less than that. Even an external blessing is appreciated.

And if you put in some thought, "I really *am* happy for them," then you're already exceptional. This you don't write - you say it with your mouth. The recipient doesn't have to hear this. As you're closing the envelope, while you're walking to the mailbox, you say, "I wish them both a long and happy life together." And if you want to add some particulars - "They should have a lot of money, and many healthy children. And a beautiful home and they should never quarrel. They should have a lot of good times together in their home." If you add these words or these thoughts, then you have to know that you are walking on the *derech* to success in life. Wishing for the good of others even when they don't hear you is a *derech* in *avodas Hashem* - it's a way of achieving perfection.

THE ALTER TALKS TO HOUSES

This is something I learned from a great man. The Alter of Slabodka was once walking in the street with his disciples. And they passed by a house where one of the kollel men lived, the Alter stopped, and faced the house, and said to the house, "*Gut morgen* - Good morning. You should have a wonderful day." And when he walked further, as he passed certain houses he said good morning to the houses. So one of his *talmidim* said, "But nobody hears?!" So the Alter replied, *Tzu darf ehr heren?* - "Does he *have* to be listening?" You hear that? You hear what the Alter said?! That's from a great man! *Tzu darf ehr heren* - "Does he have to hear?!" I consider that a *gadlus*; it's a remarkable thing that we just heard!

What?! You have to say good morning just because of etiquette? That's a waste of a greeting! As you pass by a house of a *rosh yeshiva*, of a *talmid chochom*, of any frum Jew, say "Good morning" to the house. And you know what's happening? You're getting for yourself that great blessing - Hakodosh Boruch Hu Himself says: *Va'avarcha*, "I'm going to bless you." That's a career! The point of the *bracha* is not that *he* should hear you; what you want is that *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* should hear you and see that you love His children and that you want only good things for them.

BLESSING BIG MEZUZAHS

And so, when you walk down the street, keep your eyes peeled for the big *mezuzos*. And when you see one, "Ah, a *bracha* on that house. "Yivoreich es beis Yisroel!" They're not just homes. They're *holy* homes. Beautiful kosher homes. So make sure to stop for a moment and bless those inside. And be specific. Say the words. "Ribono Shel Olam, please keep everyone in this home healthy. Let them all get along with each other and live happy and safe lives. Please Hashem, let there be no mishaps in the home. Let the children all be *matzliach* in yeshiva and they should all find good *shidduchim*. And the parents should see *nachas* from their children."

The next house, another big *mezuzah*. "Everyone in that home should be well for many happy years. They should all have a comfortable livelihood and pleasure and satisfaction from their children. The children in that home should find the best *shidduchim*. In that home there should be only *simchos* and happy occasions."

BEHIND THE SCENES IN YESHIVA

And so when you pass by a yeshiva and you see the yeshiva men going in and going out - don't neglect the opportunity. Do you realize what an opportunity it is when you walk by a yeshiva?! You should say, "A *bracha* on all the *roshei yeshiva*, the *menahalim*, the children, their mothers and fathers, the children of the kollel people - all of them should live long."

Pray to Hakodosh Boruch Hu that the boys should have good heads. You know how important a good head is in the *yeshivos* today? A boy with a little bit of a weaker head gets so discouraged. Especially with the *rebbeim* who are saying big *pilpulim*. Even in the lower shiurim the *rebbeim* are not saying plain *pshat* and the boys get discouraged. Each rebbe wants to show he's "Rabbi Akiva Eiger" so he's saying deep *pilpulim* - I don't know how good they are but he's trying his best anyhow. He feels he's not getting paid too much, so he might as well learn for himself. And meanwhile the poor, bewildered *talmidim* understand nothing. So a few very good boys succeed. Just a few of the *ba'alei kishronos*, those with the good heads.

So what do people do? They grumble, they complain about it. They blame this one and the other one. But why don't *you* do something about it? So you have to pray for all those boys that are being frustrated and being disappointed by these difficulties. And very many of them are being turned off - of course they are, because they don't understand what is going on. "Hakodosh Boruch Hu, please give *da'as* to all the boys in the yeshivos. Help them understand the *shiur*. Help them understand the *gemara*."

PRAYING FOR THE LITTLE GIRLS

And to the girls as well. Here's a girl - I knew the family - and she couldn't keep up with her studies in the Beis Yaakov. They wanted to expel her from the school. So her father came running. "What should I do?!" he said. "I can't take her to public school. *Gevalt*, what am I going to do? What are you doing to my child?!" They told him, "What could we do already? We can't keep her." So they made a deal finally, they let her go just to English alone. But it was a terrible thing, a calamity - it wasn't her fault, it was a girl who just couldn't keep up. So why aren't you praying for these girls?

And so one of the best opportunities, one of the most authentic and real opportunities, is when the one you're heaping brachos upon doesn't hear, and doesn't know. So you pass by a *Beis Yaakov* and the little girls are playing in the yard. You see little Jewish girls, and it's warm outside, it's hot, but they're wearing stockings, and sleeves. It's beautiful to see! Don't just pass them by! They're *tzon kodoshim*, it's a holy nation. These are going to be the mothers of our people, mothers of *frum* families. How could you pass them by without a generous blessing from the bottom of your heart?!

THE BEST INVESTMENT

Does it cost you any money? Why are you being so stingy with your *brachos*? It's the easiest and cheapest investment for you. Bless them that they should all be well and have lives full of *hatzlacha*. Each one of them should be healthy and they should live to get very good *shidduchim* - each one of them. And they should all be wealthy and all have a lot of healthy normal children. They should live long! And their husbands should be big *talmidei*

chachomim. Bless them! Whatever else you could think of, give them as many *brachos* as you can!

Get into the habit! "They should all live long," you say. Ooh, wha! You made a big business deal just now with Hashem. וְאֶבְרַכֶּה מְבָרְכֶיךָ - "I will bless those who bless the *Am Yisroel*!" Say it with your mouth. It's the best business by the way, the best investment you could make. The best business in this world is to bless a Jew because Hashem says, "I will bless those who bless you."

Part III. Blessing with Love

THE CHOCHMA OF LOVE

Now all this is really externalities. It's important externalities, yet that's what it is. But there is something else here that is very important - maybe even more important than what you just heard - and that is to be שָׂמֵחַ בְּשִׂמְחַתוֹ שֶׁל חֵבְרוֹ, to rejoice in somebody else's happiness; to have an actual love for the *Am Yisroel* - a love that causes you to desire the happiness of others.

And to actually achieve such a feeling, such an attitude in life, requires the big *chochma* of understanding how great the Jewish people are in the eyes of Hashem - how much Hashem loves His people. *Oheiv amo Yisroel* - He loves His people *Yisroel*! *Ahavah rabah ahavtanu*, a great love You love us. *Chemlah gedolah v'yiseirah*, a tremendous and overwhelming love and compassion.

THE REAL ESTATE TYCOON

As much as you'll ever love anybody in this world, it's nothing compared to how much Hakodosh Boruch Hu loves every single Jew. He loves the *Am Yisroel* more than He loves the entire universe. It's a *possuk* in the *chumash* (Devorim 10:14): הֵן לַהֲשָׁמַיִם וְלַהֲשָׁמַיִם הַשְּׁמַיִם וְלַהֲשָׁמַיִם הַשְּׁמַיִם - "Behold to Hashem belong the heavens and the heavens above the heavens." "It's all mine," He says. "There are billions of worlds in space, with huge stars, bigger than the sun. And they're all Mine."

A lot of real estate belongs to Hakodosh Boruch Hu. And the space between the worlds is so vast that we can't even measure it. In millions of light years you can't measure the

distance between the stars. And there are trillions and trillions of such stars. And Hakodosh Boruch Hu says, “Despite all that, **רַק בְּאַבוֹתַיךָ חָשַׁק הַשֵּׁם**, only in your forefathers did Hashem delight.”

“All this is nothing to Me - My delight is only your forefathers.” **לְאַהֲבָה אוֹתָם**, to love them. So you might say, “We’ll, that’s for our forefathers. What about us?” So the *possuk* goes on, **בְּכֶם בְּיָוֵם הַזֶּה**, *you*, forever. It’s an open *possuk* in the *chumash* - you can’t get away from it.

LOVING THOSE HASHEM LOVES

Now this *possuk* you should study as often as you can. Because these words should be the *pnimiyus*, the interiority, of everything we said here tonight. We give *brachos* not because we want Hashem to bless us - that too - but most important is that we want the good of *acheinu bnei Yisroel*. It’s when you love the *Am Yisroel*, and you bless them all the time *b’ahava*, that’s what brings the *brachos* of Hashem into your life.

The Mesillas Yesharim (Chapter 19) tells us that “Hashem loves only those that love the *Am Yisroel*.” And therefore Hakodosh Boruch Hu says, “Whoever blesses My people, I will bless that person Myself.”

Because Hashem loves the *Am Yisroel*, He therefore loves all those who wish well upon the *Am Yisroel*. And so, you have no choice - you have to get into your head that you love frum Jews. You make up your mind that you love the *Am Yisroel* and you want good things for them. So when you’re walking down the street and you see a frum Jew you begin to practice. You say, “I love that man. Hakodosh Boruch Hu should give him lots of money today.” You see a black hat, “Ah, I love him.” Bless the black hatters! You didn’t see his face yet; when he comes closer so maybe you’ll see that maybe it’s someone who got on your nerves last week - love him anyway! He has a black hat; he’s *unzerer*, he’s *m’shelanu*.

THE HOLY WALK

And if you practice this, so your walk to the grocery, to the shul, is transformed into a whole different walk altogether - it’s a whole different way of walking down the street. You’re walking down Ocean Parkway but actually you’re walking in the ways of Hashem. Because that’s what Hashem wants! Hakodosh Boruch

Hu loves His people more than anything else. And so when we fill our days with blessing the *Am Yisroel* because *we* love them, we are fulfilling the *mitzvah d'oraisah* of *v'halachta b'drachav* - "And you should walk in the ways of Hashem".

So take a walk along Ocean Parkway, or on 15th Avenue in Boro Park, and you'll see frum Jews. And each time one passes you, so you think in your mind - and better yet you can say it with your lips - "Hakodosh Boruch Hu should give him *bracha v'hatzlocha* in everything for long and happy days."

GREATNESS AT THE WINDOWSILL

You stand at your window and you wait for decent Jews to pass by, and you say, "Ah, a pleasure to see such a sight! Hashem, בְּרַבִּים טָהָרָם רַחֲמֵי צְדָקָתְךָ תָּמִיד גְּמֹלִים - "Bless them, purify them, forever grant them your righteous mercies" (*Tefillas Nechunia ben Hakaneh*), with a full heart you pray for them, you bless them, you hope for the best for them. You know sometimes by accident you look through the window and you see a young Jewish woman pushing a baby carriage; inside there are two babies and there are two more hanging onto the handles, and she's chasing after another one who's running ahead.

Here's your chance! She's raising up a Jewish family; she's doing the heavy lifting for the *Am Yisroel*, so why should you be stingy with your words? Why shouldn't you shower some blessings on her head? She doesn't have to hear. From the window say, "Hakodosh Boruch Hu should bless her with *nachas* from all of them. She should dance at the *chasunos* of all their grandchildren. She should have *parnasah* and an easy time raising them. She should have the best *shidduchim* for her sons and her daughters." Why shouldn't you say that? It costs you money? Your bank balance will remain the same.

THE BANK ACCOUNT THAT MATTERS MOST

Actually it won't remain the same; because there's another bank account that's more important. When the time comes and they wheel a person out of the funeral parlor, and the funeral director is standing there directing the traffic, and the relatives are standing there sadly, so this man is leaving everything behind. He can't take his money along with him. And this man now is very sad - even though he's getting a ride in a big limousine he's sad

because he can't take along a thing. All of his money is not his anymore. But there is one account, one balance, which he takes along with him, because all of the diamonds of *ma'asim tovim* are forever. And to be *mivareich es amo Yisroel* is one of the most important *ma'asim tovim* you can accomplish in this world.

Isn't it a pity the world doesn't know about this? It's a diamond mine! Suppose you had a diamond mine in your backyard but you knew nothing about it, and now someone comes along and does you a favor; he reveals the secret to you. So you walk out into the backyard with a pail and shovel, and in a few minutes you're a millionaire.

LIFE IS ACRES OF DIAMONDS

That's what this world is; life is acres of diamonds. But what good is it if you don't bend over and pick them up? At first when they came to South Africa, the Kimberley Mines had diamonds laying on the surface. If you walked along and kept your eyes open, there was a diamond here and a diamond there. That's what this world is - there are diamonds on the surface. Many, many diamonds. And if you learn to recognize them, and if you're smart enough, you'll be able to achieve what you came down here for - to collect as many of these diamonds as possible.

Now, don't think it means a great struggle. If I would say that you have to learn *chiddushei torah* of the *Ktzos Hachoshen* every day, so you could tell me that it takes a lot of work. It's not a bad idea by the way; every day, another *Ktzos Hachoshen*. After a hundred days, you have a hundred *Ktzos* - you're a *shtickel lamdan* already. A hundred more days, and you're already a fine *lamdan*. Some people learn *all* the *Ktzos Hachoshen*! Very good! But these things require a great deal of effort. If you want to be a Torah scholar, *תְּגַעַתְּ מְצַדִּיק* - you're going to have to labor in order to attain your objective.

If you want to become a big *ba'al dei'ah*, a *ba'al machshava*, a *ba'al emunah*, then there's a lot of work to be done. In order to achieve *middos tovos*, to acquire good character, there's training you must follow, a lot of important things. And they're not easy, but they're worth the effort.

THE EASY WAY

But I'm not proposing that for all of you right now; I'm saying easier things. We're learning here about an achievement that is immensely easy. And the profit is *immensely* great. And that is the career of blessing fellow Jews. Now, when I say career, I mean that you must take the ideas that you're studying here tonight, impress them upon your minds, and consider how to incorporate them into your regular practice, your regular routine of life. Because with a little bit of thought and some planning, you can live a life of **וְאַתְּרֵכָה מְרֵכֶיךָ**. Because, tell me, what difficulty lies in this exercise of good character? Nothing really! It's one of the easiest things in the world to do - to bless your fellow Jew.

Let's make it clear to ourselves that this is what we're in this world for. We're here to pick up all those diamonds on the floor. That's our purpose. When a person is discouraged as he walks through the diamond fields, so he's thinking that he has *rachmanus* on himself, he has pity on his status in life - "If only *this* would have happened;" "If only I would be in *his* shoes" - so he walks through life not even looking where he's going. And as he passes by through his days in this world, he's passing by riches, wealth that he could have picked up. And when the time comes to leave this world he walks empty handed out of this world.

THE MALACH MEETS THE MESHUGGENER

And so when he comes to the gate of *Gan Eden*, the *shomer hadeless*, the *malach* standing at the gate, says, "Let's see what you have in your hand." So you tell him, "My hands are empty - I didn't have the opportunities that others had." So the *malach* tells him, "*Meshugener!* You were walking through diamond fields! You should have grabbed all you could! Why did you waste your life?"

You know what that means? It means that you could have been filling your days with greatness. And it's the greatness that Hashem loves more than anything else. He loves those who love His people! And when you come back to Hakodosh Boruch Hu after a lifetime of blessing fellow Jews and He says, "So, what happened?" Oh, that dreaded question: "Did you accomplish anything in that world I sent you to?"

So you'll tell Him, "Well, I blessed many Jews." "Oh," Hakodosh Boruch Hu says, "Now we're talking! Now you're Mine, because that's My job; I'm busy blessing My people *ba'shalom* all the time! *Hashem yivoreich es amo ba'shalom*. And you're helping Me out? If that's the case, then you belong with Me and you come back into My bosom forever and ever. I am the *Oheiv amo Yisroel* par excellence, and all those who love My people, I love eternally." And that means that the more you shower *your* blessings on the *Am Yisroel* in this world, the more Hashem will shower upon you *His* blessings in this world and in the World to Come forever and ever.

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————— **This week's booklet based on Tapes:** —————

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Q&A

With
Rav Avigdor Miller Ztz"l



Q:

Does the Rav think that it's a good idea to try to daven at a minyan that has Birchas Kohanim every day?

A:

That depends on where you come from and who you are. I want to make a remark, however. A remark about something else. There are tzadikim who daven Vasikin – very early. Now it's excellent but I must make one remark. On Shabbos they also daven Vasikin – and they miss the opportunity to hear a little bit of yiras shamayim from somebody who speaks. They come together for a minyan, they daven fast and they go home. Instead of davening in a place where there is a Rav and sometimes he'll speak a few words of divrei mussar. It's a valuable opportunity. And it's more important than Vasikin.

"Asei li'cha Rav," means: Always be in a place where there is a Rav. Somebody who will tell you something. Don't think that you know everything. There's no end to the amount of information that we require to know the derech Hashem. But the people who go early Shabbos morning to Vasikin – they're so proud and happy when they come out early. And they come out without any kind of lesson. They're not any better than they were last week. Nobody is telling them anything wrong about themselves and that's a problem.

A person walks in blindness all his life. Do you know how many faults people have?! Somebody has to criticize you. Your wife is not enough. You need some kind of instruction. How else will you know the truth? We are living in a world of darkness. *"Hi'nei choshech yi'chaseh aretz."* The world is covered with darkness. We are walking in darkness and we're blind to the truths. Only if someone is teaching you can you see through the darkness. You have to have someone to tell you.

There's nobody to tell you at Vasikin. Vasikin- they probably think it's the very best thing. No, I don't think it's the very best thing. TAPE #E-231

This week's Q&A sponsored :

לעילוי נשמת פנחס בן יוסף צבי ע"ה נלב"ע א' שבועות תשע"ב

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