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PARSHAS KI SISA - PARAH

WITH

RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT" L

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

INTIMATIONS OF ETERNITY

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Part I. The Impurity of Death

The Impurity of all Impurities

Anybody who learned even a little bit knows there's such a thing as the concept of *tumah*, uncleanness, in the Torah. And there are various degrees of *tumah* — some are less severe, some are more severe — each one with its own *dinim*. This week however, Shabbos Parah, the *baal korei* reads in the shul about a certain *tumah* that is different from all others. A dead body is called the *avi avos hatumah*, the 'father of the fathers of all *tumah*' because it is the most strict of all the *tumos* in various ways.

First of all, even if a person is not in direct contact with a dead body, but he just entered under the same roof as a *meis*, he becomes unclean.

And then he remains unclean for seven days and can make others *tamei* with a high level *tumah* during that period.

Now, not only is it severe in how it's contracted and transmitted, and how long it lasts, but also we must use extreme measures in order to be rid of this *tumah*. The *tamei* cannot purify himself merely by dipping in the *mikvah*. There's a special procedure not found by any other *tumah*: In addition to *tevilah*, he has to take the ashes of the rare *parah adumah*. These are mixed with *mayim chayim*, and the resulting *mei chatas*, water of purification, has to be sprinkled on him on the third day and the seventh day. Only then, he'll dip in the *mikveh* one last time, and he'll be considered pure again.

Tumas Meis: Keep Out

Now, when we see how severe the *tumas meis* is, we have to realize that there must be a reason for that. The *dinim* of the Torah are intended for lessons, and so there must be something we can understand about this. Now, I'm sure there are reasons that we will not be able to understand, but there are certain things that are obvious, and number one is the purpose of *tumah* in general; *tumah* means 'keep away'. That's a *klal gadol* in all *tumos* — don't come too close.

And so we see that especially this *tumah* of a dead body, Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants us to keep away from it more than anything else. Even to be in the same house where there is a *meis*, Hashem says, "No! Keep out! That's better for you."

Now, what's the purpose of that? Shouldn't we be happy to see the *meis* from time to time? We can put him in formaldehyde, maybe, other chemicals, and we can do like some of the savage tribes do in the South Sea Islands; when they make a wedding, they go to the cemetery and take out the dead body. They take it to the wedding and they dance with it. They're very happy with the '*nachas ruach*' they do to the *meis*.

So if people would go, let's say, take the body of an old *zeide* and bring it to the wedding hall and dance with it when his great-great-grandson is being married, it would be a good gesture. Maybe it would be *bizayon hameis*, I can't tell you; but the idea, the *kavanah*, would be good.

Seeing is Disbelieving

The answer is that when we see a dead body, even just being in the same room, it's a terrible discouragement to our *emunah* in the Next World. When you're alive, you see everyone is living, yes there's Olam Haba. You know all about it; you're *maamin b'emunah sheleimah*. But when you see death staring in your face, it's a contradiction to all of your *emunah*. Because what is the first thing you think about when there is a *meis*? You think that he's finished now. Oy! It's over!

Once a man came running to me. He said, "Gevald!"

He saw his dead father! He was fainting.

I said, "Didn't you know that your father is dead?"

He said, "But I *saw* him dead! It's over. He's gone forever!"

And so death is a very great *sheker*. It's the biggest falsehood in the world! He looks dead but actually it's a lie! He *didn't* die! He's alive! He's more alive than before. He took off his overcoat of wrinkled flesh and his creaky bones, and he left to continue living in Olam Haba.

The Biggest Emunah

But to the untrained eye it doesn't appear that way, and that's why *tumas meis* is the worst kind of *tumah* – because it's the biggest lie. And it's the most severe in all the *dinim* because Olam Haba is the most severe subject. The Next World is not merely one paragraph of the *yesodos emunah*; it's the foundation on which everything stands. And that's why we have to be more careful to guard the moral integrity of our conviction in Olam Haba more than anything else.

It means that we can say **אֲנִי מֵאֲמִין בְּאֵמוּנָה שְׁלֵמָה** that Hakadosh Baruch Hu created the world *yesh mei'ayin*, out of nothing; excellent. And we can say **אֲנִי מֵאֲמִין בְּאֵמוּנָה שְׁלֵמָה** that every word in the Torah is true – the Torah *shebiksav* and Torah *sheba'al peh* – very good. And yet if we are lacking in the fundamental principle of belief that we're going to continue to live on and on after our bodies die, then the entire foundation is destroyed; Olam Haba is the foundation upon which everything else stands.

The Foundation of Everything

That's what the Mesillas Yesharim tells us in the beginning of his *sefer*. He begins the first *perek* as follows: **סֹדֵר הַתְּסִידוֹת וְשָׂרֵשׁ הָעֵבוּרָה הַתְּמִימָה**

- What is the foundation of *chassidus*, of being devoted to Hakadosh Baruch Hu? And what is the root from which the *avodah hatemimah*, the perfect service of Hashem, could develop?

Now when we hear such a preface, both of our ears perk up: What's this? He's giving us a very big promise now. If we'll listen to the following words, we can build a foundation for a successful career all our lives in this world.

So pay attention to what he tells us. The foundation of everything is, *וְיִתְאַמֵּת אֶצֶל הָאֱלֹהִים* – *and also he should be convinced*, *מֵה חוֹבְרָתוֹ בְּעוֹלָמוֹ* – *what is his purpose in this world*, *וְלִמָּה צָרִיךְ שְׂיֵשִׁים מִבְּטוֹ וּמִגְמָתוֹ בְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר הוּא עֹמֵל כָּל יְמֵי חַיָּיו* – *and toward which goal should he put his gaze, his eyes and his intention in everything that he does all the days of his life.*

Now, what is this thing that has to be on our minds constantly in order to be the foundation for everything we do?

So you'll say, "It's no question. To believe in Hashem, to believe in the Torah." And so it's settled, you think.

But he doesn't say that. No, he doesn't say that. What is the foundation of everything? *וְהִנֵּה מֵה שְׁהוֹרֵנוּ חו"ל* – *And behold it's what our Sages teach us* *ה' הָאֱדָרִים לֹא נִבְרָא אֶלָּא לְהִתְעַנֵּג עַל ה'* – *a man was created only for the purpose of the joy he'll receive from Hashem in Olam Haba.* That's it! That's why you were created! Forget everything else for now; the number one thing is that you're headed for Olam Haba and that this world is just a preparation for that great happiness of the Next World.

Top of Mind

And because it's number one, because it's the most important thing, that's what should be on your mind day and night, in everything you do all the days of your life. Those are the words of our great teacher: *צָרִיךְ שְׂיֵשִׁים מִבְּטוֹ וּמִגְמָתוֹ בְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר הוּא עֹמֵל כָּל יְמֵי חַיָּיו* – *Olam Haba is the one subject you have to keep before your eyes in everything you do, all the days of your life.*

בְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר הוּא עֹמֵל – It means whether you're putting on *tefillin* or you're sewing underwear; whether you're a coal miner, a professor, or *l'havdil a rosh yeshiva*, so while you're digging in the coal mine or professing in the university, or while you're saying the *shiur* in the yeshiva, your mind should be on the purpose that you're created only

for Olam Haba. Whatever you do, in the store, in your home and even when you're *davening*, you should keep in mind that the purpose is Olam Haba. And it should be like that **כָּל יְמֵי חַיֵּיךָ** – *all the days of your life* from your birth until your last day.

Easy Come, Easy Go

Now, such an attitude, a way of living, is not an easy thing for people to acquire. Yes, I understand that a *frum* Jew will certainly subscribe to the principle of Olam Haba, but that's not what he's saying here; what's required is much more. You think you can read this line in the *sefer*, that Olam Haba is the *ikar*, and you agree with it, you're willing to sign on the dotted line, **הֲרִינִי מֵאֲמִין בְּעוֹלָם הַבָּא**, and you're finished? No, that's nothing yet. That's not called "putting your gaze and intentions on Olam Haba in everything you do."

And that's why the Mesillas Yesharim says two requirements there: **שְׂוֵתָבָרָר** – You have to make it clear to yourself that this is your one purpose and nothing else, **וְיִתְאָמַת** – and also it has to be true to you. Two separate things.

Now, if you go outside from here, people might tell you not to talk about it much. They think that when you bring up the subject, it makes a *hava aminah* that maybe it's a *safeik*, and that's why you have to prove it. So they say, "Shove it under the table and forget it."

Make it Clear

But the Mesillas Yesharim says **יִתְבָּרָר**, that it has to be clear. And it takes a long time to make that clear because people argue with you. They say, "Don't bother about that. There are lots of better things to talk about. *Middos! Mitzvos! Torah! Only Torah!*"

Don't you hear at a *frum* table, all things are being spoken about? Is Olam Haba mentioned? Is Gan Eden mentioned? Is Gehenom mentioned? You go to yeshiva and listen to *shiurim* for years and years, even *mussar shmuessen*, do you hear Olam Haba mentioned? *Agav urcha*, it's brought in, but to talk about it?

And that's a tragedy, a big problem. Because it'll never become clear; you'll never pinpoint the main focus of living. And that's an obligation on every Jew: **יִתְבָּרָר** – it has to be extremely clear to you that this is it.

Make it True

But in addition to clarifying, to pinpointing that purpose, you must exert efforts to convince yourself that it's so, that it's real. Because even after clarifying for yourself the goal, it's possible to remain detached from the idea; it's not so real to you. And therefore that's the second requirement; **וְיִתְאָמֵת** – *make it true*. It's not enough that you're clear about it; but you have to try with all your abilities to gain a firm tangible belief, a firm conviction that it's so. It has to feel true. There cannot be any doubt and you should believe in it with all your heart. It should be real, as real as anything else.

And if you don't do it, so then all of your piety, all of your *avodas Hashem* doesn't have a foundation to stand on. It doesn't mean you can't be anything. You could be something, but it's wavering. It's shaky; it doesn't have a foundation. And in order that it should be *avodah temimah*, a perfect service that will be strong and continue to grow, you need this foundation and this root. Without it, you won't grow.

And that's why Hakadosh Baruch Hu insists on us staying away from the *meis*. It is the most severe *tumah*, because it's the most dangerous for the mind. The sight of the *meis* is a contradiction to the idealism that a person should have in his *emunah* in Olam Haba and so the Torah is warning us to beware as much as possible.

And when someone is confronted with a *meis*, and he becomes *tamei*, so he knows that it'll take extreme measures to get rid of it. It'll cost expensive means – you have to go to where they have the *mei parah* and you'll have to go through the ceremony of *hazoyah*; the *mikveh* and the sprinkling on the third day and seventh day. It'll be all kinds of difficulties once you become *tamei* and therefore; stay away from it as much as possible! Because the *meis* is a contradiction to the conviction that a person must have in Olam Haba.

Part II. Purifying the Tumah

Understanding the Secrets

Now, even though someone as great as Shlomo Hamelech said about the secret of the *parah adumah*, **אָמַרְתִּי אֲחֻכְמָהּ וְהִיא רְחוּקָה מִמֶּנִּי** – *I thought that I would be wise, but I see that wisdom is very far from me,*"

it doesn't mean that we can't learn any lessons from the details of the Parshas Parah. We know that the things that are written in the Torah are for the purpose of being a teaching, a lesson – that's what Torah means, 'a teaching' – and so we'd be remiss in our duty if we didn't try.

וַיִּקְחוּ אֵלֶיךָ פָּרָה אֲדָמָה תְּמִימָה אֲשֶׁר אֵין בָּהּ מוּם – *They shall take to you a red heifer, perfect, which is without any blemish* (Bamidbar 19:2). Now, to find such a cow wasn't a simple job – that it should have no blemishes, and it should be wholly without hairs of a different color, so you understand already that it was a rarity. And because it was so difficult to find, it was very expensive. It cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to buy a *parah adumah*.

And yet despite its perfection and its enormous cost, you must know that *while it's alive it's worthless!* All the big money it's worth is only because of its potential, of what's going to be *after* it's dead. You slaughter it and burn it, and now when it's just ashes, it's like dust, *that's* when it becomes important!

The Most Expensive Jew

Now, that's teaching us something important. It's a parallel, a *mashal*, that we have to keep prominently in our minds. Because a Jew is very, very expensive. The most precious object in the universe is a Yisroel.

I'm not telling you to yell this from the rooftops, but among us we have to know that if you would have a big scale, a tremendous scale, and you put on one side of the scale all the nations, all the Englishmen, all the Americans, all the French, every other people on the face of the earth; billions of people, white, black yellow, red, presidents and prime ministers, all kinds. And now on the other side, you put one Yisroel, one plain Jew; he's *machriya es kulam!* He outweighs all of them! Nothing is more valuable than a living Jew.

And yet, just like the *parah adumah*, no matter how precious he may be, even the greatest *tzaddik*, no matter what he has achieved in his life, he'll never reach his true purpose *while he's alive*. הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה דוֹמָה לְפָרוּזְדוֹר – *This world is only a lobby, a hallway that you're passing through to get to the banquet hall* (Avos 4:16).

Of course it's a very important lobby, this world, because it's your one chance in history to prepare for the great banquet. Never again

will you be given this chance! But that's *why* it's so valuable; that's why every second of life in Olam Hazei is more precious to us than all the money in the world. But it's worth all that only because of Olam Haba, only because of your station in the World to Come. When you come there, after your body is lowered into the ground, that's when you'll accomplish what you were born for.

The Lesson of the Ashes

And that's why it's only the *parah adumah* which can purify the *tumah* that comes from a dead body. It's telling you, "Don't be fooled by that lifeless body, the body of a Jew that was so valuable and now seems like nothing. This red cow was also very expensive while it was living, but it can only achieve its purpose now, as ashes.

The dead body that makes you *tamei* is the same thing. It only looks like the end but as valuable as he was while he was alive, now is when he really starts living. He took off his overcoat that he was wearing in the lobby, left it in the cemetery, and he went into the banquet hall to live forever."

And what's the lesson of *mayim chaim*? Why are the ashes of the *parah adumah* mixed into natural spring water before it's sprinkled? So everybody knows **אֵין מִים אֶלָּא תּוֹרָה** and so we wouldn't be wrong if we'd say that the water here represents the Torah. It means that anyone who is weak in this principle of Olam Haba – and that's all of us – has to sprinkle on their minds as much as possible the Torah attitude of Olam Haba. That's what it means *hazoas mei chatas*; we're sprinkling on the mind the attitude of Olam Haba, that **הָאָדָם לֹא נִבְרָא בְּעֵבוֹר מִצְבוֹת בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה** – *A man is created not for his station in this world but only for of his station in the World to Come* (Mesillas Yesharim, 1)

That's the purpose of the *hazoas mei chatas*, the sprinkling of the water on the *tamei*; it's a teaching. Of course you have to have *mayim chaim*; you must have *eifer parah* mixed with the *mayim chaim* according to a certain procedure. All the details you need! Otherwise nothing will help; it's a *chok* of the Torah. But you shouldn't forget the lesson. You shouldn't forget the *mashal* of what the *parah adumah* is telling you.

A World of Parables

Now we'll see in the Rambam something to this point. The Rambam in Hilchos Teshuvah (8:4) speaks about this great principle of keeping our minds on the purpose in life, on the success of gaining *nitzchiyus* in Olam Haba. And he says something there that at first seems to be strange, but we'll see that he's giving us a practical program for this subject.

First I'll quote his words. וְנִמְנָה שְׁמוֹת קְרָאוּ לָהּ דְרֶגֶת מְשָׁל – There are a number of names Olam Haba is called as *meshalim* in the *Kisvei Hakodesh*. And he gives there various examples: הַר ה' – *the mountain of Hashem*, וּמְקוֹם קְדוּשׁוֹ – *the place of His holiness*, דְרֶגֶת הַקְּדוּשָׁה – *the path to holiness*, הַחֲצָרוֹת ה' – *the courtyards of Hashem*. He gives there ten examples, words that Dovid used, that he says are speaking about Olam Haba.

Now all these examples in the Rambam are a *chiddush* to us because ordinarily, as we read these words in Tehillim, we think that Dovid is describing only a physical object, something in this world; a mountain, a road. And actually it's true, but the Rambam is teaching us here a very important principle; he wants us to know that the objects themselves are intended also as a *mashal* for us to utilize.

The Mountain of Hashem

Like it says מִי יַעֲלֶה בְהַר ה' – *Who will go up on the mountain of Hashem?* וְנָקִי כַפָּיִם וּבָר לֵבָב – *A man pure of heart and with clean hands* and so on and so forth. So we know that Dovid is talking about Har Habayis, about ascending the mountain that he was preparing for the future Beis Hamikdash. “You're not going to be able to ascend that mountain unless you prepare yourself beforehand,” Dovid said.

But the Rambam tells us that Har Hashem is more than that. That mountain in Yerushalayim is important too but *more* important it's intended as a form of speech, a *mashal* that means the World to Come. The mountain of Hashem was used by Dovid as a way of reminding himself. He's looking up at the top, the summit, and he's thinking, “There's a big mountain I have to climb all my life, to get to Olam Haba. And I have to make sure to be worthy of getting to the top.” And as he ascended the mountain to go to the Beis Hamikdash, he was trying to experience a feeling, “Someday I'm going to ascend a much more important mountain of Hashem. And on top of that mountain is going

to be a palace that is the greatest happiness and the greatest splendor that no one ever could imagine.”

The Purpose of the Catskills

Now, what does that mean for us? A lot! It means when you see a mountain, so it's natural that you think, “Wouldn't it be interesting if I could climb that mountain and see what's on top?” People climb mountains because they think there's something there, that they'll feel fulfilled when they get to the top. Now, it's only imagination – there's nothing important there – but the imagination is something. It's not a deception. There is something, only it's not at the top of *that* mountain. There's a different mountain, a more important mountain, that we have to climb and that's the mountain of Hashem in the World to Come. Ah! There, when you reach the summit there, it's exhilarating! There you really find happiness.

And now you know why there are mountains. Mountains are for various purposes. They help the climate. They cause rain and they cause rivers. The snow that falls on the tops of the mountains remains there all year and it melts gradually and streams come down from the mountains and they fill the rivers which water the continents.

All that is very important and very true. But the most important function of the mountain is to remind you of the *Har Hashem*; so that you should utilize the opportunity and think of reaching the summit of that mountain, the happiness of the World to Come.

U'vlechtechá Baderech

Or when we find the expression **וְדֶרֶךְ הַקְּדוֹשׁ** – the way toward holiness. So it could mean a path in this world to a certain location where the *Beis Hamikdash* is located, a path leading to *Yerushalayim*. *Dovid* was talking about the path that led from *Yerushalayim* to *Har Habayis*. But we're learning now that *Dovid*, as he was walking on the road to what would one day be *Har Habayis*, he was thinking to himself, “There is a more important road than this one; life itself, every day I'm walking on a road that leads to *Olam Haba*.”

According to the *Rambam*, let's say you're walking in the street – you're going to the *yeshiva* or the *beis knesses* – so that's a **וְדֶרֶךְ הַקְּדוֹשׁ**. Absolutely you're walking on the 'path to holiness'. What's more *kadosh*

than going to the synagogue to speak with your Creator? What's more *kadosh* than going to the *beis medrash* to learn the Toras Hashem?

But the Rambam wants us to know that it's more than that. As you're walking you're thinking — nobody knows! You're walking on Kings Highway and almost everyone else is thinking about nothing at all but you're utilizing this *mashal* — “This world is a road. We're all traveling on a road to the last day. And I have to keep in mind, one step at a time, to make sure it's a *derech hakodesh*, a path towards holiness, towards being together with Hashem in the Next World.”

That's a good thing to think about when you're walking to shul. It's an important reminder because not everybody is traveling in the right direction; some are traveling away from it. Some people travel a little bit, then they wander off the road. That's a tragedy. So we have to keep in our minds always that our purpose in this world is to travel in one direction. We're going towards Hashem in the World to Come, the place of happiness. And therefore, a road should be utilized as a *mashal*.

Part III. Purifying the Mind

The Real Banquet

Now, to us, all this sounds queer. A mountain, a path, a courtyard should be for us a symbol of Olam Haba? Is that what a road is for? Is that really what we should think about when we see a mountain?

If you're hearing this for the first time, you might even think that I'm inventing an idea, that I'm making this Rambam into a bigger thing than it is. So be patient with me and think it over, because we need *meshalim*! Without a *mashal* we can't understand Olam Haba at all. And it requires many examples to illustrate the principle.

You know, even a *seudah*, the Rambam says, should be utilized. Our Sages call Olam Haba a *seudah* — the World To Come is compared to a banquet of the most delicious dishes. Of course, it's only a parable; in the World To Come, it's intellectual delights, but it's the same idea. Only what's served there is much more delicious than all the delicacies of Olam Hazeh.

So imagine you come into a wedding hall — let's say your Cousin Jake is marrying off his daughter and you have to be there. You walk

into the hall and you see the waiters are serving delectable food, and everybody is enjoying themselves. And you're enjoying it too, why not? But because you came here tonight, you'll add a thought: "This is only a *mashal*. There is a real banquet hall, and there they're serving the most delectable dishes."

Of course, it doesn't approximate the real truth. Because after the wedding you'll go home and forget about the good food; maybe you'll even have some aftereffects from eating too much. But in the real banquet hall, in the World To Come, you'll never be tired of eating; you won't get any stomachaches, and you'll always have an appetite, and you'll eat forever and ever. It's a happiness that will never come to an end, and we'll be seated at that *seudah* forever and ever together with all those who deserve it.

The Real Lobby

Now, if you understand this subject, you'll use the lobby before the wedding hall too. You know, when you're standing in the lobby of a wedding hall, so you see that the guests, especially the lady guests, stop for a moment in front of the mirrors and they straighten out their sheitels before they walk in to show themselves before the public. Suppose somebody walks into the hall and his hat, let's say he has a nice respectable black hat, but he doesn't know that his hat is smudged with dirt – a bird delivered a package onto his hat.

So as he's sitting in the wedding hall, at first he thinks he's getting admiring gazes from everyone. But once he realizes what they're looking at, the rest of the *chasunah* is torture.

Of course in this world you can go back into the lobby and clean off your hat, but in the Next World when you come in with befouled garments, you stay put forever.

The Real Embarrassment

Imagine that you have to sit in a wedding hall knowing that your garments are not clean and everyone is looking and you are terribly embarrassed. The truth is that in this world the embarrassment is only a deception. What of it? So people are ridiculing you? Big deal; it all comes to an end anyhow. There will come a time when the wedding is over, the lights go out and you go home. Even if it's a big wedding – it lasts for many days, **שְׂמֹנִים וּמֵאָת יוֹם**, a big feast; but at the end comes the

cemetery. It's all over eventually in this world. No matter what disgrace a person suffers here, it comes to an end.

But in the Next World it continues forever! And if a person has stains on his garments, he can't sneak back into the lobby here. He's stuck forever. And therefore as you're walking into the hall and you're making sure you look respectable, stop for a minute and think: This world is the lobby where we prepare to enter the great banquet hall. Here is the place to stop and see if everything is in order with you. You brush off your hat here. You straighten your neck-tie here. And all the things which this denotes, you have to do in this world. הַתְּקַן עֲצָמֶיךָ – *Make the tikunim, make the preparations, the improvements, right here in this world.* That's the purpose of this world: כְּדֵי שֶׁתִּבְנֶה לְטוֹרְקְלִין – *In order to enter the everlasting banquet hall.*

It's an analogy that must be clear in our minds; we are preparing now for admission to the banquet hall. This is not the place for which we were created. This is only a temporary means of readying ourselves for our great career which commences when we pass out of this life. It's a very small vestibule before a very great banquet hall.

Shabbos Hachanos

But why should you wait for your cousin to make a wedding? Every week we have a Shabbos. Your wife made good things to eat, there's royal chicken and there's kugel and all kinds of good things, a pleasant soup. So while you're sitting at the table and you're enjoying the *seudah*, don't forget to give a compliment to the baalebuste, say, "It's very good soup." Make sure you do that. Don't neglect to thank your wife for what she did.

But after you say thank you, then you get to work. When you sit down Shabbos to the *seudah*, there's an obligation to imagine that מִי שֶׁטָּוַר בְּעֶרֶב שָׁבַת יֵאָכֵל בְּשֶׁבֶת – It's only because you worked all week to earn money to pay for the groceries and your wife worked to prepare the Shabbos *seudah*, that's why you have something to eat on Shabbos (Avodah Zara 3a). In the World To Come, you'll sit down to a very great *seudah*, but it depends on מִי שֶׁטָּוַר בְּעֶרֶב שָׁבַת – how much effort did you invest in this world preparing for the Yom Shekulo Shabbos? You have to prepare for it. That's a way of using Shabbos according to the Rambam.

The Real Spring

Now I'll add to the Rambam, something practical that you can use especially this time of the year. And don't think I'm overdoing it. I'm *underdoing* it! The more *meshalim*, the more reminders, the better off you are.

And so, springtime! Ahh! It's a wonderful thing when spring comes. The weather became balmy and the world turns green. You walk in the springtime and you see the trees breaking out with a new foliage — some of them have pink blossoms, some of them have white blossoms; flowers too, all different kinds of beautiful flowers — so what should you think about? You should think it's a *mashal* for Gan Eden.

When you pass a bush bursting out with bright red flowers, it's stunning. It's a happiness to look at it. Don't let that opportunity go back. It's for the purpose of letting you know that there's a garden that looks even more beautiful than what you see right now.

The Real Garden

So now you know what gardens are for in this world. It doesn't mean you have to pay someone to dig up your yard and plant things — let other people do that and you can use their gardens. When you pass by a house and you see in the driveway, you see behind there are some beautiful trees back there and you imagine it's a beautiful quiet little garden there, shade and flowers, maybe even fruit trees. So that garden has to remind you that there is a great garden, a Gan Eden, a garden of delight. And in that Garden we'll walk through the paths and we'll look up and see the beauties that are hanging in there, globes of beautiful colors and luscious juices, that will cause us a joy so intense because it's a *mashal* on the Ziv HaShechinah. We'll see the glory of Hashem's presence in Gan Eden.

Any garden that you see and that arouses your admiration, that garden should be utilized to make you think of the real garden where things are so beautiful that we wouldn't be able to endure the beauty. We would expire with ecstasy if we saw Gan Eden in this world.

The Real Money

Another *mashal* is money. Money is fun! Everyone loves money. You never dreamed that you were sitting in a bathtub full of money? I did. I

remember years ago I dreamed I was sitting in a bathtub full of money; a dry bathtub packed with money. It was quite a pleasant dream.

And we can't get enough of it. אָהַב כֶּסֶף לֹא יִשְׂבַע כֶּסֶף – A man who loves money never has enough money (Koheles 5:9). But the Gemara says this possuk is a *mashal*. It's going on Moshe Rabbeinu; he loved *mitzvos* and therefore he could never do enough *mitzvos*. So we see the *mashal* of money was utilized by Moshe Rabbeinu. Just like people love money and the more they get the more they become entranced and addicted to money, so also those who love *mitzvos* become more and more addicted to *mitzvos*.

It means that a businessman, as his cash register is ringing and he puts more and more money in, he should be thinking about the real money of life. It's no sin to make money but he's utilizing now the opportunity – of course besides giving *maaser*, besides paying *schar limud*, but just the joy of making money he should utilize. He's putting money in the register and he's thinking, "A *mitzvah* that I do in this world, that's the real money I can make in this world. The joy of accomplishing *shleimus*, perfection in *middos*, *emunah*, *da'as Hashem*, that's the money that will be forever."

Everyone can practice that. When you're waiting on line in the bank to make a deposit so you think, "When I acquire possessions that I'll take with me to the Next World, that's the best deposit." Of course, he's interested in the deposit in this world too but little by little the money becomes to him a *mashal* like for Moshe Rabbeinu, אָהַב כֶּסֶף לֹא יִשְׂבַע כֶּסֶף.

The Parah Parable

And so for the person who knows that the foundation of accomplishing in this world is שְׂתִבְרַר וְיִתְאַמַּת, that it should become clear and true to him that this world is only a preparation for the Next World, that this world is only valuable because of what will be afterwards, so he understands that everything in this world is a *mashal*. Just like the Parah Adumah is a *mashal*, a lesson about the Next World, everything in the world can be utilized for a career of יִתְבְּרַר וְיִתְאַמַּת.

And the results of such a career are certainly going to be remarkably great. Because when a man thinks of *Olam Haba* all the time, so all of his deeds, all his behavior in this world becomes different. When you live for the moment, you can say things and do things or not do things that you might regret later. You can do things that are not so wise. You

can waste your life. But when a person is living with intimations of Olam Haba, so he's הַרְוָאָה אֶת הַנוֹלָד – he looks forward to the future; and not only does he live more happily because of that but he lives more successfully too because he lives life walking through the vestibule of this world, preparing always for the great happiness awaiting him in the banquet hall of Olam Haba.

Have a Wonderful Shabbos

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Let's Get Practical

Bringing Olam Haba Into My Day-to-day

This week, I will, *bli neder*, work on the foundation of all *avodas Hashem*: keeping Olam Haba real in my mind. The booklet teaches that forgetting Olam Haba – or letting this world feel “final” – is the deepest *tumah*. And the cure is to sprinkle my mind, again and again, with reminders of the Next World.

So once a day this week, I will pause for ten seconds and say to myself: “This world is only the hallway – the real banquet is Olam Haba.”

To make that thought more concrete – to make it clear and true – I will take one thing I encounter during the day (a road, a meal, a garden, a mountain, money, anything beautiful or enjoyable) and remind myself: “This is only the *mashal*. The *nimshal* is much greater – eternal happiness with Hashem.”

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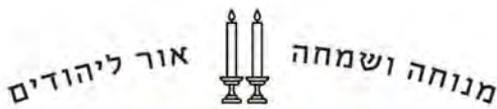

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The Fountain of Every Form of Goodness

A Jew is capable of feeling wonderfully *Shabbosdik*. He also is capable of desecrating Shabbos and thereby chasing away its *kedushah*. Without the blessed influence of *kedushas Shabbos*, our Shabbos is emptied of its true content.

We should know that *chillul Shabbos* is not just doing *melachah*. It can also be talking about nonsense on Shabbos. It can be sitting and reading things other than *divrei Torah*. This too is *chillul Shabbos*.

What's wrong with these things if they aren't *melachah*? The problem is that they go against *Zachor es yom haShabbos*. If we forget it's the holy day of Shabbos and occupy ourselves with all sorts of innocuous but mundane matters, the *kedushah* of Shabbos flees from us. To feel *kedushas Shabbos* and attain its blessings, we have to remember Shabbos constantly and keep the mitzvos of the day. If we act in this manner, Shabbos, in turn, will watch over us. All the tremendous *kedushah* and *berachah* of Shabbos will subsequently rest upon us.

The mitzvah of Shabbos is unique in the great benefit we feel from it. *Chazal* say that the shine of a person's face is different on Shabbos than during the week, because on Shabbos a person's face naturally shines with the light of *kedushah*. (*Bereishis Rabbah* 11:2) Early Torah sources mention often that Shabbos is an overflowing *ma'ayan* (fountain) of every form of goodness we may seek.

We should know that just seeing Shabbos desecration harms our souls. *Chazal* say a person is subjected to the sight of a sin only if he has sinned himself. (*Tosefta, Shevuos* 3:3) And he is rewarded with the sight of a mitzvah if he has merits. Torah sources explain that a person sees only those things to which he has some connection, directly or indirectly. If a person is absolutely unrelated to a certain matter, he won't even see it! If we kept *Shabbos Kodesh* the way we should, one hundred percent, we wouldn't even see public desecration of Shabbos.

With so much to gain from *Shabbos Kodesh*, it is a pity so few people know how to tap into it. In fact, the way to do so is found in the *Aseres HaDibros*. There it says: *Zachor es yom haShabbos le-kadsho*. What is the message? Remember Shabbos! Keep your mind on it, don't forget about it, and subsequently you'll treat it as you should. This is the key.

Shabbos differs from all other forms of *kedushah*, for only Shabbos has had *kedushah* since the very beginning of Creation. As soon as Shabbos came into existence, "God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it." From the time of Creation, Hashem Himself granted Shabbos its great *kedushah*, and so it remains to this very day.

Shabbos, in its very essence, is brimming with *kedushah* and *berachah*. Shabbos is holy even without our input and effort. To illuminate ourselves with its exalted *kedushah* and attain its blessings, we must remember that it's Shabbos and uphold its mitzvos!

Thank You to this week's Sponsors!
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and your families! Tizku Lemitzvot!

Adapted by R' Y. Levy from *Nefesh Shimshon, Shabbos Kodesh, Rav Shimshon Pincus, Feldheim*

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QUESTION

My wife has to diet and she can't eat chocolates and ice cream, and now she wants to banish these foods from the house. Do I have to yield to that request?

ANSWER

The answer is yes. A husband many times has to deny himself certain luxuries because his wife has to reduce. She cannot afford to have ice cream and chocolate cake in the house and so he has to be willing to suffer a little bit because of her.

And I'll tell you why.

In general, married life is a matter of making concessions to each other. Not only marriage – it's a principle by itself. It's impossible for each person to do everything he wants to do. Even partners in business cannot continue if everyone insists on his own way. We must always make concessions and that's a perfection that people gain in their characters. They learn self-control. They're willing to yield here, a little bit here and a little there. That's the only way people can get along together, whether it's a business partnership or a marriage or anything else.

Neighbors too. Even neighbors next door to each other, and your little boy broke a window in the basement of your neighbor. The neighbor doesn't run out and make a fuss. He's a sensible neighbor. He has to live together with you, so he keeps quiet. I had a neighbor like that. My little boy broke a window, a neighbor's basement window. He didn't say a word. That's a good neighbor! If you come out and make a fight, so there will be repercussions. You have to live together for many years.

He kept quiet. That's what neighbors are. You have to give in, and you're better off that way.

Your wife is your most important neighbor, and so you must yield. The happiness of married life is if you learn how to yield and to accommodate yourself to each other.

June 1991

Life Questions? 

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