



PART 1: HAVE YOU DONE YOUR ACCOUNTING LATELY?

THE PRECIOUS DONATIONS

The *parshah* begins by saying *אלה פקודי המשכן*, these are the the *cheshbonos*, the accountings, of the donations for the *Mishkan* (Shemos 38:21). The word *pekudei* means counting. When you have a lot of different things to take into account and keep track of, that's called *pekudei*. To build the *Mishkan* there was gold, there was silver, there was copper that was involved. All kinds of donations. And there has to be a *cheshbon*, an accounting given by Moshe Rabeinu as to what everything was used for and where everything went.

The *medrash* (Shemos Rabbah 51:6) says that when Moshe Rabbeinu finished the building of the *Mishkan*, he couldn't figure out where all the donations went. And then Hashem revealed to him where everything was. *Chazal* ask a question. If Hashem trusted Moshe Rabbeinu why did Moshe Rabbeinu feel that he had to make a *cheshbon*? It says in the *passuk* *כל משה בכל* לא כן עבדי משה בכל הוא, *we know very well that Moshe was fully trustworthy!*¹

Chazal tell us that Moshe Rabbeinu heard some of the *leitzaanim*, the comedians telling jokes about him, "We wonder how Moshe became so rich. How could a man be involved in such a project, involving gold, silver, copper, precious jewels, and not become rich? Do you blame him if he wanted to have a little bit of wealth?" So Moshe Rabbeinu said, "*Chayeichem*, I swear. The *Mishkan* is going to be finished, and I'm going to give you a *cheshbon*." He said, "Come let's make a *cheshbon*, *אלה פקודי המשכן משכן*, *אלה פקודי המשכן משכן*, these are the *pekudei haMishkan*, these are the accountings and the *cheshbonos* of the *Mishkan*, the *Mishkan Ha'eidus*."

Now, this concept of keeping a *cheshbon* and being on top of what you're doing is extremely important. Rav Moshe Feinstein says that the actual *cheshbon* for a person is to take stock of every single thing and aspect that Hashem presented him with. Hashem grants you time to live. What did you do with that valuable time that Hashem gave you? Did you move rocks around in a forest? Is that what Hashem gave you that precious time for? Did you plant flowers? Is that what Hashem gave you the time in your life for? Did you designate any of your time to Torah and *mitzvos*? How much time? How much time did you waste? When Hashem gave you *parnasah*, how did you use that *parnasah*? What did you do with your money? What types of charity did you use it for?

Now, a person should not think for one second that his life is his, his time is his, his money is his, his home is his. There's no such a thing. If Hakadosh Baruch Hu presents you with something you have to utilize it for the purpose that Hashem gives it to you for.

The Torah tells us exactly how a man has to conduct himself in his day, how he has to spend his time. For example, you have to *daven* to Hashem before a certain time in the morning. You can't get up whenever you want and *daven* whenever you want. That's an amazing thing. In the world, people don't understand that, they don't grasp that. You can't spend your money however you want. You decide you don't want to give *tzedakah* because you're doing a building project. You're building an addition to your house and it's costing you a lot. A guy once told me, "I can't give *tzedakah*." I said, "Who gave you the right to steal money?" "I didn't steal a penny!" I said, "You're a thief." He said, "What are you talking about?" I said, "You just told me you can't give *tzedakah* because you needed four hundred grand for your addition. Do you know who gave you that four hundred grand? Hashem. You know, Hashem said there's a *chiyuv* to give *tzedakah*. You can't give *tzedakah*?! That means you're a thief. What's the difference between you and a bank robber?" The guy said, "I never heard of that." I said, "Well, get smart."

There was another guy I was trying to convince to come and learn in the night *kollel*. He told me, "I can't come. I'm doing work on my house." Work on my house? I used to meet the guy every few weeks. I would say, "Are you finished yet?" "No, no, it's a project." I said, "What are you working on?" He said, "I'm doing the bathroom." "You're making a bathroom? Very interesting. How long do you think it's going to take?" He said, "I'm hoping - six months." It ended up taking him a year and two months. I said, "A year and two months of your life went to the bathroom! Can you imagine that?!" I said, "You invested more than a year of your life into a john, my friend. Are you out of your mind?" He said, "No, that was important to me. It's my time. It's my life." I said, "My dear friend, you're wrong. It's not yours. Hashem is going to someday hold you accountable for that. He's going to say to you who gave you a right to be a *ganav*? I gave you the time to learn Torah every day. I gave you the time to *daven* three times a day. I gave you the money to give *tzedakah* also." I didn't say you can't enjoy the project but you can't do it at the expense of your *chiyuvim*, obligations.

You have to know, Rav Moshe Feinstein says, that every single one of us is going to be held accountable. How did you use your *kishronos*? How did you use your *kochos* that Hashem has granted you? Did you use them the way Hashem wanted you to?

Here is a person that loves playing ball. A lot of people like playing ball. They never grow up. They like to play ball. What do they

¹ משכן העדת אשר פקד על פי משה, כל מה שהיו עושין, עושין על פי משה, שנאמר: אשר פקד על פי משה. וכל מה שהיה משה עושה על ידי אחרים, שנאמר: עבדת הלויים ביד איתמר בן אהרן הכהן, לא עשה אלא משגמרה מלאכת המשכן, אמר להם בואו ואני עושה לפניכם חשבון. אמר להם משה: אלה פקודי המשכן, כך וכן יצא על המשכן, עד שהוא יושב ומחשב שכח באלף ושבע מאות וחמשה ושבעים שקל מה שעשה ויום לעמודים, התחיל יושב ומתמיה, אמר עכשיו ישראל מוצאין ידיהם לאמר משה נטלן, מה עשה האיר הקדוש ברוך הוא עיני וראה אותם עשנים ויום לעמודים, אותה שעה נתפסו כל ישראל על מלאכת המשכן, מי גרם לו על ידי שישב ופיסן, הוי: אלה פקודי המשכן, ולמה עשה עמכם חשבון, הקדוש ברוך הוא יתברך שמו מאמין, שנאמר (במדבר יב, ז): לא כן עבדי משה בכל ביתי נאמן הוא, ולמה אמר להם משה בואו ונעסק במשכן ונחשב לפניכם, אלא ששמע משה ליצי: ישראל מדברים מאחריו, שנאמר (שמות לג, ט): והיה כבא משה האהלה יד עמוד הענן ועמד פתח האהל ודבר עם משה, (שמות לג, ח): והביטו אחרי משה, ומה היו אומרים, רבי יוסון אמר אשרי יולדתו של זה, ומה היא רואה בו, כל ימיו הקדוש ברוך הוא מדבר עמו, כל ימיו הוא משלם להקדוש ברוך הוא, זהו: והביטו אחרי משה, רבי שמא אמר היה אומרים חמי קדל דבריה דעמרים, וחרבו אמר לו אדם ששילט על מלאכת המשכן אין אתה מבקש שיהא עשיר, קששמע משה כך אמר להם משה, חייכם, נגמר המשכן אתן לכם חשבון, אמר להם בואו ונעשה חשבון, הוי: ואלה פקודי המשכן.

do? They play ball all the time. Every night that they have free time, they try to put together games - I am talking about adults! The problem is you can't get too many adults to come together every night. They have a hard time with this. They try as much as they can. Hashem is asking you, "Is that what I gave you that time for? To play ball as much as you can?" But people don't understand this. They don't begin to grasp it. They're going to give an accounting for every single thing: What did you do with your life?

AN OBLIGATED YESHIVAH ALUMNUS

A very common thing with people who learn in *yeshivah* and then leave *yeshivah* is that they think that when they leave *yeshivah*, they're free. They can do what they want, how they want, and where they want. But there is nothing further than the truth! There's no *chiluk* if you're in the *yeshivah* or out of the *yeshivah*. There's nothing wrong with a person going to work. But on Sunday you don't work. I've asked this to many people. "How come you're not in *yeshivah* on Sunday?" "I've got things to take care of." I said, "How come you're not in *yeshivah* on Shabbos?" "I've got to rest." "When are you going to fulfill your *chiyuvim*, your obligations?" You have to fulfill your obligations. But people go through their lives, their entire lives, years upon years upon years, and they think that it's a *hefker velt*. They're going to have to answer for that. Just because a person is not in *yeshivah*, it doesn't mean he doesn't have to *shteig*. It's shameful. It's a tremendous *bizayon*.

I see a *yungerman* who learned in *yeshivah* and then leaves *yeshivah*, and he can't come to *daven* in *yeshivah* anymore. And on Shabbos he can't come on time. I told the guy, "What kind of a shameful thing is that? Why don't you come on time to *davening*?" "Now I'm a *balebust*." I said, "What? That's why you don't show up in *yeshivah*?" If I see a *yungerman* who left *yeshivah* and doesn't show up in the *beis medrash* on Sunday - that's disgraceful! A shame. A *bizayon*. He's *mevazeh* himself *berabim*. That's what he's doing. Hashem is going to hold it against him like nobody's business! Why didn't you show up? What's your excuse? You don't work on Sunday.

It's not *pashut* Rabosai. You have to understand this is a *chiyuv*.

Rav Hutner was once having a conversation with a person about when he could leave *yeshivah*. Rav Hutner told him, "You could never leave the *yeshivah*." So the guy looked at him, "What?! I have to learn in *yeshivah* all my life?! I'm not going to be in the *yeshivah* all my life." Rav Hutner said, "You could never leave the *yeshivah*!" "What does that mean?" the fellow asked him. Rav Hutner said, "You don't understand what I mean. What I mean to say is you could never forsake the *yeshivah*. When you walk out of the *yeshivah* at the end of your time of learning, if you're not taking the *yeshivah* with you, you failed in your life's mission. You have to be able to take the *yeshivah* with you." It doesn't mean you learn all day. It means that you have to take the *yeshivah* with you. That's what a person has to understand. It's a very, very fundamental understanding.

ACCOUNTING ON FINGERS AND TOES

Now, there are two hundred and forty eight *mitzvos aseh*, positive *mitzvos*, in the Torah and there are three hundred and sixty five *lo sa'asehs* in the Torah, things you're not allowed to do. *Chazal* tell us (Midrash Tanchuma, Shoftim 19:1) that the two hundred and forty eight *mitzvos aseh* correspond to a person's *eivarim*, to a person's organs, to a person's limbs. Every *mitzvah* corresponds to one of the organs. *Chazal* tell us that each organ cries out to the person and it says, "Please do mitzvos with us, שתחיה בזכותנו ותאריך ימים, so that we could live in the *zechus* of the *mitzvah* and we should have *arichus yamim*." Every time a person does a *mitzvah* he has to know he's making one of his organs healthy. Exercise does not give your organs any *chiyus*. That's not what gives a person *chiyus* of *arichus yamim*. There are three hundred and sixty five *aveiros* that correspond to the person's body. And they also cry out to a person and they say, "Please אל תעבר בי את העבירה, don't do the *aveirah* with me. Don't mess me up." Whenever you see a person with a messed up organ that's an indication that he lacks that *mitzvah* or he did an *aveirah*. It's always like that. I tell people when you have a problem with one of your organs or one of your limbs, the first thing you do is to find out if you're doing the right thing with that organ. Are you doing the *mitzvos* that Hashem gave you that organ for or that limb for? It's not a *hefker velt*.

When people get older, they have hearing problems. What do people say? That's just a consequence of age. As you get older, your hearing gets diminished. No. Your hearing gets diminished if you didn't do the *mitzvos* with your ears and if you were doing *aveiros* with your ears. And so too with your eyes.²

Except that there are big *tzaddikim*. I once heard that the Steipler *davened* for his hearing to be diminished. He didn't want to be involved so much with the world. He wanted to learn. Most people that I know don't make that request from Hashem. You want to have your hearing. You want to maintain your eyesight. You want to maintain your healthy feet and healthy arms.

AN ENLIGHTENING SELF-ASSESSMENT

Rabosai, you have to understand that this is how it works. Everybody has to ask himself this question. What's my accounting? How am I doing? Do I feed and nourish my limbs with *mitzvos*? No? You had better get started! Hashem is going to say, "For years, I put up with you. For years, I was patient with you. I gave you healthy feet and healthy hands and a healthy mind." And then suddenly your mind starts to become feeble, because people never thought once: are they using their minds like Hashem wants them to? People are young. Hashem has a lot of patience when they're young. All of a sudden they get older, they get more nervous. They start dealing with all kinds of issues.

² כי יקרא קן צפור לפניך, שלח תשלח את האם. זה שאר הכתוב, מכל משמר נצור לברך כי ממנו תוצאות חיים (מש' ד' כג). אמר רב אדא, מאתים וארבעים ושמונה מצות עשה יש בתורה כמנין איבריך שבאדם, ובכל יום יום צועקים על האדם, עשה אותנו שתחיה בזכותנו ותאריך ימים. ושלוש מאות וששים וחמש מצות לא תעשה כמנין ימות החמה, ובכל יום יום שהחמה זורחת עד שהיא שוקעת, צווחת ואומרת לאדם, גוזרני עליך במי שהגיע ימך ליום הזה, אל תעבור בי את העבירה הזאת, ואל תכריע אותך ואת העולם כלו לכף חובה. הרי שש מאות ושלוש עשרה מצות. וכל מצוה ומצוה נזכר מתן שכרה, כגון כבוד אב ואם, ושלוח הקן, שכתוב בהן אריכות ימים. ויש מצות שמתן שכרה בניים, כמו שרה שאירחה את האורחים, ושומנית על שקבלה את אלישע. ויש עבירה טעונה סקילה, שריפה, הרג, וחנק. ואין לך מצוה קלה בכל המצות יותר משלוח הקן. ומה שכרה, למען ייטב לך והארכת ימים. משל למה הדבר דומה. למלך שהכניס פועלים לשדרו לנטוע ולא גילה להם שכר נטיעתן. לערב, כל מי שנטע אילן אחד, נתן לו זהוב אחד. התחילו הכל תמהין ואומרים, ומה זה שלא נטע אלא אילן אחד קל ופחות, נתן לו זהוב אחד. אנו שנטענו הרבה, על אחת כמה וכמה. ומה שכר שלוח הקן, שכרה אריכות ימים. שכר מצות שיש בהן חסרון וטורח והחייט נפשו, על אחת כמה וכמה. לפיכך לא פירש הקדוש ברוך הוא שכר עושי מצוה בתורה, שהיו ישראל עושין אותן מעצמן, להרבות שכר. שכר שנינו, אל תהיו כעבדים המשמשים את הרב על מנת לקבל פרס, אלא הוו כעבדים המשמשים את הרב שלא על מנת לקבל פרס. לכך כתב, מכל משמר נצור לברך, וכו'. [וז' הזה"ק (ח"א ק"ע"ב): "בגין דאית בבר נש רמ"ח שייפין לקבל רמ"ח פקודין דאורייתא ואית בבר נש שס"ה גידין ולקבלהון ש"ה פקודין דלא אינון איתיהבו למיעבד ולקבל ש"ה יומי שתא, וכו'"]

Rav Eliyahu Dessler in the *sefer Michtav Mei'Eliyahu* (חלק א) writes an amazing point. He says as follows: The *neshamah* is a living organism. The source of a person's life is from the *neshamah*. He says the *neshamah* is nourished from every moment in time. He says every single moment a person's *neshamah* opens up a unique window. And that window is now yearning, and calling, "Give me, bring to me a *hashpa'ah*, a spiritual *hashpa'ah*. Make me better. Strengthen me." He says after a moment, that window gets locked and now another *chelek* of his *neshamah* opens up, he says, its window. And then it gets closed. Every single moment that the *neshamah* is in this world, it constantly has windows opening up and a person has to pour *kedushah* into it. A person has to pour into it something that's going to strengthen the *neshamah*, that it could take with it for *netzach netzachim*. You're not taking your arms to the next world. The only thing you're taking with you is your *neshamah*.

The way a person puts things into that *neshamah* is by fulfilling *mitzvos*. That's how a person puts in the right influence. *Ruchniyus* is what builds and establishes the soul of a person and that's how a person goes through life.

Let's say a person does not fulfill the will of his *neshamah*. It means that *chelek* was not *mekabel* a *hashpa'ah* at all. It remains dark. And if he did an *aveirah* at that moment *chas veshalom*, so that *chelek* of his *neshamah* is *mekabel* the negative *hashpa'ah*. When a person comes to the *olam haemes* after *arichus yamim veshanim*, that person is going to see all the 'windows' that he didn't open.

I always think of this. I used to take my kids to places with little games. They have this game where things come up, and you have a little hammer, you have to hold it and try to knock down as many of those things as you can. If you miss some, you go, "Aahh! They ain't coming back. You missed that one." If you want to get a perfect score, every one that pops up, bop it on the head, bop it on the head, bop it on the head. I used to think, that's *mamash* what life is!

You should know that the 'window' that opens now has nothing to do with the 'window' that opens up in the next world. The *tachlis* that a person lives for this moment is never going to come back. It does not repeat itself. That's what a person has to know. A person has to make that *cheshbon*. It's a very important *cheshbon* for a person to make.

HEALTHY NESHAMAH - HEALTHY BODY

We go through life and we witness people at every turn and every twist who are suffering from all kinds of physical challenges and mind challenges. It's all an indication of lack of health. You talk to the fools of the world. They'll tell you it's an indication they don't eat properly. They don't eat organic food. Some will tell you they don't eat enough carbohydrates. *Yesh omrim* they eat too many carbohydrates. *Yesh omrim* you have to have different families of foods, so that you have the right *tziruf*. The bottom line is it's nonsense. A healthy body is a result of a healthy *neshamah*.

I used to always marvel at the *roshei yeshivah* in Telz. When I first came here, the whole *mizrach* wall was full from side to side with aged people. They kept on getting older and older. It was amazing to watch them. These were people who never did a drop of exercise in their life! Their diets consisted of all the food that they fed them in Telz, all the oily margarine and mayonnaise. They used to eat in *yeshivah*. I used to always marvel at them, how do these people walk? Their hands don't shake. They were 70, they were 80. They were going strong. I'm talking all day long, from early in the morning until late at night! What was keeping them going? To me, that was the greatest proof of the power of Torah and *mitzvos*. That's a *siman* of a healthy body. They were generally all healthy. And not because they were eating the right amount of carbohydrates. It was amazing to see! They didn't suffer from heart conditions. Their minds were sharp.

Now, of course, we are encouraged to keep a healthy body by eating healthy foods, not overeating, watching our weight, and exercising, but none of us should think, even for one second, that our "healthy" lifestyle and diets is what determines our health. All it is a just a *hishtadlus* to try to keep a clean and functioning *guf*, but it's ultimately Hashem Who brings *chiyus* to every cell in our body, not the combination of exercise and the perfect balance of proteins, fats and carbs.

Now of course, if you want to maintain horses you have to make sure they eat well. If you want to feed your dog and you want your dog to have a shiny coat, you have to make sure he eats healthy dog food full of good nutrients, full of good animal food in there. For horses, that works...but for a person?! A Yid? The *mitzvos* are what keeps him alive and brings him life.

WHERE ARE THE OLDER PEOPLE?

To me, it's a clear proof. Look at Rav Shach. I remember going to see him and being blown out of my mind. He was 90 something years old and he was giving *shiurim* and fighting. I saw him come alive. Because all he did was Torah and *mitzvos*. You'll ask any guy out there. That's the worst ingredient, to sit by a desk bent over looking at books and little words. That's the worst thing. It will tax your brain. It's going to make your body feeble. You're going to fall apart. I've never seen an Olympian 90 years old walking around the streets. Never! They're long gone and buried. It amazed me when I went to a health club for a little while - when they only had men there. Once, I went to that club, and I said to the owner, "Where are the older people?" He said, "What do you mean?" I said, "Don't old people exercise? This is the perfect place for them to come." He said, "Do you know what happens to the joints after you do exercise for life?" He said, "The joints go." He was an Olympian champ, this guy, a Yid, he had these joints that were all swollen. His elbows. His knees. He was the picture of a battered man. He looked like he went through the torture. And he prided himself on his prowess. There was a picture of him on the wall. There are no older folks in these places. Maybe once in a blue moon. All these guys get heart attacks.

I remember there was a fireman, a real health guy in his 40s. One day he's not there. What happened to him? He had a heart attack.

It's *pashut*. The *yetzer hara* fools us. What keeps you alive is the *mitzvos*. Our *eivarim* scream to us, "Keep us healthy! Give us *arichus yamim*."

WHEN NESHAMAH DEPARTS OLAM HAZEH

The Ponevezher Rav once said over a *moradige ma'aseh*. One day, the Chafetz Chaim called him in and said to him, "I have to tell you something. For seventy-eight years, I'm saying every day the following *tefilah* היא טהורה בי שנתת בי טהורה היא *tefilah* And only today I understood what I was saying." You hear an admission from the Chafetz Chaim?! The Chafetz Chaim gives an admission! "Only today, I *chapped* what I was saying." He said: The *neshamah* is pure. And because it's pure, it's eternal. It's forever. My *neshamah* was around from when the world was created and will be until the end of time. There is a short period of time that the *neshamah* is in this world. For seventy years, Hashem attached the *neshamah* to a *guf*. However, these years that it's in the *guf* are the deciding factors for the whole eternity of that *neshamah* because only in this period of time am I capable, and obligated, to fill my mission, to guard the purity of the *neshamah*, to better it, to beautify it. Because that *neshamah* מניי לטלה עתיד לטלה ממני *neshamah* You're going to take away from me, that's the *neshamah* that Hashem in the future is going to be לעתיד לבוא, Hashem will give it back to me in the future. It's only going to come back on the *madreigah* that it was on when I left this world!"

You look at older people who are about to depart this world and you think what did they do to their *neshamos*? What do they have to look forward to? What *madreigah*? How is it going to come back?

"A very short time," says the Chofetz Chaim, "כל זמן שהנשמה בקרבי", that's when a person could make his *neshamah* better. You have to picture it as the windows opened and windows closed, windows opened and windows closed, and a person is obligated to fill those windows with *mitzvos*. It's through the *neshamah* that the body lives."

Hakadosh Baruch Hu should help us be able to make these *cheshbonos*, be able to make these *pekudim*, and be able to strengthen ourselves. We should ask ourselves, "How are we doing? Do we have anything to show?" If you had to leave the world right now, what would you have to show? Which one of your organs do you think did the *mitzvos*? Are you even aware that you do *mitzvos* with your organs? Many people aren't aware of that. They don't even think about it. They go to work. That's what they know. Their main focus in life is on work. But keeping their health together by doing the *mitzvos* that Hashem granted them - that, they don't do. What a tragedy! Because the *neshamah* you will leave this world with is the *neshamah* you're going to have forever and forever! So it behooves us to start making a *cheshbon*, to start making an accounting and to think how are we doing healthwise? How are we doing with what Hashem gave us and Hashem granted us? Hopefully we can all wake up and smell the coffee

PART 2: THE ULTIMATE SIMCHA OF PURIM (5778)

THE STATUS OF MITZVAS MIKRA MEGILLAH

I would like to mention an important point about the Yom Tov of Purim. The Rambam in the beginning of his *sefer Yad Hachazakah* writes the whole tradition of *Torah sheba'al peh ish mipi ish* from Moshe Rabeinu until the Rambam's times. Afterwards, he enumerates all the *mitzvos*. At the end he writes the *mitzvos derabanan*. Before he lists the *mitzvos* he gives a *hakdamah* and this is what he says. There are some *mitzvos* besides the six hundred and thirteen that were *nischadesh* after *matan Torah* and the *chachamim* were *kovea* them through *nevi'im*, and they spread them throughout Klal Yisrael. One of the examples is *mikra megillah* on Purim. Some others are *ner Chanukah*, the *ta'anis* of Tisha B'Av, *netilas yadayim*, and *eiruvin*. Each one of these *mitzvos* has many complexities, many *dikdukim*. He says all of these *mitzvos* that we were obligated in, that were *nischadesh*, we're *chayav* to be *mekabel* them and to observe them like it says ומאל לך ימין ושמאל - "do not deviate from the instruction that they (Neviim and Sages) will tell you to right or left."³

Now how should you view these *mitzvos derabanan*? Do you view them as additions to the Torah?

We know you're not allowed to add or detract *mitzvos*. That means that no one could add *mitzvos* and come and tell you that Hashem Himself added *mitzvos* to the *mitzvos* of the Torah. But if a *beis din* with a *navi* who lived in that time added a *mitzvah derech takanah* or *derech gezeirah* then it's not considered a '*tosefes*' because the *rabanan* never came and said that Hakadosh Baruch Hu was *metzaveh* to read the *megillah* in its proper time. If they would have said it in that fashion, it would have been prohibited to do that *mitzvah*! It would have been *asur*. But this is what they said. The *nevi'im*, with a *beis din* were *mesaken* and commanded to read a *megillah bezmanah* in order to remember the praises of Hakadosh Baruch Hu and the salvations that He did for us and that He was קרוב לשעותינו, in order to be *mevarech* Him and be *mehallel* Him and in order to notify the generations to come that it's אמת מה שהבטיחנו בתורה כי מי גוי גדול אשר לו אלקים קרבים אליו, "who is a great nation that has Hashem close to them," "like our Hashem, whenever we call to Him."

THE FUNCTION OF MITZVAS MIKRA MEGILLAH

Now, what is the function of the reading of the *megillah*? What are we trying to accomplish by reading the *megillah*? To publicize the *nes*, *pirsumei nisa*. That's what the purpose of reading the *megillah* is, *lefarsem* the *nes* of Purim through the *megillah*. What exactly are we trying to be *mefarsem*? The Rambam (ibid.) says that the purpose of being *mefarsem* the *nes* is first to thank Hashem for the great salvation that He brought to us and in order to be *modia*, to inform and publicize to the future generations באותו הזמן מצוה דרך תקנה, או דרך הוראה, או דרך גזירה אין זו תוספת שהרי לא אמרו שהקדוש ברוך הוא ציווה למצוות התורה, או לחסר אחת מאלו השש מאות ושלוש עשרה מצוות. אבל אם הוסיפו בית דין עם נביא שיהיה שהנביאים עם בית דין תיקנו וציוו לקרות המגילה בעונתה כדי להזכיר שבחיו של הקדוש ברוך הוא ותשועות עשה לנו, והיה קרוב לשוועות כדי לברכו ולהלל, וכדי להודיע לדורות הבאים שאמת מה שהבטיחנו בתורה, "ומי גוי גדול, אשר לו אלוהים קרבים אליו" (ראה דברים ד, ז; דברים ח, נ). ועל דרך זו היא כל מצוה ומצוה שהיא מדברי סופרים. בין עשה ובין לא תעשה (משנה תורה, מצוות לא תעשה)

So now we're going to study this Rambam through the eyes of the *heilegeh* Brisker Rav. The Brisker Rav knew how to *chap* the *nekudah* that had to be *chapped* in any statement, and this is what he said. He was once having a conversation with Rav Shach about this Rambam who writes that the whole purpose of the *megillah* is "to publicize to the future generations." What is the function of doing that? What do we want to notify the future generations about? He said, "You have to know that the Torah is telling us that

³ וכו' אלו הם שש מאות ושלוש עשרה מצוות שנאמרו לו למשה בסיני, הן וכללותיהן ופרטותיהן ודקדוקיהן; וכל אותן הכללות והפרטות והדקדוקין והביאורין של כל מצוה ומצוה, היא תורה שבעל פה שקילבו בית דין מפי בית דין. ויש מצוות אחרות שנתחדשו אחר מתן תורה, וקבעו אותן נביאים וחכמים ופשוטו בכל ישראל כגון מקרא מגילה, ונר חנוכה, ותענית תשעה באב, וידיים, ועירובין. ויש לכל מצוה ומצוה מאלו פירושי ודקדוקין; והכול יתבאר בחיבור זה. כל אלו המצוות שנתחדשו—חיובין או לקבלם ולשומרם, שנאמר "לא תסור, מכל הדבר..." (ראה דברים יז, יא); ואינם תוספת על מצוות התורה. ועל מה הזהירה תורה "לא תוסיף עליה, ולא תגרע ממנה" (דברים יג, א) - שלא יהיה נביא רשאי לחדש דבר ולומר שהקדוש ברוך הוא ציווה למצוות התורה, או לחסר אחת מאלו השש מאות ושלוש עשרה מצוות. אבל אם הוסיפו בית דין עם נביא שיהיה באותו הזמן מצוה דרך תקנה, או דרך הוראה, או דרך גזירה אין זו תוספת שהרי לא אמרו שהקדוש ברוך הוא ציווה לעשות עירובין או לקרות מגילה בעונתה. ואילו אמרו כן, היו מוסיפין על התורה. אלא כך אנו אומרים, שהנביאים עם בית דין תיקנו וציוו לקרות המגילה בעונתה כדי להזכיר שבחיו של הקדוש ברוך הוא ותשועות עשה לנו, והיה קרוב לשוועות כדי לברכו ולהלל, וכדי להודיע לדורות הבאים שאמת מה שהבטיחנו בתורה, "ומי גוי גדול, אשר לו אלוהים קרבים אליו" (ראה דברים ד, ז; דברים ח, נ). ועל דרך זו היא כל מצוה ומצוה שהיא מדברי סופרים. בין עשה ובין לא תעשה (משנה תורה, מצוות לא תעשה)

there's going to come a time in the future history of Klal Yisrael, in the *galus*, when we're going to face *middas hadin*, judgment for our sins and terrible *gezeiros*, and it's going to be a *matzav* where we're going to find ourselves very distant from Hakadosh Baruch Hu. But then we will turn to Him *betefilah ubeteshuvah* and in that very second Hakadosh Baruch Hu will return to us with amazing *nissim* and *niflaos*." The Brisker Rav said, "You know when this was fulfilled? In the era of Mordechai and

Esther. And all the *goyim* were amazed. They understood there was a terrible *gezeirah* on us and they understood that we had sinned to Hashem. But in three days they hung Haman in *Shushan Habirah*, the capital city. Three days after the *gezeirah* was made! **כי מי גוי גדול אשר לו אלקים קרבים אליו בכל קראנו אליו** *teshuvah*, a great *yeshuah* can come."

In order to ascertain and establish and prove these words, the *rabbanim* made a *takanah* - and you're allowed to make such a *takanah*.

NO SHAME FOR ALL WHO HOPE TO HASHEM

But the Brisker Rav didn't stop there. Had he stopped there what I would have said is that the function of the reading of the *megillah* and the *pirsumei nisa* is to teach us the power of *tefillah*. That's where I would have stopped. Right there. That's what I would have said. Comes along the Brisker Rav and he says that this Rambam is the *pshat* in the famous Purim *piyut* called *Shoshanas Yaakov*. What does it say in *Shoshanas Yaakov*? It says **להודיע שכל קוֹיך לא יבשו**, that all those who hope to you, who are *mekaveh el Hashem*, **לא יבשו**, they won't be shamed.

So why are we doing this *mitzvah*? To announce to the world that **שכל קוֹיך לא יבשו ולא יכלמו** כל החוסים בך, all those who have *bitachon* in You won't be shamed.

When I saw this Brisker Rav a number of years ago, the lights went on! Because before the Brisker Rav, I thought the *pshat* was "*tefillah*" and I didn't see *bitachon* having anything to do with this. But I see in *Shoshanas Yaakov* that it's all about *kivuy* (hope) and *chisayon* (reliance), which is *bitachon*! **בך ה' חסיתי אל אבושה** "I seek my refuge in You, Hashem," it says in Tehillim (31:2).

I want you to know what the Ramchal explains in *Yalkut Yedias Ha'emes* on the *passuk* חסיתי בך ה' in You Hashem I relied on, **אל אבושה**. *Zugt* the Ramchal, it's known **גילוי נגאליים יהיו הגלות בזמן לישראל שיש בשביל הקיווי** כי, because of the *kivuy* that Klal Yisrael has during the time of the *galus*, they will be redeemed. That's why it says **אל אבושה לעולם** כי בך חסיתי אל אבושה.⁴

TWO TYPES OF BITACHON: RECEIVING AND EARNING

I want to explain again and to clarify further what is unique about the *bitachon* of Chag HaPurim. What is unique about that *bitachon*? I'm going to share with you a *pshat* from Rav Avraham ben HaGr"a (1766-1808). He explains the last *passuk* in *Hodu* from *pesukei d'zimra*. It says **כי גמל עלי** ואני בחסדך בטחתי יגל ליבי בישועתך אשריה לה' **כי גמל עלי**. We always say over a famous *pshat* from Rav Chaim Halevi Soloveitchik. Today, we're going to share with you a *pshat* from Rav Avraham ben HaGr"a. Now, listen to this because there are a lot of the *yesodos* here. You may hear *yesodos* from me sometimes, and you don't know if there are any *mekoros* for these *yesodos* or if we just make them up from the air. Today, I will tell you a *mekor* for two of the famous *yesodos* of *bitachon*.

Listen what he says: **כשאכיר בעצמי**, when I will be *makir*, when I will recognize about myself, **היותי חסר מכל**, that I am lacking everything, **על צד החסד המוחלט**, because of absolute *chessed*. You hear that? He continues: so then it's true **הישועה אלי** כי, **בבוא אלי** when the *yeshuah* shall come to me, **לא אמנע**, I won't refrain from rejoicing in it. **ואני בחסדך בטחתי יגל ליבי בישועתך**, however, **לא בשמחה שלימה**, it won't be *simchah sheleimah*. It's going to be **יגל ליבי בישועתך**. You know what that means to say? Where do you see it's not a *simchah sheleimah*? Where does it say in this *passuk* **יגל ליבי בישועתך** that it's not a *simchah sheleimah*? Because it says in the *passuk* **יגל ליבי**, my heart will rejoice. It won't be **מתפרץ לחוץ**. It won't "break out" into the open. It won't have enough *koach* to break out. The *gilah* is going to be *belibi*, on the inside.⁵

however, he says, **מה שיגרום לפרסם בגילה**, what is going to cause that the *gilah* should become publicized? When does a person publicize a *nes* and **להראות בכלים החיצוניים**, and it's demonstrated and shown in his outside *keilim*, his feet, his hands, his face, **אשריה לה'?** You want to know when I'm going to sing *shirah* with my mouth, **שיר וכל תודה** and **גילה ברניה מרוב שמחה**? The answer is: it's only going to be **כי גמל עלי**."

And what does that mean **כי גמל עלי**? Listen to what he says. You know what the word *gamal* comes from? *Gemul*. You know what *gemul* means? That's when you earn something. When you work and somebody pays you for your earnings, that's called *gemul*, *tashlum gemul*. *Gemul* is something you earn. It's not a *chessed*. It's not *tzedakah*. **כאשר אם אזכה לקחת מצד מעשי הטובים**, if I'm going to earn something because of my *ma'asim tovim*, I'll be able to say, **יחוס עלינו**, that's something else.

It says over here there are two types of *bitachon*. *Bitachon* number one, is when I realize I'm in a pickle. I'm stuck. I have no hope. There's nothing I can do. Let me give you some real life examples of this type of *bitachon*.

PURE GIFT, PARTIAL JOY - THE STORY OF THE RENTERS

A fellow called me today, let's call him Pinchas. He wanted to add to my story repertoire, so we will. Pinchas had a house in Lakewood and he rented out his basement. It wasn't a cheap house. He needed that income from the basement. He found somebody who was willing to sign for three years. The guy was willing to sign a lease for three years! That's pretty good. They cut the deal. The price was right. Everything was good. Nu, two years go by. The guy in the basement tells Pinchas that he's looking to

⁴ כתב הרמח"ל עה"פ "בך ה' חסיתי אל אבושה" (תהילים עא, א), וז"ל: "דוע כי בשביל הקיווי שיש לישראל בזמן הגלות יהיו נגאליים", ו"המקוה, אע"פ שיש לו מעט מעשים טובים לא יבוש, שנאמר אני ה' אשר לא יבושו קווי. וזה כי לדל יש תקוה, ומי שהוא דל ממעשים טובים, יש לו תקוה. כי ה' מתגלה עליו ומעביר כל פשעיו, וזה סוף התיקון מוגדל תקנות ישראל באורך הגלות, ובטוחים באמונה שיגאלו" (אוצרות רמח"ל עמ' קנז, רמז) ⁵ וזה שאמר ואני בחסדך בטחתי כשאכיר בעצמי היותי חסר מכל וכל ושאני מוכרח לבטוח לקבל הטוב על צד החסד המוחלט, אמת הוא כי בבא אלי הישועה לא אמנע מלהתעלץ בה אך לא בשמחה שלימה כי יגל ליבי בישועתך תהיה גילת ליבי בתוך קרבי לא יתאמץ כחה להראות החוצה, אמנם מה שיגרום לפרסם בגילה ולהראות בכלים החיצוניים שאשיר לה' בשר וקול תודה אף גילת ורנן מרוב שמחה הוא כי גמל עלי כאשר אני אזכה לכך מצד מעשי הטובים עד שיאמר שגמל עלי בדרך גמול כפי מה שרצה יתברך לייחס עלינו כאמור עד כאן דבריו (באר אברהם תהלים יג,ו)

buy a house. "Okay." "Don't worry I'm not moving out now. I'm going to buy the house and then fix it up a little bit. I'm only going to move after the three years are up."

One night the guy flees. The guy brings a truck and he skitches out like a mouse in the middle of the night. He doesn't answer his phone. Pinchas calls him up, "Hello? Hello?" He found out from a neighbor that the fellow moved only eight houses away. A chutzpah! Usually in such situations you get all upset. That's what happens. And then the *yetzer hara* sees the guy is vulnerable and the *yetzer hara* gets a person to be *over kol haTorah kulah* plus. He gets you with *lashon hara*. He gets you with *rechilus*. He gets with *sinah*. He gets you with *shekarim*. He gets you with *מוך לרעך כמוך*. He gets you loaded, basically.

The *yetzer hara* loves *machlokes* because when he sees *machlokes* he sees vulnerable people in the world, people that are just screaming, "Yetzer hara help me!" The *yetzer hara* says, "Don't worry, son. I'm coming right to you. I'm going to give you special attention." And he gets you right in the *be'er shachas*. He's *mored* you into *Gehinom she'ein kamoso*.

Baruch Hashem, Pinchas called me up. I told him, "No fights. That's the first thing. What you can do is go to *beis din*. You can go to *beis din*. Don't get angry. Go to *beis din*." So he went to *beis din*. He said the renter wasn't answering his phone. *Beis din* called him and told the guy to come to *beis din*. *Beis din* told him, "If you don't come by this day, you're getting a judgment." Ah! ויבא... And the neighbor all of a sudden came to *beis din*. They told *beis din*, "You know it's hard for us. We can't afford it. We had to move out. The house was ready. We'll still try to find somebody to rent out the basement to. We hope to help him."

They looked for somebody to replace them. So they found somebody. That somebody is not willing to take it for the whole time. Only part of the time. And that somebody is only willing to pay part of the price. So Pinchas is going to lose out. The *yetzer hara* says, "I'm still here my friend. Just call me up. I'm going to help you with this too."

I told Pinchas, "Do two things. The first thing - have *bitachon*. Have *bitachon*." I told him a similar story about a guy who called me not long ago. He had to rent his basement in the middle of a development. I have many stories like this but that was just the story that came to my mind. This guy also had a basement he had to rent out. It was a pressure for him. He had no idea how, what, where, when. He called me up and said, "How am I going to rent this thing out?" I said, "Very simple. A little *bitachon*." He said, "What kind of *bitachon*?" He said, "There are three hundred and fifty listings in the *Masa U'Matan* publication alone. Why would a guy take my little dinky basement that's not anything special?! It's not at the end of a block. It doesn't have a private driveway. I have nothing to offer the guy. *Gornisht*. Why would a guy do it?" I said, "Because Hashem is the one who arranges real estate. Hashem is in charge of all the real estate in Lakewood. Not the *yeshivah* and not the politico. Not Mr. Miller, the mayor, or other people. It's all the Ribono Shel Olam." I told the guy, "Put in one ad and *im yirtzeh Hashem* it's going to happen."

So lo and behold the guy told me, twenty-four hours later somebody from Atlanta called him. A couple wanted to move in. I said, "You've got to make sure that they can pay. That's the *ikar*." I said, "Do they have where to pay from? Do they have money?" Anyway, the guy's wife had a good degree. They had where to pay from. I told him, "Grab it." In twenty-four hours the guy found a renter and he signed. I said, "You see what I'm talking about? Three hundred and fifty listings in *Masa U'Matan*. Most people are being *boteach* in *Masa U'Matan*. And it sounds Jewish. They're *boteach* in people. But you're *boteach* in Hashem. You cut to the head of the line and nobody has any *ta'anos* on you. That's the best thing. No one has any *ta'anos* on you."

So I told Pinchas, "What do you have to mess around for? You don't have to settle for this. First, I will tell you to have *bitachon*. Tell Hashem, 'I need this apartment filled. I don't want to find somebody. I'm a busy person. It's not exactly next door to the *yeshivah*.' It's a *sh tickel* out of the way." I told him, "If it doesn't work out then you can always take the partial renters."

Pinchas called me this morning, all excited. He said, "I want to be one of the stories." He said, "A couple came. Not only did they want my apartment and they're going to pay my full asking price, but they said they want to repaint the whole thing, on their *cheshbon*! And not only that, they want to put down all new flooring." I said, "What kind of flooring do you have there now?" He said, "Right now I have carpet. Carpet is the cheapest covering for the floor. He wants to put down a nice floor. He happens to work for some company." I said, "You see? That's from Hashem." To me it's no *chiddush* anymore.

So, that's the first kind of *bitachon* that Rav Avraham ben HaGr"a discusses. That's the *יגל ליבי בישועתיך*. You know why? Because you realized you were *choser*, you realized you were lacking, you realized there was nothing you could do about it. You're *boteach* in a *chessed Hashem*. You understood it was *chessed muchlat*, absolute *chessed* and I'm happy when the *yeshuah* comes but it's *יגל ליבי בישועתיך*.

FULL SIMCHA - BITACHON WITH A PEULAH

But then there's another, a second type of *bitachon* and that is when a person did *peulos*, he did an *avodah* of *bitachon*. He did *ma'asim tovim*. He did *tefillos*. He bonded with Hashem. He connected with Hashem. Then the guy feels *עלי גמל*.

You have to know you can get *chessed* from Hashem, *tovos* from Hashem, *גמור חסד גמור*. That's when a person is not holding by being *raoy* to receive the *tovah* based on his *ma'asim*. But the *simchah* is not a *simchah sheleimah*.

From the *beis medrash* of the Gr"a, Rav Yitzchak Isaac Chaver writes, *איזהו עשיר השמח בחלקו*. You know what that means? He says the person who was *toreach beatzmo* (invested his own effort) and he was *zocheh* for the *chessed* and he didn't have to get *mishel acheirim*, he didn't have to receive *chessed muchlat* without working for it, that's a *שמח בחלקו*. That's the guy who really is happy. That's the *emese simchah*. That's the *emese yegia kapecha* your own effort, that's the *emese yegias kapayim* because I worked for it. I worked on my *bitachon*. I connected with Hashem!

This is a very important *zach*.

The *simchah* of the *yeshuah* of Purim was that type of *simchah*. The *simchah* of the *yeshuah* of Purim was such that the Yidden worked on it. They fasted for three days. They put their *bitachon* in Hashem. Esther, Mordechai, they were *boteach* in Hakadosh

Baruch Hu. Oh! You're *boteach* in Hakadosh Baruch Hu? כל קוֹיךְ לא יבִּשׁוּ. That's why the *simchah* was a *moradige simchah*. ליהודים היהתה אורה ושמחה וששון ויקר. When a person does *avodas hatefilah* and he's *mekarev* himself to Hakadosh Baruch Hu from a *matzav* that's *rachok meod*, he undertakes *ma'asim tovim* and he's *boteach baHashem*, בך ה' חסיתי אל אבושה, then you won't have *bushah*.

AN IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

I just want to add one more *pshat* from Rav Avraham ben HaGr"a on the *brachah* of *Al Hatzaddikim*. He says, what is the meaning of כל קוֹיךְ לא יבִּשׁוּ? As we explained from the Brisker Rav, based on the Rambam, the lesson of Purim is לדורות that if a person is *boteach* in Hashem בך החוסים כל יבשו. If you're *choseh* in Hashem you're not going to have *bushah*.

So he says as follows. *Bushah* could mean shame and *bushah* could also mean the word *boshesh*, delay. He says, when we say over here, "Hashem we're *boteach* in You בוש נבוש," you know what it means? We don't want our *tikvah* to be delayed in coming. בוש כל קוֹיךְ אל יבִּשׁוּ means it won't be long in coming. Hashem will be ימלא משאלותינו לטובה. So the *yeshuah* of Purim was quick in coming - within three days, Haman was already hanging on a tree! *Bushah* means delaying of the *yeshuah* and over here it was בוש. ולא. The *geulah* came immediately.

There's an interesting *medrash*. It says why did it take three days? The *medrash* (Bereishis Rabbah 91:9) says: לפי שאין הקב"ה מניח את הצדיקים בצרה יותר מג' ימים. So if you happen to see a *tzaddik* is in a *tzarah* more than *gimmel yamim* either it's not a *tzarah* or he wasn't *zocheh* to the *bitachon*. What you think is a *tzarah* is not necessarily a *tzarah*. In the time of Achashveirosh it was a *tzarah*, a *gezeirah* ולהרוג להשמיד ולהרוג.

What we're learning from the *yeshuah* of Purim is שכל קוֹיךְ, that those who are *metzapeh* and *mekaveh* to the *yeshuah* of Hakadosh Baruch Hu, לא יבשו.

PURIM IS A YOM BITACHON

Hakadosh Baruch Hu should help us be *zocheh* to both types of *bitachon*. But now that we're in the *sugya* of Purim - we want to be *zocheh*. It would behoove each person to try. We told you Purim is not a *yom tefillah*. It's a *yom bitachon*. The *tefillah* of Purim is a *tefillah shel bitachon*. That's what the *tefillah* is. There's a *tefillah bli bitachon*. There's an *avodah* called *tefillah* that a person could be *zocheh* to certain things and there are all kinds of *tana'im* to get your *bakashah* answered based on your *tefillos*. There are many conditions that have to be met. Over here, you're not getting your *bakashah* fulfilled because of your *tefillah*. You're getting your *bakashah* fulfilled because of the *bitachon* and what was *mechazek* the *bitachon*. A *chelek* of the *avodah* of *bitachon* was the *tefillah* itself.

Hakadosh Baruch Hu should help us be *zocheh* to the *avodah* of *bitachon*.

א פרייליכן פורים!

THE BOTTOM LINE

When Moshe Rabbeinu informed Klal Yisrael that he would do a careful accounting of all the donations to the Mishkan - to remove any doubts that he personally benefited from those gifts - he also taught us an important concept of making a *cheshbon* and giving an accounting in every important area of our lives that Hashem granted us: are we utilizing the precious time we've been allotted, are we directing our *tzedakah* dollars properly, are we setting aside enough time to learn, are we using our talents and *kishronos* accordingly, are we investing ourselves enough to perform *mitzvos* properly to give our body's organs their literal life force and nourish them with the *shefah*, etc? This coming week, I will set aside a few minutes before davening to ask myself these questions, *bli neder*, and make a realistic plan to strengthen some of these areas. And in the *zechus* of committing to this daily exercise, I will also internalize how precious every moment of my day is, where my *neshamah* opens up a unique and irreplaceable window of opportunity for me to fill it with *ruchniyus* and *kedushah* that it wants and needs!

In the coming weeks before the Yom Tov of Purim, I will review the idea brought down by the Brisker Rav, that the deeper meaning behind the *mitzvah* of reading of the *Megillah* is not only to publicize the power of *tefillah*, but to announce to "all the future generations" the power of *bitachon* that comes when I work on my *bitachon* and I connect with Hashem. This is expressed in the words בך החוסים כל יבשו ולא יבשו, that all those who have *bitachon* in Hashem will not lose out and will not be ashamed. The sublime *avodah* of *bitachon* that the Yidden actively did during Purim, enabled the Yidden of that generation to be *zoiche* to amazing *yeshuos*, because they "earned it" through the *maasim tovim* of their *tefillos*, fasting and connecting to Hashem. The *simchah* of making our own efforts in *bitachon* is what's behind the true *simcha shleimah* of Purim. May we all be *zoiche* to experience it this coming Purim, as individuals and, collectively, as Klal Yisrael, iy"H.