



MA'AMAD HAR SINAI: A PATH TO YIRAS SHAMAYIM



DON'T FORGET MA'AMAD HAR SINAI

What is the highlight of Parshas *Yisro*? *Matan Torah*. *Matan Torah* is the greatest event that happened in history. There is nothing that even comes close to that event. In Parshas *Vaeschanan* (Devarim 4:9-10)¹ Moshe Rabeinu warns us, in the strongest terms, to be exceedingly careful and to guard ourselves very much. Against what? Against not forgetting the event that our own eyes saw and to never take this event out of our minds. You have to see the event, you have to remember the event, and you have to have this event at the front of your heart. The event is the day that you stood before Hashem at Har Sinai. And you know what we heard over there? Hashem, for the only time in history, spoke live to Bnei Yisrael. There is no other nation in the world that this happened to. There are a lot of nations in the world that have no qualms about making up the biggest *bubbe ma'asehs* that are not *shayach*. But no one makes such a claim that a living Hashem came down and said to the entire nation, "I am the boss! אנכי ה' אלקיך." Never, ever has this happened before or after! He didn't say it merely to one person; He spoke to the entire nation at once! There are some people who claim that they were sleeping and they had a vision. I'm not sure what kind of psychotropic drugs they had before they went to sleep. They didn't tell you that. They didn't tell you they had hashish before they went to bed, maybe some strong Valium, maybe some other kinds of things. A lot of things are known to play with people's minds. Tramadol has been known to play with people's minds. But to have a living Hashem talk to everybody in the nation - that is unbelievable!

Now, what was the reason that Hashem did this? Why did Hashem perform for us in this magnificent way? What was the performance for? I don't mind that He did it. It was informative. It was nice. Besides the fact that it was the most amazing thing in history, it was the most amazing show with the greatest props, the greatest background, the greatest noise, the greatest music, the greatest light show that ever happened. But what was the purpose of it? This is Judaism 101. This is the basics.

WHAT TEACHES YIRAS SHAMAYIM?

The *passuk* says, אשר ילמדו, *אשר ילמדו*, so that they should learn, ליראה אותי כל הימים, to fear Me all their days, אשר הם חיים על האדמה ואת בניהם, *אשר הם חיים על האדמה ואת בניהם*, that they live on earth and will teach their children (ibid). Now, someday, you're going to depart from this world, as we all are, and you will come and stand before the *beis din shel ma'alah*, and Hashem will ask you this question: "Have you fulfilled this great, important commandment that I commanded you?" I'm sure you'll say a lot of nice things. You may tell them you had a stomach ache. You may tell them you were tired. You had a headache. You might tell them, "I was busy with other *mitzvos*." You might tell them, "I was busy writing, typing." You might tell them a lot of things. But they don't want to hear excuses. They want to hear that you thought about this event because this event is what teaches you *yiras shamayim*.

Now you know what the term *yiras shamayim* means? Fear of Heaven? Now, that interpretation is not the interpretation that I wanted to hear. What does *yiras shamayim* mean? It means awareness of Hashem, seeing Hashem. When you see an event, you see it play out before your eyes. Have you ever seen a play in your life? A movie in your life? An interesting one? A scary one? If so, it stands before you.

Once upon a time, there was a *bachur*, a baal teshuva. Today, he's a very big *talmid chacham*. At lunchtime, he used to sit by himself, separate from all the other *bachurim*, and he would zone out and completely go elsewhere. He would eat slowly, smile, and his eyes would get wide. People thought he was weird like anything. One day, I decided to satisfy my curiosity. I wanted to understand it. So I went over to him and said, "Excuse me, what are you doing? Are you aware you look a little off?" He said, "Every day, I watch something else." I said, "Excuse me?" He said, "One day, I watch a play. One day, I watch a movie. One day, I watch a musical or a concert." The things this fellow saw were etched into his mind. He could remember entire movies scene by scene. It was *pashut* amazing to me. I never heard about that. And he could *pashut* replay it in his mind. He saw it.

Hashem wants us to replay Har Sinai. Hashem wants us to know this is one of the *zechiros*, one of the few *zechiros*. You must do this. Any time you do this, you should say to yourself: Hashem, right now I'm remembering *ma'amad Har Sinai*. It was the most awesome, most amazing show, when Hashem revealed Himself, and the name of the show was *Yiras Shamayim*. That was the name of the show. Usually, the name of the show tries to convey what the show is about.

Now, there's a special time during the day that's designated to remember this. Do you have any idea when that is? I'll give you a hint. It's in the earlier part of the day. Every morning, we say *birchas haTorah*. How many *brachos* of *birchas haTorah* do we say? Two. The Tur (סימן מ) says that the second *brachah* is to remember *ma'amad Har Sinai*. The Tur's *lashon* is: ועוד יש ברכה אחרת על יכין בברכתו על מעמד הר סיני, *ועוד יש ברכה אחרת על מעמד הר סיני*, התורה, בא"מ אמ"ה אשר בחר בנו מכל העמים ונתן לנו את תורתו בא"י ונתן התורה, *יכין בברכתו על מעמד הר סיני*, you're supposed to be *mechaven* on *ma'amad Har Sinai*, איך בחר בנו מכל האומות וקרבתנו לפני הר סיני והשמיענו דבריו מתוך האש, *איך בחר בנו מכל האומות וקרבתנו לפני הר סיני והשמיענו דבריו מתוך האש*, you're supposed to think about how He chose us from all the other nations and brought us before Har Sinai, and let us hear His words amidst a fire, כלי חמדו שהיה משתעשע בה בכל יום, *כלי חמדו שהיה משתעשע בה בכל יום*, and gave us His holy Torah, which is the basis of our lives and *נתן לנו תורתו הקדושה שהיא בית חיינו*, a precious vessel that He delights in every day. Do you hear how the Tur refers to the Torah? It's a dear vessel that Hakadosh Baruch Hu delights in every single day. The Bach says that since there is a *lav* in the Torah which says (Devarim 4:9-12): thou shalt not

¹ רק השמר לך ושמר נפשך מאד פן תשכח את הדברים אשר ראו עיניך ופן יסורו מלבבך כל ימי חיך והודעתם לבניך ולבני בניך. יום אשר עמדת לפני ה' אלקיך בחרב באמר ה' אלי הקהל לי את העם ואשמעם את דברי אשר ילמדו ליראה אתי כל הימים אשר הם חיים על האדמה ואת בניהם ילמדו.

forget *ma'amad Har Sinai*, therefore you have to be *mechaven*, you have to concentrate in this *brachah* to thank Hashem about Now, this is an extremely fundamental principle in Judaism. But you know what happens to a lot of fundamental principles and important *yesodos* like this? The *yetzer hara* goes into an all-out battle against them and tries to erase them from the screens of our minds.

MA'AMAD HAR SINAI SHOWED EIN OD MILVADO

Now, why is *ma'amad Har Sinai* so important? The fact that we saw Hashem eye to eye? So the *passuk* in *Devarim* (4:35) says *אתה הראת לדעת*, You Klal Yisrael have been shown *lada'as*. You know what *lada'as* means? Don't tell me what you heard in third grade. Tell me what you heard here. In this *yeshivah* you learned what *lada'as* means. To understand? No. I thought by now you'd have it in your *kishkes*. What does *lada'as* mean? To become one, to become attached. That's what *lada'as* means. *אתה הראת לדעת*. The *pasuk* is saying that you, Klal Yisrael, were shown a special revelation to imbue you with *da'as*. And what is that *da'as*? *כי ה' הוא*, that Hashem is the source of all power and there is nothing else besides Hashem. Do you know how important that is? That's a struggle we go through every second of our existence. And Rashi explains over there (*ibid*), how did we come to that *yediah* of *מלבדו* when we saw Hashem give the Torah? How did we see there that *מלבדו*? Rashi, on the spot, says that when Hashem gave the Torah, He opened up the seven heavens. And He also opened up the seven heavens downstairs. He opened up the upstairs, seven flights up and seven flights down. *וראו*, and they were able to see with their eyeballs *יחידי*, that Hashem was alone. There was nothing else that existed. Hashem said, "Look at the whole universe all the way up and all the way down," and they could see with their eyes and grasp that nothing else exists but Hashem. That's why it says *אתה הראת לדעת*. That's amazing.²

THE BEST KIRUV STRATEGY, ACCORDING TO RAMBAM

Let me share with you some words of the Rambam.³ The Rambam once penned a letter to the people from Teiman who were going through a very difficult time and were being challenged to forsake the Torah. He writes in this letter: *וראוי לכם אחינו*, "My brothers, I want to tell you something that you should do. *שתגדלו בניכם על המעמד ההוא הגדול*, raise your children with that event. That event should play a major role in their lives. *ותספרו*, relate it, *בתוך קהל ועדה*, amongst congregations and masses of Jews. Say over *שהאמונה*, the greatness of that event, the glory of that event." You know it's so important? *שהוא עמוד*, Because it is the pillar, *שהאמונה*, that all of our *emunah* hinges upon. *והטענה המביאה לידי אמת*, and it's the *ta'annah* that brings to the *emes*.

You hear what he says? I saw this Rambam some 25 or maybe even 30 years ago. I said, "Thank you, Rabbeinu Moshe ben Maimon," because at that point in time I was in *kiruv*, and I was always trying to know if there's a way to reach a secular Jew. How do you reach a secular Jew? So there are all kinds of theories out there of how to be *mekariv* people. Some say ply them with vodka. Some say maybe scotch. There are a lot of *shitos* out there. Some say, tell them heartwarming stories, emotional stories about *tzaddikim* and *rebbe*s. Some people say that you can prove the Torah with computer codes. All kinds of theories. When I saw this Rambam, I said, "Bingo!" I'm going to tell them about this great event. The event of Har Sinai is the *ta'annah* that's *האמת* *לידי*. Most of them don't know the whole story, as many *frum* Jews don't know the whole story either. Many *frum* Jews are not aware of what we saw at that event. They think it was *aseres hadibros*. But to know that we saw into every corner of the earth and that we saw with our eyes that *מלבדו*, that's mind-blowing.

The Rambam goes on to say *וראו אחינו*, "You should know, my brothers, that this covenant, this great event that was seen physically, that all of Klal Yisrael, the greatest of Klal Yisrael, was able to testify about, this was an event that never had anything like it beforehand, and there will never be another event like this. There were *eidim*. And what did we witness? That an entire nation should hear the words, the speech of Hakadosh Baruch Hu and they could see His glory eye to eye. And this is the thing that's going to be *mechazek* your *emunah* and it won't allow you to ever deviate and change even when faced difficult *nisyonos*."

So, if someone is going to come to you and say, "But maybe somebody else figured it out, or maybe the Episcopalians got it right." You say, "Are you cuckoo in your mind? Did you hear what I just told you? Hashem came down. A living G-d came down and told us face to face! What do you have to offer me? *Bubbe ma'asehs!*" This is the *eidus*, this is the testimony, *rabbosai*.

AN EYEWITNESS IS THE STRONGEST PROOF

I used to elaborate on this because I wanted to get people to know and understand this. Do you know what the strongest proof in the universe is, according to all the nations in the world? What's the strongest proof that one could bring to prove something? You want to prove something happened. Get an eyewitness. In every country in the world, from crooked Russia, from twisted Ukraine, to every Arab country, Muslim country, with the *shakranim*, *kazvanim*. One thing that every country in the world uses to establish facts is witnesses. Now, when I used to talk to people, I saw many people didn't know this. Maybe if they were attorneys or lawyers they knew it because that's one of the basics they teach you in law school: everything depends on witnesses. And the whole goal of a lawyer is to figure out if the guy who claims he was a witness was really a witness. Did you actually witness it? What did you witness? Was he wearing a blue shirt or a yellow shirt? What time of the day was it? Was it nine in the morning or three in the afternoon? A witness testimony is the strongest form of proof.

I used to give them an example. What's one of the most important documents in America? A very famous one, one of the most important founding documents of America. What's it called? I'll give you a hint. It starts with a D. Declaration of Independence. You went to school. You heard that. Do you believe in it? You don't believe it? I believe it exists. I believe the event happened. Now, why do I believe the event happened? You know why? Because it wasn't written in secret. There were, I think, one hundred and twenty

² *הראת*. *כתרגומו "אתחזיקתי"*; *כשנתן הקב"ה את התורה פתח להם שבעה רקיעים, וכשם שקרע את העלווים כך קרע את התחתונים, וראו שהוא יחיד, לך נאמר "אתה הראת לדעת".*
³ *וכמו כן זכרו מעמד הר סיני שצונו הקב"ה לזכרו תמיד וגם הזהירונו מלשכחו אותו וצונו ללמד אותו לבנינו כדי שיגדלו על תלמודו הוא מה שנאמר (דברים ד' ט' יו"ד) רק השמר לך ושמר נפשך מאוד פן תשכח את הדברים אשר ראו עיניך ופן יסורו מלבבך כל ימי חיך והודעתם לבניך ולבני בניך יום אשר עמדת לפני ה' אלקיך בחרב באמר וראוי לכם אחינו שתגדלו בניכם על המעמד ההוא הגדול ותספרו בתוך קהל ועדה גדולתו והודרו שהוא עמוד שהאמונה סובבת עליו והטענה המביאה לידי אמת וגדלו המעמד ההוא על כל גדולה כמו שגדלו הקב"ה שנאמר (דברים ד' ל"ב) כי שאל נא לימים ראשונים אשר היו לפניך וגו' ודעו אחינו בברית הזאת ובסברת הזאת בסדר הגדול הזה שבראה במציאות שהעיד עליו מבחר כל העדים שלא היה מקודם כמותו וכן לא יהיה אחריו כמותו והוא שתשמע אומה אחת בכללה דבור הקדוש ב"ה ושתראה כבודו עין בעין ודבר זה היה שתתחזק האמונה חזוק שלא ישנהו משנה ויגיע לנו ע"י האמת כדי להעמיד רגלינו לבל ימעדו אשורינו בעתות כאלו כשיתחדש שום רוגז או שמד על יהודים ח"ו וכשיתגבר יד האנס שכן כתוב (שמות כ' י"ח) כי לבעבור נסות אתכם בא האלקים ובעבור תהיה יראתו על פניכם לבלתי תחטאו כלומר שזה הנגלה עליהם בענין זה כדי שתעמדו בכל נסיון שיפע בכם באחרית הימים שלא יזוז לבבכם ולא תחטאו ואתם אחנו היו על בריכתם קיימים ובדתכם מחזיקים ועל אמונתכם נוהגים עומדים, וכו'.*

people present when they wrote the Declaration of Independence, and they were witnesses. And since they were witnesses, I believe it. One hundred and twenty witnesses is enough for me.

Now, what would happen if I would go to the Smithsonian Institute, sneak in there, and pull out the Declaration of Independence. I would bring it to a professional, and I would say to him, "Can you please test this paper? When was this document produced?" He would send it to experts. It would come back, and they would say 1929. What conclusion would you reach? It doesn't disturb the fact that the Declaration of Independence transpired because there were one hundred and twenty witnesses from 1776. Perforce the paper is a forgery, and somebody's got the real document. "I think the paper is false, because we have witnesses that predate this."

The Torah is *אמת ויציב ונוכח וקיים וישר* because there are witnesses, who, the Rambam says, are choice witnesses, not buffoons. There are a lot of religions that also claim some witnesses, but witnesses that are not *ראוי להעיד*, fit to testify. They're all *pasul for eidus, gazlanim, ganavim*, the lowest of the dregs. I told people, there has never been an event that has been so witnessed as Har Sinai was. Not only that. I'll tell you even further. When you go to law school, they have a very interesting test they do there. Somebody says something on one side of the classroom to one person and then the next guy whispers it to the next guy and the next to the next guy and then they compare what the first guy said to what the last guy says. The first guy said, "G-d created the world," and the last guy is saying, "Linguine is pure Italian." That's what they're saying. How did you get from this to this? You know why? Because as the information is passed on, the message gets garbled. That's the *metzius*. The Torah has been handed down for generations. For generations! It's been spread all over the world. And yet, there was nobody that ever said there were six hundred and fourteen *mitzvos*. No one ever said there were six hundred and twelve. No one ever said it wasn't Har Sinai. It was called Har Chorev, unless the guy is a real, certified Purdue ignoramus, and then he knows Chorev is Har Sinai and Sinai is Chorev. There's nothing as testified as *ma'amad Har Sinai*. The testimony to the Torah is so magnanimous. It's so amazing. And anybody who ever has any question should think about and visualize the event. And we all witnessed that event, as *Chazal* tell us. There definitely was *אתה הראת לדעת*, and it's in your *kishkes*.

When I would tell this to people who didn't believe, and I would tell it to them with such conviction, it shook them to the core. A fellow who was a real *apikores*, an intellectual, a brilliant person, told me once that he believed in the Torah that it was just like Santa Claus *עפרא לפומיה*. That's what he thought. I said to him, "You really truly think that?" "I know that," he told me. There are people who believe in Santa Claus. They celebrate it every year. There is a lot of money made on Santa Claus. So this guy claimed the same thing with Torah: some Jews came together and made up all this bluff. And then when I began to explain to him - he was an attorney, a very *chashuve* lawyer - it really blew his mind.

ARGUING TORAH'S AUTHENTICITY IN THE COURTROOM

At one point in time, I used to learn with a lot of attorneys. One attorney asked me, "Rabbi, are you willing to go up against attorneys and judges to prove your point?" My point used to be that it's not about belief. Yiddishkeit is not about belief. It's about facts. (If someone tells me, "I believe that next week it's going to be cold. I believe it." It has nothing to do with knowledge). I told him, "Yiddishkeit has nothing to do with belief. It has to do with facts." I said, "I'd love to give it a try." Then he contacted a judge. I don't know if he's still around anymore. It was a judge named Friedman. He had a nice, big courtroom, and he lent us his chambers, and in those chambers, I presented a court case. The court case was about Torah *min hashamayim* versus Torah by humans. Every guy in that room believed Torah was written by rabbis. Not even rabbis, charlatans. And I was warned beforehand by a couple of these people. They said to me, "Rabbi, this is not going to be a class of your ordinary fellows. These are all people who have studied and who mastered their material. There are going to be judges there. There are going to be attorneys who are used to taking apart arguments and ripping them apart. Are you up to the task?" I said, "Bring it on!" Was I nervous? I was nervous. I had one attorney who said to me, "You have to know the rules of evidence. When you present a court case, you can't come to the judge and say, 'Judge, I really feel this guy did the murder. I feel that in my bones.' They'll throw you right out the door. Who cares what you feel? You can't say one emotional *shtickel*," he told me. No emotion could be inserted. And I said, "Okay." I listened to about maybe thirty hours of tapes on how you determine and decide the parameters, and the rules of the evidence. It made it a little tougher for me. If you like to make a *shtickel* embellishment, you like to put some '*geshmake zachen*' in there to hit the thing home - you can't do that.

I remember the first day everybody came with these big yellow pads. I said, "No small pads here? What are you bringing these big pads for?" And they are taking notes. I said, "I'm going to shock you. I am going to shock you in your *kishkes*." I said, "You want to know something? I am going to prove to you beyond the shadow of the doubt that Torah comes from G-d, from *shamayim*, and that the proof conforms to the highest degree of evidence, no circumstances, no assumptions, no feelings, no emotions, no *bubbe ma'asehs*. Evidence. Pure evidence. You're going to be shocked. It has nothing to do with what I believe or what I want to believe. It's facts, and facts alone. Now, I know you can't imagine it, and you're thinking, 'Where in the world is this guy coming from?' but I'm going to present you with more evidence than there was in any other case in the United States of America!"

Now, at that particular point in time, there was a major case going on in America. It was a famous low life, a degenerate. The only thing he knew how to do was throw a football, and then he showed his extra talent. He murdered his wife. And he hired a whole slew of lawyers to disprove this. They found the guy's socks at the scene with blood on them. They had his DNA all over the place. The guy got off because there were no witnesses. It was a major tumult. You can't imagine! The guy hired the best, most brilliant lawyers in the country. They came together, and they made *ששון ושמחה*. They got the bum off. I remember I said, "I'm going to present you with evidence, not like the garbage evidence that's going on in that show trial. Those are *bubbe ma'asehs*. I'm going to show you real evidence."

It took me between ten to twelve weeks to present it, and at the end, they were speechless. I said, "Guys, I want to welcome you to the United States of America, the land of the free - freedom of religion. You may not know it, but all of you are free to wear yarmulkes. You're all free to wear *tzitzis*. If you'd like to know where to get them, I will help you get *tzitzis* and yarmulkes. You're free to practice your religion. You can all shed your ghetto mentality. You can all shed your Marrano mentality. We're not living in Spain. There are no crusades going on over here. This is a free country. Before you met me, you didn't know the facts of Judaism, but now you know. Torah is facts. Get with the program. Welcome to the US of A, the land of the free." That's how I ended. And they

all told me the same thing: “We never saw such a thing. We never imagined there could be such testimony that would be accepted in any court of law.” That’s what the Rambam says, the “choicest of witnesses.” And everything that it taught in law school of how you knock down a case, the Torah is solid.

This is this great *ma’amad*. You have to remember it. You have to think about it. You have to talk about it. You have to tell your kids about it. Find out about it. Read up on it. Educate yourselves to know what you’re remembering and what happened there, and then you’ll be *zocheh* to be *matzliach* to be a believing Jew. אין עוד מלבדו.

SHABBOS : ACQUIRING KEDUSHA OF SHABBOS

We discussed in the past that there are two types of *kedushah*. There is a *kedushah* which means that a person is *poresh*, he separates himself from *tumah*. That’s called *prishus*. Then there’s a *tzeivte sug* of *kedushah* where a person does *peulos* and is *mekadesh* himself. He elevates himself. He sanctifies himself.

The *Reshis Chachmah* (R’ Eliyahu de Vidas, 1518-1587) in *perek beis* says that Shabbos is *shayach* to the second *sug* of *kedushah*.⁴ The *kedushah* of Shabbos is such that a person is *bepoel mekadesh* himself. We have to be *lemeeva* to be able to take out, explain what you have to do *lema’aseh* in order to acquire the *ma’aleh* of *kedushah*. He says *ke’inyan hakedushah*, the *inyan* of *kedoshim tehiyu* (Vayikra 19:2) is also a mitzvah. That means a person should be *mafrish* (separate) himself from the *devarim* which are *chol*. That is the *geder* of *sur meira*, removing oneself from evil (Tehillim 34:15). Then, as we mentioned, there is a positive aspect of undertaking actions of being *mekadesh* oneself *nafsho vegufo*, one’s body and soul.

He says as follows. First thing he is *shtel avek* (establishes) a *yesod* to understand a difference which we find in the Torah between *kedushas Shabbos* and *kedushas Yom Tov*. The Torah refers to Shabbos as *קדש* (Shemos 31:14)⁵ and to *yamim tovim* as *קדש* (Vayikra 23:4).⁶ There’s no question that *Yom Tov* has a *shaychus* to Shabbos. *Yom Tov’s kedushah* is definitely related to Shabbos. We saw earlier in the Beis Halevi that whatever *kedushah* there is in the *velt* - all of that comes from Shabbos. But *Yom Tov* is not called *kodesh be’etzem*. It’s called *קדש*. It says in the *passuk* *אתם תקראו אותם*, you, Klal Yisroel, have to “call them” *kodesh* (through sanctifying Rosh Chodesh). That’s what *קדש* means, something which you “call *kodesh*.” But what is the meaning of something you “call” *kodesh* vs. something that is intrinsically *kodesh*? The *Reshis Chachmah* quotes a Zohar where it says that Shabbos is the *mekor*, the source, of all *kedushah*. That’s what Shabbos is. Now what does that mean that Shabbos is the *mekor* of all *kedushah*? He says Shabbos is *kodesh be’etzem*, it’s intrinsically *kodesh*. Let’s understand what that word means. He says *עצם הקודש המתגלה*. What does that mean?

PULLING BACK THE CURTAIN OF OLAM HABA

The explanation is as follows, as I understand it from Rav Yisrael Elya Weintraub, zt”l (1932-2010), he should have a *lichtige Gan Eden*. He said that we often talk about Shabbos being the *mekor* of *kodesh*. But we find that Shabbos has another name. What is another name of Shabbos? *Oneg*. It says *וקראת לשבת עונג*, “and you shall call Shabbos a delight” (Isaiah 58:13). That means the *shem ha’etzem* (the essence) of Shabbos is *oneg*. You should call Shabbos *oneg*. It’s a very strange thing. It doesn’t say you should be *me’aneh* the Shabbos, that you should *enjoy* or *delight* in Shabbos. Rather, it says that you should *call* Shabbos *oneg*. What does it mean that the name of Shabbos is *oneg*?

So Rav Yisrael Elya says something very *pashut* and very *klohr*. He says the *tafkid* (purpose) that Hakadosh Baruch Hu created for a person is that a person should bask in the *oneg* of Hashem. That’s what Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants. Hashem wants us to have *oneg* from basking in, what the *Mesillas Yesharim* calls, the *ziv haShechinah*, the splendor of Hashem’s *Shechinah*, and that’s a tremendous *hana’ah* for an *adam*. *Mesillas Yesharim* explains where a person could get this *ta’anug*. Where is the place where a person can get this *ta’anug ha’amiti*, this true delight, as he calls it? You know where that is? *Olam haba*. In *olam haba* you sit and you’re *nahe* מִזֵּי הַשְּׂכִינָה. You get the *ta’anug* from the awareness and from the *chachmah* - the revelation of *hashgachas Hashem* and *darkei Hashem yisbarach* and *chachmas Hashem yisbarach*. That’s an *oneg* for the *neshamah* that’s unimaginable!

So he says when we say Shabbos is *oneg*, you know what it means to say? Shabbos is the *etzem kedushah* being revealed to the world. That’s what Shabbos is. Shabbos is the day when Hakadosh Baruch Hu pulls back the curtain from that place, the place called *olam haba* - which is the ultimate source where a *neshamah* could bask in the *ziv haShechinah* and get its *ta’anug*. Hashem reveals and pulls that curtain back on the day of Shabbos.

UNFETTERED ACCESS

Yom Tov is different. *Yom Tov* is something which is *תקראו אותם*, where we have to invite that *kedushah*. We who are related to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, we who are *niskadesh* with the *kedushas Hashem*, we have to be *mazmin* (invite) the *Yom Tov*. We bring the *kedushah* of Shabbos in a secondary form to *Yom Tov*. But it’s not the *mahus* (essence of) *hakedushah*. When the Torah says, *שמרתם את השבת כי קדש היא לכם*, “You shall keep the Sabbath, for it is holy for **you**” (Shemos 31:14). Shabbos is *kodesh for you*, which

⁴ אחר שפי' הקדושה, ראוי לבאר הנוגע ממנו למעשה, ונאמר כי ענין הקדושה שנצטוו קדושים תהיו, הוא שיפריש האדם עצמו מהדברים שהם חול, ויקדש נפשו וגופו, שהפך החול הוא הקדש, כהפרש השבת הנקרא קדש לימי החול, וכאשר נדע קדושת שבת מה ענינה נדע שהוא ענין הקדושה שפי' לעיל. והנה בקדושת השבת נתבאר בזוהר (פ' אמור דף צד ע"א) בחלוק שבין קדש למקראי קדש, ופי' ששבת היא עצם הקדש המתגלה, ועל זה נאמר (שמות לא, יד) ושמרתם את השבת כי קדש היא לכם, ואמר שסוד השבת הוא סוד הבה העולה לבית אביו בלי רשות, והיינו (שם טו, יא) מי כמוכה באלים ידו"ד מי כמוכה נאדר בקדש, ואמר בקדש ודאי, כבר דאתתקף באבוי, נאדר בקדש ולא זמין מקודש, ואמר אחר כך אמר ר"י חדוותא ונטירתא דיומא דשבת בכלא הוא, בגין דהאי יומא אתעטר באבא ואימא ואתוסף קדושה על קדושתיה, מה דלא אשתכח הכי בשאר יומי, דהא הוא קדש אתעטר בקדש אוסיף קדושה על קדושתיה, בגין כך האי יומא חדוותא דעלאי ותתאי כלא חדאן ביה, מלי ברכאן בכלהו עלמין, כלהו מניה אתקנו, עד כאן לשוננו. הרי מבואר, כי קדושת שבת הוא אור קדושת אבא ואימא המתגלה בתפארת ומשם לכל העולמות. ועוד בענין קדושת שבת ושאר הימים נתבאר בזוהר (פ' ויקהל דף רד ע"א), בענין מציאות השבת אמרו, שהיא המלכות נקודה אמצעית לכל ששה ימים, שממנה יונקים, וביום השבת היא בת עין המתיחדת בשלשה אבות שהם ש', והיינו שב"ת ש' בת', ועוד יש שבת עליון שלשה אבות המתקשרים בבת עין, והם מתקשרים בעלמא דאתי, ועוד יש שבת יוטר עליון כאשר יתקשר כל הנזכר בנקודה עילאה שהיא גם כן סוד בת עין, זהו קצור כוונתו. נמצא שבמקום שיעלה הבה שם תעלה הבה עמו למעלה, באופן שלעולם סוד קדושת שבת הוא אור הנשפע מאבא ואימא, ועוד יותר מלמעלה מעתיקא שהוא שורש הקדושות שהוא נקרא סבא קודש קודשיא, כמו שנתבאר לעיל, וכו'. (ראשית חכמה, שער הקדושה ב')

⁵ ושמרתם את השבת כי קדש הוא לכם, וגו'.
⁶ אלה מועדי ה' מקראי קדש אשר תקראו אתם במועדם.

means that it is the ultimate experience of *kedushah*, where you don't need to bring that *kedusha* into the world. (It's intrinsically there, brought down directly by Hashem). But *Yom Tov* is not the same. *Yom Tov* is not *olam haba*. It doesn't say anywhere that *Yom Tov* is *me'ein olam haba*.

The Zohar says that on Shabbos the world undergoes a metamorphosis, similar to a child who is able to enter his parents' home and enjoy time with them. That is what Shabbos is. *Beli reshus*, without permission. That's the *vort*. You're *עולה לבית אביו בלי רשות*, we can go into our Father's house without permission. And he says, that since Shabbos is the day when the *kedushah* of Hashem is revealed, that's what is *gorem* (causes) the tremendous *simchah* that *כולם שמחים בה*, all creations rejoice on Shabbos, *elyonim*, *v'tachtonim*, all the worlds become full of *brachah*, all the worlds become corrected and realigned and enhanced because Hashem reveals and permeates the *kedushah* of Shabbos which brings *ziv haShechinah* into the world and creates an unparalleled joy.

The *passuk* that Hashem said, "I give you the Shabbos *מקדישכם* לדעת כי אני ה' מקדישכם, that you should know I am Hashem who is being *mekadesh* you" (Shemos 31:13).⁷ What does that mean Hashem is being *mekadesh* us?

PREPARING YOURSELF TO FEEL OLAM HABA

The *Mechilta* asks what the Shabbos is a *ra'ayah* (proof) to. It says that it's a *ra'ayah* to *olam haba*. The *kedushah* of Shabbos is a *ra'ayah* to *olam haba*. That means a Yid has to know that his experience of Shabbos is supposed to bond him to the ultimate *ta'anug ha'amiti* that's *shayach* in the *velt*, the ultimate joy which is the ultimate purpose. It should also bring him to remind himself that the only reason he is coming to this world is to prepare himself to be able to be *הנה מיוו השכינה* and enjoy the *ta'anug ha'amiti* of Hakadosh Baruch Hu in *olam haba*. And that is what Shabbos is. Shabbos is *מעין קדושת עולם הבא*.

Now, one of the results of *kedushas olam haba* is that, as the *gemara* says, in *olam haba* there is no *ra*. It's *kulo tov*. The Ramchal explains that in this world the fact that we can't have the full *hana'ah* of the *ziv haShechinah* is because in this world there is *ra* mixed in. There are forces that Hashem created that we have to encounter and fight with and we have to overcome. But a *mentsch* has to know that on Shabbos, if Hashem is revealing to the world *מעין עולם הבא*, that means Hakadosh Baruch Hu is greatly diminishing the *koach* of *ra* in the world. If Shabbos is a *ra'ayah* to the *kedushah* of *olam haba*, you have to know that on Shabbos a person can experience and feel *olam haba* from the *kedushah* of Shabbos! That's why a person must *meichen* (prepare) himself for *olam haba* - because there is no such a thing as enjoying *olam haba* without preparation. That *metzius* doesn't exist. Only if a person is *torach*, he exerts himself on Erev Shabbos, will he have some food on Shabbos. So, too a person has to know that if he's not going to be *meichen* himself before Shabbos, he will never experience this *me'ein olam haba* of Shabbos. And when you *daven* to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, and you should *daven* already by *minchah*, don't wait until *ma'ariv*, you should say to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, "Please Hashem, be *mezakeh* me that we should all together enjoy *menuchas Shabbos*." What you want to yearn for is that you should be able to experience a diminished *koach hara*.

BE AWARE OF THE SATAN ON EREV SHABBOS

Sadly though, because this is a tremendous day with a tremendous power, the Satan is very available on Erev Shabbos to try to break up and create what's called a *matzav* of *ei shalom* in the world. He creates a *matzav* of strife. He creates a *matzav* of anger. He creates a *matzav* of discombobulation. He creates a *matzav* where a person gets drawn into the *kochos ha'ra*, and *nebach* many *frum yeshivah bachurim* - in the time that was allotted to them to prepare for Shabbos *nebach* - they leave the *beis hamedrash* and instead of preparing for Shabbos, they un-prepare for Shabbos. They don't realize this and become so bamboozled and the *yetzer hara shtels avek* these *yesodos* by them.

The first time I became aware of this *yesod* I really thought that it was something that was *lema'aleh* from this world, it was *lema'aleh min hateva*. I didn't know it was *shayach* to even have such a thing in this world because, *nebach*, I was caught up in that whirlwind that Shabbos was a time when you went to sleep and it was a time that you said goodbye to Hakadosh Baruch Hu until Sunday morning when you tried to start your engine again. A person has to know that if he davens for this, to feel and experience this *kedushah* of Shabbos and this *aliyah* of Shabbos, he will *mamash* have a feeling, on his level, and this would give him a tremendous impetus for the rest of his life. It would give him a tremendous push. People will ask him: "Why are you doing this? Shabbos is a day off." And he will say, "Why don't you try experiencing this? If you had this experience, a feeling of Shabbos and a feeling of what the *kedushah* of Shabbos is, this would change your entire attitude to Shabbos." But of course just like there's a *me'ein* of *olam haba* there's a *me'ein* of *me'ein*. We hope to get a *me'ein* of a *me'ein*. But if you get some *hargashah* of this on Shabbos you'll actually be able to say, if you try, you'll actually be able to experience a diminished *shlitah* of the *koach hara* in you.

WORK ON YOUR MIDDOS

You should know that on Shabbos it's much easier for a person to be *שומר פיו ולשונו*. You have to try a little bit. *Be'eztem* on Shabbos it's much easier for a person to work on his *middos*. *Be'etzem* on Shabbos a person can be *shomer* himself from *chataim* and *aveiros* much easier than during the week, because there is the *velt aza matzav*. Unfortunately, though, we are so distant and so keyed out of it and so disattached from it, that and to us it's *pashut* unimaginable! It's like telling a *friere Yid* that *Yom Kippur* is a really a holy day. He'll think you're crazy. What's *Yom Kippur*!?

Until the *zman minchah*, let us learn, and we should have in mind to be *mekadesh* ourselves. How does a person *mekadesh* himself? Through his *machshavah* - a person is *mekadesh* by thinking. The way you're *metaher* your *machshavah* is by thinking of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. That means the first thing you think is Hakadosh Baruch Hu is *rav*. Hakadosh Baruch Hu is *harbeh*, is above and beyond anything I could imagine. You then think Hakadosh Baruch Hu is *shalit*, Hakadosh Baruch Hu rules over every aspect of my life. Then you should think that Hakadosh Baruch Hu is the *ikar* and the *shoresh* for everything. Hashem not only controls every single thing, but He is being *menik* and being *meizen* it. He sustains everything. At this very moment Hashem is coursing through the atmosphere your ability to see, to think, to hear, to sit, to breathe, to understand *chachmah*. Hashem is giving you *chachmah* and Hakadosh Baruch Hu is opening your mind. Hashem is being *דעת* חון לאדם דעת. He's being *meishiv* us (enables

⁷ ואתה דבר אל בני ישראל לאמר אך את שבתתי תשמרו כי אות הוא ביני וביניכם לדרתים לדעת כי אני ה' מקדישכם

us to do teshuva). He's being *goel* (redeems) us. He's being *soleiach* (forgives) us. If you do this *hachanah* - it doesn't make a difference what you learn or where you learn on Erev Shabbos - have this in mind, try to do an exercise of thinking: "Hakadosh Baruch Hu, I'm getting ready for Shabbos by learning with You." Whatever Torah you learn, try to learn that Torah with Hakadosh Baruch Hu. And if you learn that Torah with Hakadosh Baruch Hu, see if you can be *zocheh*, we should all be *zocheh*, to have some *hargashah* of *kedushah* in our lives this Shabbos and we'll remember that this particular Shabbos we were *margish*, we merited to feel a little bit of that *kedusha*. Tell yourself, remember this, make this a point in your life. "I was *margish kedushas* Shabbos this week because I was *meichen* (prepared) myself somewhat." If you know you have *chataim* that you're aware of, you should definitely have a *hirhur* of *teshuvah* and say, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu I am *mescharet* (regret) for using my *machshavah* incorrectly. I'm *mescharet*." *Machshavah* includes the heart and eyes. Say, "I'm *mescharet* Hakadosh Baruch Hu for my *dibur*," and *dibur* is included in *machshavah* also. "Hakadosh Baruch Hu, I'm sorry for any *peulos* (actions) that I did wrong this week." Tell Hakadosh Baruch Hu: "I want to come back to You. I acknowledge I was *mesracheh* (distanced from You) and I want to unload my *middos raos*. I don't want to live with *olam hasheker*."

Hakadosh Baruch Hu will help us. We'll experience a *hergesh* of *kedushah* on Shabbos itself. Try it! Attempt it! Just attempt to implement small changes in different areas, not to come to the other extreme, but to at least diminish your *dibur*, diminish your *leitzanus*, diminish discussing things that are not *Shabbosdik*. And if you do that, you will be *zocheh* to be *margish* some *kedushah* of Shabbos. A Gutten Shabbos to everyone.

IN CONCLUSION

We are obligated to constantly remember *Maamad Har Sinai* where Hashem revealed Himself to *Klal Yisrael*, an event which is unique to *Klal Yisrael* only. No other nation can honestly claim that Hashem spoke to all of them. And this was witnessed by the entire *Klal Yisrael*. Hashem said the purpose of *Maamad Har Sinai* was that *Klal Yisrael* should learn to fear Hashem "all the days." This means to visualize and do *chazarah* over the events at *Maamad Har Sinai* for all time. The Rambam says that *Maamad Har Sinai* is the pillar of *emunah*; when we think about *Maamad Har Sinai*, we will have the key to pure, strong *emunah*. The Tur says we have a place to recall *Maamad Har Sinai* daily in our *tefillos*, and that is in the second *brachah* of *Birkas HaTorah*. We should tap into the pure facts that *Maamad Har Sinai* took place, as evidenced by a nation literally witnessing the G-dly event, and use it to ensure that ourselves and our descendants will be *maaminim* and *yarei Shamayim* forever. This week, I will (*bli neder*) make an effort to be *mechaven* in *Birkas HaTorah*, to thank Hashem for choosing us and giving us the Torah at *Ma'amad Har Sinai* and especially, at the words ה' נתן התורה ברוך אתה ה' נתן התורה, to thank Hashem that Hashem gave us the Torah.