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# PARSHAS SHEMINI

WITH

RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT" L

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

## SEEING HIM

### CONTENTS:

**Part I.** Seeing Glory - 3

**Part II.** Noticing Glory - 8

**Part III.** Studying His Glory - 13

## Part I. Seeing Glory

### The Fire of Glory

For seven days Aharon haKohen was preparing himself for the service of Hashem in the Mishkan. And now that great day in history, the Yom haShemini, when the Mishkan would be inaugurated, had arrived: The Presence of Hashem was going to rest now among the Bnei Yisroel.

And so the nation gathered together around Moshe Rabbeinu and he gave them the final instructions: *זֶה הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' תַּעֲשׂוּ* – *This is the thing that Hashem has commanded you to do*, *וַיֵּרָא אֲלֵיכֶם כְּבוֹד ה'* – *and then the Glory of Hashem will appear to you* (ibid. 6).

And that's what happened, the inaugural *avodah* of the eighth day was completed and *אֵל כָּל הָעָם וַיֵּרָא כְבוֹד ה'* – *the Glory of Hashem appeared to the*

entire people, וַתֵּצֵא אֵשׁ מִלְפָּנֵי ה' וַתֹּאכַל עַל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ – then a fire went forth from before Hashem and consumed the *korbanos* that were on the altar (ibid. 23-24). That was the *kevod Hashem*, the Glory of Hashem, that they saw – a fire from Hashem came down.

### The Rambam's Glory

Now the Rambam in his *Moreh Nevuchim* (1:64) takes note of that phrase 'כְּבוֹד ה', *the Glory of Hashem*, and he wants to know, what does that mean? It should say maybe 'the Fire of Hashem' or 'a Vision of Hashem'. Why is it called the 'Glory' or 'Honor' of Hashem?

It's an important question because it's a phrase, a description, that comes up again and again in the Torah. When the Mishkan was completed, it says וַיִּכַּס הָעֶנָן אֶת אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְכְבוֹד ה' מָלֵא אֶת הַמִּשְׁכָּן – *the Glory of Hashem, the Honor of Hashem, filled the Mishkan* (Shemos 40:34). What filled the Mishkan? A cloud. But it's called 'the honor of Hashem'.

And the עֲנַנֵי כְבוֹד, the Clouds of Glory that the Bnei Yisroel saw overhead for forty years in the Wilderness, what were they? Clouds. Why 'Clouds of Glory'?

That's what the Rambam wants to know. The fire that came down on *Yom Hashmini*, the cloud that filled the Mishkan, the clouds that covered the nation, in what way were they *kevod Hashem*, the Glory of Hashem?

### The Glory of Awareness

So pay attention now to a *yesod*, an extremely important principle. The Rambam makes the following statement: "Any manifestation of Hashem's Presence is called His 'Glory' because it is Hashem's Glory when men become more aware of Him." It means that any kind of demonstration, any kind of phenomenon, any kind of event or object that will make people think about Hashem; that's called *kevod Hashem*.

And that's why when וַתֵּצֵא אֵשׁ מִלְפָּנֵי ה' וַתֹּאכַל עַל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ, when a fire came forth from before Hashem and consumed the *korban* on the altar, the Torah describes it as 'the people seeing the Honor of Hashem.' Because it was a demonstration of Hashem's Presence – it caused the people to think about Hashem; and if you think about Him, that's the greatest way of honoring Him.

### What He's Waiting For

You're hearing something important now. You want to honor Hashem? Think about Him! You're walking in the street, all around you are *goyim* or Jews that are *amei ha'aretz*, and they're thinking nothing thoughts: the

Knicks did this and President Bush said that or my wife said this. And you, on the other hand, are thinking about Hakadosh Baruch Hu; that's *kevod Hashem*! It's a tremendous achievement! That's an honor for Him. A half a minute, think about Hashem!

And He's waiting for that. **ה' מִשְׁמָרִים הַשָּׁקִיף עַל בְּנֵי אָדָם** – *Hashem looks down from heaven at mankind*, **לְרַאוֹת הֲיֵשׁ מַשְׂבִּיל** – *to see if there is any thinking man*, **וְהִרְשֵׁ אֲלֵקִים** – *someone who is thinking about Me* (Tehillim 14:2). Hashem is looking down. “Are you thinking about Me?” He looks and looks. He looks on Ocean Parkway. “Is anybody thinking about Me on Ocean Parkway?” Ocean Parkway, that's a long avenue. A lot of people are walking; a lot of cars driving. A lot of houses on Ocean Parkway too. “Is anybody thinking about Me?”

And here you are. Nobody knows about you. You're an ordinary man, an ordinary woman, an ordinary child. And you're walking down the street through a crowd; Russians, Israelis, *l'havdil goyim*. Who's thinking about Hashem? Nobody! Nobody! Oh, what a tragedy! Their lives are being wasted! And as you walk through them you say, “I'm thinking about You, Hashem.”

“Oh,” Hashem says. “That's My man! You're not ordinary at all. You're extraordinary!”

### **Fires of Glory**

Now, what's the best way to think about Hashem? What is the best way to see His Glory? If we had the Beis Hamikdash and we saw a fire come down, very good; we'd appreciate that. We'd also '*look and sing glad song and fall down on our faces*' (see Vayikra 9:24).

But we have something just as good; and that's His creations! After all, the sun is also a fire. The sun is a huge orb in heaven, a tremendous body of fire, of nuclear energy. Billions of tons of horsepower energy from the sun are hitting this earth every second; the energy equivalent to thousands of nuclear bombs.

It's burning with tremendous nuclear fires. And it doesn't burn out! You know by this time, after almost six thousand years, the sun should have burned out. How long can a fire burn already? It's burning at a tremendous rate and yet it's not getting any smaller – the scientists are measuring it and it's not getting any smaller.

So if a fire came down from Hashem to show His Glory, wonderful! But this is a bigger fire, a more glorious fire! And it was created by Hashem for the same purpose as that little fire in the Mishkan.

## Works of Glory

Not only the sun; everything in the world was made for that purpose. Like it says in *Ashrei* (Tehillim 145:10-12): כָּל מַעֲשֵׂיךָ יְיָ – *All Your works praise You*, כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתְךָ יִאֲמְרוּ – *they speak of the Glory of Your Kingdom*. And it says, why are they speaking? Why are all the works of Hashem praising You? לְהוֹדִיעַ – *To make known*, לְכַבֵּי הָאֱדָם גְּבוּרָתִי – *to people His greatness*. The works of Hashem are for the purpose of making Hashem known to mankind; that's *Kevod Malchuso*, the *Glory of His Kingdom*.

And it says כָּל מַעֲשֵׂיךָ – *all Your works*; not some of *maasecha*, or a lot of *maasecha*. All of Your works have that function of making You known to mankind. So it says openly that Hashem made everything for the purpose that people should learn to be aware of Hashem. We say it every day, only we're sleeping. Every natural object in the world is made to remind you of Hashem!

## Flowers of Glory

I was once walking in the street in the springtime, early in the season. No flowers had come up yet but then I saw two dandelions growing. The first flowers of my spring; two dandelions. “Oh,” I said, “עַל פִּי שְׁנַיִם עֵדִים יְקוּם” – *two witnesses to the Glory of Hashem!*”

Some people think it's a weed; they want to take it out of the gardens. No; the dandelion has a very important purpose – it's reminding you about Hashem. Watch it carefully. After a while you'll notice an interesting thing happens: the yellow dandelion turns into a gray puffball.

If you're walking outside take a minute off from whatever you're busy with and if it's not somebody's lawn – if it's *hefker* – pull out that puffball and give a puff.

Watch what happens. You'll see *nissei nissim*. You'll see parachutes take off. You don't have to puff hard. A little puff and parachutes disentangle themselves from the launching pad and they float gracefully in the air; and each parachute has a little passenger floating, a little package of seed. The wind blows them all over the world and they plant new dandelions. When you see that, you see plan and purpose; tremendous plan and purpose!

## Riding With the Rav

I once was inside of a car; two yeshiva boys were driving in the car. I said, “Stop the car and go outside. Pick one of these seed pods from the crack in the sidewalk.” They brought it to me and I blew it in their car. They gave me permission to blow it and inside the car was filled immediately with floating parachutes. A beautiful demonstration of the *yad Hashem!*

And that's why He created it. The purpose is to remind you of Hashem! לְהוֹרִיעַ – to make known! You remember that song we sang on Purim? לְהוֹרִיעַ לְהוֹרִיעַ לְהוֹרִיעַ! This is a song too. A better song! לְהוֹרִיעַ! To make known to us the Glory of Hashem!

The entire *briyah* is testifying to His Glory. All the *shotim* of the world, all the fools who babble about evolution and accident, they're *meshugoyim*; they're immature babies. It's only because there's so many of them that they continue talking their stupidity. Otherwise they'd be ashamed of what they're saying; there's plan and purpose everywhere! The world speaks about the Glory of the Borei! And that's why He made it. Hakadosh Baruch Hu says, "Look at the world and think about Me. That's what I want from you."

### A Good Glory

Now, there's something here that I know might bother some of you. And it should. We see that Hakadosh Baruch Hu is interested that people should think about Him; that they should honor Him by thinking about Him. But the question arises, why does He need that people should think about Him? What does He care? It should be immensely *unimportant* to Him what people think or not think.

The *kashe* was once asked this way: טוֹב יֵצֵר כְּבוֹד לְשֵׁמוֹ – *The Good One created everything as a Glory for Himself* (Siddur: Yotzer Hameoros). That's the statement: He's good and He created everything as an honor to Him. That's not easy to understand because if He did it for His Glory, for His own *kavod*, is He called the *Tov*? We think that's the opposite of 'good' when someone does something to glorify himself.

### The Best Glory

And the answer is this: *The greatest tov for us is that we should recognize Hashem's Glory*. The greatest good we could achieve in this world is if we succeed in utilizing our lives to gain awareness of Hashem, *emunah*, *yiras Hashem*, *deiah*. The more successful we are in gaining a real tangible feeling of Hakadosh Baruch Hu's Presence in the world, that's the greatest good for us because that's going to be the measure of our reward in the World to Come.

And that's what those words are reminding us: טוֹב יֵצֵר כְּבוֹד לְשֵׁמוֹ. Because Hashem is a *tov u'meitiv* that's why He made this *kavod* for His Name, so that we should recognize Him from this world; so that we should come to be *makir* the Borei.

And therefore, if you spend your lives thinking about Hakadosh Baruch Hu, so He says, “You’re not doing Me any favors! **אִם צְדָקָה מֵהַ תַּתֵּן לִי** – *If you’re righteous, what are you giving Me?* (Iyov 35:7). It’s for *your* benefit. I made everything so that you should see My Glory because that’s your eternal greatness.”

And so if you’re intelligent and you train yourself properly, you can transform the whole world into *kavod Hashem*. Wherever you look, you’ll recognize the handiwork of the Expert Craftsman, the Great Designer, the Master Engineer, Who planned and created everything. That’s called living purposefully because Hakadosh Baruch Hu made it for that purpose. The entire world is made for the purpose of *kevod Hashem*!

## Part II. Noticing Glory

### Seven Thousand Apples

Now because the *Tov*, the Good One, *Yatzar kavod lishmo*, created this universe so that we should bring glory to His name by thinking about Him; and because it’s such an important part of our lives, He did something therefore when He created the world that would encourage us to succeed. In one word, it’s ‘variety’.

I’ll illustrate that with an example. When you go into a fruit store so you see various kinds of *pri ha’nitz*, of fruits of the trees. Here there are boxes of dates; here, packages of figs. There are plums and peaches and oranges. Next aisle, bananas, grapes, blueberries, mangos. Over here, cherries, cantaloupe, avocado. Various kinds of vegetables! Various condiments! Fruits of all kinds. A riot of taste and color! Figs and cranberries and grapefruit and apples.

But not only apples; *a wide variety of apples!* Red apples, yellow apples, green apples – and of all types. The people who know, the ones who study apples for a living, tell us that there are at least 7,000 varieties of apples. 7,000! And they’re always finding more.

### Discovering Gold

I told you how they found the Golden Delicious. There was a company that used to send out scouts – they still do – to look for the best kind of trees, fruit trees. So once this scout was motoring through the countryside and he saw an apparition. He saw a tree that seemed to have apples on it, but they weren’t the apples he knew – these apples were golden colored.

So he stopped and he bought one and the taste was delicious. That's how the Golden Delicious was discovered. Immediately on the spot – he was authorized by his company – he paid the farmer 5,000 dollars for that little apple tree. And he immediately called artisans and they built a steel cage around that tree and it became the property of the company. And then the company took cuttings from that and sold them all over the world. That's how the Golden Delicious spread all over the world.

Now, the farmer hadn't planted any Golden Delicious; he had planted an apple tree. But in the apple seed lay dormant the Golden Delicious apple. It's not a new fruit. The Golden Delicious is an apple as far as we know but Hakadosh Baruch Hu made it that way, that there should be potential for variety. That's why with proper breeding it's possible to bring forth various strains, because that was the plan of Hashem from the beginning. He put into the apples that they should contain recessive, dormant genes because He wanted not only a world of apples but a world of all types of apples.

### **The Brooklyn Botanical Garden**

But not only apples; that's one little example. Everything in this world was created with variety. There's not one type of tree; there are thousands! I'm not talking about fruit anymore. Trees! Oak, Maple, Birch, Spruce, Pine, Cedar. Thousands of different types of leaves. Various branches and trunks and barks and roots.

Flowers! When you walk down a street and you see that there are all types of flowers. Right here in Brooklyn! Here on one side my neighbor grows tulips; on the other side, violets. One house over, daffodils; across the street, lilies and carnations and roses.

And not just roses. Red roses and pink roses and yellow roses and white roses and purple roses and orange roses. Not spray painted; they're not dyed – they grow that way in the wild.

So the question is why did Hakadosh Baruch Hu do that? There are no accidents. Everything is planned. Why did the Creator make it that way? We need so many types of fruits and grains and nuts and vegetables? Do we need thousands of varieties of grass and leaves and flowers and bugs and fish and birds? What's the purpose? It seems to be superfluous.

### **Apples Aren't For Eating**

So pay attention now to the following because you'll understand one of the secrets of the phenomena of the universe. Suppose there was only one kind of fruit; let's say nothing but apples. Wherever you looked in a fruit store, nothing but apples. So you'd fall asleep. The senses become dulled

and stultified when you see nothing but uniformed phenomena; your mind falls asleep.

But we're not here to sleep! We're here to see the *kevod Hashem* in His creations! And so in order to wake us up Hakadosh Baruch Hu therefore gave us a variety of objects in the world.

And so if you see a red apple and you don't appreciate it – you should! The glory of a red apple, a regular Macintosh. What a beauty! What a miracle it is! An apple is a wonder to behold. I'm not talking now about eating it. Even on Tisha B'Av, on Asarah B'Teves, it's a glorious sight.

A luscious package of food – nourishing and delicious – and it's wrapped in a waterproofed peel. It's a waxed, waterproof packaging to protect it. And it's made attractive colored in order to attract your attention. Red with some green splotches; sometimes there are little dimples and dots on it to make it more interesting and attractive. It's so interesting to look at; it belongs in a museum. A red apple should wake a man up, absolutely.

Still, if you're obtuse enough not to notice that, if you're thick headed, so Hakadosh Baruch Hu has *rachmanus* on you and He makes variety. The regular Macintosh apple didn't do the trick so He made the Golden Delicious. Maybe someday you'll see a Golden Delicious and it'll hit you between the eyes, "Wooah, what a beautiful tint that is!", and it'll wake you up.

### Colorful Roses

If you see red roses all the time it becomes monotonous and you stop thinking about them. But if they're red over here and in another place they're white and elsewhere they're yellow and still further on they're pink, so finally the message is brought home to you that there's something called roses that require your attention.

After a number of times of being nudged, of our attention being solicited, finally we'll wake up and say, "Oh, yes, look! I've been looking at it perhaps for ten, twenty, maybe thirty years, and I didn't see it."

Now, I'm not saying these things from my own head; it's not me. Rashi Hakadosh says it in Mesichta Rosh Hashanah. With me you could say you don't agree but this is a Gemara. There's a question there, why is it that in the Beis Hamikdash on the fifth day the *shir shel yom*, the song that the Leviim sang – we say it still today after *davening* – was the *kepitel* of 'Make song to Hashem' (Tehillim 81). Why was that chapter chosen? And the Sages say the reason is *על שם שִׁבְרָא עֹפּוֹת וְדָגִים* – *because on the fifth day Hashem created birds and fish.*

The question is, what does that have to do with singing to Hashem? So Rashi explains like this: **מִזֶּה קִשְׁרוֹת מְשֻׁנִּים זֶה מִזֶּה** – When a person sees all kinds of birds and fish, each one different from the other, he notices; he pays attention.

### **Get Woke**

If all the fish looked like goldfish, we'd get bored. We'd be lulled into inattention; we would be bored by the monotony and we wouldn't pay any attention. But now if the trout doesn't get your attention maybe the carp will. And if you're still sleepy then He made for you the rainbow fish. The rainbow fish! That has to wake you up!

If all of the birds looked like chickens, we wouldn't pay any attention. But now there are all kinds of birds, so if you didn't notice the robin, you'll notice the crow. If you didn't notice the crow, you'll notice a parrot in a cage. Or at the seashore you'll notice the seagull. Or in the zoo you'll notice a stork or an ostrich.

And so when people see different kinds of creatures in the world, it wakes them up. It causes them to see Hashem and to call out to Him in songs of awareness.

### **The Sleepwalker**

Now, that's an important point, the singing. Because all of this variety is intended to wake you up but the question is what are you waking up for? Just to notice the variety in a superficial way? No, that's not enough.

You know, some people wake up to the variety in Creation but they miss the entire purpose – that it's there to remind you of the Creator. Don't you see sometimes a person will say, "Ahh! Isn't the wildflower a beautiful thing! Ah yah yay!" Someone might even join an Audubon society and become enraptured over birds, over the various beaks and wings and colors. He notices but he's still sleeping!

He's still sleeping because he doesn't understand that the purpose is *kevod Hashem*. If your awareness stops with the birds or the red roses or the wildflower, then it's nothing; it's a big zero. Because all of that variety that we're talking about now is intended not only to wake you up, but to wake up your thoughts; to spur you to see the great complexity, the great *chochmah*, in His creations.

### **The Beis Medrash Shop**

You know, I used to take yeshivah boys into fruit stores. I told them beforehand that a person can *shteig* very much in a fruit store if he's willing

to think about what's doing there. "It's a *beis medrash*," I told them, "a place where you learn *emunah*; you learn *yiras Hashem*. You'll see *chochmas Hashem*. It's tremendous!"

So when we walked in, we were prepared already. We were prepared to make use of the variety for *kevod Shomayim*.

"Look," I said. "Red apples. Golden oranges. Green peppers. Blue grapes. All different colors, all different tastes. Look at the *niflaos haBorei!*" The variety of colors wakes us up from our sleepwalking.

But now that we're awake we have to start thinking. How did such beautiful things come into existence? From a little seed! **אֶפְסֵר זָרְעוֹ בּוֹ** Each one has seeds in it! Inside the apple, there are seeds. Inside the orange, there are seeds. Inside every kind of fruit, there are seeds. Think about that.

### **Computers in the Fruit Store**

How did the seed get inside?! If you'd find a quarter inside, you'd be surprised, wouldn't you? A quarter inside the fruit! But a seed is a million times more important than a quarter. A quarter is nothing. It's a dead thing; it has no life in it. A seed, on the other hand, is a computer. It has at least one million pieces of information coated on the seed inside, a million instructions on how to make a tree: all the information on how to make roots, and a trunk with bark and sap, and branches and blossoms and apples with more computer-seeds inside. The seed is alive! In that little seed there is all the machinery, all the equipment, needed to take those million pieces of information and make it happen.

A seed should become a tree? A little seed? If we would trace the development of the apple from a seed, how it grew into a plant and into a tree with bark and with sap and with leaves and with blossoms, we would be so amazed at the tens of thousands of sequences, tens of thousands of steps that are necessary to transform the carbon dioxide of the air and the sunshine and water and a little bit of soil and turns into a tree that makes more apples. There's design and tremendous wisdom in that seed. And that means that there's a Great and Wise Designer.

Oh, now you're thinking! If you think like that, then that apple is *kevod Hashem* just as much as the fire in the Mishkan. And it's not only the apple; when you learn to think like that then the entire fruit store becomes *kevod Hashem* just like the fire that came down from before Hashem in the Mishkan.

## Part III. Studying His Glory

### **Kevod Hashem in This World**

Now, because טוב לצר קבוד לשמו, because the Creator wants to do good to us by giving us the opportunity to think about Him, He therefore made it so that we don't have to wait for fires that go out from before Him or even go to the fruit store to see the *kevod Hashem*. What did He do? He filled this world with His phenomena. The world is full of millions of such natural objects that are intended to help us see Him.

Only that we can't be dummies about it. We can't be like the unthinking dummies, the mannequins, in the store window. The dummy is standing there today like it was standing there yesterday; it'll stand there tomorrow too. That's how most people are – unthinking, not changing. And it's a tragedy because life is passing by and we'll take along into the Next World only what we achieved in this world.

### **Springtime Avodas Hashem**

And therefore you have to get busy. It's springtime now, a wonderful opportunity. You walk in the street and you see that your neighbor was kind enough to plant tomatoes in his front yard. He was doing it for himself, but you won't let it go to waste – you came here tonight so you know what the purpose of the tomato is. So you stop by his garden for a minute and you're thinking, "Look at that tomato. Why is it red? Because red makes it more appetizing. I see a purpose there – the Creator wants to give me more *cheshek* to eat it; He wants me to enjoy it more."

But where did the redness come from? The tomato seed has no redness in it and yet when it's put into the soil it's able to produce such a wonderful result, a nourishing package of food with color. How could the seed accomplish that?

It's such wisdom and design that the greatest chemical company in the world will never be able to reproduce something similar to that. That tomato demonstrates the presence of a Creator, a *Borei*, a Designer with tremendous infinite wisdom.

### **Orange Peel Lessons**

Let's say you continue your walk, your *kevod Hashem* walk, and you see a little piece of an orange peel lying on the ground. It's not an accident. Why is it there, that piece of orange peel? So you should look at it. You don't have to touch it; look at it. On the outside, it's beautifully colored. On the underside, there's no color at all. Why is that?

I once asked a man that question. “Why is it that the orange is colored beautifully on the outside of the peel, but the underside of the peel has no color at all? Why shouldn’t the color be on the underside and the outside should be without a color?”

“That’s evolution,” he said. It means he’s a certified dumbbell! He went to college and he listened to his professors and then, after four years, he was given a certificate: “This diploma certifies that you are a dumbbell.”

### **The Miraculous Peel**

But we understand why it’s that way. There’s only one answer. Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants you to see the color, to be seduced by it. The purpose of the color is to attract your attention. Once you open it up, you see the color inside, the fruit, so you’ll eat it anyhow – you don’t need color on the underside of the peel.

But the peel is also shiny; there’s a sheen on that orange peel. “What’s that about?” you’re thinking. It adds to the attraction but it’s more than that. The *Borei* covered the outside with a thin sheet of plastic to protect it against small chewing insects. The underside doesn’t have to be protected and a Great Designer doesn’t waste materials. And so that little piece of orange peel demonstrates the Glory of Hashem.

### **Don’t Kick It, Think It**

But if the orange peel didn’t wake you up so Hashem tries again. You’re walking in the street further and you see somebody dropped a peach pit on the floor. Now, other people they think it’s nothing; they give it a kick, maybe. But you look at it with great *derech erez*. For you it’s just like the fire that came down on the *Yom Hashemini*. It’s *kevod Hashem*.

You’re thinking, why is the peach pit so hard? There is nothing in the entire peach tree as hard as the pit. Try to break up a peach pit; sometimes even a hammer won’t help. Why is that?

Because the pit is for the purpose of protecting the seed – the seed is the future of the peach tree – and it has to be protected inside against animals that would like to eat it. That’s why the pit is so unusually hard.

### **Soil Meets Pit**

But *nissei nissim*, when you put it into the earth it opens by itself and begins to grow! A miracle! The pit protects the seed until it’s put into the ground. There’s a paste that is holding together the two halves of the pit and the paste is such a formula that it dissolves inside the earth; it yields to the bacteria and fungi in the soil.

So it's up to us not to be dummies. Each time you encounter a peach pit in the street, or when you encounter it after you eat a peach, it should be a spur to your mind, to start thinking about the One Who made it that way. And the more we're thinking, the more we're living according to this ideal of *kevod Hashem*, of טוב יצַר כְּבוֹד לְשֵׁמוֹ.

Now how many things are there like the peach pit? Trillions of things. Because there is not a single natural thing in the world that doesn't have the purpose of teaching us of the *chochmas Hashem*.

### **Don't Blow It, Think It**

You remember that dandelion I told you about in the beginning of the lecture? It's not enough to pick them and blow on them. That's like the man who picks up the maple seed and all he thinks about is that it's a mustache; he picks it up, opens it, and sticks it on his nose or underneath.

He thinks it's nothing; it's a toy. What a waste of an opportunity! It's a seed and it's a wing; a seed with a wing! A glorious contrivance! A flying machine! Maple seeds are for thinking!

### **Studying Dandelions**

And dandelions are for thinking too. That's what they're for, for *kevod Hashem*. You see yellow dandelions in the green grass. Why are the dandelions yellow and the grass is green? The answer is, Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants the insects to see the yellow flowers and to pollinate them or to feed off them. And so the yellow color attracts the bees.

But what happens? Once a dandelion is pollinated and it germinates, then it turns into a seedpod, a pad with gray seeds on the top of it. But now there's no color anymore; it's grayish. Why is it that when it was a flower it was a beautiful color and now that it turned into a seedpod, it's colorless?

The answer is, before when it needed to attract the bees, the color was yellow. But now it has to attract the wind and the wind doesn't need any color. The wind has to blow and the seeds scatter. That's why you notice a queer thing happens. When the yellow dandelion turns into a gray puffball, the puffball is taller than the dandelion used to be; because that will accommodate the wind. The extra few inches make it easier for the wind to blow the seeds away.

### **The Ultimate Purpose**

Now, what is a dandelion for? Well, you'll say, it has a lot of purposes. It's nice; it adds color, happiness, to the world. Very good. Dandelions also feed

bees and butterflies and hover flies. They supply the pollinators with nectar and pollen.

The dandelion feeds people too. As soon as it grows in the springtime the jagged leaves at the bottom that look like lion's teeth – *dent de leon* is 'the lion's teeth' in French; that's how it got the name 'dandelion' – those leaves are good to eat. For poor people who can't afford to go to the fruit store, they go out with a knife and they can eat the *dant de leon*. That's what they used to do; they would cut off those leaves and eat them; they're good to eat in salads and they're nutritious too. It's not only for bees and goats; it's for people too.

That's a good enough reason for Hashem to create dandelions but Hakadosh Baruch Hu doesn't do things merely for that. There's a bigger reason, and the bigger reason is to recognize the wisdom of the Great Designer Who made this miracle. The dandelion was created to make you aware of Hashem and that means it's our obligation to look. And the more you look at the dandelions and the seeds and the clouds and the leaves and the everything, that's called living with purpose – with the purpose of *kevod Hashem*.

### Wake Up and Respond

Now once a person realizes that the purpose of everything in the natural world is *kevod Hashem*, for the purpose of recognizing the Borei, so his life becomes transformed. He's living now in a different type of world, a world crammed with things that are all made for one purpose: **לְהוֹדִיעַ לְבָנָי הָאֱדָמָה** – *to make known to people*, **וּכְבוֹד הָרַר מְלִכּוּתוֹ** – *the glory of the Creator*.

Only that you have to wake up and respond. Say, "Yes, Hashem, I'm going to try to know." And not merely to say it; we have to train ourselves to recognize Hashem by means of *kol maasecha*, all His works. And when we try to live that way, you'll be amazed at what's going to happen to you. Your mind is going to flourish.

And you should never falter. Don't weaken because whatever you accomplish in this field of *kevod Hashem*, of being aware of the Shechinah, it will be the most important achievement you made in this world because it will go with you to the Next World.

### Crowns of Knowledge

Because what is our career in the Next World? Listen what Rav says in Mesichta Brachos (17a), **צַדִּיקִים יוֹשְׁבִים וְעֵטְרוֹתֵיהֶם בְּרֹאשָׁם** – *Tzaddikim sit with their crowns on their heads*. What are the crowns? The *da'as*, the awareness of Hashem, that they gained in their lifetime, will be a crown on their heads,

וְהִתְנִיחַ מִזֵּי הַשְּׂכִינָה – and by means of that daas they'll gain joy from the splendor of the Shechinah.

'The splendor of the Shechinah' means that they're going to see the Shechinah itself. In this world they saw only a shadow of the Shechinah but in the Next World they'll see the real thing. And that's a tremendous and intense happiness that has no end.

It's so great that the Gemara says we won't be able to tolerate it; we'll burst from the joy. You know, from too much happiness, some people die. Here's a man who received good news that he won a sweepstakes. They called him from the lottery office to tell him and he fell dead from the good news. His body, his heart, his nerves, couldn't handle it. And we wouldn't be able to survive being נִתְנָה מִזֵּי הַשְּׂכִינָה either, only that in Olam Haba Hashem will give us *koach* to withstand the happiness of seeing the Shechinah.

And therefore, you begin to understand now how big of a function it is in this world for us to study Creation, to look everywhere and think. That's the *kevod Hashem!* And just because of that Hakadosh Baruch Hu will say, "Because you strove to see Me in this world, to see Me as much as you could, so I'm going to reward you when the time comes לְחַזוֹת בְּנַעַם ה'." Forever and ever you will gaze at the sweetness of Hakadosh Baruch Hu and enjoy the splendor of His Shechinah.

**Have A Wonderful Shabbos**

## Let's Get Practical

### *Seeing Hashem Always*

In our parshah we read about the Glory of Hashem being revealed in the Mishkan. Truthfully, the world is filled with His Glory and once we learn to notice it, our lives in This World are filled with new meaning and we gain a tremendous crown of *daas* in the Next World.

This week I will keep my eyes open to seeing the glory of Hashem in the world around me. Every evening I will *bli neder* write down two things I noticed that day that helped me to see His Glory.

This week's booklet is based on tapes:

**90** - Your Works Praise You | **449** - Hashem's Two Testimonials  
**511** - All Things Declare His Glory | **992** - The Count of Bnei Yisroel  
**E-245** - And My Shechina Shall Dwell Among You

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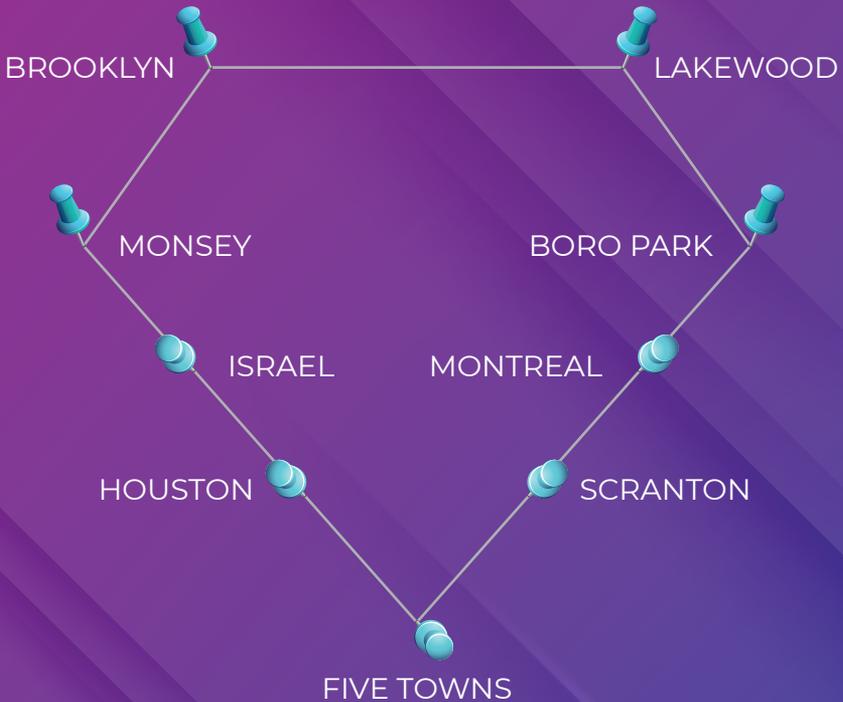


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## QUESTION

**What is something we can think about while we're busy with the preparations for Pesach?**

## ANSWER

One thing you can spend time on is appreciating that the Am Yisroel are *tzmei'im l'avodas yotzrom* – they're thirsty for *mitzvos*. *Poshuteh* Jews are keeping the Torah with all their hearts. Men and women, boys and girls, are getting ready for Pesach and it's not easy work but they're doing it anyhow.

Some people want to dodge their work for Pesach – they want to go to a hotel. But those who are thirsty for *mitzvos* don't dodge work. They want to work because it's a *mitzvah*. It's *shver*, it's not easy – *heint* it's doubly *shver* because erev Pesach is Shabbos –but they're happy to do it. They're not going to dodge their responsibilities. Taking things in and out; bringing in the *Pesachdige keilim*, taking out the *chametz* – all kind of preparations.

Now, I'm not interested in changing the curtains. Changing the curtains is not necessary. You want to make a spring house cleaning, you want to change the curtains, I'm *moichel* that. But to prepare for Pesach – it's a very great *mitzvah*! And many, many, very *poshuteh* people are laboring to prepare for Pesach! You have to appreciate them. They're *tzmei'im*, they're thirsty for *avodas yotzrom*. We're accustomed to seeing it and so we don't appreciate it but now is a good time to think about it.

We should train ourselves to see the greatness of the Am Yisroel, how much people are willing to do in order to carry out the *pratim* of the *mitzvos*. And it's a very important *shleimus* to appreciate that. No matter how great you are in *avodas Hashem*, how great you are in knowledge of Torah, you must add this attitude of appreciating the Am Yisroel to your personality.

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