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*The End Is Important*

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# פרשת תצוה

WITH

# R' AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"l

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

## The End Is Important

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## Part I. Various Endings

### In and Out

One of the special garments that the *kohen gadol* wore in the Mishkan was the **מָעִיל הָאָפֹרֶד**. It was a garment, **בְּלִיל תְּכֵלֶת**, made completely out of royal blue (Shemos 28:31) that added an aura of nobility to his service in the Mishkan. And on the bottom edge of this robe was a unique apparatus, an arrangement of golden bells that emitted sounds as the *kohen gadol* walked (ibid. 33-34).

Now, the possuk in our *sidrah* says about these bells: **וְנִשְׁמָע קוֹלוֹ בָּבֵאוּ אֶל** 'הַקֹּדֶשׁ לִפְנֵי ה' – and its sounds shall be heard when he comes to the holy place before Hashem, **וּבְצֵאתוֹ** – and when he goes out (ibid.), and so we have a question. Considering that the bells made sounds when the *kohen gadol* walked, it's obvious that it will be heard when he leaves just as when he comes. And therefore it pays to understand why the Torah goes out of its



way to tell us that the *kohen gadol* should be conscious of the sounds also when he is leaving.

I've said the following before but I'll repeat it here because it's important: The brother of the Vilna Gaon in his *sefer* Ma'alos HaTorah teaches us a very important rule. He says it in the name of the Gra but it's found in the Rishonim as well and it's an idea that opens up for us a panorama of opportunities. He says there that although the six hundred and thirteen *mitzvos* of the Torah are commandments on their own, yet they are also intended to be much more. Actually they are six hundred and thirteen general principles that serve as models that should guide us in our everyday lives; we gain direction and motivation by studying the details of these mitzvah-principles.

### Until the End

And so the Torah is teaching us something here, not only for the *kohen gadol* and not only for the Mishkan but for each one of us who wants לְשָׁרֵת אֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ – *to come into the service of Hashem* (*ibid.*). When Hashem tells the *kohen gadol* that upon the completion of the service in the Sanctuary, he must depart with the same trepidation as when he entered, that he has to be mindful of the greatness of Hashem from beginning to end, He's talking to us too.

Because it's one of the weaknesses of human nature that even when a person invests energy and thought into a mitzvah or any service of Hashem, when he comes to the end and is about to return to his regular self, his idealism is lessened; he doesn't keep his previous enthusiasm burning. But the Torah here is teaching us that it's not the way of 'serving in holiness'. בָּבֹאוֹ אֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ לִפְנֵי ה' וּבְצֵאתוֹ – Even when going out he must retain the same enthusiasm and respect for the mitzvah that he had when he went in.

### Hopscotch in Shul

We'll give an example just to introduce the subject: You know if you walk into a shul today and look around at the end of *davening* you'll notice that there are very many people who when they finish Shemoneh Esrei they skip back three steps and then skip forward three steps. It looks like a hop, skip and jump game. Watch them – three steps back, bend the head this way, that way, and then back again. It's a common sight, people playing hopscotch before *chazaras hashatz*.

So listen to what the Sages say about that. If a person takes three steps back after Shemoneh Esrei and then immediately he takes three steps forward or he walks away, רָאוּי לוֹ שְׁלֹא הִתְפַּלֵּל – *it's better to have not davened* (Yuma 53b). You hear such a *psak*? It would have been better if he hadn't

davened Shemoneh Esrei at all! To *daven* such an irreverent Shemoneh Esrei, he should have just stayed home.

So you'll say, who said it was an irreverent *davening*? Maybe he *davened* very nicely, only that at the end he rushed a little bit. A little bit at the end wasn't so good but what does that have to do with his *davening*?

### **Finish With a Bang**

The answer is that the end is too important for that. Nothing is little when you're serving Hakadosh Boruch Hu. There's no such thing as 'Well, at least the beginning was good.' When it comes to serving the Creator nothing is 'just' an end. When you're standing in front of a King there's no room for slacking off.

That's why the Gemara there teaches us how to finish Shemoneh Esrei properly; even the end has a certain procedure. It says there that when you walk back three steps, you should remain standing there for a little bit; don't hurry back. End with a reverence; wait a little while then walk back. Even the very end, the way you walk away, has to be measured with the same seriousness as the way you walked in.

That's what Hashem wants from us, to accomplish in our service of Him **נְבִיאָו וְנִצְאוֹ**. It's a big lesson you're hearing now. *Avodas Hashem* requires a person's dedication and enthusiasm from beginning to end.

### **Leaving the Shabbos**

That's why when it comes to Shabbos the Chachomim go out of their way to teach us how to leave the Shabbos. Everyone knows that when Shabbos comes in we begin with a bang; the Am Yisroel is busy all day Friday preparing for the Shabbos. And Shabbos itself, of course; we go to the synagogue and we *daven*. We have big *seudos*. We sing *zemiros*.

But all that is not enough because the end matters very much. It's a tragedy how people, observant Jews, end the Shabbos. Here's a pious observant Jew. On Shabbos he wouldn't do a thing. He would never think of violating the Shabbos. But he sits there Saturday, late afternoon, as it's getting dark, and he's looking through the window waiting for three stars. Or he's looking at the clock; is it time yet? Can we say *maariv* now? He's waiting for Shabbos to be over.

Such a man is leaving the Shabbos with a skip and a hop. That's not the way; that's not how the Jew walks out of the day of service of Hashem.

### **Make Havdalah Great Again**

The Jewish nation is not only **מְמַהְרִים לְבוֹא**; they don't only hurry to bring in the Shabbos but **מְאַחְזֵרִים לִצְאת** but they are sorry to have to let go

of Shabbos. They make a special *shalashudis*; they sing songs. They *daven* late. Because the way you say farewell to the Shabbos, that counts just like the way you bring it in.

That's why *havdalah* is so important. *Havdalah* is like *kiddush*; it's included in the mitzvah of זְכוּר אֶת יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ, of proclaiming the day of Shabbos. It means that it's a mitzvah to remember the Shabbos not only in the beginning when it comes, but also when it goes out.

When a king comes into the city they stand with bugles and they sound a welcome. It's a privilege to have the king visit and there's excitement. But that's not enough. Because when the king is finally leaving if the city people are not interested, if their enthusiasm waned, it means they don't appreciate that the king is in town.

And so when it comes time for the king to depart they go through the same procedure again; they sound the salutation again with the bugles because the end has to be as vibrant and reverent as the beginning. That's the core of genuine service, to stick with it from beginning to end. That's called dedication.

### ***Havdalah with Challah***

And so we are saying goodbye to Shabbos Hamalkah by making *havdalah*. That's why when you are saying *havdalah* you should be thinking of the great principle that the world was created out of nothing. Isn't that a good idea?

Now, when you were chewing on the first piece of challah on Friday, it was easier to think those thoughts. The beginning of the mitzvah, naturally it's easier. He takes his first bite and he's thinking, "This challah tastes so delicious. Who made it so delicious? Who made it so that when the starch mixes with the saliva, with the enzymes in the saliva, that it creates sugars and tastes sweeter? It's only the One Who made starches out of nothing. The One Who made saliva from nothing. The One Who made sugars from *ayin*. He's the One who made this world of kindness, of *oneg*."

Of course, some people don't even do that; even the beginning they're lazy about. But even those who already learned how to make use of Shabbos, the end of the day they sometimes let it slip away.

And therefore *havdalah* is the time to think about *briyas haolam yeish meiyain*. I know it's the last thing a lot of people would think about but it's a wonderful idea. You pick up the *kos* and everyone is waiting; but you stop for five seconds – let them think you're absent-minded, that you're day-dreaming – and you remind yourself that the world was created out of nothing and that everything is nothing but the will of Hashem; it's only His

imagination. There is no such thing as sky and no such thing as earth; it is only His will that became concretized and changed into these materials. That's the way to end the Shabbos.

### Eight Days

Yom Tov too; same thing. Here's a good Jewish family making Pesach; a wonderful family. They don't go to any hotels. They make the Seder only in their home. *Chol Hamoed* too. They don't run to amusement parks. They're in the *beis medrash*. The women are at home; they're cooking up delicious things for *Chol Hamoed*, for *Yom Tov*.

I admire families like that; we should be proud of such people. I know that today it's *apikorsus* to say something like that, that you don't go to hotels and that you don't have to go on trips on *Chol Hamoed*, but such *apikorsus* is something to be proud of; it's something to aspire too.

But even that is not enough. The great lesson of **וּבְצֵאתוֹ וּבְבֹאוֹ** teaches us that the beginning and the middle is not enough. The end too is important! The last day is important! Don't let go of the excitement, the mitzvah lessons, as much as you can.

### Nine Days

So here is a man who on the day after *Yom Tov* he has to go to work – his gentile boss is upset he took off so many days for Passover – but before he sets out to go to work in the morning, he puts on his breakfast table a bottle of wine. He doesn't have time to drink much but he asks his wife, "Where do we keep the whiskey?" and he pours out a little bit just to wet the bottom of the glass in order to celebrate *isru chag*. And he reviews for one minute in his head the lessons of *Yom Tov*.

It's a mitzvah. The day after Pesach, the day after Shavuot, the day after Sukkos, eat a little bit more than usual. Put something on the table extra, a little cookie. For lunch take along something extra.

You think it's not so important? It's very important! The Chachomim say (Sukkah 45b) on that person **בָּאֵלוּ בְנֵה מִזְבֵּחַ** – it's as if he built an altar, **וְהִקְרִיב עָלָיו קָרְבָן** – and he offered on it an offering. Not just he brought a *korban*; he built a *mizbeach* and prepared a *korban* and he brought it up on the *mizbeach*. He did everything from beginning to end.

And that's the successful Jew; the Jew who knows that the end is important too. He walks out of Shemoneh Esrei with the same reverence he walked in with. He takes off his *tefillin* with the same thoughts he put them on with. He ends his Shabbos and *Yom Tov* like he began them. He has a *chavrusa* he learns Torah with? The last five minutes are the same as the first. His winter *zman* in the yeshiva? The last day is the same as the

first. And there are thousands of examples like that; opportunities to fulfill the Torah principle of **בְּבֹאוֹ וּבִצְאוֹ** in our lives.

## Part II. Never Ending

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### The Heavenly Laborer

Now, even if we would have time to list here all of the ways we can apply this principle of **בְּבֹאוֹ וּבִצְאוֹ**, we have to understand that actually it's not limited to examples; because it's a principle that applies to all of our lives – from beginning to end.

There's a possuk we say on Rosh Chodesh as follows: **יֵצֵא אָדָם לַפְעֻלָּו** – *A man goes out to his toil*, **וְלַעֲבֹדוֹ עַד עֶרֶב** – *and to his work that he labors down to the evening* (Tehillim 104:23). It's a possuk from Borchi Nafshi and it's talking about the day laborer; in the ancient times when men were hired by the day they began working as soon as daybreak occurred and they continued all the way **עַד עֶרֶב**, down to sunset.

Now, on this possuk the Gemara comments, **בְּמֵי שְׁהֶשְׁלִים עֲבֹדָתוֹ עַד עֶרֶב** – *The verse is talking about a person who completes the job down to nightfall* (Bava Metzia 83b). But it's a comment that seems superfluous. Of course that's what it's talking about. That's exactly what the possuk said.

The answer is that the Gemara is talking about a different type of laborer – it's not somebody laboring for earthly wages, for money, but the one who's laboring in *avodas Hashem* for heavenly wages. That's the one whom we extol for working *adei arev*, until the evening.

### The Real Boss

Now I have to explain this. The Gemara says in Bava Metzia that **פּוֹעֵל הַיּוֹם יָכוֹל לְחַזֹּר בּוֹ אֶפְלוּ בְּחֻצֵּי הַיּוֹם** – *a worker can leave the job in the middle of the day* (ibid. 10a). That's the *din*. And you have to pay him for his work, for whatever time he already worked. You can't fine him for leaving you in the middle of the workday. Unless you can't find anybody to finish up and you have to pay extra wages to get somebody to work the second half of the day, so you can collect from the first man's wages to pay for the second man's extra pay. But if you can get somebody to finish up, you cannot penalize the man for leaving in the middle of the day.

Why? Because **בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עֲבָדִים, עֲבָדֵי הָאֱלֹהִים** – *"The children of Yisroel are My servants,"* declares Hashem (Vayikra 25:55). It means that Jews are not slaves to anybody but to Hashem.



And so, suppose in the middle of the day a Jew says, “Look, enough Olam Hazeh already. I can’t ruin my life just working and working. That’s it! I’m off to the yeshivah.”

Imagine that. A Jew, in the middle of the day, he sees that he’s wasting his life and he drops everything.

So his boss says, “Chaim, where are you going?”

“Sorry boss,” he says, “I’m giving up this foolishness. I’m going back to the yeshivah.”

### **From Work to Kollel**

That’s his right. He’s allowed to quit the factory in the middle of the day and get busy with his real job, for his real Boss.

Now, don’t get me wrong. I’m not recommending that. It’s a good ideal but I’m not recommending it because first of all you have a family to support. That’s also *avodas Hashem*. You made a commitment in your *kesubah*. You promised when you got married: אָנאָ אַפֿלח. When you’re a *chosson*, you take hold of the handkerchief that the two *eidim* bring to you and you promise. It’s a shame; the *chosson* thinks it’s just a ceremony. He takes hold of a handkerchief, that’s all.

It’s a *kinyan*! You’re *meschayav* yourself. אָנאָ אַפֿלח, I’m going to work. אַפֿלח means work. *Palach* means to work. In Arabic *falachin* means workers, laborers. אָנאָ אַפֿלח, I’ll work. וואָזן, I’ll support you. And so, if you already promised that’s a different story.

### **Don’t Quit Just Yet**

Also, I’m experienced with this already, with proposals like these. A man told me a while back – and this has happened to me more than once – that he would like to be a *kollel* man; he is thinking of giving up his job and becoming a *kollel* man.

So I said to him, “You don’t need to give up your job; on Sunday become a *kollel* man. You don’t work on Sundays so on Sunday morning pack up lunch in a brown paper bag, say goodbye to your wife, and don’t come back till Sunday night. Sit in the *beis medrash* in front of the Gemara all day. You’ll be a *kollel* man all day long and it won’t harm your *parnassah*.” A good idea I gave him.

That was years ago I told him this; he still hasn’t done it! He doesn’t go to the *beis medrash* on Sundays. The answer is, he didn’t want to be a *kollel* man; what he wanted was not to work!

However, the point is that you have the right to do it. Imagine somebody is sincere and his wife is *maskim* too; so according to the strict

Torah law he can quit his job even in the middle of the day. And the boss has to pay him because he's not doing anything wrong. He belonged to Hashem before he belonged to the factory.

### **A Different Type of Job**

All that however is in this world – there's no need to work till sundown. But when it comes to heavenly wages, it is essential that you work down to the time that the whistle blows. **בְּמִי שֶׁהַשָּׁלִים עֲבוּדָתוֹ עָרֵב** – You have to complete your job down to nightfall (*ibid.* 83b). Nightfall means when the sun of life sets; you cannot stop work before the sun sets.

And that's because this Torah teaching of **כְּבוֹאוֹ וּבִצְאוֹ**, that the end has to be just as accomplished as the beginning, is a much bigger teaching than just the *kohen gadol* or how to end your Shemoneh Esrei. It means that not only the end of the mitzvah counts but that the end of life counts. How you live the beginning is not the entire story. How you live the middle is not the entire story either. What matters is from beginning all the way to the end.

### **Youthful Idealism**

You know there are many people who in their youth were idealists. Let's say when they were eighteen a wave of enthusiasm washed them up upon the shores of Judaism and they began doing *mitzvos* and gaining some *yiras Shamayim*; but then they were left stranded with the enthusiasm that they had at twenty years old. They stopped making progress and they're left in the same place where their first wave of enthusiasm deposited them.

Here's a former yeshivah man who learned in yeshivah in his youth and he loved Torah. "Once upon a time," he says, "I knew this and this *sefer* by heart. I remember how we sat up all night *mishmarim* studying. All my days were only in learning Torah."

What happened? He cooled off. He wasn't prepared for life because didn't understand enough the lesson of **כְּבוֹאוֹ וּבִצְאוֹ** and therefore he slacked off.

Don't we see examples again and again of good boys who eventually went out of the yeshivah; they left the Torah world? It doesn't mean they become *chas v'shalom apikorsim*. We're not talking about that. But they went out of the yeshivah and they went into profession and they lost their taste for Gemara, for mussar, for *avodas Hashem*.

Yes, from time to time they learn, but now they're head over heels in the practical world and as they look back, it's with a little bit of amusement that they view their former enthusiasm. In the olden days, their greatest pleasure was to say a *chiddush*, to learn the *sugya* and ask a lot of *kashes* on

it and understand it and add some ideas of their own. But subsequently, because of the exigencies of life, they went into some profession or business and they become so busy with the great task of making money in this world and now in the second half of their lives they slack off. They have a taste for other things.

### **Youthful Idealism Forever**

Oh no! *בְּמִי שֶׁהַשְּׁלִים עֲבוּדָתוֹ עָרִי עָרֵב* means *how good it is to remain with your youthful aspirations all your life*; the idealism that you gained in the yeshivah – your love for Torah, your fire, your *hislahavus*, should be always, from beginning to end.

And even if you'll be the owner of a big department store, you'll be sitting in your office with a Rabbi Akiva Eiger and you're making notes in the margin. That's your life!

That's your life! If somebody comes in and brings a sheath of checks or orders, so you say, 'Put it down. Soon.' This, the *sefer*, is your business. That, the business, is only incidental.

And when you come home, you're not taking your business with you home. When you come home, you get back to your *seforim*. That's your first love and your last love. Forever and ever, your head is in the Torah.

### **Kollel Forever**

A woman too. Here you have a woman whose husband studied Torah in the *kollel*. She was proud to be a *kollel* wife, to have a *kollel* family. When a girl marries a young man who sits in the yeshivah and learns, you have to know that home is not an ordinary home anymore. It's a *kollel* home. It's influenced by the spirit of Torah. Every day the husband goes off to the *kollel* and the wife goes off to work. She's a *kollel* wife, a different kind of wife, and the children are *kollel* children, different kind of children. Everything is different – it's a different life. He's working at learning and she is working making a *parnassah*; it's a beautiful beginning.

But that's not enough. Because eventually when he'll take over the earning of the livelihood, the family should continue to be a *kollel* family. They established themselves as a *kollel* family, the children are already established as *kollel* children, and that attitude of *kollel* life – it has very many ramifications; the primacy of Torah learning, the shunning of luxuries – should remain all their lives. Even though he leaves the *kollel* later and goes into business it's already a different family forever and ever.

But suppose it's many years later; her husband is out of the *kollel* now for many years. And she's talking with a circle of so-called friends. And she says, "I remember the old days when my husband learned in the *kollel*. The

silly old days when I thought Torah was everything. I used to run out of the house at 6:30 in the morning to catch a bus to Monsey to teach.”

Oh, to say that is a big mistake! Because she has to remain with that same *hislahavus*, that love for Torah, that she had in the beginning. Her husband is out of the *kollel* now? No matter. Her fire is still burning.

### **Morning and Night**

She pushes him out the door early in the morning to the *beis medrash*. In the morning, it's cold outside and dark but she turns and says to her husband, “Chaim, get up and go to the synagogue. You have a *shiur* to learn before *davening* in the morning.”

So Chaim has to put on his overcoat and go out in the cold weather. She's home under the warm blanket but she's a partner. Because she keeps that fire of enthusiasm burning and she pushes him to go, she is a partner in all of his Torah.

When he comes home late at night from learning so she warmed up his supper for him. It was warm and cooled off. She warmed it up again and it cooled off again. But she's patient. It's for the sake of Torah so she warms it up again. Now, when she does that she's a full partner. The Talmud tells us that; she's a 100% partner. She's a partner in his *kollel* days and in all of the learning he does today too because she understands that the end has to be just as good as the beginning.

That's the lesson. It's not enough the beginning of a mitzvah or even the beginning of a day or a *zman* or a lifetime. *Avodas Hashem* is a full day job, a full life job. You have to keep it up *adei erev*. That's how important the end is.

## *Part III. A Happy Ending*

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### **Approaching the End**

We'll listen now to what the Rambam says in *Mesichta Avos* (4:17) because he makes there a very important statement about what it means ‘the end’. And if we understand his words, if we take them to heart, we'll be inspired to not let go; to hold on to our idealism and dedication always.

The Rambam says when a man dies, the way he is in the last moment **כך ישאָר לעולם** – *that's how he'll remain forever and ever*. Not what you were fifty years before; you won't be judged only on what you accomplished when you were younger. What matters is that you kept it up as long as you possibly could, all the way *adei arev*.

I'll explain this with an analogy. Imagine all of us here are working in a big factory, a pottery factory; we go over to the foreman and each one of us gets from him a lump of fine clay to work with. And then we go over to our place at the table where we have to fashion the clay and make it into the best kind of vessel we can. That's our job.

### ***The Bakery Bell***

And the foreman, when he hands us our clay, he warns us, "Shake a leg! Don't talk! Don't waste time! Because a bell is going to ring in the evening and then you have to race with whatever vessel you made out of the clay towards the kiln."

There's a big kiln on the wall with a lot of little doors, and at the end of the day you have to stick your clay into your little oven and lock the door and in one second it's baked hard. After it's baked you can't change it. Whatever it is in that second, that's how it will be forever.

"It won't help anymore what you want to do to your clay," the foreman tells you. "You'll come to me and say, 'Let me please take it out again and change it. I was negligent. I didn't do a good job.' I'm sorry but it'll be too late. It's baked already. It's forever."

### ***The Lazy Laborer***

And so the workers are all standing by their tables with their clay and the smart ones are busy making the clay into a vessel, smoothing it and shaping it and making designs and so on. The foolish ones are talking, laughing, wasting their time – they'll regret it – but the wise ones are working hard. It's the morning time and they feel strong and invigorated and industrious.

But suppose now that one of these men who is industrious – he had already made good progress on his vessel – but as the afternoon comes he begins to tire out; he gets distracted or weary. He's confident about the work he did all morning and he doesn't spend the last hours of the day like his friend does, adding designs and perfecting the shape.

And now, suddenly, the bell rings. Ooh ah! He wasn't expecting that. He has to race now with his vessel to the kiln and as he's running he looks down at his clay with a tinge of regret: "I could have done better."

### ***The Unfinished Vessel***

It won't matter to him that he spent the first half of the day hard at work. What will matter is that he slackened off towards the end and now he's going to bake his vessel yet unfinished.



And that, says the Rambam, is what death is. Whatever you accomplished until that last moment, that's how you enter that kiln and in one second you're baked permanently. That's how you'll be forever; not for a hundred years and not for a thousand years. כִּךָ יִשְׁאַר לְעוֹלָם – *That's how you'll remain forever and ever.* And so what will it avail you that you were good in the beginning? If you rested on your laurels, if you didn't continue for as long you could, it'll be to your eternal regret.

### ***Laboring in Tefillin***

Here's a *bar mitzvah* boy who puts on *tefillin* and he puts them on with pride. Because he was inspired and to him the *tefillin* means something; וְקִשְׁרָתָם לְאוֹת, – *it's a sign of greatness, a פָּאָר, a glory.*

And imagine he's a good boy; he practices those thoughts and he feels more and more elevated every day. He feels a warmth come over him and his character changes every morning because of that. And for a long time he continues to feel that way. He glories with *tefillin*! Ho ho! *Tefillin*! He's happy he's wearing *tefillin*!

What happens? He gets older and he falls into the rut, and he forgets all about it. And one day, he's forty years old or fifty years old now, and he puts on *tefillin* without much thought at all, maybe without any thought.

### ***The Woman Laborer***

Or a woman. She used to be so happy with Shabbos. She prepared for that day with thought. Could be she came here once and she heard us talk about Shabbos, about creating the 'Shabbos Mind'. Everything she cooked she was thinking, "I'm cooking this chicken or I'm baking these potatoes in honor of *briyas haolam yeish meiayin*, to celebrate that Hakadosh Baruch Hu made this entire universe out of nothing."

Or maybe she heard a Torah lesson about studying the Hand of Hashem in nature or about working on her character or *yiras Shomayim* or *ahavas Hashem*. Whatever it is, she grabbed onto it and made something of herself. She became very great because of it. It could be that nobody knows about her; she's just a private woman in her humble little home but she became very great in the Eyes of Hashem.

What happened? After some years she begins to weaken. She's a little lazy about it and now she cools off. Shabbos is just Shabbos – the drudgery of cleaning and preparing and cooking. She's not reminded of Hashem when she sees a cloud in the sky or a rose in her neighbor's yard. Her idealism is not there anymore.

## ***Davening Gone Lost***

You can see the same thing every day in the shul. Someone who when he was younger he *davened* with fire but now you can catch him saying noble words, words that should set his heart on fire, but his heart is not in it. Sometimes he's even signaling to his neighbor. Or his neighbor is talking to him. "Did you see, was Shmerel here today?" his neighbor asks him. And he's mumbling, pointing; "*mehmehmehmeh, hadarkevodhodecha, mehmehmehmeh.*"

*Tatte in himmel*, what happened to this man? He spent twenty, thirty years *davening* like a *tzaddik* and now it's gone. I'm not saying it's all gone. He's still an *ish kadosh* in all his practices, but it has died out within him! The idealism has been extinguished.

## ***Keep Up the Good Work***

The Chovos Halevavos warns us about that. He tells us, his readers, that we have to gird ourselves against such things. And he gives an *eitzah*; he says that you should always review these Torah ideals in your thoughts. You should read the words of the *siddur* as if you're reading it for the first time. You know the meaning of the *davenen* already and years pass by; go over it again anyhow.

"That way," he says, "when you grow older you'll keep reviewing your accomplishments and increasing them. You'll stand your ground and continue to develop your mind."

Not only the *davenen*. What it means Shabbos and *tefillin* and *niflaos haBorei* and learning Torah; everything! All the things you already learned before, all the various ways of serving Hashem that you set out upon in your life, reinvigorate yourself with them when you're older.

## ***Toras HaWatermelon***

Even when you eat a watermelon at the age of seventy, go over it again and review all the lessons when you ate the watermelon the first time. Now, I'm afraid you didn't learn anything the first time but if you're a regular here you know how to dive into a piece of watermelon. You have to dive in with your thoughts. A piece of watermelon is a *sugya*. It's like a tasty *sugya*.

Like this: Why is it that only the outside is deep green but the peel inside has no color at all? The peel is a half inch thick. Why doesn't the green continue into the depth of the peel? It's almost colorless that half an inch. And then starts the red.

What kind of business is this? The plant is like a flag, red, white and green? You see something there! It's purposeful *Yad Hashem*. Outside is green because that's how you know whether it's ripe or not. Depending on its shade of green an experienced person will know whether it pays to buy this watermelon. But why waste color? So the color is thin, only on the outside. The rind doesn't need that color so there's no wasting.

Now, even though the rind doesn't have to be any color, but when you come to the meat, the meat is red. Why is the meat of watermelon red?

### ***The Joy of Color***

Let's say when your wife makes a party she makes ice cream, why does she make it pink? Even if the pink ice cream doesn't taste any better than white ice cream but she adds coloring because it looks better. It's more appetizing. It's to make it more enjoyable.

So Hakadosh Baruch Hu when He is serving you this ice cream – the watermelon He's serving you is better than ice cream – so He colors it red, a beautiful tint of red. You'll eat it with more gusto that way, with more zest.

So if you know how to eat watermelon the watermelon goes into your stomach but *daas* is going into your head. That's the real purpose of the watermelon. That's how to eat red watermelon.

### ***Go on Red, Stop on Green***

Suddenly, however, you come to the rind and you stop eating. Now if the rind was colored red, you wouldn't stop. You would keep on and get a stomachache. Because it's not edible, that's why the color stops. It's an indicator. *Ad kan* you can eat. From now on, discard. No eating.

You're supposed to get excited over that! I know that some of you never heard this *torah* before; I see you're looking at me with dumb stares. But even those who are regulars here, they heard it already, but they're so tired of hearing it so they don't hear it anymore. Oh no! We have to keep pushing! We have to think these thoughts every time we eat watermelon – until the sun of life sets.

### ***As Long As the Candle Burns***

And that's what Dovid Hamelech said. אֶהְלֵלָהּ ה' בְּחַיִּי – *Let me praise Hashem during my lifetime* (Tehillim 46:2). That's what he did. All the days of his life he was singing to Hashem.

Now when Dovid was approaching old age so somebody might have said to him, "Look, you did a good job. Now you can relax. Like it says in the

taxi, 'Lean back and relax.' Enjoy the ride for the rest of your life. You did so much already."

"Oh no," Dovid said. **אָזמֶרָה לֵאלֹקֵי בְעוֹדִי** – "I'll sing to My Hashem as long as I'm still around" (*ibid.*). **בְּעוֹדִי** means 'as long as I'm here'. Because that's what's most important, to sing down to the last moment.

### **Making the End Great**

Now in the last moment it's not so easy to sing. Your bones are creaking and rusty, your digestion is not what it used to be, you're not earning money like you used to earn, you don't get as much *kavod* from your children. As long as the father can hand out big money he's treated well but now he's an old man, a broken old man. It's not so easy to sing when you're old and weak.

But Dovid continued to sing even when he was lying on his bed and he was so cold because of weakness. **וַיִּכְסֹּהוּ בְּבָגְרִים וְלֹא יָחַם לוֹ** – They covered him with blankets but he had no warmth left in him (Melachim I 1:1). Still, enough enthusiasm to sing he had. He never stopped singing until his last moment.

And that's the way that shows us a model for our lives. From beginning to end, **בְּבֹאוֹ וּבְצֵאוֹ**, we are *ovdei Hashem*. Because that's the perfection of our service in this world.

### **Have A Wonderful Shabbos**

## **LET'S GET PRACTICAL**

### **Remembering The End**

The *possuk* in our *parshah* about the bells of the *kohen gadol* teaches us that 'the end is important'. Whether it's the end of a Shabbos, a Yom Tov, or a lifetime. Furthermore, we learned that the end is so important that sometimes the end can atone for all that we missed out in the beginning. This week *bli neder*, three times a day, as I finish Shemoneh Esrei and I take three steps back, I won't rush to finish and move on with my day, I will savor the ending of Tefillah as I review these lessons in my mind.

**This week's booklet is based on tapes:**

**R-6** - Evening of Life | **R-9** - Growing Old | **R-76** - In The Evening Don't Rest  
**16** - The End Is Important | **338** - Always Enthusiastic

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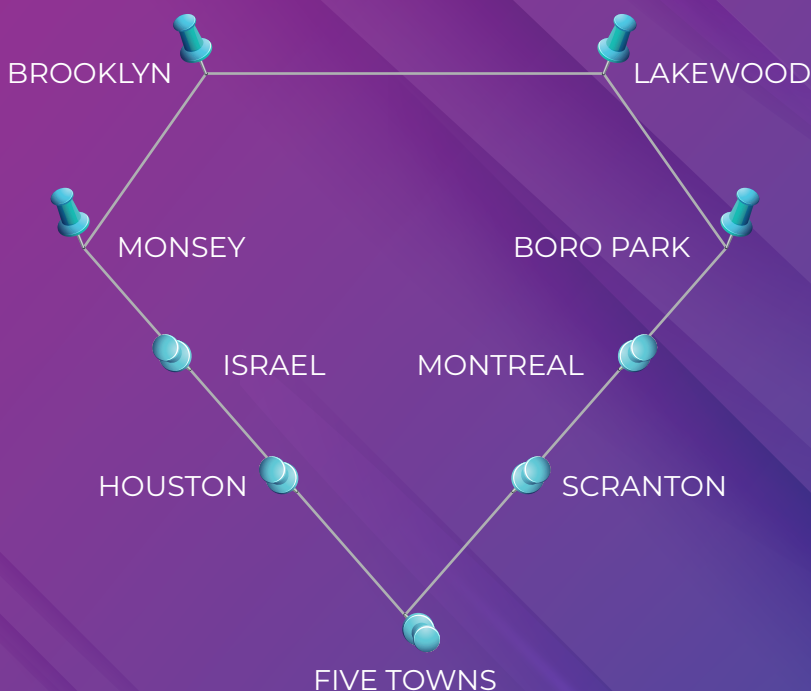
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שאל אביך ויגדך זקניך ויאמרו לך



**What is the *pshat* in the *ma'amar Chazal* that tells us that we should be careful with poor children because they are the ones who will become *Talmidei Chachomim*?**



In Mesichta Nedarim (81a) it says: **שְׁלְחוּ מִתָּהֶם** – “They sent a message from Eretz Yisroel: **הִזְהָרוּ בְּבָנֵי עֲנִיִּים** – Be careful with the children of the poor, **כִּי מִהֶם תֵּצֵא תּוֹרָה** – because from them Torah will come.” Torah comes from poor children. So the Ran asks: Why from poor children? Why is it that especially from the poor families will develop *Talmidei Chachomim*? And he says that it's because poor children have nothing else but Torah.

Do you hear that? A rich boy has a bike and maybe he has a radio too; an automobile and all kinds of expensive toys he might have. He has a lot of things to keep him busy. Boruch Hashem, when I was a boy, I never had a bike. I was such a poor boy that when I wanted to buy a little hammer – it cost twenty-five cents in those days – I couldn't afford it! It took me a long time but finally I saved up twenty-five cents and I bought the hammer. That was a big thing for me! We didn't have any toys.

Poor children have much less opportunities to waste their lives! Boruch Hashem! So **הִזְהָרוּ** – be careful, **בְּבָנֵי עֲנִיִּים**, with the poor, **כִּי מִהֶם תֵּצֵא תּוֹרָה**, because Torah will come from them. And the Ran says it's because they have nothing else to do except learn. That's the *pshat* there. So now you know that children who have so many good things, it's a very big problem.

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