



פרשת יתרו

WITH

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BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

Think My Thoughts

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Part I. His Will, My Will

Righting Your Will

We'll begin with a quote from the *mishna* in Pirkei Avos, a *maamar* that most of the people sitting here are familiar with: עֲשֵׂה רְצוֹנוֹ כְּרְצוֹנְךָ – Make His will like your will (2:4).

Now this statement is usually explained to mean that you should do what Hakadosh Baruch Hu desires you to do. 'Make His will, your will' in the sense of fulfilling the commandments of Hashem; if He wants you to fulfill the *mitzvos*, then that's what you should do.

And yet, even though this is not a wrong explanation, it's not enough. There's more to that statement. Much more.

What does it mean עֲשֵׂה רְצוֹנוֹ כְּרְצוֹנְךָ? It means to make the will of Hakadosh Baruch Hu, whatever He's thinking, whatever He wants, into your will. It's not merely a matter of fulfilling what He commands – it's a matter of thinking like Hakadosh Baruch Hu

thinks. That's what Hashem wants from us, to think along with Him; that our minds should follow the patterns of His mind *kiv'yachol*.

More Than Doing

Now, if that's so it means that this subject of עֲשֵׂה רְצוֹנוֹ כְּרְצוֹנְךָ requires us to study not merely what we are expected to do. Of course we must know what to do. The Torah has all kinds of requirements; we must know the *halacha*, what's commanded to do and what's forbidden to do. The truth is that a large part of *avodas Hashem* is studying what you're expected to do and what you're expected to avoid. Very many people don't know that even their *l'maisah* living, their acts, are being done many times incorrectly and therefore to learn *halachos* is very important.

But besides that, included in that obligation, there's also a great mass of *information* that Hakadosh Baruch Hu expects us to learn; patterns of thinking that will make His attitudes and ideals our own attitudes and ideals.

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Is Torah Mitzvos?

That's why it says **לְפִיכֶם הִרְבָּה לָהֶם תּוֹרָה וּמִצְוֹת**, that Hashem gave us the gift of two things: Torah and *mitzvos* (Makkos 23b). Now, *mitzvos* we know are commands – it means commands, what you must do and what you shouldn't do. That's *mitzvos*. But what is Torah? Isn't that included?

The answer is it is, but it's a separate branch of doing. It's the doing of the mind, the activating the thoughts to think along a certain pattern. The word 'torah' means teaching; in English we'd call it 'ideology'. It's *ideologia*, the *chochma* of concepts, of ideas. But not any ideas. 'Torah' with a capital T means the Thoughts of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. To pattern your thoughts after His; that's what's intended here. And therefore it's an entirely different area of achievement independent of anything that you would *do*. It's a matter of succeeding in learning how to think.

Now, if a person is loyal to what the Torah told him to be loyal to, he's fulfilling the Torah. If a person does what he's supposed to do, he's a fine man. He's a *tzaddik*, no question about it. We love him. Anybody who keeps the Torah, he's a *tzaddik* and you are required to love him, no question about that.

Plowing New Fields

Nevertheless it's only a part of the story. These *frum* Jews who never gained an intellectual attitude, they're missing an important part of what it means to be a Torah Jew. It's wonderful to be *frum l'maisa*. I'm not belittling it *chas v'shalom* but it's only when a person learns to think with the Torah attitudes – not only his body keeps the Torah but his *neshama*, his *machshava*, his intelligence thinks like the Torah – only then is he a Torah Jew.

Now that's an entirely new field. It's as old as Matan Torah but the idea is new to most people. But new or not it's a field of endeavor we must learn to undertake because that is what Hakadosh Baruch Hu meant when he gave us the Torah. One of the

most important aspects of Kabolas HaTorah is this: we should think along with Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

The Hidden Commandment

Why do I say it's most important? Because it's the first commandment we heard at Har Sinai. When we look at the *Aseres Hadibros* we see that the first of these commandments is **אֲנֹכִי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ**. Now that does not sound like a commandment to us. It's a statement, that's all. What's the *mitzvah* there? If it's a command, we don't see any command here.

Now there are a number of *peirushim* but one of the most important ways of understanding is what the Rambam explains: You're obligated *leida uleha'amin*, to know and believe (Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah 1:1, Sefer Hamitzvos 1). That's the *pshtat*: to know and to believe **אֲנֹכִי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ**.

Now the question is, it seems to be an entirely superfluous command. After all, it was said to people who ate *mann* every day, people who saw *ananei hakavod* overhead all the time and at night the *ananei eish*. This command was said to people who were standing at Har Sinai and heard Hashem's Voice speaking to them. It wasn't necessary to tell them this *mitzvah*. For the *yotzei Mitzrayim* it was superfluous.

This *mitzvah* after all is not only for the future generations. It was also for the *yotzei Mitzrayim* who were standing there right now. And they're looking, they're hearing. Hashem is right here! So **אֲנֹכִי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ** means merely you should believe in Me? How could they not believe? A dead man maybe, but a live man it's impossible not to believe. They heard His Voice speaking to them.

Secrets Revealed

And so we understand that the *mitzvah* includes more than that. *Anochi* means 'you should get to know Me.' Of course, on the lowest level it means *emunah*; it means saying, believing, **אֲנִי מֵאֲמִין בְּאֱמוּנָה**, **שְׁלֵמָה** – "I know that there's One Hashem." But that's only the bottom rung of the *mitzvah*.

To know Hashem means to know *all* about Him, to know what He thinks about everything. “I am Hashem your G-d” means, ‘You should know what My thoughts are and you should think according to the way I think.’ *Anochi* means ‘I am your model in how to think, in what to think.’ That’s how Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants us to fulfill this mitzvah. It’s a commandment to think.

Now the truth is it’s impossible to know what Hashem is thinking. Hashem’s ‘Intellect’ – if we could say such a word – is way way above the ability of our minds to grasp. **כִּי לֹא מַחְשְׁבוֹתַי מַחְשְׁבוֹתֵיכֶם** – *Your thoughts are not like My thoughts*, Hashem says (Yeshaya 55:8). It would be ridiculous for a *basar v’dom* to aspire to know the thoughts of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Who are we to imagine that we could think His thoughts?

And yet we can! We can because *what He wants us to know of His thinking*, that’s what He wrote down in the Torah. The Torah, as far as we, *basar v’dom*, are concerned is Hashem’s thoughts. And you can despair about learning more about what He’s thinking than what you can get out of the Torah; you’ll never discover more about the Mind, *kiv’yachol*, of Hakadosh Baruch Hu than what He revealed in His Torah.

Talmud Torah Kineged Kulam

But it’s not only something interesting, something mysterious or mystical, that we can open up the Torah and see the thoughts of Hashem. **אֶלְקֵי ה' אֶנְכִי** means that it’s an *obligation*: “I’m obligating you to study Me; to know Me by means of knowing My thoughts.”

Now, this principle that the Torah is the thoughts of Hashem, a look into His intellect, lends a new importance not only to internalizing all the great Torah ideals – we’ll speak soon about them; there are thousands and thousands of them – but to learning Torah in general. Because we’re seeing now that it’s not merely a mitzvah of learning Torah – it’s an opportunity to study a Sefer that is a treasury of the highest Thoughts available to man.

That’s why our Sages (Peah 1:1) say that **תְּלַמּוּד תּוֹרָה כְּנֶגְדְּ כָּלֵם**. ‘*Learning Torah is equal to all the mitzvos*’ – it’s a statement that everybody knows but many don’t understand. Why should it be so? Studying should be so important? Isn’t it the doing that counts?

Change My Mind

The answer is that learning Torah is the biggest doing there is. It’s considered one of the most important *mitzvos* because it changes you. Now, the truth is that any mitzvah changes you. **וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֶת כָּל מִצְוֹתַי וְהִייתֶם קְדוֹשִׁים** – *You do mitzvos and you become holy* (Bamidbar 15:40). Every mitzvah makes you *kodosh* but the mitzvah of *talmud Torah* makes you a new mind. And when your mind is changed into a Torah mind that’s the greatest *kedusha*, the greatest perfection of all.

When you put into your mind the *machshavos* of the Borei Olam, that’s the most tremendous change you can make in yourself. And that’s what *talmud Torah* is; it’s *kineged kulam* because you’re changing your mind into a mind that thinks like Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

When you’re learning Yevamos or Gittin, you’re thinking the thoughts of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. When you’re learning Bava Kamma, *arba avos nezikin*, you’re thinking the thoughts of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Hakadosh Baruch Hu is thinking how important it is that every Jew should avoid damaging somebody else’s property. And so when you walk into the synagogue you’re thinking about how you have to be careful. You want to open the window? Don’t push against the windowpane; you might break the pane. You’ll be a *mazik* and you have to pay for it. Hakadosh Baruch Hu doesn’t want you to be a *mazik*.

So you’re thinking that Torah thought as you open the window; that idea not to be a *mazik* to your fellow man’s property! How big an ideal that is! You’re thinking like Hakadosh Baruch Hu thinks.

The Greatness is in the Details

But not just in a general way like that. You know, if you never learn Torah, you can't appreciate what great emphasis is put on clarifying the smallest details but once you learn Torah, you'll see that it's so. When you learn Gemara and *mefarshim* you're amazed at how tiny details are magnified; on how much time is spent on the *svaros* and understanding of the most minute technicalities.

Of course the *leitzim*, the *amei haaretz*, they say "Oh, it's legalism." They belittle the details that *talmidei chachamim* are busy with; they look down on it. "What difference does it make?" they say. "It's a small thing. It's just splitting hairs."

But what to a layman, to a boor, an ignoramus seems like just a hair is to great scientists a big factory. "What do you mean, 'just' splitting hairs?! Splitting a hair means to us discovering great secrets of wisdom." It's the medulla and the cortex and the cuticle. And the layers: Huxley's layer and Henle's layer and the Hyaline layer. And that's the superficial understanding of it. A cell is less than a hair and they're trying to split cells today. They're splitting not only the cell; they're splitting fractions of cells.

But the business of splitting cells is nothing compared to the splitting of hairs in Torah study. The more you learn, the more details you study, the more you're thinking in details of Hashem's thoughts. Even the most abstract details, the finest minutiae, are details of His thoughts. And because Hakadosh Baruch Hu is so great, everything that He thinks is of infinite importance; the smallest detail is never small because it's Hashem's Mind. Don't look at the smallness of the detail – look at the greatness of the One Whose thought it is!

And that's the mitzvah of *Anochi Hashem Elokecha*: "Think along with Me," Hashem says. "That's how you'll know Me best, by filling your mind with the thoughts of My Mind."

Part II. His Thoughts, My Thoughts

Ideology of the Creator

Of course it's not only details, the *lomdus* of Gemara. It's *kol haTorah kulah*, all of the Torah ideology that we're expected to think along with. You want to know what He's thinking about, what He wants us to be thinking about? So open the Chumash. בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ – *In the beginning, there was nothing at all and Hashem created the world, ex nihilo, from nothing at all* (Bereishis 1:1). That's the first thing He wants us to think.

It means that we have to acquire that attitude that whatever you see in the world, it's *devar Hashem*, the word of Hashem. You look up into the heavens, it's לְעוֹלָם ה' דְּבַרְךָ נֹצֵב בַּשָּׁמַיִם – *Your word is standing in the sky* (Tehillim 119:89). You look down at the ground, it's the word of Hashem. You look everywhere in between and it's כִּי הוּא אֲמֹר וַיְהִי – *He is commanding the world every minute to continue to be*. Every *rega*, Hashem is *mehaveh es kol habriah*; every second He continues *yesh me'ayin* and if He would stop commanding, the whole world would disappear into nothing. The entire world is nothing but the word of Hashem! If you look at the world like that, that's called thinking His thoughts.

It's More Than Facts

That's why Hakadosh Baruch Hu put this in the Torah. *Bereishis bara Elokim!* It's not just a fact, a story, a piece of information. It's a peek, *kiv'yachol*, into the Mind of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. "That's what I'm thinking," He says. "That there's no reality except for My Will. And אֲנֹכִי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ means I want that to be your way of looking at the world too."

Now, I mention that example, that thought, because it's the first one. But it's endless the thoughts we have to put into our minds. It's a big job and that's why you shouldn't put it off. Hurry up and get busy! Hurry up and get busy changing your mind.

little children and we retain a juvenile understanding of that all our lives. Does it become part of your mindset? No.

But *Anochi* means that it *must* become a way of thinking. We have to take it out of the cellar of our heads from time to time as we grow older and review it. Not just as a fleeting thought; to spend time on it until it becomes part of your mindset.

Now, if that's the greatness of man in general – of every Puerto Rican or Italian – so what is a Jew? He's a skyscraper on top of a skyscraper. How do we look at our fellow Jews? With the thoughts of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. **נִה אָמַר ה' בְּנֵי בְכֹרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל** – the Jewish nation is My *bechor*, My firstborn, says Hashem (Shemos 4:22). The word *bechor* **ב.כ.ר** is related to the word **ב.ח.ר**, which means a chosen one; *bechor* means the chosen first one. 'You are My chosen first nation in the world'.

That's a thunderous declaration from the Mind of Hashem. And it means that it should be thundering in our minds from that time on. I'm not saying you have to yell it from the rooftops; the nations of course don't like that kind of thunder. But what can we do? In our own minds at least it has to reverberate without end. We are obligated to think along the lines of thought that He revealed to us.

Acquiring a New Mind

Accepting the Torah doesn't mean merely signing on to keep the laws of the Torah, signing on to be a doer; it means accepting a new way of thinking, acquiring a new mind. At Har Sinai the Bnei Yisroel accepted that they will stop using their minds and think only what Hashem wants them to think. Torah means giving away your mind and substituting for it the Mind of Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

Of course, the intelligentsia will come out with the protest: "What's he saying?! We should stop using our minds?!"

Absolutely not! We want you to use your mind; but only to think true thoughts. Because, let's say you want to be open-minded. So whatever you hear

comes into your mind. And what is the result? All kinds of sewage collects in your mind. All kinds of garbage are now filling up your mind; it's a garbage disposal, that's all.

But if your mind is closed, and it's open only to the subject of Hashem's thoughts, that's the most open mind you could have. It's like in a bank you have the bank vault, the safe. It's a closed place. There's nothing in there except for gold and silver; and stacks of greenbacks. That's all that you'll find there and therefore it's the most valuable place. You want an open place?! Walk out of the bank, stop at the curb, and look down into the sewer. That's an open place. Everything runs into the sewer. Which is more important? Which is more valuable?

False Independence

And I have to tell you something: don't imagine that you're an independent thinker. Ach! You have to know that in case we don't think along Torah lines, don't think that we're thinking along independent lines. You're never independent. Either you're thinking Torah thoughts, Torah attitudes, or you're thinking the attitude of New York City, of Hollywood, of the street. The mind is not a vacuum. It's one or the other.

And so anybody who will say, "How can I give up my own independent mind and accept the Torah way of thinking?" is really saying, "I prefer to hold on to what the New York Post is telling me." And if that's the choice, it shouldn't be so difficult.

The Unreliable Conscience

"Oh," he says, "but I have my conscience that I listen to." That's what this humanist – I don't want to say his name here – wrote in the New York Times; a long letter. "I don't need Torah", he says, "I follow my conscience. My conscience is enough to guide me to do what's right."

So you ask him, "What conscience was guiding Hitler? If you think that all you need is a conscience so Hitler when he killed six million innocent people he was following his conscience too. And all the

bums who rape and who murder? The mothers who kill their unborn children? They're following their conscience too. So is your conscience any guide for you?"

And so forget about that. If you think you're following your conscience you're fooling yourself. You're following the ideas of some nincompoop who wrote a book or who writes in the newspaper. And so you're thinking along with the street and you're imagining it's a conscience.

The Not Difficult Choice

The only way to think is the Torah way. Otherwise, it's a sewer, not a head. There's no וְהִנֵּה מָאֵד in your head if you're not thinking along with Hashem. It's impossible! You'll be a complainer, a nag – it's too cold and too hot and too rainy. This is no good and that's no good. There's no בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרֵא אֱלֹקִים. You'll mouth the words maybe, some lip service, but there's no *devar Hashem* wherever you look. All it is is clouds and sun and trees and people, that's all; it's all *gashmiyus*. וְיִפַּח בְּאַפָּיו? You don't think so at all! It doesn't cross your mind even. בְּנִי בְּכוֹרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל? To actually think like that when you see another Jew? Ah *nechtigeh tug*. Never.

All the thoughts of Hashem are crowded out by the thoughts of the street. Either you have in your head Mayor Lindsey and City College and evolution; either you have a television-head or a Torah-head; it's either or. Either you'll think like Me, says Hashem or your head becomes a sewer. It's not a difficult choice.

Part III. His Torah, My Torah

A Torah Head

Now, the more a person practices up thinking according to the Torah patterns, the more of a Torah mind he develops. Not only he's thinking Torah thoughts but they actually become his own thoughts.

That's what it describes in the beginning of Tehillim (1:2). It's praising the man who בְּתוֹרַת הַשֵּׁם

הִפְצֹו – *his desire is the Toras Hashem*. That's what he's interested in knowing, the thoughts of Hashem. And then it goes on and says, וּבְתוֹרָתוֹ יִהְיֶה יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה – *and in his Torah he ponders by day and by night*. First it's called תּוֹרַת הַשֵּׁם, Hashem's Torah, and subsequently it's called תּוֹרָתוֹ – his own Torah.

So the Gemara (Avodah Zarah 19a) says like this: When you learn Torah, so at first it's the Toras Hashem, it's Hashem's business. When you hear what the *posuk* says or what the Gemara says, alright, the Gemara is saying it. Of course, you're a *frum* Jew so you'll study the words, absolutely. You're willing to do Hashem the favor and think along with Him. But still it's the Toras Hashem – only that you're good enough to keep His Torah.

But then what happens? After a while it begins to become *Toras*, your own Torah; it actually becomes the way that you feel. The more you think about Torah ideals and Torah attitudes, *the more they become your own ideals and attitudes*. You become so imbued, so saturated with Hashem's thoughts that they become your own thoughts.

It's Our Will

You look around and you don't see clouds and trees anymore – all you see is the *devar Hashem*. And not only that but it's *tov me'od* – you feel that the world is actually very good! Every person is actually of infinite potential and every Jew is actually Hashem's chosen child. All the Torah attitudes become your attitudes too.

That's the real עֲשֵׂה רְצוֹנִי כְרִצּוֹנֶךָ – *Make your mind like the Mind of Hashem*. To think along until Hashem's will actually becomes your will. And not only in the intellect; it's bigger than that – what Hashem wants, that's what you actually want! What He likes you like. And what He dislikes you don't like.

Dovid Hamelech was describing a certain great man. נִבְזָה בְּעֵינָיו נִמְאָס – *What's scorned is disgusting in his eyes*, וְאֵת יְרֵאֵי ה' יְכַבֵּד – *and he honors those who fear Hashem* (Tehillim 15:4).

Now I'll explain that. 'What's scorned' means whatever Hashem scorns – He tells us in the Torah, "I scorn this. I don't like it," – so this person has learned to think in the ways of Hashem and he trained himself to also despise it.

Scorning Seafood

Let's say *treifeh* food; seafood. So when a person begins to understand *kashrus* in the sense that Hakadosh Baruch Hu portrays it in the Torah – that the Jewish body is a sanctuary – he begins to feel that it's a profaning, a sacrilege, to allow something into his mouth that's not kosher. Besides for the sin, the Gehenom of the Next World, when a man realizes the great principle that he is a sanctuary, it becomes much more clear to him. שָׂקָךְ הוּא לְכַמּוֹ – *It should be disgusting to you* (Vayikra 11:12,20,23). It's nauseating. It's out of the question to introduce a dead *sheretz* into a holy body.

Now those who didn't learn Torah so they pass by a seafood store and see snails in the window: "Well, we don't eat snails. We Jews don't eat that." That's all. But he has no objection to snails. Sometimes he's a *lamdan*: "It says in the Gemara (Rashi Vayikra 20:26) that you should say, 'I like to eat snails only I'm refraining because of the Torah.'" But he's not understanding correctly. He should say, "I would like to eat snails but I learned from the Chumash that snails are disgusting." That's how you think along with Hashem.

Scorning Romance

And so any kind of relationship between men and women which is not *kosher al pi Torah* is disgusting. Hashem hates immorality, and *Anochi Hashem Elokecha* means that we too hate immorality.

The nations of the world glory in immorality; they make it an ideal. The literature of the nations is nothing but men and women, love and romance; even illicit. Everything that the nations are doing is because they're following their own ideas and they're not limited to any set of ideals. They pay lip service. Yes, they have certain ideals that they claim to follow but they don't. But the Am Yisroel, when

we accepted the Torah we became a holy nation because we mortgaged our minds to Hashem. From now on what Hakadosh Baruch Hu says is pure and good, that's what we accept. What He says is *tamei* is *tamei*. And immorality בְּתוֹבָה בְּהַעֲרִיּוֹת – *immorality is considered like filth, uncleanness* (Yevamos 11a).

Now to an *am ha'aretz* it might not be so; he tries to keep away from it because it's forbidden but actually, to him it can be quite romantic. But to a Jew who learned, there's no romance in whatever is not kosher. To the Jew who thinks along with Hashem, it actually smells bad.

Rabbi Akiva's Sense of Smell

I'll tell you a story from the Chachomim (Avos D'Rabi Nosson 16:2) about that. Rabbi Akiva was traveling and he visited a certain monarch, a king. Rabbi Akiva was an important personality so the king put him up in a special place and two women came into his place of lodging. Rabbi Akiva took a look at them and began spitting. He was retching. He couldn't hold his food down when he looked at them.

So they came to the king and said, "What kind of man is that?"

The next morning the king asked Rabbi Akiva, "What happened? What went wrong?"

"What could I do?" Rabbi Akiva said. "Their smell came to me like dead rats. They smelled like dead rats."

Imagine a dead rat lying in the July sun for a week on the sidewalk. You have to make a big detour around such a thing. Rabbi Akiva trained himself all his life, what's not according to the Torah smells bad. Whenever he passed a dead rat he practiced that; he was thinking, "That's that! That's that!" So he trained himself and, therefore, he learned the attitudes of the Torah. That's called נִבְזָה בְּעֵינָיו נִמְאָס – *What Hashem scorns is disgusting in his eyes.*

Loving the Beloved

And the *posssuk* concludes, וְאֵת יִרְאֵי ה' יְכַבֵּד – He honors those who fear Hashem. Our Sages say it's talking about Chizkiyah Melech Yehuda; he trained himself that way. Here is Chizkiyah, a king sitting on his throne. He sees a *talmid chochom* and he gets up from his throne and he walks over and he embraces him and he kisses him.

Chizkiyah Hamelech?! But he's a king; and this is a plain man, this *talmid chochom*? The answer is he's only a plain man to someone with an empty head, a head that is empty of Torah attitudes. But if Hashem's will is your will so you love this plain *talmid chochom*. ה' אוֹהֵב צְדִיקִים – Hashem loves *tzaddikim*. Even though they don't confer any benefit upon Him, He loves them; כִּי צְדִיק ה' צְדָקוֹת אוֹהֵב – Because Hashem is a *tzaddik*, He loves righteousness. For itself; no other reason. Hashem loves people who learn His Torah so Chizkiyah loved this man too. He loved him because he learned to adopt the attitudes of Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

That's why Abaye one time said, תִּיתִי לִי – If any reward would ever be owing to me, it's because when I see a *tzurba m'rabanan*, a *ben Torah*, who completed a *mesichta*, it is my custom to make a *repast*, a *seudah*, in honor of that achievement" (Shabbos 118b).

Now, it's not that he himself finished the *mesichta* – he's happy that somebody else completed a *mesichta*. Of course, if you're the one who finished the *mesichta* you have more reason to rejoice. But suppose someone else who has no connection with you achieves something in Torah – it's not your own achievement – but you are so happy that you spend your own money and you furnish a *seudah* to celebrate it! The mere fact that you saw some virtuous act makes you so happy, just like Hakadosh Baruch Hu is happy; that is already an emulation of the way Hashem thinks.

Loving the Tzaddik Nistar

And so suppose you see a *tzaddik* walking across the street. He's not a *tzaddik* who's a Rosh

Yeshiva. He's not a *tzaddik*, a *chassidische Rebbe*, who has many followers; just a nice, fine, private Jew. But you know he's a good Jew, a *tzaddik*. So you generate in your heart a certain admiration of him. You're thinking, "Hashem considers this man a very fine man, and so I do too."

Or you see a woman pushing a baby carriage. Inside, there are two babies and four more are holding on to the side. So instead of just passing by like a *golem*, you admire that sight. She's raising a future family of *bnei Torah*, of *ovdei Hashem*. You admire that. You consider her a princess.

Now she is dressed very plainly. There's nothing to admire in the way that gentiles would look at that scene. She's busy and she's worried. Raising a family means many responsibilities and so her mind is occupied; she's harried maybe. Nevertheless, we don't look at the *chitzoniyus*. The exterior means nothing to you. Because you see what's being done here! Hakadosh Baruch Hu desires a nation that is multiplying itself. That's the great wish of Hashem to the Jewish nation. And, therefore, anyone who is succeeding in this tremendous endeavor should arouse admiration within you.

The Besamim Boys

Now the Gemara tells us that עֲתִידִים בְּחֹרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁיִּתְנוּ רִיחַ טוֹב בְּלִבְנוֹן – The time will come when Jewish young men, *yeshiva men*, who never tasted of sin, kosher, frum *yeshiva men*, they will give forth a fragrance like a Lebanon cedar forest (Brachos 43b).

You ever smell a cedar forest from a distance? It's a pleasure. Ahhhh! You breathe deeply as the wind brings the aroma of the cedar to you.

So when you see a group of *yeshiva men* across the street going to the *yeshiva*, you're thinking: "Ahhh, it smells beautiful." Now they don't use any perfume. Bums yes. Bums smell good. They have perfume, after-shave lotion. They douse their underwear with perfume but as they pass by they smell to you like skunks. You have to hold your nose when they pass by. That's how you have to learn.

בְּבִזָּה – *What is scorned by Hashem*, בְּעֵינֵינוּ נִמְאָס – *is disgusting to you*. You can't stand it! The stench of sinners is what Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants us to feel.

Accepting the Torah Mind

Now some people who are not acclimated to these things won't find it easy to think along these lines. But that's what Kabolas HaTorah means – a Jew is obligated to feel that Hakadosh Baruch Hu has given him everything including his mind and therefore he joyously accepts the mind of the Torah in place of his own mind.

And therefore, it's our duty as *mekablei haTorah* to put the Torah into our heads and think along Torah lines. That's the most important function of the Torah, to teach us how to think along with Him. That's the Torah mind and it's the greatest and most important service of Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

Have A Wonderful Shabbos

LET'S GET PRACTICAL

Thanking for Torah

The first of the Ten Commandments we received at Sinai seems to be but a statement: "I am Hashem, your G-d". But actually it is a command that we emulate Him and see things the way He described for us in the Torah. Every morning this week before I say Birchas HaTorah I will *bli neder* spend 30 seconds planning out the emotion of gratitude that I should be feeling as I say the *brachos*: gratitude for the gift of the Torah which gives me the opportunity to align my thoughts with the highest thoughts available to mankind – the thoughts of the Creator of the world.

This week's booklet is based on tapes:

291 - Thinking By Torah | 809 - Thinking Along With Me
1000 - Thinking Hashem's Thoughts | E-3 - Purim: A World Upside Down
Listen: 718.289.0899 Press 1 for English and 2 for Thursday Night Lectures



Should we say that "all is good" even though we don't feel it?



And the answer is yes! Because *v'halachta b'drachav* – you have to walk in the ways of Hashem, and it says in the Torah: וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה – *Hashem saw all that He had made*, וַיִּהְיֶה טוֹב מְאֹד – *and behold the whole thing is very good* (Bereishis 1:31). Hashem said this is a very good world! And so, instead of walking around and grouching, "It's too hot. It's so humid," or "It's too cold – it's nasty; it's raining;" instead of that, we should always speak well of Hashem's world.

It's hot? Wonderful! The apples are getting red on the trees. The pears are becoming sweet on the trees. If it wasn't hot, they wouldn't become sweet. It's cold? That's also wonderful! The earth now is taking a rest from producing and while it's taking a rest it's recuperating all the minerals it lost, all the materials it lost during the summertime. Without the winter, there can't be a summer. If it was summer all year, the earth would keep on producing and it would become arid and infertile. That's why the earth takes vacation in the wintertime. Cold is wonderful. Cold forces the earth to stop producing.

Rain is wonderful! Without rain, we're nothing. When it rains, we're coming down from the sky. You came down in the rain once upon a time! We're almost 80% rain. We came down from the sky once. And people are grouching and complaining about the rain. Here we were coming down from the clouds and they were complaining against us. That's our chance to come to this world! That's rain! And therefore when rain comes down, all the boys of the *yeshivos* are coming down and their future brides, the *kallots* from Bais Yaakov, are coming down. They're all coming down together from the sky. So rain is wonderful.

So Hashem says it's a very good world, and He wants us to keep on saying that all the time. הוֹדוּ לַיהוָה כִּי טוֹב – Give praises to Hashem that He gave a very good world; and if you keep on saying it, after a while, after some time, you'll begin to feel it.

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