

TORAS AVIGDOR

AUTHENTIC TORAH THOUGHT FOR LIFE

RAV AVIGDOR MILLER



Hallel

הלל

SONG OF THE NEW MONTH



Publisher's Note

Menucha Chaya was our first child and she introduced into our lives an especial happiness and *nachas* that only a child is capable of bringing.

Sadly we only had Menucha for 28 years and last year, on כ"ט שבט, Hashem took her back and left us only with memories of her life; memories that comfort us even as they break our hearts. Her smile, her face that shone with happiness even in the midst of her suffering, is something that we can never forget.

One of our most precious memories of Menucha is her Rosh Chodesh Hallel. Menucha enjoyed singing Hallel to Hakadosh Baruch Hu every Rosh Chodesh, thanking Him for the gift of another month of life. Even when she was not well, lying in the hospital, she would daven Hallel together with her friend on the phone. It was symbolic of a special *koach* she had to be happy even through her most difficult days.

And so, even though we don't have her here with us anymore, one of our *nechamos* is that promise of Chazal that כָּל הַעוֹסֵם בְּשִׁירָה לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא – *Someone who makes themselves busy saying song to Hashem in this world,* זוֹכָה וְאוֹמְרָה לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא – *will be rewarded by being able to continue to say the song in the Next World.*

And so our Menucha is saying Hallel to Hashem now and forever, and even though we don't see it or hear it, knowing that it's true is the greatest *nechama* and *nachas* that parents can have.

Rabbi Amichai Markowitz
Toras Avigdor

לעילוי נשואית

מנוחה חיה ע"ה

בתר' עמיחי שליט"א

Menucha Markowitz

Remembered for her smile and joy

A hallel to Hashem

That lit up the room

*And encouraged all who knew her
to be thankful to Hakadosh Baruch Hu*

For everything He gives us

נפטרה כ"ז שבט תשפ"ה

ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.





Contents

Publisher's Note	2
Introduction	6
Q&A.....	7
<i>The Avodah of Rosh Chodesh: Three Elements The Pashtus of Rosh Chodesh: Hallel</i>	
Hallel: Tehillim chapter 115	11
הללו-ה - Go Wild About Hashem.....	12
<i>What does Hallel mean? Hallel about Kah</i>	
הללו עבדי-ה - Praise, O' Servants of Hashem.....	17
<i>Who are the Avdei Hashem? The Function of Avdei Hashem The Work of Avdei Hashem</i>	
הללו את שם-ה - Be Excited Over Hashem's Name	25
<i>Knowing His Name</i>	
מְבָרַךְ מְעַתָּה וְעַד-עוֹלָם - The Name of Hashem Should Be Blessed Forever	28
<i>Bending Our Knees in Gratitude</i>	
מְעַתָּה וְעַד-עוֹלָם - From Now Until Forever	31
<i>How Much Time? The Never Ending Job</i>	
מִמְזֶרַח-שֶׁמֶשׁ עַד-מְבֹאֵל מְהֵלֵל שֶׁם-ה' - From the rising of the sun until the setting of the sun, Hashem's Name is to be praised.	35
<i>A World Created for Praise A World for Everyone to Praise</i>	

'רם על־כָּל־גּוֹיִם ה'	- Hashem is Above All the Nations	41
------------------------	---	----

How Great is Hashem?41

עַל הַשָּׁמַיִם כְּבוֹדוֹ	- Above the Skies is His Glory.....	44
---------------------------	-------------------------------------	----

Higher than the Universe..... 44

מִי כֵּה' אֵלֵינוּ הַמְגִבֵּהוּ לַשָּׁבַת	- Who Is Like Hashem Our G-d Who Dwells On High	45
---	---	----

The Meaning of Our G-d

הַמִּשְׁפִּיל לָרְאוֹת בַּשָּׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ	- He Lowers Himself to Look in The Heavens and The Earth	47
---	--	----

Lowering Himself to the Lowest

מְקִימֵי מַעַכְרָ דָּל מֵאַשְׁפַּת יָרִים אֶבְיוֹן	- He raises up the low man from the dust, He raises the poor man from the dung heaps.....	49
--	---	----

Hashem is Lifting Up Everyone

מוֹלֵשֵׁבִי עֲקָרַת הַבַּיִת אִם־הַבְּנוּיִם שְׂמֵחָה	- The Barren One is Established as a Happy Mother of Children.....	53
---	--	----

Hashem Establishes the Barren

הִלְלוּ־ה'	- Be Excited Over Hashem	56
------------	--------------------------------	----

Wild About Hashem Forever

The Bottom Line - A short peirush.....	59
---	-----------

Epilogue	62
-----------------------	-----------



Introduction:

The purpose of this *peirush* on the first chapter of Hallel is intended *not* as a *peirush*. Of course it's that too, but when the Rav z"tl spoke about Hallel it was much more than just teaching us *teitch* of the words or *iyunim* on the *pessukim*. He was teaching us how to *say* Hallel — better yet, how to sing it — and how to be swept up in *his* gratitude for Hashem's *chassadim*, and *his* excitement of praising Him for גדלו וְטוֹבוֹ, His Greatness and everything He does for us.

Anyone who was *zocheh* to know Rav Miller can testify to the fact that he was a most happy man. His sweet smile of contentment was a sign of what was doing in his head — he was overflowing with gratitude to Hakadosh Baruch Hu for even the most simple things in life and for life itself. And that was his especial *avodah* of Hallel on Rosh Chodesh: It was a time to reinvigorate that feeling of gratitude and happiness, a time to prepare again for another month of saying thank You to the One he called, “my best Friend.”

And so we hope that the following *likut* on the first *kepitel* of Hallel, gathered from more than twenty of the Rav's tapes, will lift us all up a little closer to the way the Rav said Hallel every Rosh Chodesh. His face was flush with excitement, gratitude and love of Hashem, and it was a spark plug for the rest of the day — a day of thanking Hashem for another month of life — and a catalyst for happiness during the rest of the month.

But before we begin with Hallel itself we'll first introduce the subject of Rosh Chodesh with two Q&A's from the Rav where he describes what he often referred to as “the three important elements of the Rosh Chodesh,” and which encapsulated his *avodah* of the day.

The Avodah of Rosh Chodesh: Three Elements

- Q: -

What is so special about Rosh Chodesh that we say Hallel and some call it a *moed katan*? It seems like a very important occasion but I don't see what it is.

- A: -

There are three elements that we can see easily about Rosh Chodesh.

First of all, we look back and thank Hashem that He let us live through the past month. You think it's a small thing to live a whole month? *Baruch Hashem!* That's why we say Hallel. Hallel means to thank Hashem that you lived to see another Rosh Chodesh.

Suppose a man was sentenced to be put to death and he received a reprieve for one month. A month is a tremendous gift! Many people pay big money in order to live another month. And Hakadosh Baruch Hu certainly deserves a great Hallel for the gift that He gave you.

Another element of Rosh Chodesh is *yaaleh v'yavo* which symbolizes our *tefillos* for the coming month. We have to ask Hakadosh Baruch Hu that the month that's coming should be a successful month. Even if it is signed and sealed on the past Rosh Hashana, nevertheless we have to continuously beg the parcel postman to deliver. That's the *derech Hashem*—even if He promised us but we have to shout and beg for it. That's what He wants of us.

And therefore, it's important to ask! Not only in *yaaleh v'yavo*; all day long Rosh Chodesh as much as possible, to ask Hakadosh Baruch Hu that the next month should be a month of good health, a month of success in *parnassa*, a month of *aliyah*—we should make progress in serving Him and in knowing Torah more. There's a lot of things to ask for! And we shouldn't generalize! We have a right to ask for individual things too.

And the third element of Rosh Chodesh is *zman kaparah lekol toldosam*; it's a day of atonement for the sins we did in the last month. *רְאֵשִׁי חֹדֶשִׁים לְעַמְּךָ נָתַתָּ. יָמֵן בְּפָרָה לְכָל תּוֹלְדוֹתֵם* – *You, Hashem, gave Rosh Chodesh to Your people, Rosh Chodesh is a time to atone and make good for all that happened in the past month or months. (Mussaf r.c.)* It's a miniature day of atonement.

Which of course means to look back on the past month and see what happened. You think a month is a small thing in our lives? You should look back and take stock of the past month; what you received from Hakadosh Baruch Hu in the past month and what did you give in return, what errors you made. If you look back and see that you didn't accomplish anything in the past month, ooooh, you should be worried. You should worry and make up your mind that this month you're going to do all the good things that you hear here at least. Do all these good things next month. Make up your mind that your month shouldn't be wasted.

It's a very good idea to utilize Rosh Chodesh even for that alone. If you do it for five minutes every month, then you are a head taller than the rest of the people. It's an important element of Rosh Chodesh, to look back and remind yourself what were the wrong things you did and you do *teshuvah*; *zman kaparah*.

And therefore we sum up now, Rosh Chodesh has three elements. One is to thank Hashem for the month, that you lived to see another Rosh Chodesh. Second, to beg and ask that the month should be a month of happiness and success. And the third element is *zman kaparah*, to atone for the past month. Which means to retrospect, to go back and consider what happened, mistakes we made or the progress we made in order to hold onto it. If you started good things, you have to consider what good things you began in order to hold onto it.

These are very important things and that's why it's a *very* important occasion.

February 15, 2001

The Pashtus of Rosh Chodesh: Hallel

- Q: -

What's the *simcha*, the great happiness of Rosh Chodesh?

- A: -

Today is Rosh Chodesh Iyar. It means that one month ago, on Rosh Chodesh Nissan you were asking Hakadosh Baruch Hu, "Oh, Hashem give me *chayim* and *chayim* and *chayim*. Please give me another month of life."

So suppose somebody would have told you then, "My friend, I have a secret for you. I was listening in to the *Beis Din shel Maaleh* and they said you're going to get a whole month of life for the coming month."

Oh what a happiness! To know that you are guaranteed another month of life!

We're worried every Rosh Chodesh. Who knows? The people that passed away in the past month weren't all expecting to go away. If somebody would know for sure he's going to live the next month, it's a happiness. A month of life is a gift.

Especially if you're going to make use of it. That's what we say, לִמְנוּת יָמֵינוּ – *To count our days*, בְּנָ – *properly*, הוֹדַע – *teach us*. We're asking Hashem, "Teach us the importance of counting our days."

A month? A month of life?! That's diamonds! Are we happy? Sure! That's why we say Hallel. We're wild with happiness. We lived another month already. We look back on the month that passed, the month of Nissan, the *hachanos* of Pesach and during Pesach; we were busy all month and now *Baruch Hashem* the month came to an end. *Baruch Hashem*, no big troubles came during the month, maybe no little troubles either. Whatever it is, we survived. We're so happy we lived a whole month.

So what's the question? Certainly Rosh Chodesh is a happiness. It's the happiness of being alive! It's fun to be alive!

And that's why besides for thanking, besides for Hallel, we also ask Hashem for the next month: "*Yaaleh v'yavoh*, please, Hashem, give us another month."

I want to tell you something however. Hakadosh Baruch Hu says, "You're asking Me for another month? It depends on how your attitude was to the past month. Did you appreciate the past month? Were you thanking Me for the past month? And now you're coming to Me ungrateful, not thanking Me, saying, "I want another month."

First you have to say to Hashem, הודו לה' ב' טוב ב' לעולם חסדו in Hallel. That's what Hallel is for on Rosh Chodesh. "We thank You Hashem, how good You were to us in the past month. And now Hashem, give us another month."

"Oh," Hashem says, "That's what I want to hear. If that's the case, I'll give you another month."

And so Rosh Chodesh in itself is the biggest happiness because it's a celebration of being alive. There's nothing like life. *Chayim*, life is the biggest gift and therefore whatever else is included in Rosh Chodesh. the *pashtus* of the day is the happiness of being alive. And that's enough of a reason for us to spend today and all our days in gratitude to Hashem!

May 8, 1997

Hallel: Tehillim chapter 115

הַלְלוּ-ה

הַלְלוּ עַבְדֵי ה' הַלְלוּ אֶת שֵׁם ה': יְהִי שֵׁם
ה' מְבָרָךְ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד-עוֹלָם: מִמְּזֻרַח-
שֶׁמֶשׁ עַד-מְבֹאוֹ מְהֵלָל שֵׁם ה': רָם עַל-
כָּל-גּוֹיִם ה' עַל הַשָּׁמַיִם כְּבוֹדוֹ: מִי כֵה'
אֱלֹקֵינוּ הַמִּגְבִּיהִי לַשָּׁבֶת: הַמְשִׁפִּילִי
לְרֹאשׁוֹת בְּשָׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ: מְקִימֵי מַעֲפָר
דָּל מַאֲשֵׁפֹת יָרִים אֲבִיוֹן: לְהוֹשִׁיבֵי
עַם-נְדִיבִים עִם נְדִיבֵי עַמּוֹ: מוֹשִׁיבֵי
עֶקֶרֶת הַבַּיִת אִם-הַבָּנִים שְׂמִיחָה

הַלְלוּ-ה:

הַלְלוּ-ה'

Go Wild About Hashem

What does Hallel mean?

The Excitement of Hallel

The most important word in the entire subject of Hallel is of course the word *'hallel'* and therefore it pays to understand what that word means exactly. Because even though some people translate it as 'praise', actually it's not so—the word הַלַּל specifically means something more than just 'praise'.

How do I know? Because the word הוֹלֵל means 'wild'. אָמַרְתִּי לְהוֹלִלִים. אַל תְּהוֹלוּ – I said to those who are wild, 'don't be wild'. (Tehillim 75:5). The most basic, literal translation of hallel is 'wild excitement'. It comes from the word ho: הוּ הוּ הִנְסוּ מֵאֶרֶץ צָפוֹן נָאֻם ה' – "Ho! Ho! Flee from the land of the north," says Hashem (Zecharyah 2:10). So ho means to make a noise. The word is what you call onomatopoeic—it's a word that expresses itself through the sound of the word itself. And so ho is a word of excitement and hallel means to be wild with your enthusiasm. 'Hallel!'—it's a word of shouting! And that's the difference between hallel and all the other words of praise: לְשִׁבְחָהּ, לְפָאֵר, לְהוֹדוֹתָהּ, לְשַׁבַּח, לְהַדְרָהּ, לְכַבְּדָהּ, לְעֲלֶיהָ, וּלְקַלְסָהּ. Each one means something else, but hallel specifically means to be excited, to be shouting in your excitement.

And so "Hallelukah", that's the summoning of the people, ourselves and those around us, to the function of being excited. "My friends," says Dovid Hamelech, "throw off your slothfulness, your laziness, and wake up! It's time to go wild now with excitement!"

And so we're ready now to begin, only that we have a question. The sixty thousand dollar question is, what are we supposed to be excited about? And that's what Dovid begins with: *Hallelu-Kah – Go wild about Kah, about Hashem!*

The Two Letter Name

Now, if we're going to follow along with Dovid we have to first understand what does *Yud-Kei* mean? We have to study it because it's a remarkable word. It comes from the word הָיָה – *to be*, and it actually would be proper to consider it an abbreviation of הָיָה, הוּדָה, וְיִהְיֶה – *He was, He is, and He will be*. It means He is the One Who is around always because He is the only One with true existence. And so ה־ means “Being; the One that has true existence.”

We don't have any true existence—we're only a dream that Hashem dreamed up into existence. כִּי הוּא אָמַר וַיְהִי – He said “I want things to come into existence,” and so because He desired it, it came into existence. And only because He is wishing everything into existence right now, that's why it exists. If He would stop desiring, it would all collapse into nothing; not into dust, not into atoms—into nothing.

And so actually we are only the imagination of Hashem. Of course, we like living in His imagination. Because it's very real; Hashem's imagination makes it very real and we want Him to keep up this imagination for a long time! It's fun to be alive in His imagination! But we shouldn't ever forget that He is the only One that has true being. ה־ אֱלֹהִים אֶמֶת, the Rambam says, means הוּא לְבַדּוֹ אֶמֶת – *He is the only One Who is really true*; nothing else is true in this world.

The Real Refrigerator

Not only people; everything! You'll laugh but it means that as you walk to the refrigerator and you feel thankful for that contraption—a refrigerator is a big benefactor after all; it keeps your food fresh, you think. No, it doesn't keep your food fresh! It's *Yud-Kei* Who is keeping your food fresh. Forget about the refrigerator. It's only a dream.

You have a gas range and it cooks tasty meals, and you think what a good thing it is to have such a stove. In the olden days when they wanted to cook something they had to build a fire of wood and put over it some bricks. And now, look, you press a button and the flame springs out and it starts cooking efficiently. No, that's just a deception. Nothing is being done by the gas range. Hakadosh Baruch Hu is doing everything!

And that's what *Yud-Kei* means — He is the One that *IS*. Nobody and nothing else *IS*. He's the One that always was, is right now, and is going to be forever and anything else is only going to exist as long as He decides it should exist. And so as we begin our song of praise and gratitude to Hakadosh Baruch Hu for another month of life, we recognize now that our existence, our being, our body, is from Him and only Him.

Hallel about Kah

Hallel Only to Kah

And therefore we say *Hallelu-Kah!* Who are we excited about? To Whom are we going to shout now in excitement? הַלְלֵנוּ! Only to Him. He's the One to express your gratitude to. He is the Author of your existence and your happiness and therefore He's the One Who is deserving of our excitement.

And so *Hallelu-Kah* means 'be excited about Hashem — to the exclusion of other things.' And so we begin Hallel with a plan, a commitment: As much as possible we're going to be excited about *Kah* and nothing else.

Because the *umos ha'olam*, you have to know, they also go wild—but they go wild about nothing. When they are dancing, the drunken revelers, and they are dancing and singing ho ho; that's *holel* over nothing.

Especially today. America is a country of people excited about nothing. I can't say in public the things they're excited about but you hear what the music stores are blaring forth all day long. Look into music stores and you see inside how they're jumping up and down to the tune of the music, to words that are worse than meaningless. A *meshugene* comes to hear the music and jumps up and down. What are you excited about?

The News Not Fit to Print

It's a very great reproach of the gentiles when you see their newspaper headings. You think, "Maybe the newspapers are reporting important news; I'll go out and look at the newspaper." So you pass by and you see the front page, it tells about a certain man who was a top basketball man and now he was captured by another team. Ho! Ho! Big news!

They're excited about a nobody! When he went to high school, he didn't attend the classes; every afternoon he stood in the schoolyard and he practiced basketball. A bum, that's all. This bum is on the front page. He's a hero, and they're excited about him.

Another bum who has nothing in his mind at all, no intelligence at all, but he knows holds a stick and he's able to swing it just right to hit a ball. So when this nobody whacks the ball with a bat and the ball starts flying in the sky way out in the bleachers and everybody goes crazy and screams with enthusiasm, are you going to join in their enthusiasm over nothing? It's one of the biggest errors in life! Whose business is it if people get together in a stadium with sticks and they hit balls covered with horse skin, and then they run? *Meshuggene!* About nothing!

I came back from Slabodka once, I was walking in the streets, in the busy street. A man was on the steps. He called out to me, "What's the score?" He said he wants to know the score! From me! The score is important now! Who cares what the score is?

Turn Your Enthusiasm to Kah

A ridiculous world; the outside world is stupid. Nothing at all. Why are you excited? There's nothing in it. Dovid Hamelech says you're wasting your energies! Turn it to *Kah*.

And even if a person becomes enthusiastic about his troubles or about his successes, his worst enemies and his best friends, any kind of interest that he invests in anything else, detracts from his excitement about Hakadosh Baruch Hu. You're excited about nature? You're competitive with your neighbors? You're excited about the glory that's being proffered you? If there's anything in the world about which you should be excited it's Hakadosh Baruch Hu. We don't have enough enthusiasm in ourselves to share it with anyone or anything else. And if a person invests his enthusiasm in anything else, it detracts from his excitement about Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

The One-Track Mind

And so, *Hallelu-Kah* means we have to husband our excitement—we have to be stingy with enthusiasm and keep it only for things connected to Hashem. When we see the *sefer Torah*, we're excited about that. We stand up. And not lazily. No! We're enthusiastic about the *sefer Torah*. “Oooh! *Zos HaTorah* – this is the same Torah that Hashem gave us at Har Sinai!”

You can be excited about Torah and *mitzvos*, about *chessed*, *gemilas chassodim*. Be excited about your Torah *shiur*, about *mussar*, about *tzaddikim*. Be excited about raising *frum* children! Be wild on Simchas Torah. Be excited on Shavuos at *Matan Torahseinu*. Be happy on *yomtov*; Succos, *Zman Simchaseinu*. Shout to Hashem!

And especially on Rosh Chodesh when we're saying Hallel and thanking Hashem for another month of being alive, we have to remember that everything we have is from *Kah*, the True Existence, and therefore we say with excitement, הֵלֵלֵנוּ-הָ!

הָלְלוּ עַבְדֵי ה'

Praise, O' Servants of Hashem

Who are the Avdei Hashem?

Servants Get Excited

And so once we prepared ourselves with this opening word, with the purpose of Hallel and one of our most important functions in the world, so we say now 'הָלְלוּ עַבְדֵי ה' – *You, who are the servants of Hashem, get busy being excited about Hashem.*

Dovid is talking now to the Jewish people and he's encouraging them in this great endeavor, this great function of life. "All of you are 'עבְדֵי ה'!"

The Fortunate Slaves

So first of all, these two words, *avdei Hashem*, make us feel important because who you serve, who you're a subject of, that already says a lot about who you are, about your status.

Suppose you're an *eved* let's say of the king of one of South Sea Islands. The island is maybe a little bit bigger than the size of this place here and there's a king. He's in charge. Once in five years a boat stops there to drop off things and so the king comes out with his twenty subjects. The king is almost naked but he's different from his subjects. They all wear a piece of cloth around their *ervah* but he, in addition to that, also wears an old hat that once washed up on shore. It was used in Europe by somebody maybe a hundred years ago and

that's his crown; he puts on the old hat and he's the king! He marches out, the king with his twenty subjects to greet the boat coming in. So suppose you're a servant of that king. It's a small *yichus*; but nothing so special.

But suppose you're the servant of the King of England. So that's a bigger *yichus*; to be an *eved* of the king of a big country, there's more honor there. And if it was a king of all Europe, even more; the bigger the king is, the more your honor is.

And so Dovid says, "My fellow Jews, that's nothing yet! Because you're servants of the מֶלֶךְ מְלִכֵי הַמְּלָכִים הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא – the King of all kings, the Creator of the universe, the *Yud-Kei*, and that's the greatest honor there is. That's why I always tell a bar-mitzvah boy, when he comes to shul wearing his black hat for the first time, I tell him that his hat is more valuable than the crown of the Queen of England. Her crown of gold and diamonds is a dunce cap compared to your sixty dollar or eighty dollar black hat.

And that's the plain truth without exaggeration because if you're fortunate enough to be an *eved Hashem* so you're more important even than kings. If you're fortunate enough to be from those whose function in this world is to serve Hakadosh Baruch Hu then you have to know that you're more important than all the kings in the world together.

The Function of Avdei Hashem

The Servants' Obligation

And so we come back to Dovid's first words. We say to ourselves and to anyone listening, "הֲלֹלוּ עַבְדֵי ה' – *You servants of Hashem, you fortunate ones, let me tell you what you have to do. You have to be excited about Hashem.*" Because along with that good fortune and honor, there comes an obligation.

You know what your job is in this world, you *eved Hashem*? It's an important piece of information as we go into a new month of life. You have to know that you have an important job. You have to get busy with הללו את שם ה' because that's the primary function of an *eved* of Hashem.

The Secret of Avodah

How is that the function of a servant of Hashem? The Chovos Halevavos analyzes the word *avodah; avodas Hashem*. What does it mean to serve Hashem? A pious Jew who decides today to serve Hashem has in mind he's willing to do things for Hashem. He'll sacrifice his own desires. He'll give away his time or his money or his labor to serve Hashem.

But the Chovos Halevavos translates it in a different way. He says that to be an *eved* to Hashem, to be a servant of Hashem, means to be humbled to Hashem; to be so humbled that you feel like a servant who wants to serve His master. That's called *avodas Hashem*.

But pay attention because I didn't tell you the *peirush* yet what it means, how you become humbled. The Chovos Halevavos tells us *avodah* is based on the principle of *gratitude*, the attitude of gratitude. A person can only hope to be an *eved Hashem* if he understands what Hakadosh Baruch Hu did for him always and is doing for him right now. He studies all the benefits that were showered on him: How fortunate he is that he was born! How many miscarriages take place, but he was born. And he's not a cripple either and he's not blind. He lives normally, and he has so many limbs and so many organs, and every one is functioning.

Not just functioning—each one is a miracle of plan and purpose. Each organ by itself is one of the most wonderful contrivances that no human inventor can equal. And every day he arises in the morning, opens his eyes and is still alive, and he begins using again the great gift of his body and of his mind, all the faculties; he remembers, he thinks, he can speak, he can see and hear, he can function in every manner.

Indebted Service

After a while he begins to think and look what Hashem is doing for him, and he asks a big question, a very big question. *מה אשיב לה' כל תגמולוהי עלי* – *What can I pay back to Hashem for all that He's doing for me?*

It's a question very many *frum* people don't ask themselves. What He's doing for me?! We're doing for Him! Oh yes, we're serving Hashem, and He owes us a great debt. In this world He's not giving us anything and in the Next World we expect to present Him with a bill. "Look what we did for You in this world!"

So Hakadosh Baruch Hu says, "You have to know, whatever you did for Me in this world didn't pay for the first day of your life yet. When you were a little baby and you were breathing and you were living normally, whatever you got on that first day, you didn't pay Me back no matter how many *mitzvos* you performed until the last day of your life. What I did for you, you could never pay back."

You have to know that when you come to the Next World, you'll be very surprised. You'll find that you fell way behind in payments for the first day of your life. "Oh no! I haven't paid up for all those diapers that I was wearing then." And diaper pins—you have to pay for diaper pins. You have to pay for all the milk you drank the first day.

And only when the Jew understands that and he says *מה אשיב לה' – "What can I do to pay back to Hashem what He does for me?"*, then he can begin serving Hashem; whatever he does after that — Torah, *mitzvos*, *gemillas chassadim* — it's all being done in humble gratitude. That's called *avodah*.

The Work of Avdei Hashem

The Attitude of Gratitude

Now, all of this means that an *eved Hashem* has his work cut out for him because if you don't study what He does for you, you just can't

be an *eved Hashem*—you don't think there's much to be grateful to Him for. On the contrary you're on top. עֶבֶד לַיהוָה לְאִישׁ מִלָּוָה – When you borrow money, you're a servant to the lender. So we think we're the lenders here; we're lending Hashem our time, our money, our dedication. We're doing good deeds to Him so He owes us. He's our *eved, kaviyachol*. And so unless you invest your thoughts in understanding what you really owe to Hashem, that's going to remain the attitude of an honest person.

Only when you begin to feel humbled in gratitude, then you can start to serve Hashem. If you receive benefits, piles, mountains of benefits and you can hardly pay back pennies, so you're embarrassed. You don't know what to do. You say *mah ashiv*, what can I pay back? You're put to shame. You're *nichna*, you're humble, you're an *eved*. Oh! Now you begin the career of *avodas Hashem*.

The Gift of Eyes

And therefore you have to consider everything that He's giving you. You have two good eyes? So he says, “Of course I have two good eyes. I'm born with two good eyes.”

No, you're not born with two good eyes! You have two good eyes that are given to you *every day* by Hashem. Every day, it's a special gift; two good eyes! That's how to think if you're an *eved Hashem*. And that's how you have to say it every day: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִלֵּךְ הָעוֹלָם פּוֹקֵחַ עֵינַיִם – *I thank You Hashem that You open up the eyes of the blind*. Why don't you say “that You gave me two good eyes”? No! You have to act like you're blind, and now you got two good eyes. Ohhhh!! A blind man who suddenly gets two good eyes, he wouldn't just mumble the *bracha*, “muh-muh-muh-muh”. Oh no! He would say it with dancing! With excitement! With *hillul*! He would be *meshugah*! He would be drunk with happiness! He would shout! He'd say Hallel!

The Gift of Teeth

And that's the function of *avdei Hashem*. You have to thank Hashem for everything that you have. You have teeth? Most of you have

teeth, don't you? Your own teeth. Ahhhhhh! Ah ah ah! How lucky you are! You have to thank Hashem for that great gift. Teeth are a great gift!

Now, people say that's silly. You came here for such foolish talk? You come to a place to hear maybe *sodos*, *sisrei Torah*, but such things, about teeth, you can't waste your time. You want to hear *chiddushim*.

The answer is this is the biggest *chiddush* you have to know. To thank Hashem that you have teeth! And if you don't, then you have to know that you're not an *eved Hashem*.

It's the first time you heard it? You're lucky you came tonight.

Functioning Feet

If you're able to walk – look how many people cannot walk. How many people need wheelchairs? How many people have walkers? Or crutches? Or canes? And you're able to walk! You're moving around all day on your Rolls Royce.

And even those who have canes have to thank Hashem. Even those who have crutches have to thank Hashem. Even those who have wheelchairs have to thank Hashem. As long as you can open your mouth and say something, you have to thank Hashem! Because there are many people who can't even talk – they talk with sign language. And even with sign language you have to thank Hashem in sign language. At least you have hands to make the motions.

The Breath of Life

One more example; I can't help myself. If you're sitting here now, you're breathing. One breath, another breath, another breath. You know how much gratitude you have to feel for that? Pay attention.

כל הנשמה תהלל י-ה – *Every neshama should praise Hashem* (Tehilim 150:6). So the Medrash says that *neshama* here means 'a breath': על כל נשימה ונשימה תהלל י-ה – *For every breath you have to say Hallel*

to Hashem (Bereishis Rabba 14:9). You didn't know that? For each breath, one Hallel. Not half-Hallel; the whole thing.

I was in Slabodka when this was once being spoken about and one of the *rebbeis*, *zichrono levracha*, said, "Think how many breaths we took since we were born! A little baby when he comes out and takes his first breath, he's *mechuyev* in Hallel already. So you see we are behind in Hallel." My rebbe, Rav Avraham Grudzinski told me that. "We haven't finished by today paying for the breaths of the *first* day," he said.

Home Experiments

You're not convinced that one breath is worth saying Hallel? I have a simple experiment. Put your head in a bucket of water and hold it there for three minutes. And somebody will say, "I'll let you take one breath if you promise to say Hallel afterwards for it." It's a bargain! He'll let you take your head out for one second. You take one breath and back in the water again. And as you're there, after a half minute you signal to him, "Ok, I need another breath."

Then you pull your head out. Ahh! I owe another Hallel.

It's an experiment anybody can carry out at home. It's only because you have so many breaths they become cheap to you and therefore you begin ignoring that.

Be Different

Now, if you'll speak about this in the *beis medrash*, they'll take you for a *meshugener*. No matter! הֲלָלוּ עֲבָדֵי ה'! You can't follow what the ordinary run of the mill people say. Although they're good people — יִבְרְךְ אֶת בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל; Hashem should *bentch* all of them, all the *tzaddikim*, all the men and women who keep the Torah — but you can't follow them because they don't study thoroughly the *yesodos haTorah*.

How many *frum* Jews do you know who thank Hashem for air? Did you make a tally of how many people think about that? I'm talking

about *from* Jews—the *beheimos* outside I'm not talking about them, but *from* Jews, how many are thinking about thanking Hashem for air? I'm very sorry to say that not many will say yes. It doesn't even enter his mind.

Be Jewish

Now that's a condemnation, an accusation against us. Because you're missing the point—gratitude and praise, that's what it means to be a Jew. You know, Jew comes from the word Judah. Whether it's Jude, Judah, Jewith, Jew; whether it's juif, jude, yid, zhid, whatever it is, it comes from the word Yehuda. And Yehuda means 'the one who praises Hashem'. Just take out the *daled* and you have *yud kay vav kay*. And so the purpose of a Jew in this world is to be a *Yehudi*—our job is to praise Hashem.

Every Jew should know that's his business in life; he is in the employment of Hashem. You may be a doctor. You may be a street cleaner. Whatever you are, you're working for Hashem and that means you have to get busy studying His kindness to you. It's without an end; it's a subject that has absolutely no limit, the kindness of Hashem, but if you're a non-thinker you'll never appreciate it — you'll be blinded by habit and you will never fulfill what you've been hired out to do. We are all *avdei Hashem* and that's our business: 'הללו עבדיו'!

הִלְלוּ אֶת שֵׁם ה'

Be Excited Over Hashem's Name

Knowing His Name

The Name

Now, the question is what does it mean, 'Be excited about the *Sheim*, the Name of Hashem.' Let's be excited about Hashem Himself. Where does His Name come in here?

The answer is that we can't know Hashem; we won't be able to know Him until we come to the Next World. The only things we know about Him is what He lets us hear about Him. And that's what the word *Sheim* means — it's what we hear about Him; from the word *shamo'a*, to hear. A name is not *the* person; it's what you *know* about him. Let's say a man named Chaim. You don't know him but his name, that's the first thing you know about him. You heard about a person named Chaim. So the *sheimah*, the report of him is Chaim.

Now, when you know the Names of Hashem so already you begin to know about Him. All the various names are *mesichtas* of information. But when in addition you know also about Chaim's deeds, so you know more about him. How do you know about Hakadosh Baruch Hu? From His deeds. We don't see Hakadosh Baruch Hu but we 'hear' about Him by means of the things He does in the world. That's also His 'Name' because it tells you more about Him.

And so whatever we heard about Hashem, whatever He has allowed us to hear about Him, whatever He's given us to see in this

world, that's His Name. What we hear about Hashem from His *ma'asim*, that's *Sheim Hashem* — that's how much we know Him.

Listening to the News

Now, what did we hear? We heard a lot of things. We heard that He created the world. We heard that He took us out of Mitzrayim. If you look in our history how we went out of Mitzrayim, it was a tremendous *chessed*. Finally Hashem gave a destruction to our enemies and He gave us the victory and we came out full of wealth and rejoicing. Oh! To remember that, that's *Sheim Hashem*.

We heard that He gave us the *mann*. We heard that His *ananei kavod* protected us for forty years in the Midbar and that He took us into Eretz Canaan. We heard that He fought wars for us against the Canaanite nations. We heard that He built for us a Beis Hamikdash.

So all the things that Hashem did to our nation in all history is His Name. *Sheimah, shmuah*, whatever we heard in the Chumash and in the Neviim, whatever we were told by our forefathers about our history, it all speaks of the greatness of Hashem's kindness and that's the Name of Hashem in the world. And therefore if you want to learn about Hashem, learn Chumash; study what He did for our forefathers or in history in general *lehavdil*.

Hearing the Call of Nature

Now, *Sheim Hashem* also means what we hear about Hashem, what's reported about Him by *nature* on all sides. We hear that He causes the sun to shine every day all over the world, that He's pouring down sunlight for the world. And the sun gives you vitamins as it hits your skin. The sun gives you light. And it's all free energy! No landlord will send you a bill. Con Ed won't send you a bill for the daytime light.

We heard that He makes rain. When it rains, it's a tremendous *chessed*. Water comes from the sky and falls down upon the world. When the winds blow, *mashiv haruach*, it's Hashem feeding us. Without the wind you'd have nothing to eat. Wind causes us to have food to eat.

Feeding the World

Everybody here eats. You don't believe it? You don't see them eating when you come here but they eat. I was once in a hospital. I walked down the corridor. It was lunchtime and everybody was eating. In every room they were bringing in trays of food. "Oh," I said. "Everybody eats. The whole world is eating!" Every single person in this world! Don't tell me there's an exception.

And He does it with kindness. מְכַלֵּל חַיִּים בְּחֶסֶד – Hashem gives the world food and He gives it with *chessed*. People enjoy food. בָּהֶן בְּחֶסֶד וּבְרִיחִים. He gives it with a taste and a color and we enjoy it. Even a little cat is chewing the bones that you threw out of your window after your chicken supper. The cat is eating those bones with a relish, with a *ta'avah*; "Ah, ah, ah." But it's not you who gave the cat the bones. Hashem is the One Who gave the bones to the cat. He is supplying everybody in the world with food; all the living. That's what we know about Him.

The Name of Kindness

And therefore that's His Name! What's His Name? *Chessed*. חֶסֶד מְלֵאָה הָאֲרֶץ – The whole world is full of Hashem's *chessed*. There's water all over the world to drink. There's grass all over the world for animals to eat and produce milk. Cows eat grass and make milk. And they make cows too.

Look at the world and see how Hashem does kindness. Pass a fruit store and see red apples. Why are they red? Ah! It's a pleasure to see red apples. And golden oranges! And yellow bananas! And blue grapes! And red cherries! All these are the pleasures that Hashem gives to mankind to enjoy.

That's Hashem's Name! A name of kindness. If we had to pinpoint one thing that His Name teaches us about Him, it's Kindliness. And therefore when you say הִלְלוּ אֶת שֵׁם ה', it means "Let's get excited about everything we know about Hashem and praise Him!" Talk to your wife, your children, your neighbors and tell them about Hashem's Name, and let them know that's the only thing to be excited about.

יְהִי שֵׁם ה' מְבֹרָךְ מִעַתָּה וְעַד-עוֹלָם

The Name of Hashem Should Be Blessed Forever

Bending Our Knees in Gratitude

Blessing Hashem

Now, what's the result of saying that His Name—it means what He shows us of Himself in the world—is what we get excited about?

So Dovid says, יְהִי שֵׁם ה' מְבֹרָךְ מִעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם, *The Name of Hashem should be mevorach, blessed, forever and ever.*

Now, that sounds like something important, something very significant: *His Name should be mevorach forever!* And it *is* important. Only that we have to know first what that word *mevorach* means. Otherwise it's empty words, empty promises.

Bend the Knee

Mevorach comes from the word *berech*, a knee—it means to be bent-kneed. Anytime you find a form of the word '*Baruch*' in connection to our relationship with Hashem, it comes from the word *berech*, knee. And so when we say בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, *baruch* means a knee is bent, *atah*, only to You. You're the only One to Whom we bend our knees—we don't bend our knees to anybody else in the world.

And even though it's true that after we have that word established then we use it sometimes for human beings too as a secondary meaning, to thank somebody, to bless him; but originally *baruch* means only that: We bend our knees, our *berech*, to You.

Now, why do we bend our knees? In *hachnaah*, humility. In ancient times when somebody did you a favor, you bowed down to him; you made yourself low before him. That's a sign of gratitude. I'm humbled, bent-kneed before You because of all the benefits You give me. You're the *Nosein* and we can't give anything back to You in return. What can I give back to You, Hashem, for all the good that You've done for me? I can't give back anything! All I can do is bend my knees in gratitude. And so אֶלּוֹקֵינוּ רוֹמְמוֹ – *we elevate Hashem*, הַשְׁתַּחֲוּ – *by making ourselves low*.

The Mevorach Program

And so 'Hashem should be *mevorach*' means that 'we should make Hashem the One to Whom everyone is bent-kneed in gratitude.' It means *we* have to talk about what He does for mankind. Otherwise, what does it mean, "His Name should be blessed"? It means other people should do it. It doesn't cost you any money to say it so why not, you'll say it. But to actually do it? It's the last thing to enter his mind.

Oh no! הֵי יְשָׁם ה' מְבָרַךְ means *you* have to talk about what He does for us. That's a good program to think about on Rosh Chodesh. This month I'm going to speak about Hashem's kindness to us, what He does for mankind. And if nobody will listen, so listen to yourself. You're your best audience, your most important audience. You're talking primarily to yourself. You're encouraging yourself, "Wake up sleepyhead! Another month of your life just went by. Are you going to waste now another month of life?"

Ten Thousand Hallel

And so you say, "Ooh ah! It's good to be alive. And there's so much to thank for. When I was born there were ten thousand things that had to be exactly right."

Ten thousand?! A hundred thousand things! And every one of them was in place. Otherwise you wouldn't be normal. If one thing of one hundred thousand details wasn't exactly right, you wouldn't be normal. Did you ever walk on the street and see a mother pushing her sick child in a wheelchair, a profoundly impaired little boy? Oy, a *rachmanus*! It's from one little thing that went haywire, one detail.

I'll speak about the sun and the wind. I'll speak about eyes and kidneys and the heart. There's so much to thank for, that a month is not enough. But I'll do whatever I can to make sure that יהי שם ה' מברך. I'll talk and talk and talk and I'll make Hashem *mevorach*. I'll make it my business to thank Hashem for every detail and never stop thanking Him. We can't walk around all day with bent knees; we have to go to work, we have things to do. But ideologically we are bent-kneed to Him always.

מֵעַתָּה וְעַד-עוֹלָם

From Now Until Forever

How Much Time?

One Minute a Day

Now Dovid tells us how much time we should invest in this. It's a very important question, a serious question. How much time should you give to this program of *יהי שם ה' מְבָרַךְ*?

So you think, maybe I should give a minute a day? It's not a bad idea by the way. Suppose a person gave a minute a day to speak about Hashem, to thank Him. I'm not talking about *davening*; *davening* you shake yourself and finished. No; I'm talking about in the middle of the day. Stop for a minute and fulfill *יהי שם ה' מְבָרַךְ*.

Let's say you're walking outside on the street. So walk in a telephone booth and pick up the telephone receiver as if you're making a call; you're making a long distance call to Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Hold it to your ear; nobody will disturb you. And make a one minute phone call to Hakadosh Baruch Hu and thank Him for His kindness. Talk to Him! "Your Name should be *mevorach* for what You do for me!" Choose one thing, two things, whatever it is, and thank Him.

One minute! Sixty seconds on the clock! Excellent! It's a big accomplishment!

A Full Day's Work

But it's not enough, Dovid says. It's good but it's not enough. Because how much should the Name of Hashem be blessed? *מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם* – *From now and forever*.

Oh, that's already a different story. He's telling us that we have our job open for us for our whole lifetime. **מַעֲתָה וְצַד עוֹלָם!** A big job!

And so let's say you're saying Hallel now and you came to this *pos-suk*. Catch yourself! I'll start right now with this Hallel—instead of just rattling off the words, I'll think about what I'm saying.

And I'll continue with that program all day long too. That's what you're saying here and that's how it should be. You go to the *beis haki-sei* and come out and it's **יְהִי שֵׁם ה' מְבָרֵךְ**. That's what it means to say *asher yatzar*. "Ah! What an operation He just made on me! A tremendous accomplishment!" It's a miracle how the waste was taken out of you.

And when you drink some water, it's *shehakol nehiyeh bedvaro*. But not quietly like a thief in the night; out loud you say the *bracha*. **הוֹדוּ לָהּ קְרָאוּ בְשֵׁמוֹ** – *Proclaim His Name*. You have to speak aloud about Hashem – that's **יְהִי שֵׁם ה' מְבָרֵךְ**. You eat an apple? *Borei pri ha'eitz*. When you sit down to eat, *hamotzi lechem min ha'aretz*. And when you finish, *birkas hamazon*. All day long you're thanking Hashem. **מֵאָה בְּרָכוֹת בְּכָל יוֹם** – *At least a hundred times a day you're thanking Hashem*.

Until the Night

And then after a busy and successful day fulfilling **יְהִי שֵׁם ה' מְבָרֵךְ** so now the evening comes and before you go to sleep you'll thank Him for the gift of sleep. Ah, sweet sleep! Sleep is one of the biggest benefits that we enjoy in our lives. It's more important than medicines because at nighttime your worn-out nerves become mended. Everything in the body is restored by sleep.

And it's a miracle every night. Why do you fall asleep? All of a sudden, you lie on the pillow and you fall asleep; you're falling away into dreamland. It's a *nes*. And while you're asleep, all good things are happening. And therefore, when you make that blessing you should appreciate that gift because some people unfortunately cannot sleep. It's a tragedy.

An old man told me, “*Ich hub farloren dem schluff*” – I lost my sleep.” He meant he lost his ability to sleep. It’s a pity on him. To lose such a precious gift like the sweetness of falling asleep, that’s a tragedy. Sleep is more important than food.

Another Day of Life

Now, at the end of that blessing we thank Hashem “Who illuminates the world with light.” Which means: We are going to sleep with one hope – that Hakadosh Baruch Hu should once more give us a chance tomorrow. “Hashem, we’re going to sleep and we look like we are dead. We beg You, revive us tomorrow morning and once more let us see the light of day.”

Now, suppose it happens! Suppose you open your eyes and you see the light of day! “I made it to the second day of the new month! *Baruch Hashem!*” Oh, is that a *simcha*! You should be excited! How great should be our happiness every morning! Another day! You mean to say I get to wake up again! I remember once there was a member in my synagogue who went to sleep. In the morning, his wife came and said, “Mordechai! Wake up!” Mordechai didn’t move. “Mordechai, wake up!” He didn’t move. It was all over. Don’t take it for granted! This happened to a young man, by the way. Mordechai was a young man. Don’t take it for granted!

Born Again Jews

So at night pray for tomorrow and when the tomorrow comes, be enthusiastic in expressing your gratitude. מודה אני לפניך – *I thank You*, מלך חי וקים – *O’ King Who lives forever and endures*, שְׁחַיֵּיתָ בִּי נַשְׁמָתִי, בְּחַמְלָה – *You returned my life to me with compassion*, רַבָּה אֱמוּנָתְךָ – *how great is Your steadfastness!*

That’s how the Jew gets up in the morning! He spends time expressing his gratitude to the One Who woke him up in the morning. Every Jew in the morning, his first duty before he goes to work or eats breakfast is to speak at length to Hakadosh Baruch Hu and to express thanks for giving back to him his life after having slept without any awareness, as if he were a dead body. הַמְחִיזֵר נַשְׁמוֹת לְפָגְרִים – *He restores*

the soul to the dead bodies! How happy we are in the morning! Once more we have a chance to look at the sunlight and say, יוֹצֵר ה' אֱתָהּ – *We thank You, Hashem, for the sunlight.*

The Never Ending Job

All Day, Every Day

And he continues all day long! לְהַגִּיד בְּבֹקֶר הַסֵּדֶךְ – In the morning he starts, וְאֶמְוִנְתָּךְ בְּלֵילוֹת – until he goes to sleep at night. All day long, תָּמִיד תְּהִלָּתוֹ בְּפִי – words of excited gratitude to Hashem are always in his mouth. That's a Yehudi. The *avdei Hashem* praise Hashem all their lives and all day long. All day long a Jew is busy. In between, he takes off a little time to make a living. But all day long, that's his job. Three times a day, you stand *Shemoneh Esrei*. And in between, between *Shachris* and *Mincha*, בְּכָל עֵת אֹדֶה אֶת ה' – *I thank Hashem at all times.* You walk in the street, thank Hashem. Why not? Sitting at the Gemara, thank Hashem! You're working, thank Hashem! All day long, a man should thank Hashem.

Prime the Pump

“That's your job in life,” Dovid says. “The Jew is a nation that praises Hashem. All the time! All day long and all their lives! To the Yehudi there is no subject as important in life as Hashem and therefore you *avdei Hashem* should know that מְבָרַךְ יְהִי שְׁם ה' – *how much do you have to thank His name and bless Him and praise Him?* מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם – *From now until forever.*”

Now it's not merely a *mashal*. He's telling us that's what we should do. How often should you do this? On Rosh Chodesh? No! You're not finished yet. Rosh Chodesh is only a primer for the rest of the month; it's a day for priming the pump. You should say Hallel מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם – *forever and ever*. That's our job in life; always, all day long and forever and ever. It's the very first and very last obligation of a Jew: יְהִי שְׁם ה' מְבָרַךְ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם – to give thanks to Hashem always!

מִמְּזֶרַח-שֶׁמֶשׁ עַד-מְבֹאוֹ
מְהֵלֵל שֵׁם ה'

From the rising of the sun
until the setting of the sun,
Hashem's Name is to be
praised.

A World Created for Praise

M'Hodu ad Kush

And therefore, Hallel keeps on going with this program and we say מִמְּזֶרַח שֶׁמֶשׁ עַד מְבֹאוֹ! 'מְהֵלֵל שֵׁם ה' *From the rising of the sun until the setting of the sun, Hashem's Name is to be praised.*

We're saying two things here. More than two things, but two we can see easily. And we'll take one at a time.

Number one is that 'from one side of the world to the other side, from where the sun rises to where it sets', it's full of things that are intended for 'מְהֵלֵל שֵׁם ה'. You have to know that it's not merely that we have an obligation to say *hallel* and *brachos*, and that we have to go searching for what to sing about. Some people they think they have to go to Niagara Falls or to the Swiss Alps to be able to sing.

A World of Wisdom

No. That's absolutely wrong because Hakadosh Baruch Hu made this world for a purpose: *אֱלֹהִים עָשָׂה שִׁירָאוּ מִלְפָּנָיו* – *He made the world that people should learn to fear Him*. It's made in such a way that when you look at the world correctly, you'll come to have a great respect for Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Now that takes a lot of time to explain but that's one of the purposes. Everything in the world testifies to its Creator. Every detail is made with such wisdom, such cunning, that it is *מִהֲלֵל שָׁם ה'*.

Even if you take a peanut, a 'simple' peanut, so if you push the peanut in a certain spot, it breaks open in two perfect halves. It's made like a strip pack on the cigarette boxes. There's no question you wouldn't buy cigarettes—who would smoke a cigarette and then come to Hashem and ask for another month of life?—but I'm just telling you as a *mashal*. A cigarette strip pack, you pull the strip and it opens up. But you see from the peanut that it's Hakadosh Baruch Hu's invention. Marlboro took the idea from Him. You press the peanut and it breaks in two halves. It's made with a purpose.

And inside there are two packages of luscious food with plenty of oil and fat and they're wrapped in red wrappers to keep them fresh. All this is planning. Every detail is full of *chachmah*.

Everything Praises

Now, that's just a peanut — I chose one example at random— but when you look around this world you see there are so many wonderful things for our benefit, that there is never an end to this task of praising Hashem. *יְדוּחַ ה' כָּל מַעֲשֵׂיךָ* – *Hashem, all of Your works praise You*. That means everything that you made in this world, from one end to the other, is for the intention of praising you. *כְּבוֹד מְלִכְיֹתְךָ יֹאמְרוּ* – *They speak of the glory of Your kingdom*, *וְגִבוֹרֹתְךָ יְדַבְּרוּ* – *and about Your greatness*. And what's the purpose of all these things? *לְהוֹדִיעַ לְבָנִי* – *It's for the purpose of making known to man His mighty deeds*, *וְכְבוֹד הַדָּר מְלָכוּתוֹ* – *and the glory of His Majesty as the King*.

So we say that מִמְּזֶרַח שָׁמֶשׁ עַד מְבֹאֵל – *from where the sun rises until where the sun sets*, the whole globe is covered with signs of Hashem's greatness; His kindness, His wisdom and His power. And therefore the whole world is full of opportunities for מְהֵלֵל שֵׁם ה'.

Nature's Hallel

Where is the *hillel*? The whole *world* is saying *hallel*. The sun says *hallel*. It's a miracle what the sun does for us. It's a miracle what the clouds do for us. It's a miracle what the rain does for us, what the soil does for us. Everything in the world is doing miracles and therefore the whole world is full of things that testify to the greatness of Hashem. And it's made for that purpose.

So the first *peirush* is, מִמְּזֶרַח שָׁמֶשׁ עַד מְבֹאֵל – *from one end of the earth to the other, all around the globe*, 'מְהֵלֵל שֵׁם ה' – *we'll find cause to become excited about Hashem's Name*. When we see what He did — that's His Name — we'll become more and more excited about Him.

A World for Everyone to Praise

Everyone's Obligation

But there's another *pshat* and both are true; each one is included in the other. מִמְּזֶרַח שָׁמֶשׁ עַד מְבֹאֵל – *From one end of the world to the other*, 'מְהֵלֵל שֵׁם ה' – *all mankind should be busy praising Hashem*. Not only that creation is doing it—we have to join in and do our part. Wherever people live on the planet, they have to join in.

But not only the Am Yisroel. מִמְּזֶרַח שָׁמֶשׁ עַד מְבֹאֵל means from one end of the world to the other end; it means the Chinese and the Russians and the Hottentots in the Congo. הָבֹו לָהּ' מְשֻׁפָּחוֹת עַמִּים – *All the families of the nations of the world are mechuyav*. All the Indians and all the blacks, all the Anglo-Saxons and all the Germans. Everybody should be busy all day long thanking Hashem.

Yetzurim, Not Yehudim

We say in Nishmas, שָׁבוּ חֹבֶת כָּל הַיְּצוּרִים; it doesn't say כָּל הַיְּהוּדִים. חֹבֶת כל הַיְּהוּדִים. It's the duty of all those who are created. Who are created? All men. What's their duty? Now pay attention. לְהוֹדוֹת לְהִלֵּל לְשַׁבַּח לְפָאֵר לְרוֹמֵם לְהַדָּר. להודות להלל לשבח לפאר ולקדם.

Like it states further in Hallel, הִלְלוּ אֶת ה' כָּל גּוֹיִם, praise Hashem all the nations, שִׁבְחוּהוּ כָּל הָאֻמִּים, all the peoples should extol Him.

So much we expect even of the gentiles? Yes. Even gentiles are *mechuyav* to do that. If you're a human being you have to thank Hashem. Every gentile is *mechuyav* to thank Hashem. And not only to thank but לְהוֹדוֹת לְהִלֵּל לְשַׁבַּח לְפָאֵר and so on.

Judging the Congolese

And so in the Congo some grizzled old Congolese has to gather his family together and they are sitting on the ground — they're not wearing too much clothing and so he tells them, "Let's cover up in honor of Hakadosh Baruch Hu because we're going to say *hallel* to Him now."

And if not, he's going to be judged. He'll be held accountable. Hashem will say to him "Did you speak about My greatness? You ate food at My table all your life, didn't you? I gave you air to breathe all your life. I gave you water to drink all your life. You ate something too every day. And you didn't thank Me? I'll hold that against you."

Don't Be a Savage

And so you have to realize that with your black hat and your beard how far away you are from fulfilling the obligation of even a plain savage. A plain savage has to think about this all the time — otherwise he has no business in this world. For every breath that he breathes, he has to say thank You. For every heartbeat he has to be grateful; so he has no time left for himself.

Now, when people are ready to admit this — I don't know if you're ready yet; you're only hearing it. Some people don't want to make

any disturbance here, but outside they say “It’s ridiculous what he says! It’s extreme; it’s not true that everybody’s expected. When it says there שָׁבוּ חֹבֶת כָּל הַיְצוּרִים it’s ‘the duty of all creatures’, creatures mean *tzaddikim*, the great *rebbehs* maybe, the *roshei yeshiva* maybe.”

But unfortunately that person is in error. שָׁבוּ חֹבֶת כָּל הַיְצוּרִים means every human being. Of course it doesn’t mean birds and cattle, because they can’t do that. *Yetzurim* means all the creatures who have the ability to do it. Everyone in the world must praise Hashem.

Busier Than the Gentiles

Only that we, the Am Yisroel, כִּי גִבֵּר עָלֵינוּ הַסְדּוֹ, we especially; we are more obligated than they are because upon us His kindness has been overpowering a thousandfold more than all the nations of the world. The nations, they must praise Hakadosh Baruch Hu let’s say for four or five hours a day. A gentile is supposed to think of Hakadosh Baruch Hu an hour here and an hour there, about four or five hours a day.

But a Jew? אֶהְלֵלָה אֶת ה' בְּכָל עֵת – *I must be saying excited words of praise to Hashem at all times.* תָּמִיד תִּהְיֶה בִּפִּי – *Always His praise is in my mouth.* בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ – *When you sit in your house,* turn off the television or better still, take a hammer and break it up and spend the time praising Hashem. וּבִלְכֶתְךָ בַּדֶּרֶךְ – *When you walk in the street too.* When you walk in the street look around; the street is full of things to see and they demonstrate the presence of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. וּבְשָׁכְבְּךָ – *When you lie down,* וּבִקְוֹמְךָ – *and when you rise in the morning.* All day long. It is not an exaggeration. That is what is expected of a Jew.

From Sunrise to Sunset: Two Peirushim

So there are now two *peirushim*; again. From the east where the sun rises until the sun sets the whole world is covered with *eidus*, with testimonies that show how Hashem is kindly, is doing *chessed* with mankind and giving us all the good things. And all these things

are made for the purpose we should learn to become more and more aware of Him.

And the second *peirush* is that because Hashem's *chessed* is so evident in the world, all of mankind מְמַזְרֵחַ שְׁמֵשׁ עַד מְבוֹאֵי, they should be מְהֻלָּל, praising Hashem. That's the duty of *kol hayetzurim*.

They're not doing it? Then they are neglecting their obligations and Hakadosh Baruch Hu will hold it against them. But we at least, we have to do our part. And it's a big part because there's so much to be said in this world. If you look around this universe, this world and outside of the world — the sun, the moon, the planets, the far off stars — there are so many wonderful things for our benefit, that there is never an end to this task of praising Hashem.

רַם עַל-כָּל-גּוֹיִם ה'

Hashem is Above All the Nations

How Great is Hashem?

The Real Ruler

רַם עַל כָּל גּוֹיִם ה' – *Hashem is way up High above all the nations*. It means this: Hashem is the Ruler of all the nations.

Now every Jew will say, “Certainly. *Mai kemashma lan?*”

No; saying it is not enough. You have to get it into your mind that Hakadosh Baruch Hu has the control over all of Russia, over all of India, all of America, North and South. Hashem is *actually* in 100% control of their governments. And when they come together in their parliaments, in their congresses, and they pass laws, *they're* not making the laws—Hashem is making them do these things. Even wrong laws Hashem is making them pass in order to give them a chance to cause trouble to their own countries.

So therefore רַם – *Hashem is exalted*, עַל כָּל גּוֹיִם – *over all of them*, means that *He* is the Ruler. *He* is the King. He is the Prime Minister and the President. He sits on a *Kisei ram v'nisa*, on the Throne above all thrones, and all the empires of the world, big and small, are at His bidding.

The Great Big Puppet Show

That's something to think about during the month. Hakadosh Baruch Hu is driving the car and therefore you can sit back and relax.

There's no need to worry about Gorbachev. Don't worry about Khomeini in Iran. Because Hashem is **הָם עַל כָּל גּוֹיִם** – He's sitting High up, above all the nations, pulling the wires and managing everything with a design. You have to know they're puppets and **הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא יוֹשֵׁב** **בְּסִתְרָא עֲלֵינוּ** – Hashem is hiding, but He's manipulating them; the One behind the scenes is pulling the strings.

So in the White House right now there's a business going on between President Bush and Prime Minister Shamir. Now I'm not going to go into the details of that fight between them, but something is taking place that might affect the whole Am Yisroel for the future. And some people are interested in that; they waste their time with that. But you have to know that Hakadosh Baruch Hu is manipulating the whole story.

Hashem in the White House

Hakadosh Baruch Hu is holding the king's heart in His hand. **כִּלְגִּי מִיָּם לֵב מֶלֶךְ בְּיַד ה' עַל כָּל אֲשֶׁר יַחֲפֹץ יִטָּו** – *The mind of a melech is like water in the Hands of Hashem.* Anybody's heart is in the Mind of Hashem but it's saying here that, "Even a *melech*, his heart is like water." Water you know has no resistance. A king cannot resist when Hashem says, "That's what I want." Hakadosh Baruch Hu is pulling wires and we are all puppets.

I have to make one little remark. When we say we are puppets, it doesn't mean our *minds* are puppets. Our *acts* are puppetry. But our minds are up to us; that's *bechirah chofshis*. We have free will to choose but Hakadosh Baruch Hu is manipulating the acts of man.

How does He do it? Endless ways. It could be President Bush's wife was a little bit fresh to him and sullen to him, and therefore he became despondent and bad tempered and so when Shamir applied for a loan guarantee, President Bush wasn't in a good mood. Now I wasn't present when Mrs. Bush spoke these words to President Bush, I'm just surmising, but something happened, Hakadosh Baruch Hu

made *something* take place that caused him to be in the wrong mood so that he wouldn't accept Shamir's request for loan guarantees.

Exalted Above All

Things are happening like that in the families of the most noble people in the world. The most exalted families, whatever happens there, Hashem is making it happen because He is Exalted over them.

And so saying this *possuk* and thinking about the words is a good way to prepare for the upcoming month because it means a month of *menuchas hanefesh*. You can relax for the next thirty days! Everything is under control of the **ה'ם על כל גוים**.

עַל הַשָּׁמַיִם כְּבוֹדוֹ

Above the Skies is His Glory

Higher than the Universe

Exalted Above Galaxies

But not only in this world, above rulers and countries, is He the Highest One: עַל הַשָּׁמַיִם כְּבוֹדוֹ – *His glory is way above the skies and space*. All the millions of worlds in space do His bidding. Hakadosh Baruch Hu is High above everything.

It doesn't mean geographically high. You can't say Hashem is here or there. Otherwise you're giving Him a *guf*—you're attributing to Him physical boundaries; but it means the greatness of Hashem is Exalted above everything in this world. He's way way up.

He's down here below too, on the earth, but His stature is so high it goes into space. And we have to understand that *mashal* – it should be before our eyes at all times that our Hashem is so so High, way above anything we could imagine.

מִי כֹה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ הַמִּגְבִּיהַי לְשֶׁבֶת

Who Is Like Hashem Our G-d Who Dwells On High

The Meaning of Our G-d

Our G-d is the G-d

That's what he continues and says, מִי כֹה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ – *Who is like our Hashem Who dwells on High*. Our Hashem is above everything else. No nation, no people, nobody else can make that claim. הוּא ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ – *He is Hashem, our G-d!* (*ibid.* 105:7). The One Who is pulling all the strings is ours!

And what does it mean 'ours'? So the end of that *possuk* says בְּכָל הָאָרֶץ מִשְׁפָּטָיו – *in all the world are His judgments*. What's the connection between the first half of this *possuk* and the second half of the *possuk*? "He is Hashem our G-d and His judgments are all the world." So people think it means we're praising Him, that His power is all over the world. But that's not the *pshat* because then what's the connection between the two parts of the *possuk*?

The *pshat* is, 'He, Hashem is Our G-d, and *therefore* whatever He does in the world, all of the judgments in the world are in the role of *our* G-d; which means He does it because of us.'

The Energy Source

Again, let's study that *possuk*. הוּא – Who is He? הוּא – He is the *Borei* Who made everything come into reality; it's only His will that exists in the universe. His word 'Yehi' is the source of all reality.

Hakadosh Baruch Hu is the source of the energy that caused everything to come into existence. You know everything is energy. Not only processes of nature are energy, all matter is a form of energy. ל-א means energy and the *Keil Elyon* means He is the uppermost source of energy. Hakadosh Baruch Hu is the One Who creates energy.

And so when you see a dime, a piece of silver, you must know that it's nothing but energy. If you would exploit it according to the proper method, the metal would turn into energy. Of course you have to be careful if you do that because there's so much energy in half of a dime that it could explode a city once it's let loose. All that energy is crystallized into a little bit of matter and it's all from the *Keil Elyon*, the uppermost energy.

Energy for Jews

And now the *possuk* comes along and says, do you know what all this is about, this tremendous release of energy that came into the universe at that time, trillions and trillions of tons of horsepower in energy were released at that time? It was only for one purpose, הוא ה' – *He's our Hashem*. בְּכָל הָאֲרֶץ מְשַׁפְּטִי – *and therefore all of His judgments, all of His acts in the entire universe are done only because of us*. Hakadosh Baruch Hu is manipulating everything, all world events, for *Amo Yisroel*.

And so we say, אֵלֵינוּ הַמְּגִבִּיהִי לְשֹׁבֵת, מִי כֵה – *Who is like Hashem, our G-d, that He sits up so High, above everything and everyone*, but He does everything only for the Am Yisroel. Everything that takes place in the world is directed by the One Sitting Up High, in His role as *Elokeinu*, our G-d.

הַמְשַׁפִּילִי לְרֹאוֹת בַּשָּׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ

He Lowers Himself to Look in The Heavens and The Earth

Lowering Himself to the Lowest

Man Meets G-d

But not only on a national level; הַמְשַׁפִּילִי לְרֹאוֹת בַּשָּׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ – ‘*He dwells on High and nevertheless He looks down low*’ means all the way down, even to the ‘lowly’ individual Jew. Even though you think you’re unimportant, you’re only a little fragment of protoplasm on the face of this earth. A person on Mars wouldn’t see you. A person on the moon wouldn’t see you, you’re so little. But Hakadosh Baruch Hu is high above them and yet He sees you. He keeps His Mind on every individual Jew.

So therefore if you’re a Yisroel and you stand and talk to Hashem, when you stand and praise Hashem, it’s good to know Whom you’re speaking too. You’re not talking to a Being that’s right down here, a little taller than you are. You’re talking to Somebody Who is so tall that He goes all the way up into space. Way past Mars and Jupiter, way past Andromeda, way past the Milky Way, He’s so great Hashem! How High Hashem is! You’re standing before Hashem who is so tall that He’s standing way into space. And at the same time, as much as you recognize His Greatness, you should understand that Hakadosh

Baruch Hu despite מְגִבֵּהוּ לְשֶׁבֶת, despite that He's so tall that He's into space, still, מְשַׁפִּילִי לְרֵאוֹת. He's most interested in you.

He's listening to you and therefore you have to be careful what you say. מְשַׁפִּילִי לְרֵאוֹת בְּשָׂמִים וּבְאָרֶץ. If while you're talking to him, you'd be thinking about something else—you're taking a trip, let's say, to Europe while you're talking to Him, you're praising Him, but in your mind you're traveling around the world. You're singing Hallel, a beautiful *niggun*, but you're on a safari in Africa? Oh no, that's no way to talk to Hashem! Hashem is so great that we should be spellbound and hypnotized by the fact that we're talking to Him. We're talking to the One Who is Most High but Who lowers Himself *kavayachol* to think about us.

מְקִימֵי מַעַפָּר דָּל
מֵאַשְׁפֹּת יְרִים אֲבִיוֹן

He raises up the low man
from the dust, He raises
the poor man from the
dung heaps.

Hashem is Lifting Up Everyone

From Rags to Riches

Dovid is telling a story about a poor man who was evicted from his cottage finally — he couldn't pay rent and finally the sheriff came and evicted him. So he went and sat on the dung heaps. It's a pile of manure. It's not a very pleasant place to sit but at least he has some place to sit.

What happened to him? Today he's wealthy. He has a place of business, he has a family. He raised himself up; he picked himself up by his bootstraps and he became wealthy. And now he's *עָם נְדִיבִים* — *with the nobility of the land*, *עָם נְדִיבֵי עַמּוֹ* — *with the noble ones of the nation*.

So he's sitting there and thinking, "Whoa! How did I get here?"

Well, something happened in between. He got busy, he invested, he bought a little business, he got rich, he bought a bigger business, and finally he's sitting in the palace with all the wealthy people of the country; עַם נְדִיבֵי עַמּוֹ.

So what is he thinking? He's thinking, "Look, I worked hard. It pays to work hard. I got up early, I saved my money. I invested. It pays to be a hustler! Look what I did for myself."

No! This man in Dovid's story, he's not saying that! He's saying, "מֵאֲשַׁפֶּת יָרִים – *You're the One, Hashem.* מְקִימִי מֵעָפָר דָּל לְהוֹשִׁיבִי עִם נְדִיבִים – *You're the One Who lifted me out of the garbage dump.* לְהוֹשִׁיבִי עִם נְדִיבִים – *Hashem, You're the one Who seats me with the nobility of the land,* עַם נְדִיבֵי עַמּוֹ – *with the nobles of Your people.*"

Dovid's Rags

Now, we understand that Dovid is talking from personal experience; he's talking about his own experiences in his life. Dovid, at one time, was unknown to the world. When he was a youth, he was a shepherd for his family. He went out sometimes for weeks in the wilderness with his flocks. He slept in the *midbar*. In the daytime as he was watching his sheep, he spent his time talking to Hashem. And he talked with his harp; as he talked he was playing music and he was singing to Hashem his love for Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Dovid grew great behind the sheep but nobody knew about him. Nobody knew the greatness of Dovid.

And when Shmuel Hanavi came to anoint a *melech* from one of the sons of Yishai it never occurred to anybody that he should call in Dovid, that maybe he's the one. No, they didn't think about him. A boy, a shepherd boy.

Dovid's Riches

"וַיִּשְׁחַנֵּי מֵאַחֲרֵי הַצֹּאן – *Hashem took me from behind the sheep,*" said Dovid. "מֵאֲשַׁפֶּת יָרִים מֵעָפָר דָּל – *He raised me up from the dust,* אֶבְיוֹן – *He took me out of the garbage heap,* עִם נְדִיבִים – *to sit with*

nobility.” Dovid sat next to Shaul. He became an *eidem*, a son-in-law of Shaul Hamelech.

Now, we can be sure that when Dovid married the daughter of Shaul Hamelech he was thinking, “What just happened? Who am I? How did I get here?”

So we say, “What’s the question? You killed Golias Haplishti! You did a great act of heroism and you became beloved by the whole nation. That’s why Shaul chose you.”

“No,” Dovid said, “I didn’t do that. Hashem did it. How did I come to sit next to Shaul? How did I come לְהוֹשִׁיבִי עִם נָדִיבִים, to sit next to a king?”

Now to sit next to a gentile king is already a surprising thing but עִם נָדִיבֵי עַמּוֹ, to sit next to the king of the Am Yisroel? That’s a tremendous glory! “How did it come to a little man like me?” said Dovid. “Who did it?”

לְהוֹשִׁיבִי! He sat me here! Hakadosh Baruch Hu is the One Who did it! And so Dovid Hamelech was full of surprise and happiness and gratitude. He could never forget what Hashem did for him.

That’s what happened to this rich man in Dovid’s *marshal*. A rich man is sitting in his palace and he remembers that he was once sitting on the dirt. He was a poor boy sitting on the dung heaps with nothing in his pockets. And he was thinking, “Where will I get my next meal from?” And today he is a millionaire! So his job is to remember always that it was *mekimi* – that You raised me up, and *l’hoshivi* – it was You who sat me here.

History Repeats Itself

But Dovid was speaking not only for himself; he was saying that *marshal* for everyone. Here is a man, let’s say, an American boy, an *am ha’aretz*; he came from an irreligious family, became a *frum* boy, worked hard, learned, had good children. Now he’s marrying off his children with good *shidduchim*. Maybe he’s sitting next to his *eidem*. “Such a fine *eidem* I have. Such fine *mechutanim* I have.”

One of his sons even married the daughter of a *rosh yeshivos*. So he's sitting now next to the *rosh yeshivah* at the *tena'im*, at the *chasunah*. "How did I come here? How did I come to sit next to a *rosh yeshivah*? מְקִימִי מַעֲפָר דָּל!"

I know people like that, people who were nothing and all of a sudden they were catapulted into the company of the *gedolei hador*. It was a tremendous thing.

It happens every day nowadays. מַאֲשֵׁפֶת יָרִים אֶבְיוֹן – *He took me out of a garbage heap*. My family is a garbage heap, *amaratzim*. He took me out from my family and now I'm a *mechutan* with *rosh yeshivos*; וְנִדְבִי עֲמוֹ!

And so Dovid is telling us that we have to do that too. "You want to be excited about Hashem? You want to fulfill *Hallelu-Kah*? So think what Hashem did to you. Go back and think! וְאֵל תִּשְׁכַּחֲי – *Thank Hashem!* And don't forget all the things that He bestowed upon you."

You were just a boy one day and now you're a *talmid chacham*. You're married, you have children; grandchildren maybe. A little *parnassa* you have; maybe more than a little. Whatever it is, it's מְקִימִי מַעֲפָר דָּל – *He's the One Who raises up the low man from the dust*; מַאֲשֵׁפֶת יָרִים אֶבְיוֹן – *He's the One Who raises the poor man from the dung heaps*. Whatever you achieved in life, He's the One who established you!

And we can't forget the greatest *chessed* of all. All of us today, all *frum* Jews are sitting next to each other; עִם נְדִיבֵי עַמּוֹ. All *frum* Jews are *melachim*. Isn't it a happiness we're together with them? How many of your friends from your younger days went away? How many went lost? But you, Hashem saved you. You were nothing, a little boy, and He lifted you up and gave you what's worth everything; you're sitting among the Am Yisroel. You're with the *nedivei amo*, the ones who are guaranteed הִבָּא לְעוֹלָם חֵלֶק לָהֶם. And that's already enough of a reason to say *hallel* to Hakadosh Baruch Hu עוֹלָם הַיּוֹם.

מוֹשִׁיבֵי עֵקֶרֶת הַבֵּית אִם־הַבָּנִים שְׂמִיחָה

The Barren One is Established as a Happy Mother of Children

Hashem Establishes the Barren

The Barren Woman

Now Dovid is saying another story that he knew about personally. מוֹשִׁיבֵי עֵקֶרֶת הַבֵּית – *There was a woman who had no children, and Hashem established her as an* אִם־הַבָּנִים שְׂמִיחָה.

I'll tell you the story. There was a man that had two wives. One wife was fruitful and she had many children. The other wife, her name was Chana and she was barren and had nothing at all. And therefore her life was a torment. It's human nature; she had no *ayin hara* but when she saw all the children of her rival it tore her heart apart. She didn't have a single child of her own.

But what did Hakadosh Baruch Hu do? He took this עֵקֶרֶת הַבֵּית, the childless woman, and He made her אִם־הַבָּנִים, a mother of sons. She has a child now. Things started happening and now שְׂמִיחָה – *and she began rejoicing*. She became the most important one in the family because her son became the leader of the Am Yisroel. Shmuel Hanavi, the son

of Chana, became the leader of the Klal Yisroel: מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן בְּכֹהֲנָיו וְשִׁמְשֹׁאֵל בְּקִרְיָאֵי שְׁמוֹ. He's compared even to Moshe and Aharon.

Now, Dovid knew this story well because Shmuel Hanavi was his teacher, his confidant. So Dovid looked at that example. Just like he was elevated from the *ashpah* to sit next to a king, so also Chana was elevated.

The Barren Women

But not only her; every woman is the same story. מוֹשִׁיבֵי עֶקְרֶת הַבַּיִת – Here's a woman that is childless. And Hakadosh Baruch Hu makes her אִם־הַבָּנִים, a mother of a lot of children. What does that mean? It doesn't mean a woman is barren and suddenly she has six, seven children at once. No, it didn't happen that way. She was a barren girl; when she was fourteen years old she was barren—she didn't have children. She got married, let's say, at sixteen, and she got busy having babies, one after the other. Now she has a big family. *Baruch Hashem!*

And now her sons and daughters are married, and there are granddaughters, and grandsons, and great-grandsons. And she sits at the weddings of her grandchildren and she looks—huge family pictures are being taken. She and her husband are in the middle, her daughters and sons are here, and sons-in-law and daughters-in-law next to them, the granddaughters and grandsons next to them, and the greats are next to them. It's a tribe!

“Where did this tribe come from?!” she's thinking. “A whole village!”

So she says, “Well, I was interested in having a big family.”

No! She says, “*You Hashem! מוֹשִׁיבֵי עֶקְרֶת הַבַּיִת – You took a barren woman and you made her an אִם־הַבָּנִים שְׁמִיחָה. And therefore, הַלְלוּ־הָ! I am going to praise You forever and ever.*”

The National Renewal

And we, the Am Yisroel, use that as a *marshal* on a national scale. Because there are times in our history when we are like an *akarah*; אִשָּׁה עֲקָרָה שְׁלֹא יָלְדָה. So much has been destroyed; we lost so much. We lost our land. We lost our Beis Hamikdash. We lost our power. We lost the *Shechinah*. We lost our *nevuah*. And now we're in *golus* and we're mourning. And so Dovid Hamelech encourages us; he says the time will come when Hakadosh Baruch Hu will raise us up again. That's the *nevuah* he's saying here. The nation that is beaten down will become *eim habanim semeichah*. Once more the Jewish nation will be full of children, full of sons and daughters.

We see a little bit of this today, *baruch Hashem*. There's a big movement of people coming back to *yiddishkeit* and people having big families. *Baruch Hashem*, there's a hope in the course of time that the Jewish *frum* population will be so big that the entire world will start thinking maybe we're the ones whom they should join. *Baruch Hashem* there's a big increase. Of course it's nothing compared to what we need, but the fact that today you find families of ten and twelve children; you see the streets full of boys and girls. Boro Park, full of *chassidishe* Jews; wherever you look you see people with beards. It's *baruch Hashem* a *nachas ruach*. Once upon a time you couldn't see it in America. And therefore אִם-הַבָּנִים שִׂמְחָה, the time will come when the Jewish nation will rejoice when it regains all that it once had.

And so even now we sing with the confidence of what's going to be in the future. Besides for all the happiness in our private lives, our families, our friends, that we sing to Hashem about, a Jew goes into the new month with the confidence that not only does the present belong to us, but the future too is ours.

הֵלֵלֵנוּ-הַ

Be Excited Over Hashem

Wild About Hashem Forever

The Bottom Line

And now Dovid concludes the first *kepitel* with the most important word of our subject. It was the word he began with and it's also the *shurah achronah*, the bottom line. If you know a little Gemara so you know that when you write a document that you have to repeat the gist of the document in the last line; like you say in English 'the bottom line'—the bottom line, that's what counts. And so what's the bottom line of the subject? הֵלֵלֵנוּ-הַ— *Our job in this world is to be excited about Hakadosh Baruch Hu.*

Hallelu – Be wild, *Kah* – only about Hashem. That's called living successfully! And that's why on Rosh Chodesh we take the time to express our gratitude to Him for giving us another month of life and we say that this coming month we're going to redouble our efforts in living successfully by means of מְבַרְךְ מַעֲשֵׂתָהּ וְעַד עוֹלָם, *by making Him the One Who we bend our knees in gratitude, all the days of our lives.*

The Real Forever

But there's another *pshat* and they're both true. Because not only forever in this world but מַעֲשֵׂתָהּ וְעַד עוֹלָם, *ad v'ad bichlal*—even in the Next World too. We'll sing Hallel to Hashem in this world on Rosh Chodesh, and all month long, and for many more months, and then because we were so busy saying Hallel to Hashem in this world, we'll be *zocheh* to say it forever in the Next World too.

That's a Gemara in Mesichta Sanhedrin (91b). אָמַר רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻעַ בֶּן לֵוִי: כָּל הָעוֹסֵק בְּשִׁירָה בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה – *If a man is busy saying song in this world;* So what's going to happen? וּזְרָה וְאוֹמְרָה לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא – *He'll be rewarded that he'll continue to say the song in the Next World.*

Now, he says there, עוֹסֵק בְּשִׁירָה. You have to pay attention to the words. עוֹסֵק means he is busy, and בְּשִׁירָה means saying song, not prose. So number one, get busy with this; make it your business, your *eisek*. And number two, make it a *shirah*—it means make it poetry, not just prose. If a man says 'Things are very good,' that's prose — you're expressing yourself with words. But suppose you get a call from the lottery office that you picked all the right numbers, and you turn around and your wife says, 'What is it?' so you won't speak prose to her. You will speak in poetry! You will speak in lyric words! You might even dance too.

Sing in Happiness

And that's the way we have to talk about what Hashem is giving us in this world. You have to be *busy singing* in this world! And of course, you sing in a certain direction. אֲשִׁירָהּ לָהּ and שִׁירוּ לָהּ You have to sing to Hashem! *Hallelu-Kah!* That's what it means to make Hashem *mevorach*.

And once you get the hang of it you'll keep on singing! You'll be a happy, singing person. Of course, if a man goes around this world unhappy, and he says, "This world is nothing. This world is just darkness and bitterness. It's only we're waiting for the World to Come," that man will never understand his purpose in this world. כָּל הָעוֹסֵק בְּשִׁירָה – *You have to be busy singing in this world and thanking and expressing gratitude.* And you can only be busy singing with happiness; you don't sing from unhappiness. But if you practice it up and get the hang of it, that's the best way of preparing for the World to Come.

Prepare With Song

Because that's the purpose after all. הִתְקַן עֲצֻמָּךְ בְּפֶרוֹדִדּוֹר – *Prepare yourself in the lobby of this world,* כְּדֵי שֶׁתִּכְנֵס לְטַרְקֵטִין – *in order to enter*

the everlasting banquet hall. And so you sad-faced people perk up and listen to what's being said here. Rashi says an important statement; and these words are the clue to our function in this world: הִנְהִיגוּ בְּרִכּוֹתַי בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה – *Accustom yourself to saying His blessings, blessings of Hashem, in this world*, כְּדֵי שֶׁתִּהְיֶי רְגִילִים בָּהֶם לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא – *in order that you should be practiced in them for the World to Come.* Rehearse in this world! הִנְהִיגוּ בְּרִכּוֹתַי – *Accustom yourself to saying in this world to Hashem, baruch Atah, thank You and thank You and thank You.* Instead of being morose, instead of being sad, you have to be happy in this world because you have to thank Hashem continually.

There's so much that He's giving us. It's a big smorgasbord of happiness! So many good things He's serving us in the lobby here and we have to say thank You, *baruch Atah*, thank You, *baruch Atah*. And that's the great rehearsal; because when we come into the big banquet hall there we're going to have something really important to say thank You for. But if you get busy saying *hallel* in this world then that's the preparation for the great happiness of singing *hallel* in the World to Come.

And that's why Rosh Chodesh and the Hallel are such an important part of our lives. Because everything we said now on this first paragraph of Hallel is only a primer — we're priming the pump for the rest of Hallel and the rest of our lives. And that means that we're priming the pump for Olam Haba because the more we sing Hallel to Hashem, in this world the more we're preparing ourselves for the World to Come. Ah gut'en chodesh to everyone.



The Bottom Line

A short peirush

הַלְלוּ-ה

We're calling out now to ourselves and to everyone else, "Let's go wild with excitement about Hashem! And only Hashem! And we use His Name Kah to remind ourselves Whom we're getting excited about: The One Who created everything and continues to create everything – the only True Existence. And so we begin the new month with a program, a program for today and for the whole month — let's get excited about the kindness of Hashem!"

הַלְלוּ עַבְדֵי ה'

All of us who are fortunate enough to be servants of the King of all Kings, have an obligation to to serve Him by shouting to Him in gratitude for everything He gives us all the time.

הַלְלוּ אֶת שֵׁם ה'

And we fulfill that by shouting in excitement about all the things He shows us of Himself in this world; all of history and nature are His creations and they are the Name of Hashem. They are what we know about Him and every detail is another opportunity to sing to Hashem.

יְהִי שֵׁם ה' מְבָרָךְ

We want this Name of Hashem that we see in this world to be the one ideal, the one thing, that everyone is bent-kneed to in gratitude.

Everything He gives us constantly makes us more and more humbled because we can never pay Him back for what He does for us.

מַעֲתָה וְעַד-עוֹלָם

And therefore we are recommitting ourselves now to express our humbled gratitude to Him all day long and all the days of our lives.

מִמְזוֹרַח-שָׁמֶשׁ עַד-מְבוֹאוֹ מְהֵלָּל שֵׁם ה'

And it's not a difficult thing because we see His greatness and kindness wherever we turn; from one side of the world to the other, the world is crammed with creations that are intended primarily for this purpose. And because it's such a basic and visible purpose of creation, a second pshat is included in these words: Everyone, from one side of the world to the other, is obligated in this function.

רָם עַל-כָּל-גּוֹיִם ה'

Everyone in the world is obligated in praising Hashem because He is exalted above all nations and all leaders. He is the Most High, the One Who is pulling all the strings in nature and history.

עַל הַשָּׁמַיִם כְּבוֹדוֹ

He is more than merely above all the nations; His greatness is above all the heavens and all the galaxies.

מִי בֵּה' אֱלֹקֵינוּ הַמְּגֻבֵּה לְשִׁבְתָּהּ

But as Great and High as He is, His interest is in His people. Everything He does in the world — and He does everything — is for the Am Yisroel.

הַמִּשְׁפִּילִי לְרֹאוֹת בְּשָׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ

He 'lowers' Himself to be interested in our national life and individual lives. His interest is in every solitary Jew and He guides everything in the heavens and earth for that purpose.

מְקִימֵי מַעֲפָר דָּל מֵאֲשַׁפֵּת יָרִים אֶבְיוֹן

Everything we accomplish in this world, every time we are lifted from the depths of a problem to the heights of success, it is He Who is lifting us up. And therefore whatever success we achieve in life, even the most mundane achievements, we have to remember to attribute it to Hashem.

לְהוֹשִׁיבֵי עַם-נְדִיבִים עִם נְדִיבֵי עַמּוֹ

All of the important friends and acquaintances and family that we have sat together with in our lives, we have to attribute to Hashem's kindness. He is the One Who manipulated our lives so that we merited whatever station in life we achieved. And most importantly we feel a constant gratitude and happiness that we are part of the Am Hashem.

מוֹשִׁיבֵי עֵקֶרֶת הַבַּיִת אֶם-הַבָּנִים שְׂמִיחָה

And even about the most natural events of life, like marrying and having a family, we have to shout to Him in excited gratitude because He is the One who gifted us with everything.

הִלְלוּ-הֵ

And so the bottom line is that we are forever and ever indebted to the kindness of Hashem for everything that we have, for everything He does for us. And most important we are forever grateful to Him for giving us the biggest gift—another month of life itself. And just for that we want to proclaim out loud, "Everyone! Let's go wild with excitement and gratitude to Kah—to the One Who truly Exists and gives us everything we have."



Epilogue

We hope that the above peirush can transform not only the way you say the first kepitel of Hallel but serve also as a catalyst for appreciating the rest of Hallel. In fact because many of the words and ideas explained by the Rav are repeated in variated ways throughout the Hallel and even in hundreds of places in our daily tefillos, a study of the Rav's words above can be transformative not only for the first kepitel and all of Hallel, but for all of our davening as well.

AN OVERWHELMING DEMAND

FOR RAV AVIGDOR MILLER

Baruch Hashem, as we continue our mission to freely print and distribute Rav Miller's Torah and Hashkafah to as many communities and shuls as possible, – it is simply impossible to keep up with the demand!



BUT YOU CAN ENSURE THAT
TORAS AVIGDOR REACHES YOUR SHUL

Sign up to receive 10 or more booklets
in the mail at less-than-cost price

Only 50¢ each!

Free shipping →

TORAS AVIGDOR

AUTHENTIC TORAH THOUGHT FOR LIFE



[TORASAVIGDOR.ORG/MAIL](https://torasavigdor.org/mail)

INFO@TORASAVIGDOR.ORG / CALL-TEXT 732.844.3670

RAV AVIGDOR MILLER

Hallel



SPONSORED BY

PRO TALENT
SOLUTIONS

www.protalentsolutions.com

Confidential Recruitment | Executive & Managerial placements |
We make it happen for you! We make you shine!

לעילוי נשמת

יענטל לאה בת ר' חיים יוסף יהודה
ברכה אסתר בת בנימין

לעילוי נשמת

ר' הלל בן חיים אהרן
נפ' כ"ז שבט

TORAS AVIGDOR

AUTHENTIC TORAH THOUGHT FOR LIFE