



פרשת עקב

WITH

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BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

Close to Hashem

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Part I. Physical Closeness

Intellectual Deveikus

In this week's *sedrah* we find a fundamental Torah command, the *mitzvas eseh d'Oraysa* of וְבוּ תִדְבֶק - *you should cling to Hashem* (Eikev 10:20). Now, if we'll attempt to explain it figuratively, we understand immediately that it means that there's a mitzvah to cling to Hashem by means of thinking about Him, to cling to Him intellectually.

If you're thinking about Hashem always – *yiras Hashem, ahavas Hashem, inyanei Torah, emunah, leshem Shomayim* – there's a certain closeness that you achieve by means of that. And therefore that certainly is a true *peirush* of וְבוּ תִדְבֶק.

Of course it takes some practice. It takes a great deal of practice – good things, big achievements, don't come easy – but it's an obligation on each one of us. The mitzvah of וְבוּ תִדְבֶק obligates the Jew to develop a mindset, a frame of mind, where he is clinging to Hakadosh

Baruch Hu by means of his constant Awareness of Hashem.

A Concrete Deveikus

Now, if the tape doesn't run out, I'd like to talk to you at length about how to achieve that, about how to become someone who clings to Hashem by means of the mind. But first I would like to say that this explanation of *deveikus* – clinging by means of thinking – is the more abstract explanation of this mitzvah. And as valuable as this ideal is, it is not enough however. Because the *Chachomim* came along and they told us a more concrete application of וְבוּ תִדְבֶק. 'You should cling to Hashem,' the *Chachomim* say, means to cling to Hashem physically.

So right away we flinch at such an idea; to be close to Him physically? Such a thing is impossible! וְכִי אֶפְשֶׁר לְאָדָם לְהִדְבֶק בְּשָׂכְנִיָּה - How is it possible to fulfill such a precept? Is it possible for a man of flesh and blood to cling to Hashem?

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And so the Sages (Sifrei 49) explain as follows. How do you *physically* cling to the Shechinah? הִרְבֵּק בְּחַכְמֵימָם וְתַלְמִידֵיהֶם – By *clinging to the Chachomim and to their disciples*. That's the way to fulfill the command of clinging to Hashem.

The Queer Dissociation

Now, that to us seems like it's veering away from the intention of the *possuk*; it seems like a whitewashing of the Torah's intent. Because here the Torah is telling us that the mitzvah is to cling to Hashem and the Gemara comes along and says something else altogether – that it means to cling to the Sages; that merely by keeping geographically close to the *Chachomim*, to the yeshivah men, that's already a fulfillment of וְגַבּוּ תִרְבֵּק, of clinging to Hashem. How is that so?

And so I want to quote for you an important idea from the Kuzari; when he speaks about this matter he notes a queer thing. When the Torah describes how the Jewish farmer brings his *bikkurim*, his first-fruit offering, to the Beis Hamikdash, so it says that when he hands the basket to the *kohen*, he makes a declaration: הִגְדַּתִּי הַיּוֹם לְהָשֵׁם אֶלְקֵיךָ כִּי בָאתִי אֶל הָאָרֶץ – “I declare today to Hashem, your G-d ...”.

But the Kuzari says that it's a queer way of talking. “I declare to Hashem, *your* G-d?” The farmer, a *frum* farmer, dissociates himself from Hashem and says that it's only the *kohen's* Hashem. ‘Your G-d’?! What kind of expression is that?

He's Mine but He's Yours

A similar thing we find by Shaul Hamelech. Shaul is talking to Shmuel Hanavi (Shmuel I 15:15) and he says, “I have brought these – he is talking about certain animals, cattle – as an offering *laHashem Elokecha*.” Again, “*your* G-d.” But it's Shaul's G-d too. Why does he say “*your* G-d, Shmuel's G-d”?

And the Kuzari explains that it is meant literally. It is the *kohen's* Hashem and it is Shmuel's

Hashem, because the Shechinah rests on the *kohen* and on the *navi* more than on anyone else. The closer a person is to Hashem, the more the Shechinah is with him. And therefore, the one who is more aware of Hashem, the one who is *osek b'Toras Hashem* and walks in the ways of Hashem, so Hashem is especially close to him – it means physically close, *kaviyachol*. And that's why you can say *Elokecha* when you talk to great men.

It certainly is *Elokai* – absolutely it's ‘my G-d’ too – but we can't ignore the fundamental truth that it is *more Elokecha*; it's your G-d even more, because He is with you, He is especially close to you.

Approaching the Shechinah

Now we have to think about that for more than a mere moment because the Kuzari has just told us a gem; he taught us now an entirely new attitude we should have when we come close to *Chachomim*. Let's say you would come to a great man; we'll pick as an example let's say the *Satmarer Rav zichrono livrachah*, who recently passed away. If somebody would come to him, he had to feel that he was coming to Hashem!

Not merely as a form of respect because this man is a *gadol* or the man represents a very great number of people who are influenced by him. That too, but it's much more than that – Hashem is with this man much more than He is with you. And so, as you come near him, you are approaching the Shechinah. That is how a person has to feel.

So you'll say, “The Shechinah? The Shechinah actually rests on him?!! It's only a *mashal*!” No! We're learning now that actually the Shechinah rests on the *Chachmei haTorah*.

Dust and Gasoline

Of course that needs training. We must free ourselves from the dust and the gasoline fumes of the street and we have to start viewing the *Chachomim* in the light of the Torah. And included

in that is the attitude, the *hargashah*, that when you come to a *Chochom*, you are actually approaching *Hashem*.

And therefore it's not a play on words, a cop-out or a twisting of the Torah's intention with the words **וּבו תִּרְבֵּךְ**. This is actually a fulfillment of the mitzvah of being close to Hashem – to cling to the *Chachomim* and their disciples.

The truth is it's such a great thing, that in a certain sense, it's even more important than learning from the *Chachomim*. That's why when they introduced Elisha haNavi and they wanted to say his *yichus*, who he was, so it says, **פֹּה אֵלִישָׁע בֶּן שָׁפָט** – Here is Elisha, **אֲשֶׁר שָׁפַךְ מֵיִם עַל יְרֵי אֱלִיָּהוּ** – who poured water on Eliyahu's hands. **לְמַד לֹא נֶאֱמַר** – It doesn't say he learned from him, **אֲלֹא שָׁפַךְ מֵיִם** – only that he poured water on his hands. The plain meaning is that Elisha was present when Eliyahu had to wash his hands, so Elisha took the can of water and poured it on his *rebbe's* hands. That's our introduction to Elisha.

The Plain Meaning

Now that's a stunning statement; almost not understandable at all. It could have said, "Here is Elisha who learned from Eliyahu." Eliyahu had a school of *bnei hanevi'im* and he brought up Elisha in the *darkei hanevuah*. He taught him everything. But no, that's not mentioned at all. All the secrets of the Torah, all the *darkei Hashem*, everything else that was taught in that great academy of *nevuah*, nothing is mentioned. The only thing that deserves mention is that Elisha poured water on the hands of Eliyahu HaNavi. And the Gemara says that we learn from there that, **גְּדוּל שְׂמוּשָׁה יוֹתֵר מִלְמוּדָהּ** – that serving the *Chochom*, being in his proximity, that's greater than learning from him.

Now, don't go off into long explanations about how *shimush* means learning more deeply. It does too – we're not excluding that – but the *pashtus* of the Gemara means what it says. To be physically close! The physical closeness to Eliyahu was such a

great merit that it's like being close to Hashem even more than the closeness by learning the Torah.

Of course, many other benefits can be gained by such a career. If a person is *meshamesh Talmidei Chachomim* there's no question he becomes different because of that but that's not the subject now. What we're learning now is that we cling to the Sages *not* because of any benefit we get from them, *not* because we learn from their deeds; we cling to the *Chachomim* because they represent Hakadosh Baruch Hu. That is the closest you can physically come to Hashem in this world – by coming close to the *Chachomim*.

Looking For a Wife

Now, you should know that we are not learning something that is a utopian ideal, something that if one day you'll become a *tzaddik* and a *kadosh*, then you'll think of doing it. No, we are talking now about a practical *peirush* on the command of the Torah which means that it's obligatory on all Jews. And that's why the Gemara doesn't let this remain abstract; it gives us concrete examples of how this is carried out in practice.

Let's say you're looking for a wife; **לְעוֹלָם יִשָּׂא** – **אָרָם בֵּת תִּלְמִיד הַחֵם** – so try to marry the daughter of a *Talmid Chochom* (Pesachim 49b). Not because she is so important. She's a little girl still, but because of her you're going to be connected with her father. That's the way you'll be able to associate with him. Otherwise, when will you come into his house? When will you sit at his table? So become his son-in-law! It's not so easy but you have to try; you have to exert yourself to marry the daughter of a *Talmid Chochom*.

Of course it wouldn't be a compliment to her if you tell her you're marrying her because of her father, but that's the truth. There are other reasons too – could be she's quite a prize herself – but this is one of the more important reasons; that's your

link with her father and that's how you're clinging to Hashem.

Looking For a Husband

There's another way. **יְשִׂיא בְתוֹ לְתַלְמִיד חָכָם** – if a man wants to join a *Talmid Chochom* to himself, so he can marry off his daughter to a *Chochom*, to a good *kollel* man. So now your son-in-law will come to your house and you'll be frequently in company with him. You'll talk with him, you'll eat with him. And you're fulfilling the command of the Torah to cling to Hashem.

Now we'll say also – I'm adding my own words to the Gemara – that a woman herself should try her best to marry a *Talmid Chochom*. If she can do it, it's wonderful, because this way she'll enjoy the company of a *Talmid Chochom* all her life.

Now, all these things they're not merely good advice – it's that too – but it's a command. Whatever you can do to become close; look for opportunities **וּלְאָכַל וּלְשִׂתוֹת עִם תַּלְמִידֵי חָכָם**, *to attempt to join them in every manner possible* (Rambam Deios 6:2). As much as possible, to walk with them, to ask them questions, to sit with them.

Eat With Them

Even to eat with them. **וּלְאָכַל וּלְשִׂתוֹת עִם תַּלְמִידֵי חָכָם** – He should attempt to eat together with them, the Rambam says. You see a *Chochom* sitting somewhere, at a *chasunah* or a *pidyon haben*. It's a golden opportunity. There's a seat right near him. Seize it! Snatch the opportunity! You're not interested in being there right now; you don't know the *baal simchah* but act like you belong so that you can sit next to a *Chochom* for a few minutes and fulfill the mitzvah.

Another way, the Rambam says, is **פְּרָקְמִטְיָא לְתַלְמִיד חָכָם** – *do business with them*. Let's say he has merchandise to sell, so patronize him. Walk into his store. Look for opportunities to associate – even in a business way – with

Chachomim. Try to become his supplier. Try to buy merchandise from him.

Whatever you can do to associate with *Chachomim*, you should do. I cannot overemphasize the importance of this principle – physical proximity. Just to associate with *Chachomim* is a very great privilege because it's a form of closeness to Hashem.

Part II. Intellectual Closeness

Grab the Tallis

Now, all that is well and good – it's excellent – because it means that there are opportunities for all of us. Of course, if you live in a *frum* place, in a *yeshivah* town, it's easier, but more or less, there are opportunities everywhere. And by all means, you should try to grab them. Don't worry about being an encumbrance. Don't worry that you're bothering the *Chochom*.

Let's say the Sigheter Ruv. A very fine man, by the way. I know him personally. A very fine man. He's a busy man; he's learning all the time, he's answering *shaalos* too. But still, you want to fulfill the mitzvah of **וּבֹו תְדַבֵּק**. So you'll tell him, "I heard Rabbi Miller speak so I want to get close to you."

He says, "I don't have much time."

So you'll say, "Maybe I can carry your *tallis* to your *beis hamedrash* with you?"

"I don't need it," he says. "I carry it myself."

But you beg him, "Please *rebbe*, do me a favor. Let me carry your *tallis*."

Become Useful

So you're walking behind him. What are you doing? You're accomplishing a great achievement for yourself. I'm not a *chossid* but I'm telling you – if you'll get that privilege to carry his *tallis*, so you're now becoming closer to Hakadosh Baruch Hu. No question about it.

I picked one person as an example. Boruch Hashem we have *Talmidei Chachomim!* We have *roshei yeshivah!* We have yeshivah men, exceptional *kollel yungerleit*. Find ways and means of getting close to them. They don't have time to talk to you, but if you become useful to them in some way, you're *meshamesh Talmidei Chachomim*. Hang around where they are.

You have to know that it's a tremendous achievement and therefore don't worry about becoming an encumbrance. Let them tell you, "Get away from here." You try your best to get close to them because it means you're coming closer to Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

But right now, however, we want to talk about something else – another method of *וּבוֹ תִרְבֵּק* which is of very great importance. We're not by any means minimizing the ideal that I mentioned until now. The method of coming close to Hashem by means of attaching yourself *b'chol minei chibur* to the *Chachomim*, I'm not going to belittle that by comparison. However there is another very fruitful and even more accessible career for achieving closeness to Hakadosh Baruch Hu. And that brings us back to what we said in the beginning of our talk, that it's by means of a person's mind, his thoughts, that he can best fulfill this mitzvah.

A New Method

The Chovos Halevavos when he finishes the Shaar HaYichud – that's the opening *shaar* – he begins Shaar Habechinah, the *shaar* of examining the world around us. And he says there a big *chiddush*, something that's important for our subject. He tells us that by looking at the world around us, that's the best way to clarify to yourself the presence of Hashem and to attach yourself to Him.

Now if the Chovos Halevavos says that – and he knows his subject – so we have to pay attention. He says that *בְּרוּר מְצִיאוֹתוֹ*, it means to clarify in your own mind His Presence, that's the surest way. You

want to feel that Hashem is right nearby? You want to be close to Him? The ways we mentioned until now are excellent – absolutely you fulfill the mitzvah of *וּבוֹ תִרְבֵּק* – but the Chovos Halevavos says that this method of seeing His Presence in the world around us, that's the way forward. Because if you are aware of Hashem wherever you are, if you see Him wherever you go, so you're close to Him. And so we have to get busy and embark on the lifelong career of looking around us and seeing signs of Hakadosh Baruch Hu wherever we turn. Wherever we turn!

The Miraculous Little Boy

Suppose for example you take a look in the street. There's a woman walking and a little boy is running after her; it's his mother. A little boy, two years old is running. So instead of ignoring the whole thing, maybe you think, "Didn't Rabbi Miller say something about utilizing everything we see in nature to become close Hashem?" And so you start thinking, "Where was this boy three years ago?" Three years ago, he was in the Atlantic Ocean. Chemically, that's the plain truth. After all he's mostly water. 80% of the boy is water and the other 20% is air with a little bit of soil.

Now, how did that combination of water and a little bit of air and soil come together to create a human body? A little boy is a perfect creation. He has ears and eyes and a mouth. He has teeth. He has legs. He has muscles. He jumps up and down. His heart is beating. He has kidneys. He has everything. How did such a complicated mechanism come just from air and water?

The answer is, once upon a time, he was a tiny microscopic ovule and Hakadosh Baruch Hu went into action and began creating that miracle of miracles – a human body. Nobody understands that! They can say fancy words, scientific words, but they can't explain it. How could they? It's a miracle. And so you're looking at a little boy and you see the Hand of Hashem in the world. It's such

a complicated matter that anybody who thinks into it can see *yad Hashem!* Just with this proof alone you could walk into the college and make a public protest: “*Shotim!* Fools! How is a person formed?! Is it an accident?! You have to be a lunatic to say that.”

Mr. Potato Head

Now, this is something *halachah lemaaseh*; I'm giving you homework now. Not merely listen to me and then go home and forget all about it. You should do it. Tomorrow morning, you'll be on the street and you'll look at one of your neighbors. Look at one of your neighbors and think – let's say he's 35 years old – “Where was he 36 years ago?” He was in the vegetable bin in the vegetable store. His mother ate potatoes and other things and this beautiful creature came out with a mind and eyes. It's a *nes*. He was made from potatoes! Where do people come from? Only from what their parents ate. Can you take potatoes, bananas, milk, and meat and transform them into a person? *Nissei nissim*.

And therefore if you want to be close to Hashem, if you want to succeed in this program of *bechinah* you have to train your eyes to do that. Every human being you see, you look at him and you're amazed at the handiwork of Hashem. And once is not enough. Every time we go out in the street we have to use our minds which Hakadosh Baruch Hu gave us and little by little, you learn how to recognize Hashem in this world.

Now let's not stop here. Let's think a little more. This little boy on the street, imagine that he's eating a peach. Let's say his mother is coming out of the supermarket with a bag of peaches and she gives one of them to her little boy.

So you start thinking, “Why is it that this little person becomes hungry?” Suppose you have a car and you're running out of gas. You keep on going and you get stuck in the middle of the highway.

And everybody is honking! You're stuck! You have to get out on the highway and look for a telephone.

Evolution of Hunger

But this little boy, when his body needs more gas so it gives a signal to the brain that it's running out of materials. It's a signal that urges him to find food, to replenish his materials. “Mommy, can I have a peach please?” he says. That's a miracle!

Next time you're hungry, think it over. Why are you hungry? It's an accident? Go into the colleges and say to the evolutionists, “How did it happen that all living things when they need food they get hungry?”

I'll tell you what they say. I know. I read their books and I know. They say like this: At first they didn't have the sensation of hunger. Why should there be such a sensation? So it means like this – we'll take the evolutionists at their word and so it means that there were animals or people, let's say, who at first when they looked at food were indifferent. Even though the body needed food – they didn't feel hungry at all. Others looked at food when they were in need of calories and it was even nauseating to them; they couldn't look at it at all. There were all kinds of people, all kinds of accidents.

Government Coercion

What happened? After, let's say, thousands of generations – and of course all the people during that time were being force-fed by the government so they shouldn't die out because you couldn't rely on their instincts; the police had to come and put pipes down their throats to force them to eat. And in the meantime while they were being forced to eat, they were having babies. Another accident. By the way, the mothers hated the babies, of course. In the beginning all mothers hated the babies. Why should mothers love babies? It's an accident that just happened. But meanwhile the mothers who hated the babies, they died out and the accident mothers, the ones who loved babies, those are the ones who survived. And it just so happened that

she was the one who accidentally also had the sensation of hunger when she needed replenishment of her materials.

Of course, she met a man of the same kind too; otherwise it wouldn't work. So she was that kind, and the man was that kind too, and that's how they survived!

Well, that's good for fools, for *shotim*, but for us it means only one thing – it means the Hand of Hashem. And so, when we see somebody who wants to eat and he goes into a store and buys food, we should stop and gaze at him. We're amazed! What's taking place here? Where did he get this wisdom of automatically feeling the necessity for replenishment of his resources? Did anybody tell him? Did a bell ring? Did a light go on? Did a gauge somewhere have a needle and show him that the supply is running low? No, he feels it.

Rotten Tomatoes

And I'll add something more. Why does this little boy like peaches? Maybe he should like dirt? Maybe he should like spoiled food. How is it that when something is rotten, putrid, he can't stand it? Why isn't that when somebody is hungry, he sees something rotten, "Ah! That's delightful. Ahh, the smell of spoiled milk! It smells so good and rotten" – he wants to dive right in and guzzle it down.

Why is it that people run away from rotten foods? There's an instinct in them to tell them it's dangerous. Is it an accident? The evolutionists say clearly it's a result of accident. They say that there was a time when people and animals ate rotten things; they ate things that smelled bad, that looked bad. Instead of eating apples that look so appealing, they used to eat raw potatoes. They tried it for millions of years and the raw potatoes didn't agree with them, so little by little, they began to acquire a new taste – not for rotten things, for other things.

Of course, it's stupid. It's nothing but *sheker v'chazav*. And so those who walk in darkness, they see nothing. They're blind and they're leading the

blind and therefore all they see is accidents. But the Am Hashem, those who want to fulfill the mitzvah of clinging to Hashem, they see just the opposite wherever they look. They see Hashem! And because they're always looking for Him and always seeing Him, He's very close to them.

Part III. Spiritual Closeness

The Blind Liars

Now, once you understand that there is a Perfect Intelligence, a *Borei Olam* who wants you to come close to Him by means of His creations, so your eyes open up and you begin to see Him on all sides. On all sides!

Of course most people will just ignore this; when they go home they'll forget all about it. It's just talk, they think. *Ay yah yay* is that a tragedy. It's a tragedy because *this is the way*; this is the best way to come close to Hakodosh Boruch Hu. The Rambam says that; he says it's the most effective of all methods because the wisdom, the design, is so clear that it demonstrates as openly as possible that there is a Great Designer.

I once saw an article in that evolution magazine, The National Geographic. The National Geographic is devoted to evolution – there's one other thing that it's devoted too that I won't say in public but primarily National Geographic is an evolution magazine. So in the article I saw there was a heading like this: 'The Infinite Design in Nature.' Infinite design?! You know what that means? It means that all of them are *yordei Gehenom*. Because if you see infinite design, who is the Infinite Designer? You, of all people, the ones who went to university and studied all the information about how complicated every natural thing is, you should be the first ones to recognize the Hand of the Creator! And you are the ones who are preaching it happened by accident? Blind men! Liars!

The Grass is Greener

And therefore today the world is being held responsible more than in previous generations. And us surely; especially if you heard this lecture tonight so Hakadosh Baruch Hu holds us responsible – you should feel it's an obligation. We're expected to use our minds, to look around and say "Yes, we recognize You Ribono shel Olam. We see You so clearly that we actually feel close to You."

If you walk by a plot of grass today, a lawn, you shouldn't waste such an opportunity. Besides thinking how beautiful the color is, how green is so soft on the eyes, and how it's such a nice thing to roll yourself in the grass if you're a child; but you're also thinking how the grass refreshes the atmosphere and how it holds the soil together so the top soil shouldn't blow away. So you're already seeing the *yad Hashem* in the grass.

Now, if you want to do it right you won't stop there. You're thinking now about how Hakadosh Baruch Hu planted grass all over the world as food for grazing animals, for sheep and cows. And the cow uses that grass to produce milk. Milk from grass? Yes from grass and water a cow produces milk and cream and butter and cheese. That's what milk is, grass and water. Can you make cream and cheese or even milk from grass and water? If you did, you'd get a patent and you'd become a millionaire overnight. But the cow has it – he has that patent of taking grass and making it into all these ingredients that we eat and enjoy.

Appreciating the Miracles

Now look at your wool suit. You're dressed in grass. What is wool? A sheep eats grass and turns it into wool. That's a tremendous procedure, to take grass, to chop it up until it's shiny and change the chemicals around and the molecules around in such a way that now it comes out in the form of wool on the sheep's back instead of grass. Grass should grow on the sheep's back. If he eats grass,

grass should grow on the back, not wool. A tremendous thing! You have to realize it's a miracle.

You heard this before? You know all about it? You have to hear it a thousand more times to appreciate the tremendous *nes*. And hearing is not enough. You have to do something about it. You have to study creation and see the Creator all the time.

You look at a man and he has two eyes over here, by his head. But they're not just eyes, just two holes in your head so that your brain can see out. It's a marvelous contraption, the eye. Two perfect color cameras that can focus for distant scenes and for close scenes. Immediately, they can change focus from far off to close by. And they're taking pictures every second. And how would they take pictures? It's a real camera. Inside there's a dark chamber and inside there's a negative in which the picture registers. And these nerves in the retina bring the picture to the brain.

Two such perfect cameras that are unmatched! Nobody in the world has manufactured cameras that work as efficiently as these two! So it means that every time you look at someone's eyes you're reminded of the Creator. You're walking on the street and you see your neighbor coming towards you. Look at his eyes! They are demonstrating there's a plan and purpose in the world. They are demonstrating that Hakadosh Baruch Hu is right here! It's His handiwork after all. As open as can be, we see the *yad Hashem* in the world!

Microscopic Factories

And it's with no end. It's crowding in on you from all sides! You walk outside and you see the leaves on the trees. If you know something, a little bit about science, you know how complicated a leaf is. It's amazing how complicated a leaf is. A leaf is a whole block of factories. It breathes in carbon dioxide from the air. It breathes in moisture from the air and it takes in sunshine too. And it takes

together all these things and it kneads it together and it makes out of it materials.

Yes, the leaf is making materials; there's machinery, microscopic machinery, in ever leaf that's producing material and then it sends the juicy materials through tiny little channels to the stem of the leaf and into the branch of the tree. It goes into the trunk. It becomes wood. It becomes root. It becomes leaves again. And eventually it makes blossoms with nectar to attract the bees in order to pollinate the plants; and then a fruit grows. And that's the work of the leaf.

Now, the leaf is spread out. The leaves of one tree are thin, very thin, but they want to cover as much space as possible. If you take all the leaves of one tree, it will cover an entire city block. Imagine you have a breathing space in contact with the air, a whole city block.

You see the tree is doing tremendous work. And every leaf is like that. Every leaf is in contact with the air. That's why some leaves have irregular circumferences. They're not round and smooth but irregular; an irregular shape, in and out. Why is it in and out? Because the end of the leaf has holes in it where it breathes in and out. It's like a bay. When the land goes in and out there's more shore. And therefore when you have irregular shapes of the leaf, the more opportunity for the leaf to function, to breathe.

A Different Life

And so when people begin using their eyes to see all around them the wonders that are speaking to us, their minds will open up. The purpose of everything is to let us come close to Hashem! Only we have to be stubborn and utilize those things around us! Don't wait for a nes! We have to study the *nissim* that come every day and our eyes will open up and we'll recognize Hakadosh Baruch Hu from the midst of His creations! And it's waiting for the people who are willing to invest a little time. And if you'll think five minutes a day, then these

secrets will begin to become apparent to you and it's going to change your life – if you'll do it.

If you do it, your lives will be different because you'll begin to see that there's no way out except to recognize that the *yad Hashem* in the world is everywhere. It's *מלא כל הארץ כבודו* – *the world is full of His glory*. Wherever you look, you see His *nissim* and *nefla'os* everywhere. And we have to marvel at it! Always to be excited! Never to be deadened by insensitivity because of habit! Not to listen to the foolishness of the world! Not to be stampeded by the herd of silly unthinking animals all around us! We must be stubborn in our clarity of logic and always remind ourselves of *nissim* and *nefla'os* around us!

And that's how we, all of the sane people who want to be close to Hashem, if we apply our minds we'll arrive at the realization that we're looking at Hashem! Almost as if we see Him! He's right here! He's just around the corner!

Becoming Close

And that's an important part of our career of coming close to Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Of course, we never forget the first explanation, the obligation to come close to the *tzaddikim*, the *Talmidei Chachomim*, where the Shechinah rests more than anywhere else. But at the same time, we come close to the Shechinah by means of thinking about Him and seeing Him in the world around us.

And those people who embark on this career in life are going to be rewarded in many ways. They're going to gain a firmness of conviction that nothing in the world can shake. They are *maaminim* on which they can build their entire future career of happiness. And in addition to that, Hakadosh Baruch Hu will say to them, "Because you strove to come close to Me in this world, to see Me as much as you could, so I'm going to reward you when the time comes," *לְהִזּוֹת בְּנַעַם הַשֵּׁם* – you will gaze at the sweetness of Hakadosh Baruch Hu and enjoy the splendor of His Shechinah.

That's the real *dveikus* and that's the real happiness, because עז וְהִדְרָה בְּמִקוֹמוֹ – in His place, there's strength and joy. Where Hashem is, that's the greatest happiness. And the ones who came close to Him in this world, those are the ones who will be together with Him forever. Forever and ever you'll travel together with the הַיְדוּת בְּעֶרְבוֹת – the One Who rides in the clouds. And you'll enjoy the ride! Even more than if you would ride, let's say, in a stratosphere plane, and go to visit far off celestial worlds. All that is nothing compared to the great ride in eternity at the side of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Because you fulfilled בּוֹ וְרִבְקָה, your *nefesh* will be *tzrura btzror hachaim* – in the bond of everlasting life with Hashem; forever and ever you'll continue.

Have A Wonderful Shabbos

LET'S GET PRACTICAL

Clinging Every Day

This week I will focus on fulfilling the mitzvah of “And you should cling to Hashem” by means of both ways that we learned tonight.

Every day I will *bli neder* look for one opportunity to become physically close to a *talmid chochom*. Even if it is in the slightest way, for example just to sit near him, I will do it and I will have in mind that I am fulfilling the mitzvah of becoming close to Hashem.

Also, I will *bli neder* spend five minutes every day looking closely at Hashem's creations and study them carefully until I can actually feel the closeness of the Presence of Hashem. And I will keep in mind that I am fulfilling the mitzvah of וּבוֹ תִרְבֵּק.

This week's booklet is based on tapes:

278 - My Servant Moshe | 579 - Middos - Finding Favor in Hashem's Eyes
596 - Coming Close to Hashem | 713 - Close to Hashem
E-264 - Close to Hashem

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What does one do if he lives in an area where there is no contact with his rebbi?



First of all, there may be somebody in that area who could become a *rebbe* of his.

Secondly, what business does he have living in such an area? It's important to live in a good neighborhood. When you live in a certain neighborhood it becomes part of your personality. You can't help it. אדם נמשך ברעותיו ובמידותיו אחר רעיו וחביריו – *You're attracted, you're drawn after your environment*. If the environment is a pop culture environment, and there are movies all around and people with TVs all around, you can't escape the influence. Although you can try to some extent but you can't escape it.

And therefore a person if he's wise, he should listen to what the *Chachomim* say: *shachen tov!* (Avos 2:9). A good neighbor is very important! And a good neighborhood is very important. It's extremely important to find a place where you'll be influenced by the people around you.

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