

תורת אביגדור
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Rav Avigdor Miller on the Parsha
Adapted from his Tapes, Sforim and Writings of Talmidim

פרשת ראה

Mishpachat Levy
Edition 

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Rav Avigdor Miller ztz"l on

פרשת ראה

EAT AND REJOICE!

In *Parshas Re'eh* Hashem commands the *Am Yisroel* to bring *korbanos* to the *Beis Hamikdash*: ואכלתם שם לפני ה' אלקיכם ושמחתם בכל משלה ידכם, "You shall eat there before Hashem your G-d and you shall rejoice" (12:6-7). To eat and rejoice! Although this may imply singing and even dancing, yet these activities are never explicitly mentioned in the Torah. And therefore, we understand that the *eating of the korbanos in itself is the rejoicing* that Hashem speaks about here. And Hakodosh Baruch Hu wants you to rejoice not merely by eating meat, but by eating meat *lifnei Hashem Elokecha*, in the Presence of Hashem.

Now, although we have read these words many times, we should stop for a moment and appreciate the significance of this lesson. It is remarkable that Hashem considers *eating* as the fulfillment of a person's desire for happiness before Hashem. And if the Torah is letting us know that our joy "before Hashem" should be in the so-called simple pleasure of eating, it is only right that we study this *sugya*, the topic of "eating before Hashem," as it is more common and perhaps even more crucial for your service of Hashem than many other *sugyos* you might study.

The opportunity to gain awareness of Hashem's kindness by means of eating is important enough to earn repetition in the Torah frequently. "Before Hashem your G-d you shall eat it... and you shall rejoice before Hashem your G-d" (D'varim 12:18). "And you shall eat before Hashem your G-d and you shall rejoice" (ibid. 14:26). "And you shall eat and be satiated and you shall bless Hashem" (ibid. 8:10).

EATING BRINGS HAPPINESS... AND PERFECTION

The nation of Hashem can gain happiness and perfection through eating in the right way. You know that when the nations of the world wish to bring offerings to Hashem, they may do so; we accept their *korbanos*. But they are limited to burnt-offerings, *korbanos* that involve no eating. Unlike the *Am Yisroel*, the *goyim* are not allowed to eat of offerings, for the physical act of eating bestirs their bestiality, their most base animal instincts, and they are incapable of joining thoughts of Hashem to their eating. When a *goy* eats and drinks, it is often a source of trouble. I always tell you this joke: What do you call it when you see three ambulances racing down the street one after the other, with their sirens blaring? It's the end of a Puerto Rican wedding! When *goyim* get together for eating there is no eating in the Presence of Hashem, and therefore there is usually trouble afoot. And they are therefore unfit for the function of serving Hashem at the dinner table. But we, the Holy Nation, can learn to eat in holiness and become great through the function of eating.

WHAT IS THE WORLD FOR?

In *sefer Emunas V'deios*, Rabbeinu Saadia Gaon makes a remark that enlightens us about the nature of *Olam Hazeih*. He says that this world is a world that's made for food. He doesn't say it's a world made for *Olam Habah*, and not for the *Am Yisroel*; this world is created *entirely* for the purpose of supplying food. It's a very important observation that nobody pays attention to. But Rav Saadiah Gaon made note of this phenomenon. The entire *Olam Hazeih* is geared for the function of **מכלכל חיים בחסד**.

The first thing that we take note of is that the entire earth, with all its phenomena, is devoted to the purpose of creating and supporting life, through a wonderful system that supplies the food needs of all the living. The entire soil that blankets this earth

is only for the purpose of supplying food. The winds, the sun, the rain, the atmosphere, many factors have the sole function of cooperating in supplying food for the living. The vast phenomena of the sun, the force of gravity, the winds, the rains, the snow and the atmospheric gases all cooperate in the mighty function of supplying you with your breakfast, lunch and supper - as well as all that snacking in between. And of course these systems are all cooperating with each other to feed the world. And if you open your eyes, if you open your mind, you see it all day long.

THE MAN WHO NEVER SAW A COW

Even if you are a city-boy, and you don't live out in the boondocks where you can see the cornfields and the cows. Keep your eyes open just a bit and all day long you'll see the trucks driving back and forth. Some are loaded with fruits and vegetables. Others with milk and cheese. And poultry and meats. And loaves of every type of bread. And from early in the morning, before you're even thinking about getting up, these trucks are on the road and unloading the cases of food. Even a man in the city - he never saw a cow, or a wheatfield in his life - he can see what Rav Saadiah is speaking about, all around him. There's something here! The whole briyah, the creation of the whole world, the whole *maaseh bereishis*, is for what? For food!

THAT'S WHY WE SAY ASHREI

Now this explains what the *gemara* says in *Mesichta B'rachos*. The *gemara* states if you say *תהילה לדוד*, that's *ashrei*, every day, you're a *ben Olam Habah*. The *gemara* asks why? What's so important? Of course, it's certainly a marvelous composition of *ruach hakodesh* and very deep wisdom, but what makes it distinguished from all the other chapters of *Tehillim*? Dovid said a lot of beautiful things. And the *gemara* concludes that it's because of the *passuk* *וּמְשַׁבֵּיעַ לְכָל חַי רִצּוֹן*, You open Your hand, *פּוֹתַח אֶת יָדְךָ*, and You satiate all the living with all their needs. That's what makes *ashrei* so important. And not just important, but so important that by saying it everyday properly you're becoming a *ben Olam Habah*. You're impressing onto your neshama that Hashem is feeding the whole world.

Now the question arises why did the *gemara* quote that *passuk*? There's a *passuk* right before that that says the same thing,

so it seems: ואתה נותן, עיני כל אליך ישברו, the eyes of all hope to You, ואתה נותן, להם את אכלם בעתו, You give them the food in its time. What's wrong with that *possuk*?

And the answer is that the first *possuk* merely tells us that Hakodosh Baruch Hu gives food. He supplies the needs of the living. That's all it says. But the next *passuk* tells us something else. ואתה פותח את ידך, You open up Your hand." Hakodosh Boruch Hu doesn't have any hand; "Your Hand" means all Your Power. You have nothing else that interests You except הוא חסד הוא; *כי חפץ חסד הוא*; all of Your power is for *chesed*. That's what Hakodosh Boruch Hu wants to show us in this world; His kindness. He's יושב וזן מביצי כינים ועד - Hashem is sitting in heaven and feeding everyone, everything! הקב"ה יושב ברומו של עולם ומחלק מזונות לכל בריה, Hakodosh Baruch Hu sits on his throne and is distributing food to the entire world. That's *kaviyachol* His main interest in the world, to feed every creature. And how great is the achievement of understanding this important principle that the entire *briah* is geared to supplying the needs of the living? So great that if you know it, if you really know it, you're a *ben Olam Habah*.

THE TZEDAKAH SPECIALIST

We'll give a *maschal*. Here's a rich man. He has a big business. He has an office where he receives *rabbanim*, *rosh yeshivos* that come for their institutions. So he takes them into that room, and he sits with them, he talks to the them. And then he opens a drawer, pulls out a checkbook and he gives a fine donations. He's running to his *tzedaka* office for meetings all day long. But that's not his main business. He has a very big factory where he spends his day. That's where his thoughts are. The *tzedaka* office is only a branch of his activities.

But suppose there's a rich man who opens up in Manhattan an office *only* for giving *tzedaka*. It's a big building, with many floors, and the whole building is only to give *tzedakah*. Different rooms and offices for *tzedaka* programs. This man is a specialist in *tzedakah* and *chesed*. That's where he spends his days, running from room to room, giving *tzedaka* and supporting all the Torah institutions and all the *nitzrachim*, the needy.

That's Hakodosh Baruch Hu! That's what Rav Saadia Gaon is saying. And that's what ואתה פותח את ידך ומשביע לכל חי רצון is

telling us. Hakodosh Boruch Hu made this world only to feed. All of His powers are concentrated on kindness. The whole world is one big *tzedaka* office, a food supply office for all of the *briyos*.

WORMS AND RHINOCEROS MILK

Hashem gives fish worms to eat, but *you* don't like worms! So He gives you bread. Everybody gets what he likes. ומשביע לכל, He satiates every creature with what he wants. Cows don't like meat. They love grass. Lions don't like grass so Hashem gives them meat. Everybody gets what he wants and you should know it's a very special restaurant, this world. It's customized. Each creature has its own menu and there are hundreds of thousands of different customers with hundreds of thousands of different menus. And Hakodosh Baruch Hu gives each customer exactly the menu that he likes. Little baby rhinoceroses like only rhinoceros milk from their mother. They don't like milk from seals or from elephants. Rhinoceros milk has a specific prescription, much different from the milk that comes from cows. Little raccoons like only raccoon milk. Every animal gets their milk suited to each species, and Hakodosh Baruch Hu caters to everybody's tastes.

In *Birchas Hamazon*, the first *bracha* we say, ברוך אתה השם, הזין את היהודים. No, we don't say that. We don't say thank You Hashem for feeding *me*, for giving *us* food. We say הזין את הכל - You feed *everybody, everything!* Birds on the wing, earthworms in the interior of the soil, the cat in the backyard. Everybody is eating it's not only once a year; every day new food. When you pass a bakery and see in the window all kinds of bread and rolls and cakes, they're not the same ones that were there yesterday. Every day they bake new ones. You pass a fruit stand. It looks like the same apples that were there last week. No, those ones are gone. Everyday new piles of apples and new heaps of oranges and bananas. Every day Hakodosh Baruch Hu is supplying; הזין את הכל.

WAS HASHEM STUCK?!

But you should be asking yourself: What is the purpose of all this? Such a wondrous and stupendous food system of interrelated subsystems, and for what?! Just to provide food? For what purpose did Hashem do this? Hashem, Who created the

whole world and everything in it, didn't have to create people with the need for food in order to live. But He did. And He created a most complicated system of feeding us. What do you think, that it was without a purpose?! Hashem had to create a food system only because He was stuck, because He made humans?! No, not at all. And even if Hashem wanted us to eat to live, did He have to create the marvels of the food supply? The nourishment could have been tasteless and colorless, and without aroma, and we would have been happy to ingest the life-giving materials which would supply us with energy.

So we'll explain as follows: There are *two kinds of knowledge* that we have to gain in this world - and remember, *we're in this world to get knowledge*. Whatever you're doing in this world, it's for *da'as*, for knowledge. Hakodosh Boruch Hu said that. **וידעת היום** - **והשבות אל לבבך** - You should know today and you should keep on putting into your mind - *leiv* means mind (see Toras Avigdor Parshas Va'eschanan), **כי השם הוא האלוקים** - that Hashem is our G-d." We are commanded to know. And to know and to know and to know. That's what **והשבות** means, to keep putting it into your mind more and more.

SEFORIM ARE A GOOD BEGINNING

One form of knowledge is called *chochma* - learning facts. There is so much to learn in this world, so much Torah information that we have to absorb. And that's called *yedias ha'seichel*, knowledge of the mind. To know with your mind is an accomplishment; but that's not the chief accomplishment of life. Oh no! Many people understand and know, and nevertheless, they never have absorbed, they never took into their inner consciousness, the real truths of these great principles.

And people are not aware of that. They think we just have to learn *seforim*. *Seforim* are very important, but there are so many things to learn that are outside of the *seforim* - things that the *seforim* are only *m'ramez* to. The *seforim* give you the *roshei perakim*, of what you have to do, but it's you who has to do the work. You must begin the process *avodah* of internalizing the *chochma* and making it part of your personality. That's when you can begin actually living with Torah attitudes. It becomes part of who you

are, not merely a superficial piece of information. That's the real *yediah*; it's called *da'as*.

A WARNING FROM THE ENCYCLOPEDIA

I always give the same example. A mother is standing in the kitchen and her little boy comes in and starts fooling around. So the mother says, "Watch out - the stove is hot. It's fire, it burns. Don't touch the stove!" Now, he knows that his mother is an Encyclopedia Britannica. He knows that his mother knows everything. And he believes her *b'emunah sh'leimah*. A little boy believes his mother knows everything. He believes her that the stove burns. So what does he do? He puts his fingers on the hot stove and burns his finger. Oooh, it hurts. *Now* he shouts, "Ow, the stove burns."

You know what happened here? The little boy just learned another form of wisdom. Before, it was *intellectual* wisdom. But now he knows *sensory* wisdom. Sensory wisdom is a whole new type of wisdom. His mother told him it burns, yes, he believed that. That's called *yedias haseichel*. But now that his finger was burned by the fire, he felt it with his senses, that's a whole different story. Now it's *yedias hachush*. *Yedias hachush* is a new kind of knowledge, a new kind of knowledge entirely. And there's no comparison.

NOW HE KNOWS!

So the first level is called *chochma*. Let's say he would never have put his finger on the stove. He knows, fire burns. His mother told him! But he's lacking *yedias hachush*. But once he goes through the experience, so he tells people, "You know, fire *really* burns." So they say "*Mai kamashma lun*, we always knew that." No, they don't know it! But *he* knows it now!

I always tell the same stories but it's important to know these stories. Once a bachur came late to yeshiva in the morning. I said, "Why are you late today?" He said, "Today I saw something; I saw a man die on the street." He was agitated, discomposed, trembling! A man died in front of him. I said, "What's the big deal? Don't you know people die?" He said, "Yes, but I never *saw* it before." The knowledge that people die shook him up because

before it was only a superficial kind of *yediah*. Now he *saw it with his own eyes* and he learned that *it was really so*.

YOU SAY IT, BUT I MEAN IT

Now, one of the most important *yedios* that we have to strive to acquire is the knowledge of the *chesed* and *chochma* of Hashem. So you're going to say "I know that already." We all know that Hashem created the world for one purpose, for *chesed*. You might even quote the passuk in Tehillim, עולם חסד יבנה - "The world is created for kindness." But look at what Dovid said: אני אמרתי - "I am the one who said, עולם חסד יבנה - that this world is built for kindness" (ibid.) Now what are those extra words, *Ani amarti*, "I said"? What's the introduction for? Just tell us, "*Olam chesed yi'baneh*."

And the answer is this. Yes, of course, everyone could say "This world is a world of *chesed*." Why not? It's easy to say. But to actually *understand* that it is so, to *feel* that this world is a world of *chesed*, and more *chesed* and more *chesed*; that's a big accomplishment that only a few people achieve.

DOVID HAMELECH EATS SUPPER

When Dovid sat down to eat, he didn't waste any time. He ate supper like an *eved Hashem* eats supper. He was *Dovid avdi* because he knew how to eat; he ate with thought. Dovid was sitting and eating and thinking. As he ate, he saw the *chesed Hashem*; better yet, he *tasted* the *chesed Hashem*. He felt on his taste buds, he felt it in his stomach, how kind Hashem is to us. And because he made a program out of it, because he did it day after day, he actually began to *feel the chesed Hashem in his bones*.

And now Dovid was saying these words again, while he was eating and allowing the *yediah chushis* of *olam chesed yi'baneh* to saturate his body and his mind. And so now, it was a different kind of words, a different kind of words altogether. Because when he ate, he was taking the superficial wisdom that everyone knows, and he became saturated with it. He became identified with that wisdom. It became part of him. He actually *felt* it so.

Ani amarti, said Dovid, after his breakfast, after his supper. "I'm the one who can really say it, because I actually make it my business to experience, to appreciate, Hashem's kindness." *Ani*

amarti - "Listen to me because I know what I'm talking about. I've come to the conclusion that *olam chesed yi'baneh*, that Hashem truly made this world for kindness."

And so we see that experience of eating is a very important part of our progress that we make in this world. Eating food is a great opportunity to appreciate the great *chesed* of *ani amarti*, the understanding of what *bri'as haolam*, the creation of the world, really means. When you sit down to the table and you eat food, you're taking the *yedias hasechel* and you're transforming it into *yedias hachush*. And the more you enjoy the eating, the more you're going to be grateful to Hashem and understand His kindness.

THE WAY TO MAKE A GOOD SALE

In *Mesichta Chullin* (4b) we find a very interesting observation that Chazal make: "There is no persuasion unless by food and drink." When you want to make that big sale to an important customer, you make sure to take him out to a good restaurant. Of course, you'll be talking about how your prices can't be matched, and about the quality of your goods - but you need that good steak to induce him into closing that deal.

Now, pay attention to this: The wide variety of foods and drinks in this world is Hashem persuading us. He is doing His best to persuade us to perfect ourselves in Awareness of His kindness and wisdom. That is the reason that the world is a food making machine. All day long Hashem is trying to seduce you with the endless variety of good foods. He's trying His hardest to get our attention. But we're sleeping. Even when we're eating our minds are fast asleep. We're not thinking about it at all. But when a person is wise enough to think when he eats, he's allowing himself to be persuaded by Hashem to fall in love with Him.

A VARIETY OF ENJOYMENTS

The measure of the kindness of Hashem is apparent not only in the abundant food supply and the intricate systems that are in place to feed us, but even more in the tastes and qualities of the food itself. The Creator made the eating function into a considerable pleasure by bestowing on our food a wide variety of tastes, colors and aromas specifically to induce us into recognizing

Him through the kindness He bestows. The large amount of fruits, with each fruit itself coming in various flavors and shades of color. A variety of poultry and fish and meat. Varieties of grains and vegetables and fruit. And various spices and condiments. All for the purpose of inducing us to “rejoice before Hashem.” So that we should rejoice in this endless variety and appreciate the infinite kindness and wisdom of Hashem.

WHITE PILLS THREE TIMES A DAY

And now we know why Hashem gives food. We thought He gives food so we should continue just to live. No that's not the real purpose. The real purpose is what we say in bentching. **הִזְן אֵת הָעוֹלָם כֻּלּוֹ**. He feeds the whole world, and not only He feeds us, but it's **בְּטוֹבוֹ בְּחֵן בְּחֶסֶד וּבְרַחֲמִים**, in His goodness, kindness, grace and mercy. He could have given us white pills without any taste. And **בְּאֵין בְּרִירָה**, with no other option, we would eat the white pills. It would keep us going like vitamins. They don't have any taste. Sometimes they're bitter. But we'd eat them because we have to.

But instead He gives us “pills” that taste good. Everything that's good to eat has a good taste. Everything you taste that's good to eat smells good. Hakodosh Baruch Hu made it naturally that way. And why? It's **בְּעִבּוֹר שְׁמוֹ הַגְּדוֹל**, for the sake of His great name. In order that you should appreciate His wisdom and greatness and kindness. All of the kindness inherent in this world full of food, is for that purpose only. To appreciate the gift of food for the purpose of recognizing and appreciating the Giver. That's why we're eating and enjoying these things.

And now we see how important the function of eating is in this world, because it's the eating of food that is the occasion for the great service of Hashem, the service of actually believing that He is a *Chofetz Chesed*.

WHO REALLY MADE THE CHICKEN?

And therefore when you eat it's a glorious opportunity. Every time you sit down at the table, you sit down with the intention I'm going to gain more love of Hashem. So here's a man sitting down to a meal. First thing is you should tell your wife how good the food is. You give her a compliment. “Chanaleh, this

chicken is excellent. It couldn't have been any better." You should say that! But when she walks out to the other room and she doesn't hear, you should say, "This food tastes so good, Hashem. Thank you, You did a remarkable job on this chicken. I love You, Hashem." That's how to love Hashem. You're eating in order to love Hashem. Although there are many ways of loving Hashem, but eating is one of the most fundamental means because it hits the spot. It's *yedias hachush*. The whole body is employed in the function of eating, and therefore when a person eats that way, it's **ואכלתם... ושמחתם לפני השם** - You're actually eating in the Presence of Hashem.

Everytime you eat, add the thought, "I'm eating because I want to appreciate the kindness of Hashem. Hashem, You're the One who makes food taste good." You know, food doesn't taste like turpentine. Food doesn't taste like dirt. Food doesn't taste like paper. Food tastes good! And He created all types of flavors and tastes. And all things to flavor it with. Onions! And salt! And sometimes pepper! "It's so much fun to be eating. It's delicious and filling. And, not only is it fun, but it's refreshing and invigorating for my body and soul. I'm a new man after a good meal." These are important thoughts. Think about them while you're eating.

KRI'AS YAM SUF IN THE KITCHEN

Say with your mouth, "You Hashem are **זן את העולם כולו** - You are feeding the whole world. And right now You're feeding me **בחן ובחסד וברחמים** - with favor and with kindness and with mercy." And it's all miracles. It's **עמוק עמוק**, it's miracles deep beyond comprehension. The gemara says: **קשין מזונותיו של אדם כקריעת ים סוף** - The food of a person is as difficult as the splitting of the *Yam Suf*." Now, what does that mean? Making a living can be difficult, but most everybody is doing it. You're making a living, but you can't split the *Yam Suf*. And therefore we must understand that what the *gemara* is telling us is something of a demonstration of the greatness of Hakodosh Baruch Hu. Food is no less a *neis* than the miracles that took place at *Kriyas Yam Suf*. At the *Yam Suf* there were 250 *makkos*, so that means that there were at least 250 open miracles. And when you're eating food, you're expected to realize that *every bite is at least 250 miracles*.

GREEN ORANGES

The truth is we're not utilizing the opportunities of seeing the miracles of Hashem. Let's say you're eating an orange right now. It's a glorious opportunity. The first thing you look at is the color of the orange. Don't pass that over. Look at the color of the orange. Why is it so beautifully colored? It could have been the color like a potato. No, a potato Hashem doesn't want you to be too attracted to it. He doesn't want you to bite into it. It still needs work; it has to be cooked or baked. But an orange? Why is it colored orange; a beautiful shining orange? Color is not an accident. Try to make color yourself. Take raw materials, dirt and water and try to make colors. Go out and try it. You could try for a thousand years and you wouldn't be able to do a thing. But Hakodosh Boruch Hu told the orange tree to make colors from the dirt and water. *Kashin k'kriyas Yam Suf*. Hashem doesn't do miracles for nothing. What's it for? The color is there for a purpose; and that's why when the orange is on the tree, it's not colored. It's green. Oranges hide among the leaves. Why is it green there and not orange colored? Because it wants to hide from you. You shouldn't look at me yet. I'm too young. Don't take me yet. When it's ready to eat then it turns a beautiful golden color and it calls out to you, "Now you can take me, *mein kind*. Enjoy me."

So now you're ready to begin eating. But we're not done yet. Hakodosh Boruch Hu still has more to show you! You begin removing the peel. Take a look at the peel. Don't just discard the peel and that's all. You're missing the true purpose of the orange. Hakodosh Boruch Hu is giving a *shiur klali* in *Chesed Hashem*, in *Chochmas Hashem*, so you have to pay attention. The color of the skin is only on the *outside*. Why isn't it on the *inside* of the skin? Because it's a waste of color on the inside of the skin. You don't need it anymore. You throw away the skin. The outside is what you see. Once you're attracted to take the orange, you bought it and you're ready to eat; now you already have it in your hand. So you open it up, and who cares if the skin underneath has no color? So we see color is being used economically, frugally, with *chochma*, it's not being wasted.

THE ORANGE TEACHES EMUNAH

And the color of the flesh of the orange inside is also beautiful. When you take off the peel, the fruit itself is an

attractive orange. Why do you need the color inside? To help you enjoy it while you eat. It makes it more pleasurable; it adds to the fun of eating. There's more *hana'ah* when you eat something that's colored.

And therefore when you eat an orange properly, you become a *ma'amin*. You become not only a *ma'amin* in Hashem the *Borei*, but you see that Hakodosh Boruch Hu intended the world for kindness! Because why did He make the orange taste good? It could have tasted unpleasant and still would have all the vitamins and all the nourishment. It's because He wanted to make it taste pleasant. And why did He color the flesh inside? To complement the taste, so that we should enjoy it even more!

EATING SEEDS

You want another thought? Hakadosh Baruch Hu told Adam Harishon **לכם הנה נתתי** - "Behold I have given you food" (Bereishis 1:29). Hashem was introducing to Mankind now the concept of eating for the first time. And He says, I'm giving you **עֵץ זֶרַע זֶרַע** - I'm giving you herbage that produces seeds and fruit that have seeds in them" (ibid.) So there's a superfluous word there. He says "I have given you food; vegetables, grasses, and fruit." But why mention **זֶרַע זֶרַע**, that it has seeds in it. Why mention that? When Hashem at the beginning said **אֲשֶׁר זֶרְעוּ בּוֹ** - "The earth should produce trees with seeds in it" (Bereishis 1:11), so we understand why it was necessary to say it then. That was the command of Creation. And He wanted fruits should have the ability to continue to reproduce forever. But when He told Adam to eat, why was it necessary to mention that there are seeds in the fruit?

THE QUARTER IN YOUR APPLE

The answer is this. When Adam eats, he has to *think about the seeds*. While you're eating it you have to realize that not only the pulp and the juice is beneficial to you, but your eyes, your mind, is going to gain a great benefit from looking at the seeds. Look at the seed. First of all, how did the seed get inside there? It's a good question. Do you think you understand that? It's a miracle how seeds get inside. Suppose you open an orange and found a quarter inside the orange. A quarter? A quarter has on it a date. It

says in G-d we trust. Even a picture of George Washington! How did it happen inside an orange?! A quarter in an orange?! But that's nothing compared to a seed. A seed is a million times more complicated than a quarter. A quarter is something dead; it's a piece of metal. There's very little information on a quarter - a few pictures, a date, some words. It's dead, it's nothing. An orange seed however has millions and millions of plans inscribed on the helix of the DNA molecule in the orange seed.

Let's say you're eating a tomato. Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants to utilize the opportunity. Notice the seeds in the tomato. The seeds are there. Each seed is a miracle of miracles. The seed of the tomato has in it millions of instructions. These are the words of the scientists today. Every seed has millions of instructions how to create a tomato plant, millions of instructions. If *they're* excited so why shouldn't *we* be more excited- we know they're understating it. There are trillions of instructions. It's not the truth what they're saying. But even millions of instructions we should get excited about it. You eat a tomato or an apple and you spit out the seeds. Look at the seed. I'll tell you a good idea. Put a seed in your pocket. Carry it around with you from time to time. I do it. I carry seeds with me. And I take it out sometimes in the middle of the street and look at it. Ahh! Look at the miracle. People write to me that I should send them some of my seeds. I send the seeds by mail. I go to the post office and I mail my seeds to people. They are miracle seeds. And Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants you to notice that, *הנה נתתי לכם ... עשב זרע זרע*.

THE DUMB SCIENTIST AT THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

And not only that, taste the orange seed for a change. Try it once in a while. It's bitter. You'll spit it out. Why is it bitter? Now let's listen what the *goyim* say. In the Department of Agriculture in Washington, I once read a bulletin, and it said the orange pip is bitter in order to discourage people from eating it. You hear that? There's plan and purpose here! So shouldn't we be at least as wise as that *goy* and see the *yad Hashem*. He didn't say Hashem, by the way. We add that. He's dumb. He's a *goy*; he's too dumb to come to right *conclusions*. But we have to be better than that. We look at the seed, we taste the seed, and we know that Hashem has made the orange seed bitter in order to make sure that it's not eaten. Animals don't eat it either. They also don't

appreciate the taste of orange seeds. So they leave it alone, and it grows into an orange tree.

That's how you have to eat all fruit. Every fruit is full of *chesed Hashem*, bursting with *chochmas Hashem*. And not only fruit. Vegetables and nuts and beans and bread and meat. Meat! How did meat come into being? You know how meat came into being? There was once a cow, and the cow was eating grass. The cow never ate meat in her life. It ate grass and water. Then it produced a calf. Where did the calf come from? The calf is nothing but grass and water that the cow ate. Absolutely, no other source. From grass and water a calf will emerge?! And that calf turned into an ox, and it was slaughtered in a *kosher* slaughterhouse. Now the butcher has part of it now. So the butcher is selling you something that's *nisei nisim*! This meat was only grass and water. You go to the butcher and you pay him ten, twenty dollars, and you come home with *nisei nissim* in your bag.

MEAT COMES FROM THE AIR

Now suppose you're sitting and eating a piece of meat with this preparation that we said here and you're thinking about the meat. Meat is a miracle. Meat is a miracle. Grass and water. And where do grass and water come from? Where does grass come from? You know where grass comes from? Grass comes from the air. Grass is nothing but air. The sun shines on the chlorophyll and some water, and it produces grass. Grass is nothing but air and water. Air and water. The carbon dioxide in the air and water and sunshine together. Go outside and collect a pot of carbon dioxide and a pot of sunshine and a pot of water and try to make a meal out of it! But Hakodosh Baruch Hu makes starch out of these three elements. It's a miracle. Just the grass itself is a miracle.

So how can you be eligible to eat that piece of meat unless you're ready to understand that *nes*? An *Am Ha'aretz* will take it in his mouth and just destroy that wonderful material. A complete waste of a *neis*. That's why the *gemara* says: **עַם הָאָרֶץ אָסוּר לֵאכּוֹל בִּישׁוּר** - "An *Am Ha'aretz* is forbidden from eating meat" (Pesachim 49b). If you want to go to a butcher shop to buy meat, he says, "What do you want sir?" "I want some meat. I want a pound of meat." So the butcher takes out a *gemara*. He says to you, "Read,

read some *gemara*." You can't say a *gemara*?!" So you say, "Well, I never learned a *gemara*.". So he tell you, "I'm sorry, but there's a vegetable man next door. For meat you have to be a *lamdan*." It says it openly in the *gemara*.

Why is that? Because you have to appreciate meat. You have to think about it while you eat it. How can you put a good piece of steak into your mouth, if you don't know what to do with it. If you don't use it to achieve *da'as Hashem*, then you're wasting good material. It's *ossur l'echol*. Keep away! But if you take that material and transform it into *da'as*, ooooh, look what I'm eating now. It's a *neis*. I'm eating the *dvar Hashem*, Hashem's word. Ohhh, that's already a different story. Now the meat is transformed into *daas Hashem*. Only Hashem could cause grass and water to become meat. Think about that. If you'll do that, then you're justified in eating it.

HAKODOSH BORUCH HU'S MAGIC TRICKS

And so it's a good thing you came here tonight. Because you're learning now how to serve Hashem at supper time. When you sit down at your table and you see bread, get excited over it! So you think that what I'm saying is silly. Get excited over bread?! Yes, bread. It's *kashin k'kriyas Yam Suf*. It's just as miraculous as when Hashem split the sea. It's such a big accomplishment to produce that bread. Now if you learned a little bit of the natural sciences, you would see how true that is. Bread comes out of the air. In the air there is a very minute proportion of carbon dioxide. Three parts of carbon dioxide in 10,000 parts of air, and the seed that's planted in the earth needs that carbon dioxide to produce food. It takes that carbon dioxide and with the aid of the sun it changes it into starches and that's food. Nobody has yet learned that trick. No human being can imitate this process. And the food which comes from the carbon dioxide is not only a combination of the sun and the seeds. The soil is also responsible; **המוציא לחם מן הארץ**. The soil is full of nutrients that are needed for food to grow. But in addition, there's the wind. Because if the wind didn't keep the air moving, the plant would draw out all the carbon dioxide that's nearby and then the plant would die for lack of carbon dioxide. So along comes the wind and it keeps the air moving past the plant so as the air passes by, the plant continues to suck the carbon dioxide out of the air. Like the *gemara* says, **אי אפשר לעולם**

בלא רוחות, the world cannot live without the wind. It's a *gemara* in *taanis*. So it's משיב הרוח, Hashem makes the wind blow, ומוריד הגשם, and He brings water. Water is needed for almost all chemical transformations. And as a result of all these miracles, מכלכל חיים בחסד, He supplies the living with their needs.

THE BATTERY CHARGER

Now that's only the beginning. That's the more superficial overview of this process. How can the sun when it shines on the green chlorophyll make it into starch? How can you take something that's inanimate, minerals, inorganic materials and change it into organic things of food? And how can it be when you eat food it turns into life, into physical life? Because we are the result of what we eat. All these are miracles upon miracles and to this day nobody can explain it. They say the sun's energy goes into the starch, goes into the food. When you eat the food, the energy is released inside of your body and therefore you're able to walk, you're able to talk. Even the thinking of your mind is like a computer. A computer has to have an input of electricity. You have to plug it in. Otherwise, it wouldn't compute. The mind cannot think unless it has an energy supply. That's the food. How can it be that energy from the sun, which is light energy, could combine with the starches and then that energy is stored up in the starches?! Absolutely not to be understood! The energy is stored up in the starches. And then, when you eat the food, energy is released within you and it remains ready within you. When the time comes, you gradually use up the energy by doing whatever you do. And then finally you have to eat again to recharge your battery. You understand that? Absolutely not! And you never will.

When eating, if only we would train ourselves to understand that this is the biggest of all earthly gifts, this is life itself. From air, carbon and hydrogen and nitrogen and sunlight, there is created such a product which is able to sustain life is one of the biggest miracles that we can find in all of creation. The creation of food is unequal. And therefore, when we partake of this miracle of food, it's up to us to utilize the opportunity to gain that *kedushah*.

WHY DOESN'T MUD TASTE GOOD?

Isn't it a pity that people let these opportunities go by? Why should you waste the opportunity? You're sitting down to eat anyway. Why don't you think, why is it that food tastes good? Why should it taste good? Does mud taste good? Does paper taste good? Does tinfoil taste good? Does plastic taste good? Why should food taste good? There's something there. It's a miracle. It's a miracle that food tastes good. Don't think it just happens that *we* make it taste good. Everything that is not good for you doesn't taste good. We find out right away that it's not good for you. You taste it, it's rotten. Your tongue warns you. Unless you maybe go to a restaurant where they disguise it with pepper and paprika and spices. They take rotten food and they make it taste good. That's what they do in a restaurant sometimes. They make it taste good and at the moment you're happy. But your stomach is not happy when you get home.

THE LONG FOOD JOURNEY

And that's only the first bite. You know, the miracles only really begin when the food enters your mouth. That's when the miracles begin. The entire eating process, the complicated system of digestion is miracles of miracles. You know, that when you begin to eat - actually before you even eat, merely from seeing the food, your entire body gets to work preparing itself for this great event, of food entering the body.

As soon as you start chewing, the bread tastes better. You know why bread when it's baked more tastes better than bread that's not baked well; or why the crust of a *challah* is always more delicious than the *challah* inside? You ever stopped to think about that? I'll tell you. The *challah* is starch. When a starch comes in contact with heat it turns into sugars. The bland starches become sweet sugars. So, let's say your wife takes the *challah* and bakes it once more a second time, the crust becomes harder, but it's sweeter. Because when the sugars develop from the starches, it's sweeter and sweeter.

CHEW YOUR BREAD

Now when you put the bread into your mouth, in the saliva there's a certain chemical called ptyalin. Ptyalin is an enzyme that acts on the starch and turns it into sugars. Now, I say

“turns into” as if it's a simple process. Just that itself, that while you're chewing the bread the Ptyalin is changing the starch into sugar, is so complicated, so miraculous that books can be written just on that. And the scientists in the laboratories are only scratching the surface of the *chochmas Hashem* and the *chesed Hashem*. So while you're chewing the starchy bread, it becomes sweeter and sweeter. So if you chew a piece of bread for a minute, it'll taste sweeter than it was when you began. It's a remarkable thing. If you chew a piece of bread for a minute, it's sweeter than when you put it into your mouth. The longer you chew it, the sweeter it tastes. It's a fact.

And not only does it taste sweeter, but the digestion of the food is beginning in your mouth. It's being broken down into sugars in your mouth in preparation for it's travels through the body. And another type of saliva helps digest the food in the mouth itself. And as the food is digested in your mouth, as it's broken down, that's the beginning of the great trip to your stomach.

THE MIRACLES IN YOUR GUT

Once you swallow, you forget about it; you're only thinking about the next bite or about what's going to be for dessert, pudding or ice-cream or chocolate cake. But that's a big mistake. There's still so much more thinking to do. The great miracles has just begun. As you swallow it, a wonderful system starts working. Peristalsis. Peristalsis means your gut starts compressing and relaxing, to squeeze the food ahead. It's compressing the food downwards, downwards. It's not gravity; it's not rolling down your intestinal tract. It's being maneuvered, pushed along by the muscles. Even if you would stand on your head, it will continue pressing, it will continue moving through your gut, only that now it's being pushed upwards.

It presses and presses and when it presses, why shouldn't it press backwards? Why does it press forward? Because all along the system of the intestinal tract there are certain little gates and these gates open only in one direction. They don't open back. They open forwards only so when the food is pressed, it can only open ahead, not open backwards. That's the system of peristalsis. It's remarkable; it's hard to even imagine. Any person who thinks

even a little bit should think about this as he's eating. Along the whole system of the intestinal tract, there are gates; and these gates are only opening in one direction and so when the food is squeezed by the muscles it make its way forward towards its goal.

DANGER: BURNING ACID BELOW

Now as it moves ahead, changes are happening. People think the food is digested in the stomach. No. The stomach just breaks it up; it gets chewed up in the stomach. The stomach has an acid so strong if you put your finger in the stomach acid, it will burn your finger. It would burn your finger. Hydrochloric acid. It's very strong. They've done it again and again. Put your finger in that acid and it will burn your finger, *but it doesn't burn your stomach!* It's a *neis*. That acid is in your stomach to burn up the food, but it doesn't burn your stomach itself. So if you eat the stomach of an animal and put it inside of you, your hydrochloric acid will digest that stomach but it doesn't digest your stomach. Isn't that a *neis*? There's a reason for it, it could be explained, but it's a *nes*. And that's the job of the stomach, to break up the food. But it only breaks it up; that's only the beginning.

As it passes into the big intestines then something starts happening. The intestines are lined with villi, little hair-like projections all along. You can't see it with the naked eye. It projects from the stomach lining, from the intestinal lining and these little villi start sucking out from the food all the nourishment, and it's wonderful how they're able to strain out only what's necessary and useful for the body. There are *nisei nissim* there. Now, as it begins traveling to your stomach and through the intestines, the intestines begin extracting from the food all the necessary material. The unnecessary materials are not taken in. How could that happen that the interior of the intestinal tract has the ability and the knowledge to extract from the food only those materials that are necessary? Everything else remains outside and it's waste, it's finally expelled.

WASTE IS LABELED

Now why is it expelled? Why doesn't it remain there? What causes it to keep on moving? Peristalsis - it moves and moves and moves. Why is it moving? It moves and moves until it reaches the stomach and then it stops for a while and then it

begins moving again and it goes slowly to give the intestines a chance to suck out all the nourishment and finally it keeps on moving again and pushing and pushing until it pushes out. And when it pushes out, it's labeled, "Do not reuse." That's why it's labeled that way. Not for reuse. It strains out all that the body needs, and it leaves over a waste which is expelled. It's propelled to the exit.

So the *nisim* really begin once you start eating your food - there's so much to think about while you're eating, so much *yediah chushis* to gain, it's a shame that we get full and have to stop.

THE REMARKABLE PIPELINE

And then when the stomach and the intestines have taken all the nourishment out of the food, the bloodstream flows along and picks it up. And the bloodstream carries thousands of different kinds of materials, all mixed together! And not only that, the bloodstream is carrying waste away from the cells, the broken down materials from the cells. All in the bloodstream. It carries it all together. Imagine a big pipe going from here to someplace in Manhattan. And it's bringing to Manhattan milk. Let's say we have cows and goats here in Brooklyn. So we put milk into the pipe. They also need gasoline in Manhattan, so we put gasoline into the pipe. And they need vinegar in Manhattan and turpentine. They need water to drink and water for bathing. So we're pouring it all into the same pipe going into Manhattan. It's all put together. And the pipe carries it and delivers to each address in Manhattan exactly what that address needs; and it arrives uncontaminated! Every separate element is delivered to the right place exactly. It delivers to the eyes what the eyes need. If it delivers the wrong thing, hair would grow in your eyes. Exactly what the eyes needs is dropped off at the eyes. It delivers to the scalp what the scalp needs. Hair grows on your scalp. It all comes from the bloodstream where it's all mixed together. And it's moving along together with the waste too. The waste is moving along together with the good material; and everything is functioning perfectly - miracles as great as *kriyas yam suf* are taking place inside your body, and don't even feel it. And finally the waste moves to the kidney and the kidney gets rid of the waste separately.

HALACHA L'MAISAH

Now everyone knows the *Shulchan Aruch* that says you have to eat *in order to serve Hashem*. Every time one eats, besides for *brachos*, there is a whole separate *avodah*, the function of eating for the sake of Hashem. When we eat it's not a bad idea to fulfill what the *Shulchan Aruch* tells you. You sit down to eat and you're thinking, "Why am I eating? Is it merely because I'm hungry? I'm eating the same reason a cow eats?! No, I'm eating to serve Hashem, in order to replenish my store of energy to be able to serve Hashem. Isn't that a good thing to do? Does it cost money to think that way?"

Now along comes the Rambam, and he says a different expression. He says you should eat *למען דעת את השם*, *in order to know Hashem*. Eating in order to know Hashem. Now that's an *avodah!* We could have explained it as follows. You're eating in order to have energy to learn a *Rambam*, to learn how to know Hashem by learning Torah. But the Rambam means something else besides that. You're eating in order so that *the eating itself* should give you *da'as Hashem*. That's how to eat.

YOU THOUGHT YOU KNOW HOW TO EAT!

You have to learn how to eat. You've been eating all your life and you still don't know how to eat! It's a pity. When you embark on the career of eating, you have to be prepared for it.

Now of course it needs practice. At first it's hypocritical; you don't really mean it. But after a while it begins to penetrate your consciousness and little by little you'll be surprised. One day you'll find yourself eating *l'sheim shamayim*. That'll be a pleasant surprise. You'll be a success.

Say it with your mouth; that's the first step. When you sit down to eat tomorrow at breakfast, say aloud - nobody has to hear you, but say it with your mouth, "I'm eating in order to serve Hashem, in order to appreciate His *chesed*." Now, you don't mean it at all, but do it anyhow.

You never heard this before? It's time you heard it; it's pretty late. It's been in the *Shulchan Aruch* and in the *Rambam* a long time. So the first thing tomorrow morning while you're eating, "I'm eating *l'sheim shamayim*. I'm eating in order to

recognize the great kindness of Hashem.” Keep on saying it, day after day, week after week, and I guarantee you that sooner or later, you're going to mean it.

TESHUVA OVER WATERMELON

It's a good idea to practice up thinking about Hashem while you eat watermelon this summer. It's a wonderful idea. Whenever you eat watermelon, devote that time to thinking about Hakodosh Boruch Hu. The whole time; not merely when you make the *bracha*. And it's a great preparation for *Chodesh Elul* as well. I always say that the best time to do *teshuva* is over a good piece of watermelon.

Instead of devouring your food with the same amount of thought as a cow grazing in the field, אל תהיו כסוס כפרד, don't be like a horse; you must begin to practice eating with thought. If not, then forever you'll remain in the same place as your Italian neighbor down the block. So many times we eat something and we finish it off before we even realize we were eating. If your mind is always in flux, and you don't concentrate on the service of Hashem that you have before you, then you won't succeed. Greatness in the service of Hashem is dependent to a great extent on your mind, on your thoughts. And therefore, whenever you eat something, it could be a delicious piece of steak, an apple or a simple hard-boiled egg, that's your opportunity for greatness. Don't allow yourself to be distracted by what's going on around you. Don't lose the opportunity to grow great in this *avodah*. Don't be the fool who is always telling others about the greatness he will achieve someday. When are you going to begin if not now?! אל תאמר לכשאפנה אשנה, שמא לא תפנה - “Don't say, ‘When I have time I will study,’ for maybe you will never have that time” (Avos 2:4) One day I'll do this and one day I'll do that. A nechtiger tug! That one day is today. אם לא עכשיו אימתו. “If not now, then when?” And the opportunity is right there by your kitchen table.

BEGIN ENJOYING EVERYDAY LIFE!

As you're preparing your food or eating your food, think about the kindness of Hashem. Put in all these thoughts that we spoke about tonight. And, if you do it, you'll become a נחל נובע, a flowing fountain of your own ideas, your own *chiddushim* in this *sugya* of the *chesed Hashem*. When you drink that cup of water,

you'll imagine that it's Hashem pouring that great elixir of life down your throat. And after a bit of practice, you'll actually begin to believe it. You'll actually feel a gratitude towards Hashem for the food that He provides you. And then you'll be on your way to fulfilling the great lesson of **ואכלתם שם לפני ד' אלוהיכם ושמחתם** – the great lesson of being happy, being delirious with happiness, with the gift of food. And as you eat before Hashem, you'll be growing in awareness of Hashem and gratitude to Him. And those who develop the genuine attitude of appreciating Hashem's countless forms of kindness in food, will begin to enjoy themselves and find true happiness in their day-to-day life. And they will thereby gain excellence of mind and character. And that's how you'll become greater and greater in the eyes of Hashem, as you're eating your meals at the dining room table.

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Dedicated by

**Rabbi & Mrs. Yaakov
Shapiro**

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מנוחה חיה בת דליה טובה

In honor of my wife, **Temima**.

May we continue growing together,
guided by the light of Rav Miller Z"L

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Q&A With Rav Avigdor Miller Tz"l

Q:

How does one acquire *emunah chushis*, real palpable *emunah* in the existence of Hashem?

A:

We were talking about that tonight. Listen to what we said and think it over. That's one of the ways.

However, one of the ways that I must mention is *tefillah*. The more you talk to Hakadosh Baruch Hu with all your heart, the more Hakadosh Baruch Hu allows you to feel that you're speaking to Him. It's very important. Say, *אתה שומע*. You Hashem. You Hashem are listening to me. "Oh, Hashem! You're listening to me! *אתה*! You! I'm really talking to You!" So Hashem says, "You're saying that. If you're saying that, then I'm going to make you really feel that I'm listening to you." Saying *אתה* is such a wonderful opportunity for gaining *emunah chushis*. And so many people are not using that opportunity.

You have to train yourself. When you talk to Hashem, you say *ברוך אתה ה'* "I bend my knees to You." To You! I'm talking to You! You is a terrible word. From where do you get the boldness to say "You" to Hashem?! It's a boldness. But He gives you permission because you are his child. You're His son. You're His daughter. So you can say, "You Hashem."

You have to think about that. By saying, "You Hashem," you can gain *אמונה חושית*. Now, there are other ways as well. But *tefillah* is one of the great ways, if done properly.

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