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WITH

R' AVIGDOR MILLER זי"ל

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

Always Enthusiastic

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Part I. Happiness in the Torah

Talking About the Weather

When we read the *pesukim* that describe the departure of the Am Yisrael from Mitzrayim, we note the interesting fact that the time of the year, the spring-like weather, plays quite a significant role in the story.

As they gathered to leave Mitzrayim, Moshe Rabbeinu told the people: “זכור את היום הזה אשר יצאתם ממצרים ... היום אתם יצאים בחדש האביב – Remember this day that you came out of Egypt ... Today you are leaving *in the month of spring*”

(*Shemos 13:4*). Now, you know that in the Torah, weather is not a subject that is usually discussed. It's strange that Moshe Rabbeinu should make a big deal about it. There were many things he could have told the Am Yisrael as they gathered together to begin their journey toward freedom. I myself could think of some very important *yesodos* that Moshe Rabbeinu could have given over at this most opportune time. But to point out the weather conditions?! After all, he wasn't a meteorologist

And if it was cold and rainy, would it have made a difference?! They were going out to freedom! Ask the man who is released from prison after fifty years if he cares about the temperature on the day he left; he doesn't remember and he doesn't even care to remember! He's free at last!

Perfect Weather for Freedom

And yet Moshe Rabbeinu *did* say, היום אתם יצאים, בחדש האביב – You're leaving today, and look outside! It's a beautiful spring day. And Rashi asks: Didn't they know it was spring? ראו חסד, אל לא בך אמר להם, ראו חסד – So what was Moshe Rabbeinu telling them? “Pay attention to the kindness that Hashem is bestowing upon you, שהוציא אתכם בחדש שהוא בשר, שהוציא אתכם בחדש שהוא בשר – That He took you out in a month that is fitting for departure, לא חמה ולא צנה ולא גשמים – not too hot, not too cold, and not raining” (Rashi 13:4).

Now, we should take a peek at *Shir Hashirim* (2:11-13), at Shlomo Hamelech's description of Hashem speaking to His people on that great day

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Rachel Simcha bat Chana Leah**

of Yetzias Mitzrayim. “קוּמִי לָךְ רַעֲיָתִי יִפְתִּי וּלְכִי לָךְ – Arise, My love, My beautiful one, and go forth from Mitzrayim, כִּי הִנֵּה הַסְּתָיו עָבַר הַגֶּשֶׁם חָלַף הַלֶּךְ לוֹ – Because now the winter has passed, and the rains are gone, and the traveling through the wilderness will be much more pleasant. הַנְּצָנִים נִרְאוּ בְּאֶרֶץ – The days of spring are here when the trees begin to produce their flowers, and those who travel delight in their colors and fragrances. עַת הַזְּמִיר הִגִּיעַ וְקוֹל – The time of birds singing and chirping has arrived, which adds the additional joy of sweet sounds for those who travel in the spring. קוּמִי לָךְ רַעֲיָתִי יִפְתִּי וּלְכִי לָךְ – And so, My beautiful beloved,” says Hashem to the Am Yisrael, “*now is the time to arise and leave Mitzrayim*”.

Scheduling for the Chirping Birds

So we see that Hashem made a point of bringing out the Am Yisrael from Mitzrayim *davka* then, during the days of spring. Not only that, but the Torah also tells us that the entire scheduling of the year is dependent on the *yom tov* of Pesach falling out during the spring to commemorate this event: “שָׁמֹר אֶת חֹדֶשׁ הָאָבִיב ... כִּי בְּחֹדֶשׁ הָאָבִיב הוּצִיאָךְ ה' – אֱלֹקֶיךָ מִמִּצְרַיִם – You must guard the month of spring ... for it was in the month of spring that Hashem your G-d took you out of Egypt” (Devarim 16:1).

Chazal (Rosh Hashanah 21a) explain this verse to mean that the month of Nissan must always fall out in the spring, and that sometimes the Sanhedrin must even add a month to the calendar just to ensure that Nissan will not begin while it's still winter. And all this, so that we will remember and commemorate that we left Mitzrayim in the spring.

It's a big question: What difference does the spring make for a nation that is escaping two hundred and ten years of bondage? The month of *chodesh ha'aviv*, the season when the grain ripens, would certainly be a joyous time once they would enter Eretz Yisroel. But as they departed from Rameses, they were far from the promised land and had no benefit at all from the ripening of the

grain. What difference is it to such a people, escaping slavery, loaded down with riches, that birds are chirping in the branches? So what that the flowers are blooming on a beautiful spring day? We're talking here about *real* happiness – the excitement of escaping to freedom and great wealth – and you're telling me about chirping birds?!

The Alter's Chiddush

This isn't *my* question, by the way. I heard this said over in the name of the Alter of Slabodka when I was in Europe. And because the Alter's answer is a foundation for how we are supposed to live successfully in this world, so we'll spend some time understanding it.

The Alter said that the spring weather, with all of its varied pleasures, was chosen purposefully by Hashem to enhance the occasion of Yetzias Mitzrayim. Even in their mountain-high joy of liberation, and even though they were loaded down with the wealth of Mitzrayim, they were expected *not to overlook the weather*, the budding trees and the chirping birds.

And why not? Because it was so important for the Am Yisrael to learn – right then, when they were leaving the bondage of Mitzrayim to become *avdei Hashem* – that the happiness of a true servant of Hashem doesn't come from the great events of life. The great jolts of good fortune, the ecstatic moments of great happiness – a new car, a new baby, even Yetzias Mitzrayim – won't make a person truly happy. It's only the small gifts of life, like a balmy spring day or a bird chirping in the trees, that are the true happiness of life.

Of course there is joy in those things, too. It's a big *simchah* when you have a child. And it's an even bigger *simchah* when you marry that child off. You won the lottery? It's a *simchah*! You got the job you wanted? You finished a *mesichta*? Those are all big *simchos* and a good reason to rejoice. *But those aren't the things that will make you a happy person!*

It's the day-to-day simple pleasures of life, like nice weather, that Hashem is *always* bestowing on you, all of those *small* things are supposed to make you a happy person.

Rosy Glasses Are Nothing

Now, you can't just tell a man, "Be happy; learn to see the good things in life." It's like saying nothing at all to him. This subject of happiness is a science, and like any important subject, its study takes effort on your part. If you'll say to someone, "Just put on optimistic spectacles and look at the world through rosy eyeglasses," you're not helping him a bit.

There's work to be done besides for putting on those rosy spectacles. What work is that? Every little pleasure you experience is an obligation upon you to appreciate and become a happy person. A person becomes happy because of the small things in life. Now, don't say that your experience contradicts this – because it's not true, you don't have the experience. You never even tried it! It's necessary to dedicate your lives to the study of all the details of happiness that you have in your life, in order to become the happy servant of Hashem that He expects.

True Wealth

And so we'll begin our career of happiness by reading together the words of a *mishnah*; it's a *mishnah* that most of us say, but almost none of us fulfill. **אִיזְהוּ עָשִׂיר** – Who is a wealthy man? **הַשְּׂמִיחַ בְּחַלְקוֹ** – Someone who is happy with what he has. Now, everybody *knows* that; everybody says it. But nobody *practices* it.

The *mishnah* is telling us here what Hakodosh Boruch Hu expects from us – that we *should* practice it and fulfill it. *Hashem wants us to become wealthy*. Otherwise, why did He tell us that? Why did He say **אִיזְהוּ עָשִׂיר**? Just some more information for us to file away? No, it's because that's what you're expected to become. Hashem wants you to become that *ashir* who is *samei'ach b'chelko*!

Now, it's important to point out that *samei'ach* doesn't mean that you're *satisfied* with what you have; it means that you're *happy*, that you're full of joy. Hashem wants you to *enjoy* Olam Hazeh, to be a person overflowing with happiness, and it's an art that you have to get busy learning.

Now, before we begin, the first thing you must get out of your head is the idea that *prishus* means to be unhappy. No, *prishus* means to be happy *without luxuries*, to be happy with all the multitude of pleasures of just living life. Hashem says that the one who does that is the wealthy man.

We have to open our eyes, apply our minds, and be willing to put effort into finding the real happiness of life. If we would do that, the happiness within us would begin to well forth, and life would be full of fun. It would be endless fun and happiness – without the new car, and without the trip to the zoo or the amusement park. The details of life itself would make you a happy person.

Study a Variety of Subjects

The joy of life is not the big things; and it's not one small thing, either. Because what does *chelko* mean? *Chelko* means your portion in life. And life is not one thing – life is a combination of things, a sum total of tens of thousands of phenomena – and it's necessary to make *each* phenomenon a separate study so that whenever you encounter that phenomenon it will cause you happiness.

If you study how two things make you happy, you'll have two things that cause you happiness. If you've studied fifty things, so fifty things will cause you happiness. The more subjects you study, the more phenomena you appreciate, the more happiness you will get out of life. Like Dovid Hamelech said: **בִּי שִׂמְחָתִי ה' בְּפַעְלֶיךָ בְּמַעֲשֵׂה יְדֶיךָ אֲרַנֶּן** – You made me happy with Your work, I sing at the deeds of Your hand" (*Tehillim* 92:5). When are you happy with His work? When you sing about what you have.

But if you only speak and think in general terms, it's just *devarim b'alma*, just words. You can't be a happy person because of "everything." Everything is nothing. The path to true happiness is in the details. And when you add together the many small phenomena, you begin to experience the true happiness in life.

Part II. Happiness in the World

Becoming Wealthier and Wealthier

Every day, you can become happier and happier with the simple details of life. Slowly, little by little, you add one more thing and one more thing, and you become an *ashir*, you become wealthy. And you find that from all sides you're bursting out with song. You're walking down the Brooklyn streets, *meshuga* with happiness!

Once you achieve this wealth, you'll never be unhappy again. You can't be unhappy if your life is filled with thousands of small happinesses all day long. Because no matter what happens, you appreciate that you still have air to breathe. All you want. And water to drink, all you want. You still have a roof over your head. You still have shoes to wear. And that's only the beginning of the list.

Once you become a happy person, you'll be able to withstand all the *nisyonos*, all the trials of life. Life is not easy; there are always ups and downs. And if you don't achieve this wealth of *samei'ach b'chelko*, so no matter what you buy and no matter how many possessions you have, you will be a fundamentally unhappy person, because you never learned what real happiness is.

The Main Portion Is ... Life!

And therefore, the first thing we must do is clarify what it is that we're supposed to be happy about — what does *chelko* mean? What is the first aspect of *chelko* that all of us sitting here right now have? "Your portion" means, first of all — that you're *alive!* You never thought about that *pshat*, did you?

You were thinking that it means that when you finally make five hundred thousand dollars, so then you'll be happy. You'll be *samei'ach b'chelko*, even though you don't have two million dollars yet. No, that's not what *chelko* means. *Chelko* means you're still alive — that's already your portion that you're expected to be full of joy about.

Because there is no happiness like being alive! The happiness of being alive is an intense experience, only that we're so accustomed to it that we ignore it. Let's say a person would enjoy the fact that he is alive. Oh, yes! How lucky you are that you're alive! Don't say it's nothing. It's everything! A millionaire would give up all of his property to stay alive.

There are plenty of people you once knew, some of them even your age, who are not alive anymore. I myself look back to when I was a boy. Some of my *chaveirim* passed away early. There was a fourteen-year-old friend of mine who passed away. And a twenty-year-old friend of mine passed away when I was in the yeshiva.

Walking on Clouds

Do you know what fun it is to be alive? Here's a man who's going to a specialist because his physician found something. And he's afraid he's going to hear some terrible news. So the specialist gives him a complete series of tests — blood tests and scans and everything else — and then he goes home for a few days and waits for the report. For those few days, this man can think of nothing else except for the phone call he's expecting from the doctor. What is anything worth if his life is about to end? And finally the doctor calls him into his office and sits him down and tells him, "I'm sorry to tell you that there's *nothing* wrong with you!"

Now, when this man walks out of the doctor's office, he's walking on clouds. He's the happiest man in the whole city. Because now he's enjoying the sweetness of life. How sweet it is to be alive! The happiness of walking down a Brooklyn street,

knowing that you're alive, is unequaled by all the pleasures of the wealthy.

The Quick Landing

Only, what happens? He walks on clouds from here to Avenue P (two blocks away from the shul), and then before you know it, he's back on the ground again. He's back to walking on the sidewalk again, because he forgets. And that's a tragedy, because the happiness, merely of being alive, is something that should keep you walking on clouds all day long.

Of course, after a while your mind becomes stultified. If you haven't studied this subject, then you won't even appreciate it. Like I told you earlier; you need to create a program for happiness. It won't come merely because you came here to the lecture and listened to me. Because if you don't *get busy* making yourself happy, all this talk here is a waste.

The Funeral Parlor

You have to learn how to be *samei'ach* in your *cheilek* of being alive. So when you pass a funeral parlor — on Coney Island Avenue, there are a number of them — as you pass by one you say, "*Boruch Hashem*, I'm on the outside!" I'm not joking; I'm very serious now. And when you pass the next one, "*Boruch Hashem*, I'm on the outside." There are three of them there. So by the third one also, "*Boruch Hashem*, I'm still on the outside." Say it with your mouth, again and again.

To be outside of the funeral parlor is a *simchah*. Inside, it's a funeral home. A "home," they call it — so you might think that it's comfortable, and there's music for the *meisim*, and they serve lunch for the *meisim*. No, he's in a box and that's all. But you're outside! "*Boruch Hashem*, I'm on the outside!" Say it!

Being alive is a happiness *ad ein sof*, no question about it. But you have to expand on that happiness, because there is much more than life itself. Because

not only are you alive, you also have functioning kidneys. I know a man who has no kidneys — it's already years and years that he's on the waiting list to get a kidney. Three times a week, he has to go to the clinic for special treatments. It takes hours and hours each time, and it's expensive. But he's happy to be alive; he's happy to have a machine that keeps him alive. Because he knows that it's a *ta'anug* to be alive. And if he could just get one kidney, how happy he'd be. *He wishes he could be you!* He'd be delirious with joy!

A New Kidney

And here's a man who finally *was* able to get a new kidney. He has one that he "borrowed" from his sister who was kind enough to give him one of her own kidneys. So now he's a "transplant man." You think that's so simple? This man cannot take certain medicines because they might upset his system. He takes a regimen of medicines to suppress his immune system, so it won't reject the new kidney. After all, the kidney is not his — it's foreign matter inside his body — so the tendency of the body is to reject it. And so he's always taking medicines to suppress the rejection apparatus.

And there are some medicines that are sometimes vital to a person — maybe he gets an infection and he needs antibiotics — but now this man cannot take them because they would interfere with his anti-rejection medications. So this person may become subject to infections that he cannot combat because he can't take medicines. And so for the rest of his life he lives precariously with his one kidney.

Now, how does this man look at the same world that you look at? If he sees somebody who is glum and downcast, you know what he thinks? He's thinking, "That man is crazy! He has something to be sad about?! He has his *own* kidney!" Your own kidney is a great happiness! A natural one that fits in exactly where it's supposed to be! It's suited to everything in your body. When this man sees you on the street, he doesn't understand how you

cannot be ecstatic – not only do you have your own kidney, you have two of them! You're not just a millionaire, you're a multi-millionaire!

Gaining an Optimistic Attitude

And now we see how silly all of mankind is that they don't sing because of what they possess. Frequently, as you walk down the street, you should bestir this happiness in your mind – how lucky you are, how convenient it is, how comfortable it is, how wealthy you are.

Now, the more you learn how to be happy from all these things, the more it grows on you; it becomes part of your personality. Little by little, an attitude of optimism grows upon your mind and you become a happy personality. "I'm so happy to be alive, to be on this side of the cemetery gate." That's what you should think about when you walk past the cemetery. "And not only am I alive, but I have kidneys!" That's a wealth!

The Delicious Cocktail

So now we begin to see that it's important for us to dwell on details. You have to take one thing at a time; maybe one week you'll work, let's say, on enjoying air. Enjoying the pleasure of breathing. The truth is that when you walk outside tonight, you should take a deep breath. "Ahhh!" you should say. "It's really a *ta'anug*." No cocktail that you could buy in the store compares to the cocktail of fresh air. Drink it in – it's free of charge, and it's healthy. Fill your lungs. It makes your blood become red immediately, the fresh air.

So let's say you're walking to the *beis haknesses* and you tell yourself, "Isn't it a wonderful thing that there is air to breathe?" Now, at first it's a *chiddush gadol*. Air?! I'm afraid that even if you tell it to a *talmid chochom*, it would be a big *chiddush*. You tell him, "Yes, air is vital. I'll prove to you that it's what you need more than anything else. You can get along without food for days and days. Without water, for a shorter time, but you can get

along without water, too – for a few days maybe. But without air you can't survive at all.

"Half Hallel" Is Not Enough

It says in the Medrash on the *possuk* בַּל הַנְּשָׁמָה תְּהִלָּה יְיָ, that עַל כֵּן בָּל נְשִׁימָה וְנִשְׁמָה תְּהִלָּה יְיָ, for every breath you have to say Hallel. And my *rebbe* said it means *gantz Hallel*! For every breath, you owe Hashem a full Hallel. Now, you don't have time for that – you're too busy breathing – but at least you should know that *that's how delicious it is!*

When a person is a little bit dejected, discouraged, it's a good idea to go to the window and breathe deeply. Air is like a drink of very strong medicine. We don't realize. It comes into your lungs, and the oxygen unites with your blood and makes your blood more red. It's a fact. As you breathe, your blood becomes more invigorated with oxygen. The iron in your blood that makes it red, the hemoglobin, unites with the oxygen, and it carries the oxygen on its path through all the blood vessels everywhere in the body to invigorate all the cells. The whole body is different because you breathe. And therefore, it's a good idea to practice breathing just for the feel of it, just to appreciate that great gift of air.

Two Hundred Miles of Chessed

Now, air is not just a single substance. It's a cocktail mixed exactly with the right ingredients to make it not only beneficial to us but pleasurable, too. It has about twenty percent oxygen, while the rest is mostly nitrogen and inert gases because you need something with which to carry the oxygen. If the air was all oxygen, you'd become drunk. If you would breathe oxygen alone, you would get dizzy, you'd become intoxicated. So you have to have the nitrogen to dilute the oxygen; and a little bit of carbon dioxide is essential because it's an incentive to your lungs to breathe more deeply. And then with traces of a few other gases together, it forms a combination of the perfect material that's suited for human beings.

You know what we are? We're like fish in the bottom of an ocean. We're in an ocean, an ocean of air. The ocean is two hundred miles high. We're like fish living in this ocean of air, and we love it. That's our element. If we were to change places with a fish, we wouldn't be happy, just like a fish wouldn't be happy if he took our place. And therefore let's enjoy this ocean while we have it.

Practicing Pleasure

So practice up on this. On the way home, you'll walk out of here onto Ocean Parkway — it's a beautiful street, a parkway with trees and bushes. Now, after the rain they exude a fragrance, and the combined fragrance of different kinds of shrubs and trees, combined with the city odors — they're a pleasure, those city odors — and they combine to give a certain cocktail that you don't drink; you draw it deep into your lungs, and you can learn to enjoy it.

You think a summer home in Maine and a winter home in Florida is going to make you happy? No, that's nothing. What good would the home be if you were strangled without air, if you were suffocating for air. Breathing is a real *simchah*! Some people have difficulty breathing. You know that some people have difficulty breathing? (*The Rav took a deep breath*). Ahh! It's a pleasure to fill your lungs. *Mamash a ta'anug!* Don't laugh at breathing — it's a great happiness to breathe.

Part III. Experiencing Happiness

Be Queer and Be Happy

So we're beginning to see now that in order to be a *samei'ach b'chelko*, you have to be a queer kind of a fellow. You can't always share your feelings with other people; they'll laugh at you. **בְּאָזְנֵי כֹסֶל** — אל תדבר — Don't speak into the ears of a fool. **כִּי יבֹדֶה** — לְשֹׁכֵל מְלִיקָה — He'll make light of these ideas and cool you off" (Mishlei 23:9).

They'll say, "There's a fellow over there, down Ocean Parkway, who's happy that he has two kidneys! Ha!" Try to tell people that you're filled with joy, that you're *mamash b'simchah* because breathing is fun, they'll think you're wacky. But *they're* the wacky ones because they're missing all the happiness of this world. And don't tell me that enjoyment and happiness is not for *tzaddikim*. Oh no, you big *tzaddik*, you don't want to enjoy the sun and the wind. He's eating his chocolate cake and ice cream, but to be happy with the sun, that's too much.

Don't be misled! Once a *frum tzaddik* said to me, "You're teaching people to enjoy life?! The purpose of life is *ta'anugim*?! To be *rodef ta'anugim*, to run after pleasures?!" He was upset at me. I looked at him and said, "Look, you have a wristwatch. I don't have a wristwatch. You drive a car when you come to the yeshivah. I *walk* to the yeshivah. Who is running after pleasures, you or I? You're running after it, but you don't have it. I'm not looking for pleasures. They're coming to me. As I walk in the street with my "Rolls Royce" — my two shoes, that's my Rolls Royce — and breathe the air of Hakodosh Boruch Hu, I'm enjoying life. I walk past the cemetery on Ocean Parkway, and I'm filled with happiness that I'm on this side of the gate." That kind of *kosher ta'anugim* is a *chiyuv*, it's a *mitzvah gedolah* to enjoy life that way.

"G-d Made" Earphones, Speakers, And Cameras

Who needs places of entertainment to be happy when you have all the happiness right here! Look at yourself! "I'm alive, *Boruch Hashem*." Look at your feet — "*Boruch Hashem*, two of them! And both the same size!" Look at your ears — "*Boruch Hashem!*" They're "earphones" hanging on the side of your head — and you don't have to buy them in the store.

You have teeth: slicing teeth in front and grinders in the back. *Boruch Hashem!* You have a functioning tongue that's busy all day long in your mouth. You have a "speaker" in your mouth — vocal

cords. *Boruch Hashem!* And eyes! “Cameras” in your head. *Boruch Hashem!* You can walk, *Boruch Hashem!* That’s some trick you have there, being able to balance yourself as you walk. *Boruch Hashem!* And that’s only the beginning.

You have to learn how to be happy with your clothing. It’s not enough to say the *brachah* of *Malbish Arumim* in general and *patur* yourself. You have to study the details of your clothing in order to become a happy person. The pockets and the buttons, everything. Study it.

The Shoes in the Treasure Chest

Study your shoes. Shoes are a happiness. Did you ever think about that? You know that in some countries, people don’t have shoes. Only one man wears shoes, the king of the tribe. And not every day. Once in a while he puts on shoes, when a visitor comes from outside, a tourist. He wants to show off so he puts on shoes. Otherwise he doesn’t put on shoes. Shoes are a big luxury. A shoe is a treasure.

Let’s say a colonel from the American Air Force lands on that island, so the king takes his shoes out from his treasure chest, and he puts them on, and he marches with his short pants covering his naked body, with some feathers in his head to greet the colonel. And he shows him his shoes. He’s so happy; he’s “an aristocrat.”

We should know that shoes are a happiness. It’s not an exaggeration at all. Just because you live in a country where everyone can afford shoes, should that decrease your happiness in any way?

That’s why we’re expected to say every day, *שְׂעִשְׂה לִי בֶּל צְרָכֶי*. But we’re lazy; we don’t think. Often we’re not even thinking about the *peirush hamilos*. But I’m not even talking now about the “formality” of making the *brachah* in shul. What about when you’re walking down the street? Take a minute every day to be happy with your shoes. Think about the details. “How lucky I am to have shoelaces that have plastic tips. If there wasn’t a

plastic tip, then I’d have a hard job fitting it into the hole. I’d have to spit on it and twist it and try to push it through the hole. *Boruch Hashem*, I have plastic on the tips of the laces.” Did you ever think about that?

Early Memories

Appreciate the roof over your head. Did you ever stop to appreciate the happiness of a warm house? Now, that’s a *chiddush* to most people. A warm house? Yes, a warm house is a happiness. It’s not easy to have a house that’s warm.

When I was a boy, we didn’t have warm houses. It was only warm in the kitchen where the coal stove was. You had to put coal in the stove. When the coal burned out, you had to take the ashes out of the stove. That was the only room where there was warmth. If I wanted to read, I would lie down on the floor in the kitchen. I lay on the floor all day, all night, in the kitchen by the stove. The rest of the house didn’t have any warmth. We didn’t have any radiators. No such thing. The house was cold. If you wanted to warm a house, you put a kerosene stove in the rooms. The kerosene stove had to have fuel there, and sometimes it didn’t work. When you got up in the morning, the whole room was black, including your face; it made everything black, the soot from the kerosene stove. This luxury of having a warm house is something that modern people have to realize.

Ahhh! What a pleasure it is to have a warm house. So when you walk in with your children in the wintertime from the *beis haknesses*, say “Chaim’l, isn’t it good to have a warm house?” Rub your hands together. He looks at you like you fell off the moon. He doesn’t understand you. “How silly adults are,” he thinks. Never mind. That’s the way to bring up children, and eventually he’ll thank you for that.

The Miracle of the Faucet

When I was in Slabodka, nobody had running water in the house. You had to go half a block away

to get water. And you couldn't drink it; it was dangerous to drink well water. You had to boil it first. And here in your house you turn on the faucet and water comes out, pure water fit to drink! What a wealth, what a happiness that is! And even hot water! Hot water coming out of a faucet! It's a luxury upon luxuries. Once upon a time hot water came only from springs, hot springs. If you didn't have hot springs, you couldn't get any hot water unless you boiled it. Think about that every time you turn on the faucet, and you'll start becoming a *samei'ach b'chelko*.

You have to talk to yourself about your home. As you walk on the steps, you should whisper to yourself, "Isn't it good we have steps?" You know, I have steps upstairs, and many times I think about how in the times of the Gemara they didn't have steps. They had a ladder, a *darga*. Try climbing a ladder to go upstairs; it's not so simple. Now, even a ladder is a very good invention. Otherwise you would have to go up with a rope; you'd have to pull yourself up. But a ladder is not so safe. So steps are a luxury. Imagine a man enjoying his steps. His life is full of fun, full of happiness.

Becoming a Millionaire Takes Work

Little by little, you learn. Of course, it's a career. You have to put in work. For five minutes a day practice enjoying air. Five minutes a day the next week practice enjoying walking. Five minute a day practice enjoying clothing. Little by little, you'll gather up wealth in your bank account, and little by little you'll become a happy man of many riches, many treasures.

But you have to do it. Just hearing me say it is not enough. It takes work even to be a fake millionaire, so to be the true millionaire of "*hasamei'ach b'chelko*" surely takes time and hard work. You have to make up your mind that you're going to pursue this career of happiness and that you'll always be saying, "I thank You, Hashem." Always, "I thank You, Hashem, for giving me this breakfast. I thank you, Hashem, for being able to

go to the bathroom." And don't rely on the *brachos* you make. You must say it with your mouth in your own language. Always. And then, **הַמְחֻשְׁבָּה נִמְשָׁכֶת, אַחַר הַדְּבֹר** — your mind will be transformed because of your speech, and you will become a happy man. At first it won't work. You won't feel so happy. But you keep thinking and talking, and these ideas will settle into your mind.

Rav Miller's Guarantee for Happiness

That's what the Mesillas Yesharim says: **הַחִיצוֹנִיּוֹת מְעוֹרְרוֹת אֶת הַפְּנִימִיּוֹת** — The outwardness bestirs the inwardness. Even if it's not sincere at first — you're not really so happy about breathing. But keep it up, and little by little from the depths of your *neshamah* real happiness will eventually come out. Little by little, you'll add more things. And after a while, all the things start adding up and you become a real millionaire. After a while you'll have forty, fifty things. And that's still nothing yet, because there's so much more than that. But with forty things you'll be happy, and you'll be a rich man already. And if you're a young man yet — even a young man of sixty — and you keep on this path, this career, until you're in your nineties, you'll be a very wealthy person.

I guarantee that if you do it, you will become happy. And you will become a servant of Hashem and a great man. Not only will you become a happy person, but you will also become a great person.

Hashem Taught Us the Path to Happiness

Now, there is a lot more to be studied on this subject — I have many more things listed here that I wanted to talk to you about, but I'm already way past time. But at least we began studying the subject. It's a science that must be studied and practiced, but at least we know that there is such a thing as happiness the way Hakodosh Boruch Hu expects it, and it's available to all of us.

And don't ask me: "Why don't I hear this from my *rebbe*, from this person or that *tzaddik*?" Don't believe it; the *real tzaddikim* know that this is the

path to true happiness in life. Because it's the path – the way of happiness – that Hashem set down for us on the day we left Mitzrayim. הַיּוֹם אֲתֵם יִצְאִים בְּחֹדֶשׁ הָאָבִיב – that it is the beauty of a spring day and the thousands of other ordinary details of our lives that are supposed to be the real source of our happiness.

Have A Wonderful Shabbos

LET'S GET PRACTICAL

The Step by Step Guide to Happiness

Hashem made sure to emphasize that Yetzias Mitzrayim took place in nice weather because it's not the big things that make us happy but the seemingly insignificant details is where happiness lies. When we focus on the happiness caused by many small details we go through life happily.

This week, I will *bli neder* thank Hashem in detail for one of the many benefits He gives me. I will reflect on how unhappy I would be if some of the blessings I take for granted were taken from me. And I will express it out loud. Little by little I will begin appreciating the joys of life and I will rejoice with Hashem.

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

שאל אביך ויגדך זקניך ויאמרו לך

Q:

How do we benefit from this cold weather?

A:

The benefits of cold weather are tremendous. Cold weather causes the earth to stop producing. If the earth would continue to produce all year round, it would use up all of its resources – all of its nutrients and energy. And that's why deserts are found in hot climates. You won't find any deserts in cold climates. Because in temperate climates the earth always has a chance to recuperate its powers. In the hot climates however, sometimes the sun shines continuously with such heat, and the earth continues to produce and produce until it becomes arid and finally loses all its energy.

So the cold weather is mamash a yeshuah, a lifesaver. The cold weather is the reason that next year there will be crops again. The crops are a result of the cold weather that gave the earth a chance to recuperate. So next summer, when you're about to bite into a delicious peach, remember to thank Hakodosh Boruch Hu for the cold winter that prepared the earth to give you this peach. And when you walk in the cold today, remember to thank Hashem for all the delicious fruit that the cold weather is preparing for you.

You know, the earth uses up all of its energy to produce for us. But when the cold comes, all the leaves fall onto the ground. And the leaves are fertilizer. After a while they melt away into the ground. And now comes the cold weather and there's no more growing. Everything stops growing. The earth stops producing. What does the earth do? It recycles. It recycles all the energy that it had lost and the earth becomes fertile once again. And now in the springtime it is ready to produce again. So the cold is actually a lifesaver for us. Without cold there would be deserts all over America. But the dry deserts are found only in the areas with hot climates like the Sahara or the Arabian deserts because the sun is shining there all year round.

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