

TORAS AVIGDOR

AUTHENTIC TORAH THOUGHT FOR LIFE

RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT" L

PARSHAS BEHAALOSCHA

WITH

RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT" L

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

LEARNING FROM OTHERS

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Part I. The Other Firstborns

The Non-Sequitur

We begin by listening to the language of a *possuk* in this week's *sedrah*. Hakadosh Baruch Hu is speaking about the sanctification of the firstborn of the Bnei Yisroel and He says as follows: **כִּי לִי כָל בְּכוֹר בְּבִנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל... בְּיוֹם הַכֹּתִי כָל בְּכוֹר בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם הַקֹּדֶשׁ שֶׁתִּי** **אֲתָם לִי** – *All the firstborn in the Am Yisroel belong to Me, on the day that I smote every firstborn in Egypt, I made them holy to Me* (Numbers 8:17).

Now, we have to try and understand that because it seems a strange thing. What's the connection? 'On that day when He struck the firstborn of Egypt, the firstborn of the Jews were made holy to serve Hashem.' What does one have to do with the other?

If it's a *sevara*, a logical teaching, that the firstborn of our people should be servants of Hakadosh Baruch Hu, we understand that. The firstborn son inherits the responsibilities of the family and so we expect him to be the leader in the family. And what is the most important function of a family? To encourage each other in *avodas*

Hashem. So the *bechor* belongs to Hashem in a certain sense. We understand that.

That Could Have Been Us

But here it says something else; it says that 'because I struck the firstborn of Egypt, *that's why* I expect your firstborn to be My servants.' The *bechor Yisroel* who saw the trouble coming on the *bechor Mitzri* was expected to become better because of that. He couldn't flippantly dismiss the catastrophe he saw; instead Hakadosh Baruch Hu wanted him to use that sight to become full of gratitude that it didn't happen to him and increase his service of Hashem just because of that.

The Torah is teaching us here that when trouble comes upon others, we shouldn't imagine that the trouble couldn't have come upon us. Those who were spared should always think, "If not for the kindness of Hakadosh Baruch Hu, that could have been me." A wise man once said – he doesn't deserve his name to be mentioned in this place but his words we could repeat: 'But for the grace of G-d, there go I.'

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Now, there's a lot to be gained from appreciating what's being said here, so listen to this principle: Hakadosh Baruch Hu needs in this world what we could call 'victims'. He needs sufferers, people who will display to the world what it means to experience hardship.

Now, we're not talking only about sinners, someone who deserves a punishment. That's why I used the word 'victims' – Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants in this world some victims who undergo suffering. Sometimes they deserve it – I imagine many of the *bechorei Mitzrayim* did – but sometimes not; sometimes it's for a certain benefit, and sometimes it seems like something that we can't understand. But we're not talking now about the reason it happened to him and not to someone else. That's a different story. Right now our concern is this principle; that Hashem wants the world to witness suffering.

Victims For the Weak Minded

One of the biggest weaknesses of mankind is that they never appreciate their happiness while they have it. It's an unfortunate fact but it's true.

And even though people who frequent this place have heard something about it already, you must know you didn't begin to hear. You didn't begin yet living successfully.

You want to know what it means to live successfully? Listen now because it might surprise you. When you go through life and you are *really* happy that you don't have *chas veshalom* a sarcoma, a tumor in the knee, that's called living successfully. We don't realize how lucky we are.

The Happy Populace

Here's a man in his hospital room and he's sitting by the window. He's getting chemotherapy treatments – he has cancer in his bones – and he looks down at the happy populace walking through the streets carefree. He sees the top of the heads

of people moving around, rushing here and there, and he envies every one of them because his legs are not functioning anymore. What would he give to be in their place! But they are oblivious.

And 'they' means us, all of us sitting here. We don't know that there's a man looking down at us wishing he could be 'walking the street like they are;' we don't think about it at all! We have no idea how fortunate we are.

And so how will we ever understand how fortunate we are when we stand up after this lecture and we stretch? After *Maariv* we'll all stride off into the darkness. We're gliding; everything is functioning and we walk along without thinking about **הַמְכִּין מְצַעְרֵי נֶבֶר**, the One Who so contrived that our joints function so effortlessly as if they were lubricated with oil in between the moving bones.

The Wonderful Mucus

You know, there are bones that almost touch each other, only there's a thin layer of mucus tissue that's constantly lubricated. Miracle of miracles – by just drinking water and eating ordinary foods! The water and food is processed into a certain lubrication – it's called synovial fluid – that causes the joints to rub against each other without chafing.

Now all of you, I pray to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, will live off all your lives, a career of 120 years, and never experience any discomfort. Wonderful! But it's a wasted career! If you don't enjoy your knees and you don't feel happiness and gratitude and *ahavas Hashem* because of that, it was a big waste.

And therefore Hakadosh Baruch Hu in His pity does what the *posuk* says: **יְנִיחַ הַטְּאִים בְּדֶרֶךְ** – He teaches the *chatoim* the path (Tehillim 25:8). He shows us pictures so that we can walk on the right path, the path of gratitude and *ahavas Hashem*.

Rav Miller Learns a Lesson

What type of pictures? So listen to me now. Here's a man who just recently married. Only two months he's married and he's looking forward to a happy career with his *kallah* and suddenly he has a pain in the thigh and he tries to ignore it but it continues and finally he goes and discovers the news. The doctor says, "It's sarcoma. Synovial sarcoma." It means that there's a cancer growing on his knees, by that fluid that we take for granted.

And he comes to me and he says, "What's going to happen?"

Now, I know what's going to happen. And so I told him he should steel himself for what's in store for him; how he should prepare for a difficult road ahead. He broke down and wept as I was talking to him. We spoke for a long time and then he left.

Of course I *davened* for him. Every day I *davened* for him. I cried for him. And we spoke to people, people who know these things, and we found him the best doctors. But I didn't lose sight of this principle, that Hashem is teaching me how grateful I should be that my knees are healthy. I forgot all about my knees! A *frum* Jew should glide around all day and not be thanking Hashem for his two healthy knees?! It's a *chata*!

And so 'Hashem teaches the *chatoim* the way.' That's one of the ways that Hashem teaches mankind. This young man has now become a lesson.

Never Tire Of It

Now why he was elected is not for me to say. It could be that he was a perfectly righteous man and there is some purpose beyond my ken for which he was chosen. But this we can certainly know, that he was chosen in order that we should learn from him. Hakadosh Baruch Hu needs people who should serve as lessons for others because

mankind is unaware of their happiness unless they see someone who is unfortunate.

And so, this lecture is going to be listened to by many people outside of this place and they're going to learn the happiness of having healthy joints and bones. If they'll listen to this again and again and never tire of it and repeat it to themselves and practice it many times while walking; when they get up in the morning and they get off their beds painlessly they'll remember this story of this young man who couldn't get off of his bed. He had to roll off and fall on the floor. It was excruciating pain for him to stand up and the pain never let up, even when he was lying in bed, much less standing up on his legs.

The Greatest Ambition

Now suppose this young man suddenly became well. Do you think he would ignore the fact that his thigh now swung forward effortlessly as he paced the street? That would be to him the greatest happiness. All of the ambitions he had dreamed about, he wouldn't need any of them to be realized. Even if his *kallah* would forsake him and even if all his life he remained a pauper, that would be success for him. That he can walk! That his thighs and knees are functioning normally. He would be delirious with joy.

But you? You get up from your bed and you're a grouch. Your knees are functioning, your thighs are swinging effortlessly; no matter – you don't even think about it for a second. You would never know how fortunate you are unless somebody was chosen to teach you the lesson! And this young man was elected.

Now don't recoil at this and say, "Are you telling us we should profit, we should gain happiness, from the misfortunes of others?" Because the answer is yes, my friends. That's what you're expected to do. Certainly you should commiserate with them. Certainly you should try to feel their

plight and do whatever you can do to help; it's your first obligation.

But remember always that Hakadosh Baruch Hu is using them to transmit this message to you. The message is being delivered; like when somebody sends you a package but nobody is home. So the mailman leaves a slip, a sticker on the door. But if you never come to pick it up, the package is lost.

Part II. Noticing The Others

The Tragedy of Ignoring

Now, all this seems like just words to people; it's not taken seriously because everybody has his cares, his ambitions, his petty and not-so-petty dreams, and they think therefore that this subject is perhaps an exaggeration, a poetic attitude. Is that the achievement of life? No, they think; it's not serious talk. It's Rabbi Miller talk, that's all. That's what people say.

And that's a great tragedy; I might say it's *the* tragedy of life. Because the gifts that Hakadosh Baruch Hu is giving are not only for this world. If it was just that, then how important could it be? It's not permanent anyhow. In a few years you'll be *עובר וכתל* anyhow, you'll have your foot in the grave, and so how important could the happiness in this world be? It's a fleeting thing; eighty years, ninety years.

But actually, *happiness* with every detail of what Hashem gives you is the greatest achievement of mankind; because from gratitude to Hashem you can become the greatest *tzaddik*. From happiness you come to awareness of Hashem and love of Hashem. And there's nothing greater in the world than to love Hashem.

Ahavas Hashem is the top of the ladder. Of all the great achievements the very top is love of Hashem. And the way that leads there most

effectively is when a person becomes aware of great joys, the fun that he is being given in this world.

Frum Fun

Now, maybe some *tzaddikim* will bridle when they hear that word 'fun' but it's the plain truth. A *frum* Jew is expected to learn how to *enjoy* life. It doesn't mean he pursues pleasures in the distorted and crude manner of the hedonist, no. But the *frum* Jew enjoys the world in the delicate and transcendental manner of someone who understands the happiness of living peacefully and healthfully in this world. And he understands that he should utilize the joys of life, the fun and happiness of life, in order to become a better servant of Hashem because of what He's doing for him.

And because it's so important, Hashem, in His kindness, sends you messengers all the time to remind you of your good fortune. That's what we're studying now. There are no accidents. It's a message. It's messengers and messages.

The Blind Show the Way

And so when you see a blind man, it's a golden opportunity. Here's a man tapping away with his stick. Hakadosh Baruch Hu is fulfilling His function of *yoreh chataim baderech*. He's teaching you a way of life. How reckless it is to ignore that opportunity!

And don't say it's heartless, that it's not right to think that way. Absolutely it's right. More than right; it's an obligation. Nobody can be happy if he doesn't have a counterfoil to contrast his happiness.

And so, when you see that blind man you're thinking, "If that man could only open his eyes again and be able to cross the street unaided how happy he would be. Oh, how fun it is for me to

cross the street with my eyes instead of a white stick!”

If he could come back to the company of normal mankind would he make a *brachah* without any feeling in the morning? Just to rattle off, *Baruch atah Hashem Elokeinu Melech haolam pokeach ivrim?* Oh no! That morning he'll make a *brachah* that will raise the roof: פּוֹקֵחַ עֵינַיִם – *You give sight to the blind!* Ay yay yay! He would cry in happiness. He would dance around the *bimah!*

The Gift of Eyes

And that's why he's there; he's a messenger, an agent, a *shaliach* Hakadosh Baruch Hu sent to cross your path that day in order to make you wake up.

You know what it means to wake up? Of course, the first thing is to help. If he needs help crossing the street or whatever it is, you help him. But you should also wake up and realize that you have eyes. It doesn't have to be that way! Eyes?! Oh ho! To have healthy eyes!

And the next day in the morning when you make that *brachah*, make it slowly and put some heart in it. But don't wait until the next day for the technical *brachah*. The *brachah* should come from your heart immediately. And whenever you have the opportunity, remind yourself. Whenever you cross the street – I can't say every time; I wouldn't demand that of you but at least once a day you think of that man walking in darkness. How happy I am that I can see.

That's happiness! That's enjoying life! That's fun! It's a great happiness when people learn to enjoy their eyes. Such a great happiness that it becomes the catalyst for gratitude and greater service of Hashem.

Accosted on Ocean Parkway

Now, we have to keep our eyes open always for these messengers. I was walking yesterday on

Ocean Parkway. I was minding my own business and then I see, Hashem sent me a package. A boy in a wheelchair; his parents are pushing him, trundling him in a wheelchair. *Ah rachmanus.* Immediately you can see the face, that he's not well; a big boy of sixteen. And he's looking around, like this, his face, his eyes, to the side. Oy, a *rachmanus* on everybody concerned. You come to tears with such a sight. Oy, a pity!

But the greatest pity is on you. Because that boy must exist in the world; it's a *chessed Hashem* to teach us how to enjoy our normal children, how to be happy with our normal minds. And if you walk away and don't utilize that scene then you're the loser. He's not the loser. You must know Hakadosh Baruch Hu is not going to do injustice to him and when his time comes in the Next World he's going to be compensated for doing his job. He worked faithfully all his years in acting his part.

As he was riding down the street in his wheelchair and he was turning his head from side to side, and his lips were opening wide, he was teaching us a lesson that we should not have failed to learn. So Hakadosh Baruch Hu is going to reward him. He'll get full pay. In the Next World, he'll be rewarded like a *tzaddik*. Because he is; he didn't sin. And he was useful. The pity is on us because we will be called to task for not using that messenger.

Shake A Leg

I once was walking in the street with a man, a man from Bangor, Maine. We were walking in the street and he was limping. He told me, “You know what happened now? My hip is becoming fused together with the pelvis. The body is depositing calcium so the thigh and pelvis are growing together.”

Eventually, one day, he won't be able to move his foot at all. A terrible thing.

But is it you? It's not you? *Chilutz atzamos!* Try it. Shake a limb! *Chilutz atzamos – baruch Hashem* the bones are moving in the sockets! That's a happiness! I'm serious about that! That's *chilutz atamos*. The Gemara calls it happiness, *chilutz atzamos*. The bones are limber.

A Million Dollar Kidney

You say, "That's all?! *Chilutz atzamos?* I'd like to do other things. I'd like to have, let's say, a million dollars on Wall Street."

A million dollars on Wall Street! I knew a very wealthy man – he was on Wall Street and he had more than a million dollars – but he had no kidneys at all. And three times a week he had to make dialysis. He had a big machine of his own in his house. He could afford to have a nurse too. But every week, he had to put the needle of dialysis in a different place. His whole body was full of holes already. They were looking for a place where they could put the needle in again. *A rachmonus* on him.

And he was trying all his life to find somebody who would give him a kidney. So his mother gave him a kidney. It didn't work. His body rejected it. His brother made an operation and gave him a kidney. Also no good.

And you have two kidneys! You have one to spare.

And you're dissatisfied? You're unhappy? So Hakadosh Baruch Hu has a *taanah* on you. I sent you so many messengers! So many times you heard about such people! And still, you don't walk around in happiness because of your kidneys?! How could it be such a thing? To ignore My messengers?!"

A Happy Noisy Home

If you see a couple, they're married for so long and still, no children. No children! A quiet house. Ay yay yay, an empty quiet house. They wish to have just one child; that's their greatest desire, just

one child. Shouldn't that remind you that you're remiss in your obligation of gratitude?

Or sometimes you meet an old *chaver* from the *mesivta* and he tells you he's divorced now. He's living by himself somewhere in a basement; in a small basement somewhere in Flatbush. You're going to ignore that message from Hakadosh Baruch Hu? You're happily married. More or less it's happy. When was the last time you thanked Hakadosh Baruch Hu for your wife? Probably never.

And so how can you ignore such things? Don't say, 'Oh no, I can't be happy with the suffering of others.' The truth is it's only an excuse because nobody is so built that he cannot be happy by the fact that he was saved from misfortune.

Only what? You don't feel like you were saved. You think that it's coming to you; you imagine that everything you have is yours and that's how it has to be. And that's the purpose of reminders, of messengers, to wake you up from your sleep, your lethargy of not thinking.

Part III. Other Prayers

Keeping Ahead of the Curve

Now I want to change the subject a little. It's the same subject but I want to add something important. Besides for the obligation of thanking, there's something else you have to do – *you have to daven to Hakadosh Baruch Hu that it should continue.*

That's a very important principle and it's included in the great system of *tefillah*; asking Hakadosh Baruch Hu to keep you *b'shalom* before the need actually arises. *לְעוֹלָם יִקְרִים אָדָם תְּפִלָּה לְצָרָה* – *A man should always put his prayers before his needs* (Sanhedrin 44b). It means before you need something, before you come into distress, you should pray that it shouldn't come.

There's no better prayer than a prayer that comes from a person who's *b'shalom*, who is walking the rosy path of life. Because that's the true greatness of a man – if you can turn to Hashem when all is well and ask Him that it should continue it means you understand that it's all from Him. Hashem prizes those *tefillos* the most, much more than the one who's calling out in desperation.

To pray for a healthy heart when most people don't even know they have a heart – it's pumping so perfectly, that they're not aware that it's there – that's a greatness of character. To pray that your kidneys should *chas v'sholom* never shut down when they're functioning so perfectly that all you know about the kidneys is what you read or see pictures in the drug store windows, that's the best *tefillah*. That's the true success of a person; that's the real *baal bitachon*.

Raising the Cup

Now, I want you to listen to what Dovid Hamelech says about this subject. In Tehillim we find an expression that everybody knows. **כּוּס יְשׁוּעוֹת אֲשָׂא וּבְשֵׁם ה' אֶקְרָא** – *I pick up a cup of salvation, 'ה' אֲשָׂא וּבְשֵׁם ה' אֶקְרָא* – *and I call out to Hashem* (Tehillim 116:13).

What is this 'cup of salvation' that you 'lift up'? It means what we're talking about tonight; it's the cup that you lift up to Hashem in gratitude. Dovid Hamelech took a bottle of wine and filled up a big goblet in order to make a demonstration of his gratitude.

Not like today, people take the bottle out of the pantry for nothing. Some people are 'connoisseurs', wine for the sake of wine, of taste. Oh no, that's not the purpose of wine. That's nothing; it's a waste. A *kos yeshuos*, a cup of salvation, means that when a person is happy about something that Hashem has given him, that's when he picks up a cup; he gives a toast to Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

The Man of Many Toasts

You're married? **כּוּס יְשׁוּעוֹת אֲשָׂא וּבְשֵׁם ה' אֶקְרָא**. A toast to the Borei! You have children? **כּוּס יְשׁוּעוֹת אֲשָׂא וּבְשֵׁם ה' אֶקְרָא**. You have a job? You pay your bills more or less? Your landlord is not taking you to court to get you evicted? **כּוּס יְשׁוּעוֹת אֲשָׂא וּבְשֵׁם ה' אֶקְרָא**. Your daughter got married? Another toast! She's still married? Another toast!

Always pick up that cup in your mind and call out in gratitude to the One Who made it that way *and ask that it should continue*.

It's not easy however. Even if you hear it now, it's a weakness of ours that when everything is going well, we forget about the One Who is making it so. We imagine it has to be so; it always was and it will continue always. It's a weakness of ours – we forget about the Giver.

And that's why there's another cup to pick up; that's another *possuk* in that chapter: **צָרָה וְיָגוֹן אֶמְצָא – וּבְשֵׁם ה' אֶקְרָא** – *When I find distress and sorrow, 'ה' אֲשָׂא וּבְשֵׁם ה' אֶקְרָא* – *I call out in the name of Hashem* (ibid. 3-4)

The Other Cup

So the world learns it like this: When you have *tzaros*, when you find yourself in trouble – the doctor sees something, a lump, at the examination and now he's sending you to Manhattan to a specialist – also then you have to call out to Hashem. You have to call out for His help.

And it's true. That's the reason the *tzaros* came, so that you should call out *b'sheim Hashem*. Absolutely. But Dovid Hamelech is saying something else too. It doesn't have to mean when you find trouble by you. **צָרָה וְיָגוֹן אֶמְצָא – וּבְשֵׁם ה' אֶקְרָא** – *If I find trouble and sadness by others, 'ה' אֲשָׂא וּבְשֵׁם ה' אֶקְרָא* – *that's going to remind me to call out to You in tefillah that my good times should continue always*.

You hear what Dovid is saying? 'When I find that other people encounter some trouble – big troubles, little troubles, whatever it is – that's a

reminder for me to call out in *tefillah*. Not to wait until אֶמְצָא by me. No, I don't have to wait for that – right away as soon as I find it, even by others, I'm reminded to call out in *tefillah* that it shouldn't happen to me.'

Aren't we always hearing about people that are having troubles? And you *boruch Hashem* don't have those troubles! So lift up a cup of salvation and ask Hashem it should continue. You can pray for your fellow Jew too, of course, but also ask Hashem that it shouldn't happen to you. "Please, Hashem, protect me! Save me from this and from that."

The List of Gratitude

You hear a fire engine? An ambulance siren? Ooh, it sounds like a wailing. Don't ignore that messenger. It means someone's in trouble. צָרָה וְיָגוֹן אֶמְצָא – *When I find that someone is in a tzarah, אֶקְרָא ה' בְּשֵׁם ה' אֶקְרָא* – *I call out to Hashem that He should save me.* "I'm here in my kitchen making supper," you're thinking. "I don't need any fire engines. I don't need any ambulance, any loud sirens. Hashem, keep it that way. Please Ribono Shel Olam, nobody should fall down the steps in the house. Nobody should get any burns. Everyone should remain a hundred percent healthy."

You can make a list too. I did that. I once made a list of about fifty illnesses; illnesses and unfortunate circumstances that I've seen by others. And I look at it often. I'm not embarrassed to say that. I look at it all the time and I thank the Ribono Shel Olam for all the things that He saved me from.

It's a good idea you're hearing now. This man has that, this woman has this, this neighbor's child has something else. Make a list of all those things and review it. From time to time you read it and you're talking to Hakadosh Baruch Hu: "Boruch Hashem, I don't have that. Please Hashem, keep it

that way. Keep me healthy and my wife healthy and my children healthy."

Swords, Plagues and Illnesses

Don't think it's nothing, what you're hearing now. It's an attitude required of us: We have to be thinking always that מִחֶרֶב הִצַּלְתָּנוּ – *Hashem, You saved us from the sword.* So someone says, "What sword? I live in Brooklyn. There are no wars here." That's a mistake. It means from those people on the street who like to pull out knives. Those people are always lurking and nothing happened to me!

מִדְּבַר מְלִטָּתָנוּ – *From all types of plagues You saved us.* It means the plague of divorce, of broken homes. It means the plagues of homelessness and joblessness. It means the plague of children who go away from the right path.

And it means real plagues too! We don't know what could be, what Hashem is saving us from. וּמִחֳלָיִים רָעִים וְרַבִּים וְנֶאֱמָנִים דְּלִיתָנוּ – *And You saved us from all types of sicknesses.* I'm healthy only because You keep me healthy.

That's a greatness of character, a perfection of the mind. To always know that you're being supported by Hakadosh Baruch Hu. A person has to acquire the attitude that whatever he was saved from, it wasn't by chance. Anything could be and you always have to be begging the One Who's in charge that you should be only *b'shalom*.

A Final Prayer

And that brings us to an important *tefillah* and we'll end with this. It's the *tefillah* of *tachanun*. We say it every day but we don't realize what we're saying: ה' מְלֵא רַחֲמִים רַחֵם עָלַי וְקַבֵּל תְּחִנוּנַי – *Hashem, the One Who is full of mercy, have mercy on me and listen to my entreaties. Save me!*

Tachanun means you're afraid. And don't say "Why should we be afraid?" You see what happens in the world. That's why we fall on our arms and

say רחום וחנון ה' אל באפך תוכיחני - Please Hashem do not rebuke me with Your anger.

Now people make a mistake. They think we're falling on our arms to take a rest. We just davened Shemoneh Esrei and now we take a little break. Oh no! It's not a pillow. It's not time for a rest. We fall on our arms and we start begging like little children. "Have pity on me, Hashem! אל בחמתך תיסרני - Don't chastise me in Your wrath." That's why you fall on your arm; they shouldn't see that you're shedding a tear, a tear for yourself: "Please Hashem let me remain well."

You're only sixteen years old. You're not thinking about sickness; it doesn't even enter your mind. Never mind! I've known sixteen-year-olds who didn't live to see their seventeenth birthday *lo aleichem*. And so, you're pleading, "Oy, Hashem! I just prayed to You now Shemoneh Esrei. But was I thinking? Was I thanking? Was I asking? And so this is my last chance before I go out into the world. Maybe I wasn't a good pleader during Shemoneh Esrei but have pity on me. There's so much trouble *chas veshalom* that could happen and my happiness depends only on You.

Scaring Your Neighbor

"*Rachum v'Chanun!* You're the Merciful One. Please help me! Please, keep everything safe and peaceful and healthy. Please I shouldn't get any calls at midnight from my daughter that she's having trouble with her husband. Please help me

The Rov's Gratitude List

HE, HIS WIFE OR A CHILD

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| CLEFT PALATE | DIVORCE |
| STUTTERING | GOUT |
| ASTHMA | MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY |
| HAY FEVER | MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS |
| ALLERGIES | CEREBRAL PALSY |
| ARTHRITIS | PARKINSON'S DISEASE |
| KIDNEY (KIDNEYS) REMOVED | COLOR BLINDNESS |
| COLOSTOMY | INABILITY TO SMELL |
| TUMOR ON BRAIN | VERY SHORT |
| ULCER | EXCESSIVELY CORPULENT |
| DEPRESSION | LIMPING |
| NERVOUS BREAKDOWN | INCONTINENT (URINE) |
| INSANITY | WHEELCHAIR |
| BROKEN (LEG, ARM, - BONE) | CANE |
| PROSTATE TROUBLE | CRUTCHES |
| DIABETES | EPILEPSY |
| HEMORRHOIDS | PARALYSIS |
| LIVER TROUBLE | POISONING |
| ONE LEG (ARM) LONGER THAN OTHER | FIRE |
| RETARDED (OR A CHILD) | HOLDUP (MUGGING) |
| DEAF | BURGLARY |
| DUMB | LITIGATION |
| BLIND (ONE OR BOTH EYES) | JAIL |
| AMPUTATION (LEG, ARM, FINGER) | ARMY |
| CHILDLESS | EXTREMELY SLOW-WITTED |
| NO BEARD (GONAD INSUFFICIENCY) | HEART TROUBLE |
| | LUNG DISEASE |
| | CANCER |

that everything should continue *b'shalom* just the way it is. I'm calling out in my extremities as if *chalilah* the worst thing has happened already. Please!"

Now somebody standing nearby, he's worried about you. "What do you want help for? What's the trouble?"

And the answer is, "No trouble! But I don't want any trouble! Everything is well now and that's how



I want it to remain always. Didn't you hear what happened to Chaim's wife? Didn't you see the sign on the wall, that so and so's child is in the hospital? That's why I'm crying out to Hashem. Because He's so good to me and I'm begging him now, so that it should remain so; that the troubles shouldn't come!"

"Oh," Hashem said, "That's a wise man! You're thinking about Me when there's no need to worry about anything. You remember Me in the good times I'm giving you and you're making use of all the messengers I sent you in this world.

"That's the greatest of all achievements. To remember Me always in gratitude and *tachanunim*. That's the great perfection of character and it's the program for perfection that I want you to learn from this week's *sedrah*."

Have a Wonderful Shabbos

Let's Get Practical

Learning From Others

In our parsha we learn that the *bechorim* should be inspired by what happened to their Egyptian counterparts to dedicate themselves more to serving Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Whenever we see anyone experiencing misfortune, it should remind us of our own good fortune, and we should make it a habit to praise Hashem and pray to Him to protect us. I will *bli neder* cut out the page with the copy of Rav Miller's gratitude list and spend some time each day this week reviewing it.

This week's booklet is based on tapes:

- 507** – Learning From Others | **E-55** – Your Bechor You Redeemed
- E-124** – The World Reminds Us to Remember Hashem
- E-174** – Two Pathways to Perfection

QUESTION

You said at a previous lecture that a man should pray for health even when he has it; he should ask Hashem that he shouldn't get sick. But doesn't that contradict the idea of אַל יִפְתַּח אָדָם פִּי לְשֹׁטֶן – not to open your mouth to the *satan* by speaking of misfortunes that could occur (Brachos 19a)?

ANSWER

There's a Jewish principle, not to speak about unfortunate possibilities.

For example, a man shouldn't say to his wife, "If one of us dies, then I'm going to Eretz Yisroel to settle." It's a Jewish principle in how we speak. It's *goyish* to say like a boy said to his rebbe; he said, "Rebbe, if an ox would gore you and kill you, does he have to pay *kofer*?" You don't talk that way. Jews don't talk that way.

However, when it comes to *tefillah*, it's just the opposite. You're praying to Hakadosh Baruch Hu and that's not פּוֹתְחָה פֶּה לְשֹׁטֶן and so we find everywhere that this kind of *tefillah* is employed. So you have a right to ask Hakadosh Baruch Hu to protect you מְאַוִּיב דְּבָר וְחֹרֵב – from a whole list of misfortunes (Hashkiveinu, Maariv). Because when you're praying to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, that's the One to Whom you can unburden yourself and you don't have to worry.

But otherwise, in idle conversation, we don't want to say anything that's not happy. Even to make yourself unhappy is not virtuous. We always look at the sunny side of life and never mention misfortunes.

There are some people who are crabby and are always thinking about what might happen and Hakadosh Baruch Hu says, "If you're misusing the opportunity I gave you to be happy, then I'm going to make you unhappy; I'll bring misfortune on you and now you'll look back and regret the good old days when things were going well."

So don't talk about misfortunes and not happy things. But when it comes to prayer, then you can pray to Hakadosh Boruch Hu for all good things including that He should save you from all misfortunes.

TAPE # 77 (July 1975)