
Dr. & Mrs. Ezra E. Cohen Family Edition

Windows of the Soul



Rav Avigdor Miller on Shemiras Einayim

*A week-long program that will help you
master the vital skill of guarding your eyes.*

2nd Large Printing!

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*A week-long program that will help you
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Shovavim 5783



TORAS AVIGDOR

AUTHENTIC TORAH THOUGHT FOR LIFE

Windows of the Soul

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Sunday

Dedication Page

*I and my entire family would
like to express our inner joy
and appreciation to hai gavra
rabba, chasida kadisha, avda
d'Kudsha Brich Hu*

Harav Avigdor Miller
zecher tzaddik livracha

*who enlightened our eyes and
our minds and transformed
our lives to something beyond
our imagination*

Meir Shalom Chaim



Sunday

Prologue

One of Rav Miller's favorite subjects was the great gift of light, and along with that our ability to see, a function that is entirely dependent on light. Rav Miller would frequently repeat that the *brachah* of "Yotzer Hameoros - He creates luminaries" is the longest *brachah* in the *siddur* because of its overwhelming importance and he was always fond of reminding us that the first *maamar* with which the world was created, the first words spoken by Hashem in the Torah, is "Let there be light". (Although Chazal name a different verse as the first *maamar*, Rav Miller would point out that "Let there be light" is the first statement of Hashem recorded in the Written Torah. The other verse was intentionally not recorded as a Statement in order to distinctly emphasize the gift of light). And if the

first recorded statement of Hashem is this, then we begin to understand that Eyesight, which is a function of Hashem's creation of light, is a great gift. And like any valuable gift it is imperative that we learn how to make use of it.

There is an interesting thought from Rav Miller on Tape #813 which I would like to share with you in his own words:

One of my great teachers once said that we are lucky we don't have a *Beis Hamikdash* today. How fortunate we are we don't have a *Beis Hamikdash* today! If we had a *Beis Hamikdash*, so we'd take a ticket on an airplane and go straight to Eretz Yisrael and we'd purify ourselves, we'd have *haza'ah shelishis veshvi'is letumas meis*, we'd be *taivel*, and then we'd get a ticket from the *kohen* that everything is perfect. You're qualified to enter the *Beis Hamikdash*.

Now we enter the *azarah* and we're standing there. What do we see? A slaughterhouse. We see people slaughtering animals. It's a shock. And they're taking out the insides, the *bnei me'ayim*, the intestines and they're washing them, and they're burning it on the *mizbeach*. It's as disgusting as could be.

Don't be deceived. We would be terribly disappointed. We don't have the eyes to see a

Beis Hamikdash. We think it's only a matter that Moshiach should come and we're ready for it. We're not ready at all.

In order to appreciate what it means to serve Hashem in the *Beis Hamikdash* you have to learn. If you learn at least Chumash, you learn how they offer up the *karbanos*. Or even better, if you learn the Gemara. And every act becomes *kodesh*. It's fraught with holiness. Every move is of the greatest importance. It's serious.

We know it's *reiach nichoach* to Hashem. We gain *l'retzonchem tizbechu*, we gain favor in the eyes of Hashem. And *vesham na'avdcha beyirah*, we will serve Hashem with fear *k'yemei alam*, like the days of old. But we're not ready for that now. You just say these words. It's easy to say them. But your dainty American nose won't stand the odor of open entrails of *beheimos*. You might even be nauseated when you see it. You might retch and vomit and run out. "That's the service? It's barbaric!" you'll say – especially if you're a person who's brought up with Anglo Saxon ideas. What do you have to slaughter for? Why kill animals? It's a pity on the poor animal. Here is a poor lamb standing here. He doesn't know his fate. And here is a cruel *kohen* standing with a knife, ready to slaughter the neck of this poor animal.

And so the *Beis Hamikdash* is not good for us, and therefore it's taken away from us. We don't see it anymore. We're lucky. You know how we can see it? We see it through the eyes of the great men who lived in those days. Ah! Through their eyes we look at the *Beis Hamikdash*. Ah! Through their eyes we see *avodas Hashem*. We see *mitzvos* and *kedushah*. And that's why we need eyes to look at the world. It's very difficult for us to see things truly through our own eyes, and therefore we're expected to look through the eyes of the *chachamim*. They're called *einei ha'eidah*. They are the eyes of the congregation.

Not only *korbanos*. Everything in this world. Marriage, making a living, happiness. Everything in this world should be looked at through the eyes of those who are competent to see. We don't see at all. *Hakesil bechoshech holech*, the fool walks in darkness. And who is that? That's us. Everybody here should admit that he does not see, including me. We all have to say that. We do not see. And it's not possible at all to utilize the great gift of life, which is light and the opportunity to learn with our eyes, unless we look through the eyes of the sages.

Certainly, when it comes to protecting our eyes, we need to study this subject through the eyes of our Gedolim. This little booklet was masterfully

compiled by Rav Amichai Markowitz Shlita from a number of tapes*) to create a guidebook for Shemiras Einayim to be read over the course of a week. The booklet may be kept in one's pocket in order to review the appropriate daily section over the course of 4 weeks to gain the maximum benefit from its life-changing teachings.

With warm blessings,
Rabbi Moshe Horowitz,
Director, Toras Avigdor
Shovavim 5783

“So Let’s Review...”

- *Vision is an incredibly valuable gift from Hashem. Like any gift from Hashem, we wish to hear from the Chachomim how to best make use of it. This booklet is guidance from Rabbi Miller on how to do just that.*
- *This booklet was divided up into daily readings. It is advisable to review this booklet four times over the course of a month to gain the maximum benefit from its life-changing teachings.*

*) **40** - Pictures in the Mind | **90** - Your Works Praise You
594 - A World of Tests | **903** - The Song at Sea | **E-228** The Eyes - The Windows of The Soul | **E-265** - The Ways of Hashem

Monday

Dedication Page

In memory of

Rivka Bas Reb Pinchas
A"H Pinchas Ben Avrohom
Moshe
Liba Bas Shalom
Yom Tov Ben Nissim
Matilda Bat Yaakov

Sponsored by:

Chagai Matzliach



Monday

Holy Music

Everybody knows that Dovid HaMelech had a harp that he used to hang over his bed at night (Brachos 3b). It was the harp that he used by day when singing praises to Hashem but he used it as an alarm clock too. The window to Dovid's room was open and at a certain time in the night, the wind changed its course and started coming through the window. And when the wind blew through the window it started moving the strings of the harp. Dovid knew it would happen; it was planned that way. And when Dovid heard the noise, the quiet music of strings being touched by the fingers of the wind, he woke up.

What did he do when he woke up? He got busy saying *shiros v'sishbachos*, praising Hashem and

learning Torah all night. The harp stirred him and he got busy with his *avodas Hashem*.

Now about this harp Dovid said the following (Tehillim 57:9): עוֹרָה כְּבוֹדִי – *Awake my glory!* There's a glory in me and I want to rouse it from its slumber. עוֹרָה הַנְּבֵל וְכַנּוֹר – *The harp and the lyre should awake,* אָעִירָה שָׁחַר – *and now I wake the morning.* I'm inspired by the harp to get up before the morning starts and sing songs to Hashem.

Now who is this *kevodi* that Dovid is trying to wake up? What glory is he talking about when he talks to himself and says, “Awake my glory”?

So listen to the answer because it takes us back to the beginning of time. When Hakodosh Boruch Hu created Adam it states וַיִּפֹּחַ בְּאַפִּיו נְשֵׁמַת חַיִּים – *Hashem blew into him a spirit of life.* Now that's a queer expression, that Hashem should be blowing, but it's said for a purpose. If you breathe into somebody, you're breathing what your breath is. If you have onions on your breath, you're breathing onions into him. If you have some sweet flavor in your breath, you breathe a sweet flavor into him.

Hakodosh Boruch Hu breathed into Adam of Himself. כִּי הַשֵּׁם יִתֵּן חֲכָמָה – *Hashem gives wisdom,* מִפִּי דַעַת וְתְבוּנָה – *from His mouth comes knowledge and understanding.* When Hashem breathed into Adam, it means He breathed a tremendous potential

into each person. Everybody is gifted with a fountain of almost bottomless wisdom - only that it's concealed inside you.

That's the *kavod* Dovid was singing about, the glory that's in your *neshama*. The *neshama* is full of greatness, but it lies there concealed all your life and Dovid was urging himself, "Awake my glory! Let's get up and make something out of ourselves!"

And so Dovid made use of this harp to bring out his greatness. Dovid understood that music has the power to awaken your soul. That's why music causes people to become wild; because it's waking up something inside of you. And it has the power to inspire people to greatness. If they have an aspiration to greatness, yes. That's why in the Beis Hamikdosh they served Hashem with music and people became wild with *ahavas Hashem*, wild with *simcha*. Music is a tremendous force.

Now the fools who walk around here with a guitar on their back, what do they do with music? *Shtus*, *tipshus*. All their music is a waste of time. Music can stir in us tremendous emotion but what do fools do? By means of the guitar strings and the tune they take these wonderful emotions and they put in worthless words.

Ach; a tragedy. It's taking the sublime emotions of our soul and expending it on nothing. That's why

you go to the music stores and you'll see the lowest people, the scum of society. When you pass a music store you should know that it's a place for *meshugaim*. No decent people go into a music store today. Only wild people frequent such a place because all it is, is a wildness of the nerves; they're exciting their nerves for nothing.

But when a person who has a *seichel* hears music, music with the right words, it causes the inner greatness to start exerting itself to come out.

I once came to a *bris* and we had to wait for a little while for the *bris* to begin. And the *rebbe* of the *shtibel* was sitting there singing a *niggun*. He was sitting by himself singing **אָנאָ עֵבֶרָא יְקוּדָשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא**. Instead of wasting time, the *rebbele* was singing that. It inspired me tremendously. **אָנאָ אָנאָ אָנאָ עֵבֶרָא יְקוּדָשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא** (The Rav *zatzal* sang the *niggun*). I was tremendously inspired. "I'm a, I'm a, I'm a servant of Hashem!"

And so when music is utilized for *mussar*, when it's utilized for *avodas Hashem*, it's an excellent expedient. The Kuzari – it was written 900 years ago – here's his statement. He says that music was once "the servant of Hashem." It was used in the Sanctuary by our greatest prophets. They had these noble ideas and they expressed them with a lyre and with a harp. And once you have the nobility of

spirit, then the music coupled with that gives you the ability to raise your feet from the earth.

It's like an airplane. An airplane is able to fly if you fuel it. You put in the high octane fuel, then it soars. It goes to the clouds, above the clouds. And the man who has greatness of spirit, then together with music, he becomes much bigger than he was before.

And that's why Dovid Hamelech when the spirit moved him and the *ruach hakodesh* came upon him he said בְּרָכִי נַפְשִׁי אֶת הַשֵּׁם – “I'm going to use these emotions purposefully and sing praises to Hashem. Awake my glory, the greatness within me. Please Hashem” he said, “Bestir me, stimulate me. I want to come closer and closer to You, I want to love You.”

And when he took out his harp and his fingers played the strings, the music he played helped him to ascend on the wings of music to the heights of perfection of the soul. By means of his harp he began expressing this more and more and that's how he came to the pinnacles of greatness.

“So Let's Review...”

- *There is a glory in our souls, Breathed into us by Hashem Himself. It is our task to awaken this glory, and to connect with our inner greatness.*

Tuesday

Dedication Page

For the
Health and Success
of our children:
Yosef Avraham, D'Vorah
and our future children BzH

Sponsored by:
Michael Farah



Tuesday

Our Music

Now you have to know that Dovid, when he spoke about the harp he played, he was speaking for all of us. Everyone has to have a harp that will inspire him to bring out the greatness which lies dormant within. It doesn't mean you have to go out and buy a guitar and make music – if you play music, usually it'll be nothing; *tra la la, tra la la*. And even if you'll play like Dovid Hamelech did, that's only an example of what Dovid meant. It's a true story but it's a *mashal* too.

Dovid meant much more than the harp he had in his room; this harp that Dovid used to awaken his glory, his inner potential, we have to know, is available to everybody. What is the harp? I'm going to tell you a secret now. The harp is *Olam Hazeh*.

I'll say it again so you don't miss it. The harp on which we're expected to play our music is *Olam Hazeh*. This world is given for the purpose of inspiring us to greatness. It's a *possuk* in Koheles (3:14): וְהָאֱלֹקִים עָשָׂה – Why did Hashem make the world? שָׂרְאוּ מִלְפָּנָיו – He made this world in order so that people should learn *yiras Hashem*; so that you should be able to reach the pinnacle of your greatness by becoming aware of Hashem constantly.

That's supposed to be the result of this world – Awareness of Hashem. But it's on one condition; you have to use your eyes to see it. The eyes are the fingers that play the harp of *Olam Hazeh*.

I'll explain that. The eyes are the windows of the soul. Whatever you see with your eyes, it's not just something you're seeing with your flesh and blood eyes. You're seeing with your soul too and that means your *neshama* then becomes changed. It's not an accident; it's intended that way – the purpose of seeing is to make an effect on your *neshama*.

You remember when Hakodosh Boruch Hu told Avraham Avinu, “I'm going to make you into a great nation; you'll have very many children”? What did Hashem do to Avraham? He took him out in the street and said “Look at the stars and count the stars. I'm going to make you like the stars.” And Avraham started counting but he couldn't finish –

so many stars. So Hashem said (Bereishis 15:5), בְּהַרְבֵּה זָרְעֶךָ – “That’s how your children are going to be.”

So I have a *kasha*. Didn’t Avraham know that the stars are very many? Was Avraham just born now? He had to go outside and look at the stars? He could sit in the house. When he was sitting in his room, in his tent, Hashem could have said, “Avraham, you know the stars in the sky are very many – that’s how your children are going to be.”

But Hashem wasn’t satisfied with that. “No, I want you to come out and see the stars. Come out of your tent and look at the sky and see them.” I think it’s a good question: Why did Avraham have to go out and look at the stars? It seems like a waste of time.

The answer is; looking at the stars and seeing how numerous they are, that’s a harp that awakened something within him. It touched his *neshama* and excited him. He looked up at the stars and said, “I’m going to have children as many as the stars?! Like these stars?!” And he became so inspired with love of Hashem, more than would have ever been possible if he had stayed in his tent and heard only the promise of Hashem.

“Look what You’re doing for me,” Avraham Avinu was thinking, “I want many children and You’re

promising me now that it will be. But not only are You saying words; I see now what's going to happen. All these stars, I can't count them; they're so many. My children will be so many I won't be able to count them. I thank You, Hakodosh Boruch Hu. I love You for that!" Avraham's mind was singing songs of happiness within him because it wasn't only his eyes that saw the stars – it was his *neshama* that was affected by that sight.

That's a very important lesson we're learning now; when your eyes see pictures in this world, it's not merely your flesh and blood eyes that are seeing. It's not only your cornea and your iris that are seeing. It's not even your flesh and blood brain that is seeing – it's a tremendous experience because these pictures are filed away in your *neshama* forever.

Don't think it was nothing – you saw it and then that's it, you turned away; it's finished, it's gone. No; even though you don't see it anymore you create a picture and the negative is deposited in your mind. And you'll never lose that negative. You'll forget about it maybe, but it's deposited way back in the files of your mind.

Every minute now, as you look around, look at the faces, you're taking pictures. And every face is

in your mind forever. You can never get it out. Even though you forget about it, it's buried in your mind.

I met a man a few days ago on the street and he looked vaguely familiar. I said, "Where did I see you once?" Suddenly a picture popped into my head. "Oh! It's you!" I hadn't seen him for fifty years! A true story – I hadn't seen him for fifty years! Where were you the last fifty years?

The answer is, the picture was waiting in my mind. I saw his face and the picture jumped to the front. I looked at the picture, compared it to him – yes, it's you. *Ooh wah!* The picture was in my mind all these years! It's a fact. It's a true scientific fact that every minute your eyes are taking pictures and the pictures are forever in your mind.

And now, we begin to understand why the *tzaddikim* were so busy looking at *tzaddikim*. You know they traveled to look at *tzaddikim* – just to see the *tzaddik*. People travel to see a *tzaddik*, to look at the *tzaddik*.

יְהֵא דְעָרִיפְנָא מִחֲבָרָאִי? "Why am I superior to all my *chaveirim*?" Rebbi asked that question, Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi (Eirubin 13b). Why am I sharper than my colleagues? He said, "Because I saw Rabbi Meir from behind. I wasn't fortunate enough to see his face but I saw his back, I saw the back of the Tanna's head, and that's why I'm superior. He said, "Had I

seen his face – ooh.” But even his back had a tremendous effect on him.

And that’s because these pictures go into your mind and change your *neshama* forever. Every picture acts on the soul and transforms it. Another picture stored away means that you have a different *neshama* now; it’s an entirely new creation. And that means that whatever you see in your lifetime is filed away and stays with you forever.

“So Let’s Review...”

- *As we attempt to awaken the glory of our souls, we should remember that the eyes are the windows of the soul. What we see with our eyes has an everlasting impact on the depths of our souls. We should endeavor to see only good things.*

Wednesday

Dedication Page

**Thank you Hashem
for giving us the
gift of teshuva.**

Sponsored by:

Tzvi Neiman



Wednesday

Guarding the Eyes

Now once we understand that Olam Hazeh is a harp that we have to use to make music, and that it's by means of our eyes that we play these songs, it means that there's a big responsibility that falls on our shoulders. Because don't we know that many people are using their eyes to see all the wrong things in this world? They see sad things, wickedness. They see *reshaim*. They see girls and hair. They see tall gentiles who throw a basketball into a hoop. They see everything they shouldn't see and those are the songs that their *neshamos* sing.

They're seeing things in this world that make stains on their souls, stains that will last forever. The Kuzari says that. He says that whatever once went into your mind, even the foolishness that you saw in your youth, you'll never get rid of it all

the days of your life. And my rebbe added something. He said that you take it with you into the next world too. Don't think you'll be able to leave it in your grave; it goes with you. And that's because pictures are the window to the soul; and whatever wickedness you see creates a stain on the soul.

And every stain is a tragedy because in order to enjoy the happiness of the World-to-Come, the soul must first be cleansed of its stains. It means Gehenom. And you have to know that there is nothing as terrible as Gehenom. To go through Gehenom means you're going to undergo H-E-L-L.

It's more suffering, more pain than all the *yissurim* we can imagine in this world because it's a trip to the expert cleaning shop where they have all kinds of chemicals there, all kinds of cleansing agents that burn out all the stains. But they're very sharp. They clean him; but they burn. And sometimes however the stains are so deep and so set that the cleaner has to use everything he has to get rid of them. By the time he's finished, the place where the spots were are now holes. And even when he's finally ready to walk into Olam Habo – he's still shaky on his feet but he's being brought now into the better place only that he has holes now, damage to the *neshama*, which will never go away. Never!

And therefore it's much better if a person is *surmeira*, if he turns his eyes away from wickedness in this world, while he's still alive, and keeps those stains off his *neshama* in the first place. And so, before anything we have to train ourselves how to not see. הָעֵבֶר עֵינַי מֵרְאוֹת שָׁוְא – Dovid *davened* for that because he understood what it means to see wrong things. We have to ask Hashem for help but at the same time we have to get busy helping ourselves. We have to train ourselves to control our eyes from looking at what we're not supposed to look at.

It's an important point because I'm constantly asked the same question. How do I avoid looking where I'm not supposed to look? How do I guard my eyes? And the answer is *you guard your eyes by guarding your eyes*. It's a matter of training. You can train yourself to keep your eyes on the sidewalk! Don't look left or right; just study the sidewalk. That's how you guard your eyes.

Of course when you cross the street, don't guard your eyes; guard yourself. First look left and then look right. Then again; look left and look right. Twice. And then scurry across the street. Don't stroll across the street leisurely. Scurry across the street! This advice should cost you \$10 by the way; but I'm not charging you for it.

You know when there is a lawyer who is trying to collect insurance money for somebody who was hit

by a car so the lawyer tells you when you stand up in court you should say, “I looked first left then I looked right and then again left and then again right.” He tells you to say that because that will help you collect damages. You didn’t do that of course. But the lawyers want you to say that because that’s what you should’ve done.

After you’ve crossed the street however, your next job is to study the sidewalk again. Keep your eyes on the sidewalks. The cement is kosher to look at. If you want to raise your eyes up and study a tree and remark on the wonders of Hakodosh Boruch Hu, that’s all right too. But as soon as you’re finished looking at the tree, focus your eyes once again on the cement underneath you and that’s the way to train your eyes. Keep your eyes down and keep walking down the block. Study the cement the whole time that you’re walking. You’ll be surprised how much that will help you.

And when you get to the next street you start the process again. You look both ways twice and as soon as you get to the safety of the next curb you lower your eyes again to the sidewalk. And keep them there.

By the way, it’s not just that you’re turning away from bad. It’s a greatness, a perfection, achieving what you came into world for. The Chovos Halevavos

says that one of the ways that we achieve perfection in this world is by being *malachim hasovlim*, like angels who are *sovel* anything, any difficulties in order to serve Him. That's one of the ways a Jew attains greatness.

And so when a person is in a place where all around him there are all types of sights, all types of sights that will stain his *neshama*, but he restrains himself; as much as possible he keeps his eyes down; he's not letting his eyes wander. That's a *tzaddik*, a big *tzaddik*. It's not easy but you find Jewish boys who will refrain from looking in the wrong direction because it's not moral to look. These are *tzaddikim*.

It's possible to do it. And if you're serious about it, you'll be helped. **לֹא יִמְנַע טוֹב לְהַלְכִים בְּתַמִּים** – *Hakodosh Boruch Hu won't withhold good from those who go in the ways of decency.* He's going to help them. **הִבָּא לְטַהֵר מִסִּיעִין לוֹ** – *When a person comes to purify himself so after a while he'll see only the beautiful trees. He'll see the beautiful carpet of green grass, the beautiful sky, the colorful fruit in the fruit stand. Life will be to him a place where he'll see only things that will help succeed in his career in life.*

Otherwise, if he won't take the trouble to train his eyes, he can expect to encounter anything. People who have eyes that wander – they're lazy

and careless and their eyes are strolling all the time; sometimes people even look into the windows of the houses as they pass by, so when the eyes are strolling all the time you can understand that they'll suffer the results. When people are looking for things to see, Hakodosh Boruch Hu punishes them and causes them to see certain things that ordinarily they wouldn't have seen. It's an *onesh*. הָבֵא לְטָמֵא פּוֹתְחִין לוֹ – If you're coming to defile your *neshama*, then Hashem opens up doors for you.

These people have no control because they didn't practice. It's not even on their minds to be careful and so their *neshamos* are getting dirtier and dirtier every day. And so we'll say that the way forward, the best way to guard your eyes is by doing just that – guarding your eyes. Anybody – man and woman, boy and girl – who wants to learn the system of *shmiras einayim* can do it by means of practice.

“So Let's Review...”

- *Because the eyes are so important, we must avoid evil sights at all costs. One who refrains from looking at immodest sights is called a tzaddik, each and every time! With practice, it is possible to train oneself to always be in control.*

Thursday

Dedication Page

לעילוי נשמת

יהודה אריה ע"ה

ב"ר זאב אליעזר נ"י



Thursday

The Eyes of the Mind

However there's a secondary – I shouldn't say secondary because it's just as important; there's a second method by means of which we guard our eyes from allowing the wrong things to make their way into our *neshamos*. After all, we need all the help we can get if we're going to succeed at walking the streets today. How can a person walk successfully on the streets today? And so listen carefully to this very important *eitzah*.

When is it that people see things on the streets that they shouldn't? It's only when their minds are empty. The Rambam says that. He says that pictures and thoughts can only enter into an empty mind.

Don't you see when a house is left empty so all kinds of vagrants, all of the lowest people, try to get in? They want to squat there. And once they're

there it's very hard to get them out – they make themselves comfortable and they think they belong. Same thing with your head. When your head is vacant then all kinds of stupidity will enter your mind. Nature abhors a vacuum and so an empty head will not remain empty forever; all of the low sights from the street will come in.

And therefore staring at the cement is not enough. Because no matter how much you're looking at your feet, sights and thoughts will make their way into your head. It's impossible otherwise.

And so you must have something to take their place because when your mind is filled already then nothing can enter your mind at that time. It tries but it immediately bounces out because it's already full. The *yetzer hora* comes knocking on your door, but your mind tells him, "I'm sorry. This place is already occupied."

It takes work to learn how to do that, but there is no option. You must fill your mind with good ideas. It's not easy, but it's possible; you have to learn what to think about. It's not a bad idea to walk with a little notebook where you have written down there good things to think about and from time to time take a look and remind yourself: "I want to think about this", "I want to think about that." You can take a small *Mishlei* along with you and think

about a *possuk* in Mishlei. Every block another *possuk*. Or a notebook with *maamarei chazal* and think into them.

When you come to the corner forget about it; look right and left right and left and scurry. But as soon as you reach the safety of the other side, go back to your *machshavos*, your noble thoughts, and your mind becomes an occupied place.

That's the counsel for people who want to succeed at guarding their eyes and protecting their souls. Take some idea of Torah and keep it there as much as possible. Play with it always; remind yourself of it while you're in the street and toy with it.

For instance, think about Yetzias Mitzrayim. Don't think it's a silly idea. Think of Yetzias Mitzrayim as frequently as possible. Think of Dam, that *makkah* that caused all of Mitzrayim to fall into confusion. Tzfardeia. Kinim. Make pictures in your head of the Mitzrim running around like chickens without heads. Think of all the *makkos*. Play over the scenes in your head. You think it's something that's not a real solid Torah thought? Absolutely it is.

Then when your mind is full of the Ten Makkos, add some more thoughts. Think about *Kriyas Yam Suf*. Many people, some very *frum*, they *daven* through these sections in the morning and evening

and don't think once about *Kriyas Yam Suf*. A pity. You have to picture *kriyas Yam Suf*.

Here's a *Yam*; it's open. It's dry already and the Bnei Yisroel are passing *b'yabasha*, on the dry land, in the middle. And here comes Pharaoh with a tremendous army; chariots and horsemen and all the footsoldiers. We weren't armed; we weren't an army and now they came chasing after us. And they're not coming to say hello. They wanted blood. And suddenly, whoosh! Water came over on top of them and all of them were buried under the waves. That's a picture to see! That's going to change your *neshama*! And not only that; now your mind is too busy for the foolish and wicked sights surrounding you. You're not on Kings Highway anymore; you're with Moshe Rabeinu at the *Yam Suf*.

Try that next time you're on the street. Suppose you're walking outside; say to yourself, "From here to the end of the block, I'm going to think about the Mann." For forty years food fell from the sky. Imagine an entire nation of millions being fed in such a spectacular manner! What a sight! What did they think in that generation when they saw every morning that white substance waiting for them? A tremendous sight! Think about that for one block. You never thought about it? It's a good idea.

I once took a walk with people; I used to talk to them and we worked on this. I said, "From now until the end of the block, we'll think about Korach; how the earth opened up its mouth because Korach opened his mouth up against Moshe. The earth opened its mouth and they all went down – *oooh wah!* It was a terrible sight. It was a scene! So from here to the end of the block, we're going to think how the earth opened up and swallowed *adas Korach*.

Then the next block, we thought about a different *neis*. As we walked a few blocks, we went through a few *nissim*. We were walking and thinking, walking and thinking. We weren't seeing anything on the street because we were seeing with the *einei haseichel*, the eyes of our minds. Our heads were occupied.

There's no end of good things in this world to think about. Not only the *nissim* that He did for our nation. You can think about the *nissim* He's doing for you right now. Think about what He does for you, how lucky you are you don't have this illness or that illness. You don't have cerebral palsy. You don't have leukemia. You don't have cancer. You don't have a tumor on the brain. You don't have diabetes. You know how many things you don't have? There are 10,000 things you don't have. If you wish, you can carry a list in your pocket of things that you

don't have and take it out from time to time and think how lucky you are.

It's May time now and you breathe in the air. It's perfumed air. And you thank Hakodosh Boruch Hu. You think how much fun it is to walk. My knees bend without any chaffing at the joints. Hashem is causing my heart to beat and my blood is circulating inside me in wondrous fashion. My kidneys are functioning; they're purifying my blood. And my brain is receiving messages from the outside world at the same time it is arranging all the affairs of your body. It's such a simcha! Why should you be that lucky? Because Hakodosh Boruch Hu is being kind to you. And so you're walking outside and what's in your head? That you're so happy to be alive!

That's how to practice walking in the street. There's no reason that the mind should be empty and allow the wrong thoughts to enter. If you train yourself to fill your mind with good ideas and you're thinking all the time about these right ideas – in the street, at home – then you won't have time for or interest in the *yetzer hora*. Little by little your mind becomes full of Torah thoughts, and then it's much easier to exclude all the silly and false and wicked sights. You'll exclude them from your mind and you'll keep your mind pure for the service of Hashem.

“So Let’s Review...”

- *If we get used to filling our minds with good thoughts, we won’t be distracted by the sights we pass by. One should practice thinking positive Torah thoughts as he walks through the streets.*

Friday

Dedication Page

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Friday

Music of Nature

Now, as much as we train ourselves to keep the sights in this world out of our heads, we have to remember the *possuk* in Koheles that I quoted earlier. Shlomo Hamelech is describing one of the most important methods of utilizing the harp of Olam Hazeih to fulfill that great function of “Awake my glory” and he says, **וְהָאֱלֹקִים עָשָׂה שְׂרָאוֹ מִלְּפָנָיו** – *Why did Elokim make everything?* What did He make? Everything! And why did He make it? So that we should fear Him

Now, if you recall it was once explained here that when we speak of fear of Hashem it means to see Hashem, to be aware of Him. **יָרָא** and **רָאָה**, to be ‘afraid’ and to ‘see’ are brother words. **יָרָא** has a *yud* in the beginning but the *yud* falls off in conjugation. Let’s say **נִירָא**; the *yud* falls off. And in **רָאִיתִי**, the *hei*

falls off. So the only fundamental letters that are common to both are **רא**.

What is **רא**? **רא** is the same as **אור**, light. In *lashon kodesh* the consonants are frequently transposed; that's a system in *lashon kodesh*. So **אור** and **רא** both mean light; they both mean to see.

To fear Hashem means to see Hashem; to recognize Him, to be aware of Him; to notice in the world the presence of Hashem – that's what it means *Yirah*.

And so Shlomo Hamelech is telling us here that *yiras Hashem* is everywhere in this world but it's on one condition: you have to use your eyes to see it! It's a lifetime job!

It's a great sadness that people walk through this world with their eyes closed from seeing Hashem. You know why it's so sad? Because you missed the purpose. There's no other purpose of *shomayim vo'aretz* except to give us that great gift of seeing Hashem. Every natural object was created for the purpose of *yiras Hashem*; not merely to gain our consent, that we should say, "Yes, we admit – Hashem made the world." No; that you knew already from when you were a little boy. *Bereishis bara Elokim* – you accepted that right away at the age of five or six years old. Only that since then, you never thought about that subject. You're a *maamin* now

and you think you're finished! But that's a great pity because *Bereishis bara Elokim* is a subject you should be studying all your life.

If we desire to fulfill our purpose here, we need to open our eyes and the sights begin to crowd in on us. They are so numerous that there is no empty space in the world. **מָה רַבּוּ מַעֲשֵׂיךָ הָשֵׁם** – *How many are Your works, Hashem* (Tehilim 104:24). There's so much to see! There's actually no space in the world where you don't see Hashem!

And the way to gain this awareness is by looking! When you take the time to look at things in the world, little by little you gain an awareness of Hashem in addition to your *emunah peshutah*. *Emunah peshutah* is very good. It's excellent if you have the *emunah peshutah* you were taught in your childhood – very good, very good! But it's not good enough!

I once gave a *mashal* here. Suppose Moshe Rabeinu announced to the Am Yisroel, "Let us all come now to Har Sinai to see Hashem come down on the mountain and give us the Torah." And here is one Jew who says, "I have *emunah peshutah*. I don't have to go. You go and I'll believe you. When you come back, tell me what happened and I'll be *mekabel*."

So he says that “When a person looks around at the world at the **מַעֲשָׂיו וּבְרוּאָיו הַנִּפְלְאִים הַגְּדוֹלִים**, at the great and wonderful objects that He made in this world, and you are *misbonein* – *misbonein* means that you see it and you think about the wonderful things that you’re seeing, then certainly there will come into you a great fear and love of Hashem.” Those are the words of the Rambam; he says “certainly.” If you follow this path in life absolutely it will bring results – the Rambam guarantees it.

“Every natural object in this world,” says the Rambam, “has within it a **חִכְמָה עֲמֻקָּה שְׂאִין לָהּ קֵץ** – the deep wisdom of Hashem with no end to its profundity.” And for what purpose? It’s trying to show you something; it wants to make known to you the greatness of Hashem. And therefore once you start looking, you’ll think, “Who can design such a wonderful thing? Only the Infinite Designer, only Hakodosh Boruch Hu can do that.” And you’ll see Hashem wherever you open your eyes – that’s what the Rambam tells us.

Now, the Rambam is not a *darshan*. We can rely on his words – he knows what he’s talking about. Maybe you don’t believe in Chovos Halevavos – you think he’s too *frum* for you – but the Rambam? Surely him you can listen to. Everybody talks about the Rambam – in all *yeshivos* they learn Rambam.

And so if the Rambam says that this is the way, so this is the way!

And that means that everything in the world is for the purpose of serving as pictures to you. These pictures are all around us – what is it Hashem’s fault if people ignore them. If someone brought you into an art gallery – I’m not recommending any art galleries, especially nowadays – but suppose, let’s say, someone brought you into a kosher art gallery; but you took a handkerchief out of your pocket and you blindfolded yourself. And now you’re walking down the corridors, on both sides are expensive beautiful paintings, but you see nothing. It is nobody’s fault but your own. Pull off the blindfold and you’ll see.

This world is full of *tziyurim*. שָׂאוּ מְרוֹם עֵינֵיכֶם וּרְאוּ מִי בָרָא אֱלֹהֵי – *Lift up your eyes and see Who created these* (Yeshaya 40:26). On all sides, we have these living pictures and each one of them is powerful enough to make a lasting impression on us, to make new men out of us.

And so as much as we’re going to be careful about what we see in this world, there’s no question that we have to be seeing! Hashem is showing us pictures and He wants us to use our eyes to bring those pictures into our souls. “Open your eyes and

look,” Hakodosh Boruch Hu says, “See what I created!”

“So Let’s Review...”

- *The Handiwork of Hashem fills the world for us to notice. Our lives are transformed when we begin using our eyes to gain awareness of Hashem within his wonderful creation.*

Shabbos

Dedication Page

**In honor of our
children,
grandchildren
and great
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Shabbos

Eyeing the Music

Now how to study these pictures is a subject as vast as the universe and so all we can do now is take a few pictures at random. But we must know that by giving the examples, we are actually belittling the subject. It's like someone saying, "Give me a sample of the universe," so you pick up a handful of pebbles from the street and say, "Here! Take a look at this." It's a sample but it gives a very poor idea of the universe. But if someone never saw anything in this world, at least let him see a pebble.

And so we have to start with a few examples; and we'll train ourselves by means of exercising our eyes. It means we'll exercise our minds too because just to look means nothing. You have to practice thinking about what you're seeing.

You're walking on Kings Highway and you're looking at the trees. Isn't a tree a beautiful creature? A tree is a creature! It's remarkable. Think about the tree. Why is it that never does a branch grow directly underneath the branch above it. The branches are all spread out like fingers in order to catch as much sunlight as possible. It's a wonderful thing to see that.

And the leaves? Why so many leaves? It's because it's the summertime and we need shade. The leaves are giving you shade from the hot sun. In the autumn all the leaves will fall off because we don't want any shade. We want the sunshine. In the winter time we want only sunshine. Isn't that a wonderful sight to see on the street? You're seeing Hakodosh Boruch Hu in action.

But don't stop there! Once you begin seeing Hashem in this world, don't let go! Hang onto it with ferocity! Look at the leaves and admire them with your eyes. A leaf is an amazing complicated piece of machinery. I say "machinery" – one leaf is a whole block of factories! It breathes in carbon dioxide and moisture from the air. Sunshine too! It takes in the sunlight; and then it takes all these things and it kneads them together, and it makes all the materials that the tree needs out of that.

If you keep looking you see that the leaf is very thin; it's spread out to cover as much space as possible. If you take all the leaves of one tree, it will cover an entire city block! Imagine a breathing space in contact with air of a whole city block. One tree! And each leaf is doing tremendous work taking in materials from the air. That's why some leaves have irregular circumferences. They're not round and smooth. Why irregular? Why is it in and out, in and out? Because the edge of the leaf has holes in it where it breathes in and out and when you have irregular shapes of the leaf, it means there's more opportunity for this function of taking in materials from the air. Once you start studying one leaf you'll see with your own eyes Hashem in the world.

Now we keep walking down the Avenue and we see a fruit store down the block. Ooh, this is going to be something to see!

Now, if you don't bother using your eyes, you won't see anything. It's big bins of fruits, that's all. But suppose you make it a principle that every time you pass a fruit stand, *bli neder*, you'll stop for one half minute – every fruit store for thirty seconds – and you'll admire the handiwork of Hashem. It's an amazing exhibition! Learn to be excited over the show that Hashem is putting on for you because it's put there just for that! אֱלֹקִים עָשָׂה – Hashem made fruit stands for that purpose!

When you see a peach in the fruit stand, it's a lesson in *emunah*. How could such a beautiful object grow out of a wooden branch? One fruit is enough to teach you enough *yiras Hashem* to last you a lifetime! Ahh, fruits! Red fruits, golden fruits, purple fruits, green fruits, yellow fruits. Take a look inside the window and you'll see a cut watermelon with deep red flesh. Such beautiful colors – where did they come from?

Next you pass by a bakery. You look in the window and you see loaves of bread. Don't just take a quick look and walk further. Stop and look. Say, "Isn't that wonderful? Where did bread come from? הַמּוֹצֵיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ. Say it with your mouth. It's a miracle – bread is a miracle! Nobody can make bread out of nothing. The chemists at DuPont can't make bread. *Hamotzi* – He is the only One who can bring forth bread from the earth!

So you look in the window and you think these thoughts. Now, of course if you're an ordinary person so you're too much of a wise guy to do that. We're talking about people – men and women, boys and girls – who want to make something out of themselves. So you walk by a window and you stop to look.

Let's say you see some chocolate cake in the window – even better. Chocolate cake! Where did

all that pleasure come from? It's a delicacy! Flavors and chocolate! It's all miracles. Nobody can make it! Only Hakodosh Boruch Hu! *Borei* – He is the one who creates, *minei mezonos*, all these cakes and cookies. And those are your thoughts as you look in the window at the chocolate cake.

Now, imagine we're talking about a *tzadik*; he never lifts up his eyes. Suddenly, here's an orange peel lying on the ground. Someone was too lazy to throw it in the garbage. That orange peel is enough to teach you the whole *emunah*. Why is it orange on the outside and it's glossy too, while on the other side, on the inside of the peel, there's no color at all and it's not glossy; it's a spongy white. Why is it that?

The answer is, because Hashem wants you to see plan and purpose. The orange peel has to protect the orange; so the outside is covered with a little, very thin layer of organic plastic that makes it slippery and even little chewing insects can't bite in. That's why rarely does any insect bite into an orange. And the color is for the purpose of letting you know that you can buy it and eat it now or you can take it off the tree and eat it now. Once you open it, you don't need the color anymore, so why waste color?

Did you ever try putting an apple on the table and looking at it for fifteen minutes? You never did

it in your life?! You don't know what you missed! For fifteen minutes look at an apple on the table; take a nice red apple, put it on the table and look at it. Look at the redness, the beauty of it, the shape of it. It's gorgeous. Inside is sweet, and crunchy, with just the right amount of tartness from the peel. And hiding inside are the seeds. There's so much to see in the apple even before you put it in your mouth.

Take a look and you'll see is that it's wrapped in a wax wrapper, a waterproof case. Because if you take the peel off of the apple, how long will it take for the apple to begin to decay? Immediately it begins turning brown. But this apple was lying on your table perhaps for weeks and it didn't turn brown. That means that this peel is doing such a perfect job in keeping the apple fresh for you – it's waterproof and it's sealed against the air. Do this for fifteen minutes and you'll be a different person forever.

You know, as a boy, as a young man, I was a *baal mussar*. I came to Slabodka, and they didn't know me there. I was an American boy who came to Slabodka on my own. One day, I went outside of the town all by myself and I laid down there in the meadow. I'm sure they were spying on me, "What's this *Amerikahner* doing out there by himself?" I was lying there for an hour and a half looking at a daisy.

I want to tell you, it was the greatest experience of my life. I was practicing *bechina* according to the Chovos Halevovos. I can't forget that day. I was there for an hour and a half thinking about the *niflaos haBorei* that were all around me in nature. Now, I had studied these things before. But when I got up and walked home, I was walking on clouds. I never had in my whole life such an experience!

And so the world is full of pictures; they're harps upon which we're expected to play beautiful songs. On all sides, we have these living pictures and each one of them is powerful enough to make a lasting impression on us, to make new people out of us. When you look at the *maaseh yadav shel Hakodosh Boruch Hu* with the intention of seeing Hakodosh Boruch Hu, so the more and more you look, the more excited you become.

And you should keep on looking for the next fifty years. Yes, fifty years looking at apples and oranges and trees! Trust me, it pays for all of you to consider such a career. You should take me seriously because once you get into this habit, you've embarked on a career for life, a tremendous career of using your eyes. Because not only are you guarding yourself from misusing your eyes, from seeing things that ruin the *neshama*, but you're using your eyes for the purpose they were given to you – for seeing the things in this world that make your *neshama* great.

And that's why once you get started on this career, the career of not seeing and yes seeing, not seeing what you shouldn't and seeing what you should, it's a ladder to greatness. It's a ladder that takes you all the way up to Hashem and so, don't tire of it. You'll be surprised because each time you look, you'll see more and more. You'll see so much that there won't be any room anymore for anything else! And after a while, when you practice up fulfilling these two attitudes of guarding your eyes - the *sur mei'ra* and the *asei tov* - you transform your *neshama* and you become a *yerei shomayim*, someone who lives with a constant awareness of Hashem.

“So Let's Review...”

- *There are too many examples of studying nature to list, but one who embarks on a career of seeing Hashem's wonders is using the windows of his soul to awaken his innate glory. Such a man has begun climbing a ladder to tremendous heights!*



“So Let’s Review...”

- *Vision is an incredibly valuable gift from Hashem. Like any gift from Hashem, we wish to hear from the Chachomim how to best make use of it. This booklet is guidance from Rabbi Miller on how to do just that.*
- *This booklet was divided up into daily readings. It is advisable to review this booklet four times over the course of a month to gain the maximum benefit from its life-changing teachings.*
- *There is a glory in our souls, Breathed into us by Hashem Himself. It is our task to awaken this glory, and to connect with our inner greatness.*
- *As we attempt to awaken the glory of our souls, we should remember that the eyes are the windows of the soul. What we see with*

our eyes has an everlasting impact on the depths of our souls. We should endeavor to see only good things.

- Because the eyes are so important, we must avoid evil sights at all costs. One who refrains from looking at immodest sights is called a tzaddik, each and every time! With practice, it is possible to train oneself to always be in control.
- If we get used to filling our minds with good thoughts, we won't be distracted by the sights we pass by. One should practice thinking positive Torah thoughts as he walks through the streets.
- The Handiwork of Hashem fills the world for us to notice. Our lives are transformed when we begin using our eyes to gain awareness of Hashem within his wonderful creation.
- There are too many examples of studying nature to list, but one who embarks on a career of seeing Hashem's wonders is using the windows of his soul to awaken his innate glory. Such a man has begun climbing a ladder to tremendous heights!

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