

## Rabbi Eliyahu Mordechai Yanofsky, Z"l

The following is a transcription of the *hesped* given by Rabbi Elimelech Mitnick of Beth Medrash Govoha, at the *levayah* of Rabbi Eliyahu Mordechai Yanofsky, z"l, which took place in the Yashan Bais Medrash of Beth Medrash Govoha.

*Tzaddikim, divreihem, heim, heim, zichronam* — Chazal tell us that when you repeat the Torah words of a *talmid chacham, sifsoseihem dovevos* — their lips move. It's a *metzius* — it connects this world and the coming world.

So let me share with you some *divrei Torah* from Reb Ely. I remember the *simchah* he had on his face when he brought me his *sefer* and we know *sefer b'li hakdamah* (a book without an introduction) is like a *guf* without a *neshamah*.

So his *hakdamah* is his *neshamah*. He asked the following: *Brachah acharonah asher nasan lanu Toras emes* — in *Birchos HaTorah* the *brachah* of *asher nasan lanu Toras emes* refers to *Torah Shebichsav*. And then we say *v'chayei olam nota b'socheinu*. That's *Torah Sheb'al Peh*.

He asks the question, *lamah tzarich brachah m'yuchedes l'Torah Sheb'al Peh* — why do we need a special *brachah* for *Torah Sheb'al Peh* — *yoser mimah sh'omarnu*; in what way is it more than the *brachah* of *v'nosan lanu Toras emes*?

And he answers, *v'nir'eh d'zehu hashevach shel v'chayei olam nota b'socheinu* — what does *v'chayei olam nota b'socheinu* come to tell us? *D'Volam zochim anu* — we're *zocheh l'giluyim chadashim miTorah Sheb'al Peh* — we're *zocheh* to new *giluyim*; the more we're *amal b'Torah Sheb'al Peh*, the more it's *nisgaleh* to us — *gal einay v'abitah nifla'os miTorasecha*.

And that's how he lived and that's who he was; and that's what kept him going. His *chiddushei Torah*, his *ameilus baTorah* — he was an incredible *talmid chacham*, he had a *gevaldig hekef*; and that's why he printed the *sefer* — to give over and to share his *chiddushim* with his *yedidim* and *chaveirim*.

He continues — his *hakaras hatov* is *hein, hein gufei Torah*, just like the *Torah* that he was *mechadesh*.

*V'chan makom l'habia todasi ha'amukah l'horei hayekarim, avi, Reb Moshe Yosef, shlita* — to his dear father. Our *mishpachos* know each other for *doros*. I could *takke* say on Reb Moshe what Chazal tell us — *k'sheShem Shamayim mis'aveiv al yadecha* — when a person is *mis'aveiv Shamayim al yado, mah habriyos omrim alav*. Reb Moshe, *yedid beis avi*, we can say about you *ashrei aviv shelimdo Torah*. And his *chashuve mamme* — *Rabbeinu Yonah* brings down a *girsah, ashrei Imo shelimda Torah*.

*Un di Gemara zogt noch a dargah*: Regarding his mother, we could say *ashrei yoladeto*. It's hard to see now, it's hard to understand, it's hard to comprehend, to wrap your mind around, but we know our *Torah* is *Toras emes* and we could tell his mother it was *kedai* — not only was it *kedai*, but *ashrei imo sheyeladeto* — fortunate and praiseworthy is the mother who brought him into the world.

*V'imi, morasi, maras Tziyyah Alte, shetichyeh* — I remember he came to me one day after the doctors gave up and said, "Elimelech, you're a *yedid ne'eman*; you see where I'm holding in the world. It's not long. Maybe if you go to and speak to Reb Chaim, you'll get something from Reb Chaim that will help me out. I went to Eretz Yisrael, I went to Reb Chaim. I told him — my *yedid ne'eman* sent me on a *shlichus*. He has *yenne machalah*. What should I bring back to him, something that will save him?"

Reb Chaim thought for a few minutes and he told me, "*Tefillah*." I asked Reb Chaim — we're *davening* in this *beis medrash hagadol*, we're *dav-*

*ening* together with the *koach haTorah. B'makom rinah, sham t'hei Torah* — *Torah* and *tefillah* together from *hai ulpana rabba* — *beis medrash gavoha*. We filled oceans of *tefillos*. I told Reb Chaim we're *davening* already for three and a half years and now the doctors were *meya'esh* because it went into the bones. What more can I bring back to him?

Reb Chaim thought, he put his head down and, after a few moments, he picked it up and he said "*Tefillah*." The *Borei Olam* is great enough to take care of it in the bones also. And I came back and *yamim* of *tefillah*, we tore the Heavens apart, we turned the world upside down.

Reb Ely continues in the *hakdamah*: "*She'asu kol mah she'byechaltam, lehadracheini al derech haTorah v'hayashar; v'chol amalam umachshavtam* — all their hard work and their thoughts were only that *b'neiheim* — their children — should grow up on the *derech hayashar* to do the *ratzon* of *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*. And Ely writes that his brothers and sisters were *zocheh* to see a *dugma niflaah* in their



parents as to what *mesirus nefesh* really is. And over the last four years, he took that *dugma* along with him, which he carried in front of him as he was put to the test, living *b'mesirus nefesh* with *yesurim nora'im*.

He then gives his parents a *brachah*: "*Yehi ratzon sheyitein Hakadosh Baruch Hu* — May *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* give you strength to continue with health and *harchavas hanefesh* and may it be *niskayem* with you the *brachah, lir'os* that all the *peiros* that you planted, *mei'hem yihiyu kamosecha* — be like you.

*Yedid beis Avi*, Reb Moshe, may you be *zocheh* to continue seeing your children and continue seeing his children as they continue in your and his ways, in *Torah* and *yirah*.

He goes on to thank his *chashuve* wife, who stood by his side. He refers to her as *yad yemino* (his right hand), *she'amdah l'yemini umakdish chayah laasos retzon Hashem* — who stood at my right side and was *makdish* her life to do the *ratzon* of *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*. And what is that?

*K'dei she'ezkeh lehamshich lilmod b'yeshivah bilti mafri'im* — that I might be able to sit and learn without any hindrances.

*V'od* — and also, *lehagdil baneinu ubnoseinu al haTorah v'hayirah b'kedushah u'vetaharah* — and to raise our children in *Torah* [with], *yirah, kedushah* and *taharah*.

The *tefillos* that went forth in this great *beis*

*medrash* had no end, oceans of *davening*, by day, by night, constantly finishing *Tehillim, al pi pisko shel Reb Chaim*.

We got together with the *Roshei Yeshivah* and we made a *shinui hashem* to add on the name *Raphael*. So what happened?

The *passuk* tells us *rachok mi'yeshuasi divrei shaagasi* — Your *yeshuah*, the help You're sending is very far from my cries — from our *tefillos*, and the more we *daven*, the further away the *yeshuah* seems to be.

The answer lies in the end of the *passuk: v'Atah kadosh yosheiv tehillos Yisrael* — and You, the ultimate *Kadosh*, are sitting with the *tefillos* of *Klal Yisrael*.

*Hakadosh Baruch Hu* took our *tefillos* and He's sitting with them — he's not answering them. Because He's holding on to the *tefillos* as He's holding on to the *korban*, the *korban* which we said before is *ahuv lemaalah, shem Shamayim mis'hev al yadecha*. We're speaking about great *dargos* where, when somebody goes through *yesurim* and people point and say *Yisrael asher b'cha espa'er*; people point and say *ashrei yeladeto*; people point and say *ashrei aviv v'imo shelimdo Torah*.

*Hakadosh Baruch Hu* takes that and He makes a greater *kiddush shem Shamayim*. By holding on to the *tefillos*, the *tefillos* become part of His *kisei*, part of His crown.

Chazal tell us *Atah kadosh v'Shimcha kadosh, u'kedoshim* — *Klal Yisrael, the Kedoshim* — *yehalle-lucha*. We also say *k'vayachol makdishe Shemecha*, He includes them as well; they become a part of the *Atah kadosh*. You, *k'dosh Hashem*, now included in that is *makdishe Shemecha*, the people He is *makdish* Himself with and by, and they become part of *yosheiv tehillos Yisrael*; together with those *tefillos*.

His wife didn't leave any stone unturned. She followed up every avenue and we're *eidim* that she did every possible *hishtadlus* that was within her hands to do. So if we leave here today questioning if we could have done more, which we know we couldn't have, but if we do leave with such thoughts, with such *hirhurim*, then, *chas v'shalom* we're being *mo'il* in the ultimate *kiddush Hashem* that Reb Ely made, in the *Atah kadosh yosheiv tehillos Yisrael*.

How do we know if a person is *ratzui l'maalah* when he comes up? The *Mishnah* tells us *Kol she'ruach habriyos nochah heimenu, ruach Hamakom nochah heimenu. Kol she'ein ruach habriyos nochah heimenu, ein ruach Hamakom nochah heimenu*. Ely was truly loved by everybody and, in return, he loved everybody. His heart included everyone. He was *libo, levav kol Yisrael*.

The nature of a human being is, as Chazal tell us, *v'es hachasidah. ... the chasidah* is not a kosher bird because it only does *chessed* with its friends, with its family but somebody who is not from the family, he's out of the inner circle. Ely was *mekarev* each and every person. He felt a deep and personal responsibility for each and every person. Everyone was a part of his inner circle. He lived a life of being *mevakesh* the *nirdaf* (seeking the one who is persecuted) which is the *derech halichosav* of *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*.

He was *mechadesh chiddushim* in *chessed*. He got involved when nobody else wanted to get involved in *shidduchim* and Rav Mattisyahu, *shlita*, chose

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him to start the seminary and the people of Beth Medrash Govoha — the *yungeleit* — knowing what a difficult task it was to be *gabbai*, requested that he should be the *gabbai* because he knows how to deal with each and every person, making decisions that account for each person's unique feelings.

And for many years, every Shabbos, every Yom Tov ... and he was busy with it all through the week to make the beautiful *minyán* of Beis Shalom that attracted all the *yungeleit* and anybody who came to visit Lakewood.

But his *chiddush* was that he was *mevakesh nirdaf* — in the places he picked, he always found the brokenhearted, the hurt, the *yesomim*, the *almanos*, the people who would come with *taanos* and with unrealistic demands and expectations, the people with hard lives ...

And he would always hear them out and he would never answer in that way. As Chazal tell us, *tanu Rabbanan, hane'elavim v'einam olvim; shom'im cherpasam v'einam meishivim* (those who are insulted but don't insult, hear their degradation and do not respond), which is what he did, day in and day out, *osim me'ahavah*, and he listened to them with his love that he poured upon them. His *osim me'ahavah* was dealing with the *iluv* and the *cherpah* and the *bizyonos* but not only that. *U'smeichim b'yesurim* (rejoice in suffering) — in the past four years, *beino l'vein Kono*, we did not hear one complaint.

*Alav hakasuv omer* — about such a person the Torah tells us, *ke'tzeis hashemesh b'gevuraso* (like the sun going out in its might). Everybody saw him as the sun, which warmed everybody up. Anybody who went to his *dalet amos* recognized immediately he was the *shemesh b'gevuraso*. But now, as the sun sets, the *tzeis hashemesh b'gevuraso* turns into the beauty of *k'zohar harakiya* (glow of the heaven) as we will say in the *Kel maleih*.

He was *mis'chased* in *shidduchim*, in *chinuch habanos*. It was an ongoing daily *avodah*, *mibayis ubachutz* and through that he became *av l'mattah* and *av l'maalah*. When a person lives that type of life; *k'sheShem Shamayim misyahev al yadcha, mah habriyos omrim alav* — what do the people say? It's hard to understand, hard to comprehend but Reb Ely was somebody on whom we can say *Yisrael, asher b'cha espa'er*, somebody who made such a *kid-dush Hashem*, somebody who was *koneh kinyanim* in the *dargos* of *naaseh adam ne'emar baavurecha* in a world of his own.

When Moshe Rabeinu was *mevakesh* for a *memale makom*, the words he chose to ask *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* were *ish asher ruach bo*. And Rashi tells us that means someone *yode'a lehalech k'neged ruach kol echad v'echad* (someone able to deal with the character of each one).

*Hakadosh Baruch Hu* created this world *k'shem shepartzufeihem shonos, kach machshevoseihem shonos* — the same way their faces are different, their thoughts are different. We're living in a *kehilah* of thousands of people, different *dei'os*, different *techunos*, different colors, different interests, but through his incredible *ahavas Yisrael*, he was able to connect with each person and give them what they wanted and work things out with them. Nobody ever left him upset.

But now, for the *machlah noraah* it caused it to be *gevilin nisrafin v'osiyos porchos ba'avir* — the *klaf*, the *eitz chaim*, the *sefer Torah*, the body of the *sefer Torah* is burnt — nothing left. But the *osiyos* — the *osiyos* lift off into the air, into the sky.

The *machalah* started off robbing him of his *to'ar*, his *ziv* and his *komah* and ended up taking away his *basar*; *giddim va'atzamos* and his *dam*. But his Torah, his *osiyos*, were *porchos baavir*. And

Chazal tell us *k'misraros netu'im baalei asufos* — they teach us *eimasai netu'im* — when is the time to start planting? Just like a farmer takes seeds and plants them and he gets a hundredfold from each seed, *b'zman she'baaleihem mis'asfim* — when *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* takes somebody back, that's the opportunity for somebody to cash in and get a hundred times as much over what that person was already *notei'a*.

The opportunity is there for his children. *Tayere Yechezkel Baruch*, he put so much *kochos* into you and your growth. I remember, he sat you in between me and him every Shabbos and I watched how you grew in *davening*, in learning. After *davening*, every Shabbos, he would sit and learn with you. He put his *kochi v'reishis oni* into you. You were *bavos einay*. He was *meyassed* you, he was *m'oded* you, he was *mechazek* you and, the last few years, when he saw what was happening, what was coming his way, he stretched you in the length and breadth and he slowly gave you the keys to carry on the *mishpachah*. But, today, is the opportunity to grab the *osiyos porchos baavir*.

Your father had *gevaldig hasmadah*, his *yashrus*, his *yiras Shamayim*, his *zehirus* and *dikduk b'mitzvos*, his *ahavas Yisrael*, his *achrayus* to each and every person in *Klal Yisrael* and his *hisbatlus* to Torah and its *Chachamim*. The truth is, we're speaking about very high *dargos*, *dargos of Yisrael asher b'cha espa'er*, *dargos of ruach shel kol ish va'ish*, *dargos* of a person who's holding by a *kid-dush Hashem*, but a *hesped* is about what he had to teach us and how to go about getting there. He had an elevated *neshamah*, blessed with great *siyatta diShmaya*; it is not so simple for everybody to reach that goal. But, at the very least, let us learn to follow his way and when one comes to break it down and figure it out, it would seem to me he worked with a Rambam.

I was brought up with him. I remember his parents' home. It was a home of *chinuch*, and every dollar mattered; there was no *hefker velt*. And Chazal tell us that a person is *nikar b'kiso, b'kaaso, u'bekoso*.

*B'kiso* — with his money, how he interacts, how he deals with his money, everybody holds on to it tightly, they're *moser nefesh* to give away their lives for their money.

But after his marriage, he was able to do things differently. So he set up a ladder that was *mutzav artzah*; start off at the bottom, on the ground. *Verosho magia haShamayim*. And he made it to the top, to the *himmel*. How did he do that? *Beino l'ven atzmo*, he wasn't grudging with money, he was *mevater*. He wasn't busy with *gashmiyus*. The house he made was a simple house, the life he lived was a simple life. And slowly, he dealt that way with his family and his children — *ohn kein dikduk*.

But with other people, with them he became a *malveh*, a *mechanen* and people started getting attracted to him. It didn't take long and his *dalet amos* were a *derhoibene dalet amos*. When people came in there, they felt a *leichkeit*, they felt the *Shechinah*, they heard him learning, they saw *divrei Elokim chaim*. And, finally, it came to a point that people would *takke* say about him *Yisrael asher b'cha espa'er*.

The *Gemara* in *Bava Basra* (11) brings a *maaseh* with *Munbaz Hamelech*, *shebizbez otzrosav ve'otzros avosav* (he squandered his treasures and his ancestors' treasures). *Chivru alav achiv u'beis aviv* — his family came down to make some sense of his *vitur*, of his not being *medakdek*. They told him he was mismanaging his money, he wasn't *achra'i*. They told him *avosecha ginzu vehosifu* — our family was in the business of hoarding and putting away the money; we should be prestigious, we should be

powerful. *Vata mevazvam* — and you're giving it out. *Amar lahem* — he told them, "*Avoseinu ginzu l'matah* — they were busy here in this world. *Vaani ganazti l'maalah* — and I'm busy with the coming world. *Avosai ginzu l'Olam Hazez vaani ganazti l'Olam Haba*."

That's the way he lived. Any *yungerman* who was sitting and learning and wanted to stay in learning knew that he could send his child to the seminary and he wouldn't have to leave learning, because Ely was not *medakdek*, he was *mevater* in *shidduchim* whenever people needed, in *tzedakos* ... and not only in money but in life and advice, in anything that was facing any person with any problem, they came to speak to him. He was the address.

And the *Gemara* ends off — *shene'emar*, quoting a *passuk* (*Yeshaya* 58:8) — *kvod Hashem yaasfecha* — the *kvod Hashem* will gather you in. Did we not see in the past four years this *pasuk* play itself out in Ely's life — *u'chvod Hashem yaasfecha*?

The *passuk* (*Tehillim* 49) tells us *al tira ki ya'ashir ish, ki yirbeh kvod beiso; ki lo b'moso yikach hakol*. Let me share with you a story. Ely, one time, was involved in a *shidduch*; as we said, he was always there to help the people who had it hardest and he made a *shidduch* — two people who had very serious medical issues. As the *shidduch* played itself out, everyone involved recognized that to have it happen they would need a boatload of money. And so, they went around to collect the money needed — which was upwards of \$100,000.

The people he approached refused to give him money — they felt it's a situation of *hiniach ma'osav al keren hatzvi* (the money will be wasted) — who knows what's going to end up happening, and they did not want to get involved. They said maybe there is no reason to even make the *shidduch* at all! It came to a point where the *shidduch* was about to break off and not happen.

Reb Ely, the *yungerman*, opened up his personal *otzros* and loaned great amounts of money with the *kavanah* that if he, a *yungerman*, does it, the *ashirim* will be embarrassed and will feel *mechuyav* to pitch in and help out. That is exactly what happened and, today, because of him and him alone, there is a wonderful big family.

Now is the opportunity for the children and friends to grab, get these *dargos* for yourselves. Until now, he was the *d'mus* (example), he was the *makor*. He gave this over to you. But now, your father is an *omeid bein hamehalchim*, now you're the *bra kar'a d'avuha*. You're the foot that the *Gemara* says, if you take over, if you fulfill the legacy, if you carry on, he'll be *mehalech* up there. "*Mir darf shikin di pekelach*" (We need to send packages) by undertaking, by trying ourselves, to get these *dargos*, but these *dargos* are so difficult.

The *passuk* (*Devarim* 30) tells us *u'mal Hashem Elokecha es levavecha* (Hashem your G-d will circumscribe your heart). The *passuk* is speaking to *gantz Klal Yisrael*, so why does it have to add on *v'es levav zar'echa* (and the hearts of your children)?

*Shteit doh*, that when the father is *mal* his *orlas halev*, automatically, *levav zar'echa* have that *zechus*, too. And so, you were born on the mountain. By grabbing the *osiyos porchos baavir*, you may be *zocheh* to ride his coattails to achieve his *dargos* and to bring *aliyah* to his *neshamah*. His *leebshaf* for this great *makom Torah*, he breathed in the air and the life the minute he came to *hay beis ulpana rabba*, Beis Medrash Govoha. Its *ameilus baTorah*, its living 24/7 Torah, together with the *gevaldig eidelkeit* and the *chessed* that was Rav Shneur's legacy.

Eliyahu Mordechai ben Tzivyah Alte, our friendship is close to 30 years old. It was more than a friendship; it was a sacred covenant, one based

on *doros* of our *mishpachos* together. In the past 30 years, and I say this without a drop of exaggeration, there was not one *machlokes*; we did not have one *sichsuch*. The entire world was being consumed in the fire of *machlokes*. In our corner there was one thing — *ratzof ahavah*; *shalvah*, peace, as the *passuk* says (*Koheles* 4), *ki im yipolu ha'echad yakim es chaveiro* (for if they fall, one will lift up his friend) — we were always there for each other through thick and thin, *ve'ilu ha'echad sheyipol, v'ein sheini lehakimo* (woe to the one who falls and has no second one to lift him up). How is such a concept even fathomable today — one nobody could even believe exists?! It was only because Rav Ely was so pure, so full of love for everyone, that it could be.

I remember going to him on a Yom Tov in his *sukkah*, sitting down next to a person who worked himself out from the *kur habarzel* and became a prince, sitting next to somebody — such a great *talmid chacham*, hearing him speak to him in learning, you just felt what the *Orach Chaim* says, *hayu mishtag'im kaari*; to run after it, to enjoy it. The *taanug* sitting next to such a person, there are no words to

describe.

This is the beauty of the friendship I had with him. It was created through his Torah, through *ameilus haTorah*, through talking in learning, through *Chovos Halevavos* and *machshavah*, through living through Yom Tov, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, *teshuvah*; being *mamlieh Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, *simchas haTorah*, Pesach of *heimenuisa* and the *simchah* of the *nitzchiyus* of Purim; a *chavershaft* that's created out of Torah and *mitzvos* is, itself, *nitzchi* (eternal), because that was the secret to his soul — he was a person whose true grounding and interests were all *ruchniyus*.

One doesn't say goodbye, one doesn't part from such a *chavershaft*. On the contrary, this *chavershaft* includes both worlds, it transcends. As we say in *davening*, *v'nizkeh v'nireh l'yemos haMoshiach ulechayei olamim*. The *chavershaft* has a *kinyan* of *shnei olamim*.

And so, *Torah, Torah, chigri sak* (wear sackcloth). This great *talmid chacham* is no longer here, but what will we put the *sak* on? *Gevilin nisrafin*. This *machalah* robs the *guf*. It's not only *laharog* — it doesn't only kill *anashim, nashim v'taf* — men, women

and children; but it's *me'abed*, it robs the person of their *guf*, it's *me'abed* the *kedushas haguf* of *Klal Yisrael*. So on what will we put the sack?

We see this horrific *machalah* entering the inner circle of *ligyono shel Melech* and it's hitting us from all sides, *melifnim u'melaachor*, in front and in back, on the right and left. It's taking away *banim u'mei banim*; *Rabbanan utalmideihon* of *Gedolei olam*, fathers and sons together — a father *sar haTorah* and a son, *aluf haTalmud b'yom echad*.

Raphael Eliyahu, go by the *kisei Hakavod, veyomar letzaroseinu dai* (and say enough to our sorrows) — He should be *mevatel* this *gezeirah achzari* (annul this cruel decree).

You should be a *meilitz yosher* for your father and your mother and for your children. *Nitzchu ar'eilim* — they took you away.

*Mir kan aych avek nemen, ober unzere mishpachah zenen tzuzamen fahr doros; doros iz der taytch, gemira d'lo kala* — we know we will not end. It's a *havtachah* from *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*: *Ki lo sishkach mipi zaracha v'zera zaracha ad olam*.

*Zeit mispallel* that your children should continue, *l'maan asher yetza-*

*veh es banav v'es beiso acharav*.

*Netzach Yisrael lo yeshaker*. May you be a *meilitz yosher* for Yechezkel Baruch, who now, filling your place, becomes *rei'a v'rei'a avicha* just like we were *rei'a v'rei'a avicha* — *b'nei vris* together. May he have the *kochos* to carry the *mishpachah* as you prepared him so well this past while; for Aharon Shaul, for Chaim, for Dovid, for Yaakov and for your sweet Yisrael Meir. For your daughter, don't forget the last *brachah* you gave her. She was *meshamesh* you, as *Rashi* tells us on the *passuk*, *Ani avdecha ben amosecha* — that an *eved* who comes for the *shuk* is not *domeh* to an *eved ben amah* who's trained. How she came and ran and dealt and took care of you as an *amah bas eved*. When you go by the *kisei Hakavod*, make sure they see through the last *brachah* you gave her.

May you be a *meilitz yosher* for the other daughters and *chasan Rabbanan*, the *eidims*, and for your *chashuve* wife who was *moser nefesh* and stood by your side the past four years *al kol neshimah u'neshimah*. And may we be *zocheh* to the *Geulah Sheleimah*; *ubila hamaves lanetzach, umachah Hashem dim'ah me'al kol panim*.