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WITH

R' AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"l

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

Sin and Exile

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This Shavuot be a



Special Letter
from our founder
on page 11

Part I. Ancient Exiles

The Good Land

When the *baal korei* reads in this week's *sedrah* (Bechukosai 26:32-33), "וְהַשְׁמַתִּי אֶת הָאָרֶץ – And I will make the land desolate ... וְנָתַתִּי אֶת עָרֵיכֶם חָרְבָה – And I will destroy your cities," we are thinking, "A tragedy! All of these words came true" and we are reminded about those familiar words from the Siddur, מִפְּנֵי חַטֹּאתֵינוּ גָלִינוּ מֵאֶרֶץנוּ – Because of our sins we were exiled from our land. We're thinking; "we are the ones who caused our beautiful cities to be destroyed."

Which cities? Which land? Of course, we're talking about Eretz Yisroel here but there's more to it. I remember a *rav* in Brownsville was once speaking. He said something that appeared queer to me at that time. He was quoting a *possuk* that describes our exile: וְאֶבְרַתֶּם מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה – you will go lost from this good land that I'm giving you (Devarim 11:17). And he said: "Be careful because one day you might go lost from the good land that I'm giving you – the land of America."

At first I was thinking that it's not true – it's talking about Eretz Yisroel! And here, this old *rav* was talking about America. But I learned something important then. America is a good land too. Not only America; Australia is a good land too. There are a lot of good lands that Hashem is giving to you, so הִשְׁמְרוּ לָכֶם – watch out! Because *golus* is not only what happened once in Eretz Yisroel; it's a process of history.

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Richest Man in Babylon

And so when we say **מִפְּנֵי הַטָּאִינוּ**, that because of our sins we were exiled from our country, we have to remember that we're not talking only about the sins of our forefathers thousands of years ago when the Beis Hamikdash still stood; it means all of our history.

Don't think Bavel wasn't an *eretz tova*. The Babylonian Exile was a remarkable stage of our history. We had all Jewish cities in Bavel. Neharda'a is described by Josephus as an all Jewish town; only Jews lived there. And it was a big fortified town that had powerful walls around it. Imagine that, an old Jewish town with fortifications.

And the Jews were respected there. From the very beginning the kings gave the highest positions in the government to the Jews. Daniel, was the second in command for a time over all of Babylonia. You remember Mordechai? He became the vice regent instead of Haman. Many great Jews had positions of power in Babylon and in Persia. It's together, one kingdom.

The Happy Exile

And even many years later we know that the kings of Babylon were friends of the Jews. It's described once in the Gemara (Zevachim 19a) how Rav Huna bar Nosson was standing before the king, and Rav Huna's belt had gone down a little bit, so the king with his own two hands lifted up the belt for him. And he said to Rav Huna, "You're a *mamleches Kohanim*. You're a nation of priests and the priests should have the belt up higher. It looks better." The king of Persia raised up the belt for Rav Huna.

Later when Rav Huna bar Nosson came to Ameimar and told the story, Ameimar said, "It was fulfilled on you the *possuk*, **וְהָיוּ מְלָכִים אֲמֵינֶךָ** – *Kings will be your servants.*" It means that in Bavel, in *golus*, we were served by the gentiles.

It was a remarkable thing how we lived in Babylonia! Bavel was a gift; it wasn't exile the way we think today. For one thousand years, the gentiles didn't molest us. We lived a thousand happy and fruitful years there. You think the Talmud Bavli was

made there for nothing?! Bavel was the home of the Torah!

Becoming a Minority

But then things started happening. Suddenly they began to try to look like gentiles. They began to despise themselves. There were sins. Oh yes. When we began to suffer there, it wasn't for nothing; it was **מִפְּנֵי הַטָּאִינוּ** that we lost that gift.

And finally Hakodosh Boruch Hu said, "If that's the case, if you don't appreciate that big gift, I'll take it away from you." It was the last Jewish majority we enjoyed. From then on, when we went among the nations, even though we lived in some countries happily more or less, but we were always a minority among strangers. In Bavel, we were a majority! And so we look back and we say, **מִפְּנֵי הַטָּאִינוּ** – because of our sins we were exiled from our land. We caused it to ourselves."

That's part of our obligation as *frum* Jews – especially when we're reading this *parsha* – we must look back on our past and say **מִפְּנֵי הַטָּאִינוּ**. Again and again, because of our sins we lost the gift that Hashem was giving us

The Caliphate's Culture Cradle

You know, we had a Spain once. It was a pride for us, how we succeeded in *Sforad*. The *Sefardim* who originate from Spain sign their names with a *samach tes* – *Sefardi tavor*; a pure *Sefardi* Jew. It means, "We came from Spain, from pure lineage." Those were Jewish families of aristocracy.

Spain was a wonderful country! It was ruled by the Moorish Arabs – they were a cultured and advanced people and the Jews lived there in wealth and they lived with a rich culture. There was commerce in Spain and Jews were so powerful that one Jew was even the vizier, the vice regent for the Caliph in Spain.

Poetry, grammar and Jewish literature flourished in Spain. Everything! Of course, the Torah and the *gedolei Yisroel* flourished there. The Jews wrote wonderful Torah books. All the great Rishonim, almost all of them were composed in Spain. The Ritva and the Rashba lived in Spain. Even the Rosh came

from Germany and settled in Spain. So many of our great ones. Rabbi Yehuda HaLevi. And the Rambam came from Spain originally.

Spain was a glorious place, a cradle for Jewish culture, for Torah and for wealth! For happiness! How great was the happiness of our nation in Spain! Every facet of Jewish living was enriched in Spain!

Catholic Conquistadors

And then they made an error. They began to forget how fortunate they were and they began to cast their eyes on the non-Jewish population and they began to imitate them. They began to mingle with them. They began to write love songs and sing love songs in Hebrew. We never had such things before. They brought in the gentile culture into their homes, into their lives. They began to get lost among the gentiles.

And so Hakodosh Boruch Hu said, “Before it’s too late, I’m going to have to stop this.” And therefore, Hakodosh Boruch Hu caused the Christians to conquer all of Spain. When the Christians took over Spain, the good times came to an end. The Church moved in with its wrath and animosity and it began to make decrees; they began to persuade the king and the queen that we don’t need the Jews anymore.

And finally in 1492, the *churban Beis Hamikdosh* took place. Ah! Tragedy of tragedies! וְאֶבְרַתֶּם בְּגוֹיִם – “You will go lost among the nations אֶרֶץ אֲתֹנָם אֶרֶץ – and the land of your enemies will devour you”. That’s what happened. We began to get lost among the gentiles and what was once a welcoming land, an *eretz tovah*, turned into a land of enemies. And so the Jewish nation had to once again take up its traveling stick in hand and we left Spain. The Jewish nation had to go into exile again.

Pirates and Savages

We have to look back on Spain and see how great a tragedy was caused by the errors of those who began to walk in the paths of sin. That’s an important lesson to think about always. Sin brings calamity upon the nation! How many people lost their lives when they went into exile from Spain? They had to travel on the seas and they were attacked by pirates.

Women were seized, snatched away from their husbands by the pirates. How many ships went down at sea?

And when they were put on the shores of Northern Africa, they were attacked by savages. Very many lost their lives. Finally the new communities were settled, but in the meantime a very great tragedy had been experienced by the people. And so we look back and we say מִפְּנֵי חַטָּאתֵינוּ גָּלֵינוּ מֵאֶרֶצְנוּ – because of our sins, we were exiled from Spain.

Not As It Seems

I’d like to jump now to our recent past. You know, we look back at our exile in Europe, Eastern Europe, and we think, “They weren’t treated well. They had to pay extra taxes. There were ghettos.” And it’s true. In old Russia, the rulers were Greek Orthodox Christians and the Jews were second class citizens and a Jew was sometimes despised and scorned on the roads. But let me explain something to you.

What do you think is happiness? The fact that you have Rome on your floor? You must know happiness consists of human emotions. And there is not the slightest question that the Jews years ago in Europe enjoyed more real happiness than anybody does today. Even though they were persecuted, you must realize that first of all the history books give you the wrong perspective, there were wealthy Jews in every generation. And the wealthy Jews took care of the poor Jews. There never was so much *tzedokah* in the world as there always was among Jews.

In addition, the Jews had a family life, the Jews were under the leadership of the *beis din*, and the *beis din* saw to it that there was *shalom bayis*, and when a parent fell ill, an old parent, the *beis din* saw to it that the sons and the daughters took care of their parents. We have no idea how powerful was the *beis din* in Europe, it was powerful. Even the church supported the authority of the *beis din*.

And they lived independently. Way back before World War I, every town had a *pristov*. There was a chief of police who was a *rasha* and he was in charge; and you had to bribe him from time to time so he shouldn't make trouble for the Jews. But it was all under control and the Jews were in authority.

Glory to Russia

The Jews had their own community life in Europe. Shabbos was a glorious day, then they really appreciated the Shabbos. Don't make any errors, when it came to solid happiness, the Jews in Russia sucked the honey of this world. The Am Yisroel in Europe lived gloriously!

Old Russia was a glorious home for the Jewish people for many hundreds of years. And don't let anybody tell you that it wasn't – I saw it with my own eyes, the Jewish towns! When I was in Europe, I once took a five-day hike with a fellow yeshiva man through Lithuania. This was before Russia had come in. It was still a Lithuanian republic. And it was remarkable to see how the towns were Jewish towns. As we went on the highway, we marched for days and days, we came to a town. In the distance, we saw the spires of the Catholic church, two towers. It meant a Jewish town because the *goyim* lived out in the fields. The town, the settled areas, were all Jewish. As soon as the cobblestone paving began, there was an *eiruv*, a wire over the road. When the rainy season came the dirt roads where the peasants lived were a quagmire. The wagon sank up to the hubs in mud. The paving began where the *eiruv* was, for the Jews.

And the town was all Jewish. Every town was all Jewish! All the businesses were all Jewish. The town had synagogues. Every town had a *mikveh*. It had a *beis hashchita*, a slaughterhouse. The *eretz tovah* of Russia was a glorious opportunity.

Part II. Modern Exiles

Weapons In Yeshiva

When did that come to an end? Why were we exiled from the *eretz tovah* of Russia, of Europe? It was **מִפְּנֵי הַטָּאִינוּ**. That's the plain truth. Had we not sinned, had the so-called enlightened ones not come and helped the anarchists who plotted to overthrow the Czar, who knows what could have happened? Russia could have remained our salvation, our future.

What happened? **מִפְּנֵי הַטָּאִינוּ** it all went away. The *maskilim* began to wean the youth away from the

Torah. They brought in gentile ways among the Jews and they began to ruin the Torah institutions. "You don't need any Jewish religion," they said. "All of us together will be brothers from now on! No more oppression in the world! No more intolerance! Intolerance is dead forever! All we need is redistribution of wealth! Everybody will be happy!"

In Slabodka Yeshiva once in 1904, a former *talmid* of the yeshiva walked in and went up on the *bimah* in front of the *aron kodesh* with a revolver and held it aloft and he gave a *drasha* against the yeshiva. He said, "Things are different. We don't need this old fashioned business anymore. A new era has been introduced." Nobody could say a word; he was holding a revolver.

There were Jewish youth also among those who wanted to kill the Czar and overthrow the government. And the rabbis pleaded with them. "You're bringing a ruination upon the Jewish people." The *rabbanim* warned the youth, "Don't organize a revolt against the Czar! Don't try to overthrow the Czar! What's going to happen subsequently will be even worse!" The *rabbanim* foresaw what would happen. But the people sinned! They ignored the Torah leaders! They knew better. That was *our sin! Our sin!*

Prison of Freedom

And finally it happened; Russia collapsed. The Czar was taken down to the basement of a prison and he was shot dead. It was all over! And the Jewish youth were celebrating. "Our glorious new period is going to begin now!" The Jewish Communists were shouting, "Hurrah! We're finished with the house of Romanov! Kaput with the tyrants! Now we have freedom."

And what happened? Russia today is one great prison! When the Czar of Russia held power, there were always things to criticize, nobody is perfect, but in those days you could travel all over Russia. If you wanted, you could leave Russia. Nobody stopped you. Millions of people left Russia under the Czar – nobody stopped you. You could engage in all kinds of businesses. There was some limitations. Jews were limited for certain things, but in general there was liberty. There were Jewish millionaires too.

And now **מִפְּנֵי הַטְּאִינוּ**, the Russian Jews are only waiting to get out of Russia. Their sole hope is to come to some other country. Today there's an outcry. Help Russian Jews! Help Russian Jews! Who caused the downfall of the Jewish people if not the Russian Jews? The Russian Jews embraced communism. It was only when Stalin came along and he began putting the main Jewish communists against the wall and shooting them then the Russian Jews lost their faith in communism. But up until Stalin they were all for it.

The Best Jews

Who was the *Yevseksiya*? I'm not talking about the small minority. There is a small minority of heroes that remained Yidden to this day. Among the best Jews in the world are in Russia today. When a Jew comes out of Russia, when a *frum* Jew, a Lubavitcher comes out of Russia today they're much better than American Lubavitcher. They are real Jews who have given their lives for Yiddishkeit, for Judaism.

But I'm talking about the masses. The masses yielded to the onslaught of communism. They embraced it. It was their fault. You know why they embraced it? Because the masses had been so rotted through and through beforehand; they hated Judaism. They despised it. Even Jews who kept Shabbos already hated Judaism. They kept Shabbos because it was a national day. It was the Jewish national day of rest. Jewish towns had no other day of rest except Shabbos. But they despised everything Jewish. The youth hated it. They were so poisoned by the Haskalah, by the Bundists and Socialists.

In all of Russia today, there's only one synagogue left. In Moscow. And even that's only a showplace where the KGB comes and puts on *tefillin* and sits there and watches that the tourists shouldn't say one word against the Communist regime. If you ever visit the Moscow synagogue, watch out to whom you're talking to next on the bench. He's an undercover agent of the Russian government. One synagogue! There were hundreds of thousands of synagogues in old Russia! Not one is left. All wiped out!

We look back on the desert of what's left: The Jewish cemeteries are gone. They're made into

parking lots, athletic fields – Jewish cemeteries. Synagogues, Slabodka yeshiva. When I was in Slabodka, after years and years of hard work, they finally gathered enough money to build a decent building. For a hundred years, they lived in a building of wooden logs – that's where I learned. In wintertime, it was freezing! We had to wear woolen boots because of the chilblains in our toes. Finally, they gathered enough money from America and they built a nice looking building. As soon as they moved in, Russia came and the Yeshiva had to move out again. The old building was taken over as a stall for horses and the new building became a club for workers. Goodbye! No more Yeshiva.

Cause of The Holocaust

Not only in Russia. In Lithuania. In Poland. Wherever Jews used to live before and the Communists came in – goodbye Jews. Cuba too. When Cuba was taken over by the Communists, American Jewish students all wore Cuban hats. They sympathized with Castro. Wonderful! An agrarian reformer! “Oh no, he's not a Communist dictator. He's just an agrarian reformer who wants to redistribute the lands among the people.” Well, are there Jews left in Cuba today? Havana was once a place where Jews lived and made a good living and there were *kehillos* in Havana. Today nothing. Nothing. Nothing.

And so we have a lot to be sorry for. Because who made the mistakes? Who sinned? We did! ‘We’ means the Jewish nation in general. It was our sons who were Communists. Our sons were Socialists. Our sons threw bombs at the Czar. Yes, our sons. Our sons! Of course there were gentiles too, but **מִפְּנֵי הַטְּאִינוּ**, because of our sons we went into exile again.

And that's how the Holocaust finally came. It was due to the efforts of our sons. They ruined everything. Hitler only came and destroyed the bodies, but the souls were ruined before. Not like Young Israel writers or some American Jewish rabbis or modern history writers who say that in Europe it was a flourishing Torah culture when Hitler came. It was very far from flourishing.

Jews destroyed the Torah, not Hitler. Hitler came after Jews did the job. That's what the Nefesh Hachaim

says. He says gentiles never come unless first Jews destroy it. And he quotes what the Gemara Sanhedrin (96b) says about the Beis Hamikdash: קְמָחָא טְחִינָא – *The gentiles came and ground flour that was already ground.* When Titus was boasting that he destroyed the Beis Hamikdash so Hakodosh Boruch Hu said, “You ground flour that was already ground by the Jews. You didn’t grind any wheat; you ground flour.” The Jews had already destroyed it.

Don’t Vote for Liberals

And so we come back to that old *rav* in Brownsville. Someday, someday, I’m afraid we’ll look back on America and say, “Oy! Look what happened because of our sins!” And so the question is, what is better? Is it better to look back some day and say, “Look, America was such a great place. We had freedom. Nobody bothered the Jews. You could open yeshivas everywhere. You could even keep Shabbos in this country. Jews could make a living. They could put U-Os. You know, to put a U-O on food products is a big nerve. The gentiles don’t like that idea. But they can’t stop us. And so gentiles buy products even though they don’t know what it means, but they’re helping to pay. They pay more for the products because we get the *hashgacha*. And all over the country, we’re enjoying prosperity.

So what are the Jews doing? Jewish youth are Marxists. They’re trying their best to break down America. Jewish politicians like Koch, Solarz and others are helping the Jews break down America with their liberal policies. Of course there are plenty of gentiles that are doing it too. But our sons are there with liberal ideas.

And Jews are voting for Solarz and Koch. Jews are keeping them in power. Of course Koch gives them in return some benefits. And for that benefit, the *askanim*, the *shtadlanim*, are selling our votes. Whole kehillas of *frum* Jews, whole congregations, vote for these people, and they are guilty of breaking down everything we have!

America’s Socialist Future

Look what’s happening to America! The whole youth is being demoralized! In the schools! The Jewish teachers in the schools are hammering away

at the minds of the children, And it’s our sins! Our votes! Our apathy! The Jews are ruining all this. They’re ruining America!

It’s a tragic error when these ultraliberal Jews battle religion in the schools. Let them have religion! Jews should not resent the fact that this is a white Christian country. We should say “Gezunteheit!” More power to you! We are satisfied with that. Let it remain a white Christian country! Certainly it’s a Christian country and it must remain so. The salvation of America is that it should remain a Christian country because to be a Christian country is ten thousand times better than being a G-dless country – because atheism is ten thousand times worse than idolatry.

What do you want? That we should someday look back from our new place of exile in Japan, or maybe we’ll be exiled in Australia, and we’ll look back to the good old days when they had this great country of freedom from one ocean to another where we could travel and make money and live comfortably and practice Judaism. We could have built yeshivas all over the country. We could have Torah and *Olam Hazeih* together, happiness and success and perfection in serving Hashem.

And we’ll look back and say, “Look what became of that *eretz tovah*?!” It can become a Communist controlled country, *chas v’shalom*, where you won’t be able to have one *shul*. Don’t say “How can it be? It’s impossible!” The truth is it’s even more surprising that Russia doesn’t have one synagogue; but don’t think it can’t happen here; in America it’s easier to happen. It can turn Socialist, no question.

American Gas Chambers

Or *chas v’shalom* it’ll turn into a Fascist country. Finally the gentiles in the Midwest will get so disgusted with the liberals and make a revolution and who knows what will be then. America, a Fascist country, *chas v’shalom*?! Who knows what kind of gas chambers can be here? They can make better ones in America than the Germans did.

And therefore we have to strengthen ourselves now! Not to cry later and bang on our chests, “מִפְּנֵי מִאֲמָרֵי קָא.” We have to be united to fight for righteousness, to spread Torah, to support *yeshivas*.

We should build *kollelim* and *Beis Yankevs*. Our communities should be fortresses. Our own families should be all *frum*. We have to keep the gentile ways, the materialism and *leitzanus* out of our homes.

When we vote, we vote only for those who are trying to build up America, not for people who are for gay rights; not for those who are destroying morality, who are ruining the youth. Together we have to try to preserve what we have because that's what Hakodosh Boruch Hu wants of us. And maybe if we'll be *zocheh*, maybe Hakodosh Boruch Hu will bring Moshiach to take us from America straight to Eretz Yisroel. We won't need to make another stop in Australia or Japan.

Part III. Exile and Redemption

Imagine Moshiach

Now, let's imagine that great day. Why shouldn't we imagine it – there will be an end after all. No question about it. That's part of our *emunah*. Every Jew must subscribe to the faith that Hakodosh Boruch Hu has promised us He is going to restore us to our former greatness and even more.

It means that one day we'll be sitting, maybe we'll be sitting here in our shul in Flatbush and suddenly, "Moshiach!" Oh, is it going to be glorious! וְשָׂא נֵם לְקַבֵּץ – Hashem will raise up a banner to gather together our dispersions. We'll march back to Eretz Yisroel from all the countries under the banner of Hashem! It's going to take place on a huge scale, all over the world, and the nations won't be able to do a thing.

All they can do is watch in awe. "The People of Israel are now vindicated! They're marching back to their homeland!"

By the way, if you don't have such a picture in your mind, go ahead and put in such a picture because that's necessary for the *emunah* that is required of every Jew.

Glory and Happiness

That's what's going to happen eventually. We'll come back. And all the nations will cooperate and see that we come back. They'll give us our money out of the banks and they'll give us good money for our property. The nations will begin giving airlifts to our people. All the airplanes will be chartered only for us – one way! All the ocean liners will be outfitted for us! All the trains will be traveling in one direction! The Am Yisroel is coming back to their homeland!

There'll be so much handshaking. It'll be a tremendous exultation. אֶז יִמְלֵא שְׂחוֹק פִּינוּ – Then our mouths will be full of laughter, וְלִשׁוֹנֵנוּ רִנָּה – and our tongue will be full of song. There's no question that there'll be laughter and singing in the streets. עֲמֻדוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם – Our feet will be standing within your gates O' Yerushalayim. The happiness is so great that we cannot picture it! It's incredible, the joy of the Jewish nation! They'll all be reunited finally after all the years of exile.

When the great *shofar* will be sounded, it will be a signal that the nations have to give in. All the Arabs will have to yield, everybody will have to say yes. And that is a very complicated process, there are many international obligations, treaties among the nations, everything will have to be rejected because they are now going to yield to the great proclamation that the Am Yisroel must be restored to its land, no matter what.

Happiness and Weeping

Now, I don't want to ruin the scene for you but I have to tell you that it's not that simple. It's not so simple. Because when Yirmiya HaNavi describes the return of the nation of Am Yisroel from their exile, how the tribes will one day come back, he says like this: וְבִתְהוֹנוּם – With weeping they shall come, אֶז אֲבִילֵם – and with entreaties I shall carry them. It means that as we come back there'll be some sadness too, some crying.

Now the question is, we're talking now about the time of the redemption, the time of the greatest happiness, and here Yirmiyahu is telling us there's going to be weeping. What's going on here?

And the answer is that in the midst of the great happiness will also be sadness; sadness about the many people who won't be coming back with us, the Jews who went lost among the *goyim* in *golus*! Ooh, to get lost; that's something to weep about.

It's frightful to think about! Like the Gemara (Makkos 24a) says, **מִסְתַּפֵּינָא מִהָאֵי קָרָא** – *I'm afraid of that possuk*, **וְאֶבְרַתֶּם בְּגוֹיִם** – *And you will go lost among the nations!* (Bechukosai 26:38). It's some of the most fearful words in the Torah; that someone from the Bnei Yisroel should go lost among the nations. And therefore when we go back, we'll cry about our brothers who went lost for two thousand years.

Plan of Exile

But I want to tell you now a big *chiddush* about this tragedy; that possuk **וְאֶבְרַתֶּם בְּגוֹיִם**, that going lost, is not an accident, an inadvertent result of *golus*. It's *the plan* of *golus* from the beginning. Of course, Hakodosh Boruch Hu has many intentions, many plans. One day I hope we'll have the time to talk about all of them; we'll make a list and discuss all of them in detail but right now I want to talk about this one, the people who go lost.

In our *parsha* Hashem says, **וְאֶתְכֶם לְאֻזְרָה בְּגוֹיִם** – *And I will scatter you among the nations.* Now, the word *ezoreh* is unusual for the concept of scattering. There are better *lashon kodesh* words to describe a dispersal. Maybe *afitz* would be better. I could tell you other words, better words.

No, no, there's no better word. Because *ezoreh* means winnowing, the purposeful separating of the chaff, the *psoles*, from the good grain. I don't know if you ever saw somebody winnowing grain. I once watched it when I was in Europe. The wind was blowing and the farmer had a big pile of wheat next to him. He picked up a shovelful and threw the grain into the wind and the chaff blew away and the grain, which is heavier, fell down.

It's a very slow process. Again and again you're throwing the grain into the wind and again and again some of the chaff gets blown away. And so we're learning now a purpose of *Golus* that we didn't know before. It's not just **מִפְּנֵי הַטָּאִינוּ** – *a punishment due to our sins*. It's a purposeful process. It's separating the

weak from the strong, the loyal from the not so loyal. That's what it means, "I will *ezoreh* you among the nations."

Seeking True Blue

Now, in case you didn't understand that word in our *parsha* so along comes Amos Hanavi and he makes the following statement in the name of Hashem: **כִּי הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי מִצְוֶה** – *Behold I am giving the order*, **וְהִנְעוּתִי בְּכָל הַגּוֹיִם אֶת בַּיִת יִשְׂרָאֵל** – *and I am going to move around the House of Yisroel among all the nations*, **כְּאִשֶּׁר יִנוּעַ בַּכֶּבֶרָה** (9:9). "I am giving an order" means if you see these things going on, don't think it's an accident; it's My command! "I'll shake them like you shake flour in a sieve."

You know what a sieve is, the purpose of a sieve? In a sieve, you have flour and you have some pebbles, so by holding it still, you won't separate the flour from the pebbles. You must shake the sieve up and down. Now the flour would prefer you should let it alone; it's not so comfortable to be shaken like that but we want pure flour so we shake it up and down and back and forth and that causes the flour to go out and the dirt is kept back. And the stronger you shake it, the better it works – the dirt is sifted out and after you finish, you have pure grain.

Hakodosh Boruch Hu declares here that one of the primary purposes of being dispersed among the nations is to sift out the disloyal. "I am going to move the Beis Yisroel among the nations in order to get rid of the disloyal. That's the purpose, to see who will remain until the end. Who's going to be loyal through thick and thin? Those who will drop out are the ones whom I wish they should drop out. Only those who are true blue will remain."

Process of Weeding

And so the Reformers are peeling off of us, off the body of the nation, and going lost. They fall off like scabs! As long as a scab is attached to the body, it's a source of suffering, discomfort. And finally it dries up and falls off.

All those who run away in Grenwich Village and all those who live with gentiles and all those who

imitate gentile ways and they are ashamed of being Jews, Hakodosh Boruch Hu is happy to get rid of them! That's the purpose of *golus*, to weed out the weaklings. Only the heroes who persist even though they're a minority; they're the purpose, the future, of the Am Yisroel.

Now this doesn't mean we shouldn't attempt to save them. Of course we have to save Jews, but nobody is being sifted out by others. וְהִנְעוֹתִי בְּכָל הַגּוֹיִם – *I'm going to shake you among all the nations*. Hashem is shaking but nobody is being sifted out; they sift themselves out. Remember that. Nobody goes lost against his will. It's when they choose to intermarry, when they choose to go away from their people, when they choose to convert, when they choose to throw away Yiddishkeit and to live like the *goyim* around them, they sift *themselves* out. Of course it's a tragedy. But that's the purpose – in order to weed out the disloyal and that's the process which we are going through now and throughout all our history.

We're Being Shaken

Now, the sieve doesn't always function the same. There was a Babylonian sieve and a Spanish sieve and there was a German sieve. There was an Arabian sieve and there was a Polish sieve. Each one had different kind of temptations and different kinds of ordeals.

There is an Eretz Yisroel'dike sieve too. Jews go lost in Eretz Yisroel today too just as well as anyplace else. On the streets of Tel Aviv, plenty of Jews go lost today every day. And missionaries are busy there. Very many Jews have been exported from Eretz Yisroel to Argentina and other South American countries because the missionaries caught them and converted them and sent them off to mingle among the Christians elsewhere.

And of course there's an American sieve too. It's a great pity, how many Jews have sifted themselves out. It's unfortunately true. Many more have become secular and they follow the *goyim*. Hakodosh Boruch Hu is still shaking the sieve and very many Jews are lost in the stupid pop culture of America today. Very many Jews move out where there are no Jewish neighbors anymore. That's also a shaking; the desire for bigger houses, for luxuries, for gentile ways and

entertainment. And so they move to places where there are only gentiles and get lost.

Part of The Plan

And all these processes of shaking us up and down are for the benefit of ridding us of the undesirable elements and giving the stronger ones, the more loyal ones, to prove their mettle and become great. That's one of the reasons we needed *shikkere* Cossacks. We needed Germans. We needed all the *goyim* to make us great. And that's why we still need the temptations. We need the Americans, the luxuries, the *leitzaanus*, the liberals and the antisemitism. It's all acting as a sifter, to weed out the weaker ones and to let the best remain. That's our greatness! To prove our mettle.

And so we see that *golus* is not merely a misfortune. It's a plan! It's an old plan! You remember when we came out of Mitzrayim it says וְחַמְשֵׁים עָלוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם. So our Sages say אֶחָד מִחֲמֵשֵׁים – *only one out of five went out*. And some say אֶחָד מִחֲמֵשִׁים – *one out of fifty went out*. Whatever it is, a tremendous number went lost in Egypt.

Now they weren't bad. Nobody was bad. They weren't *good enough*, however. Hakodosh Boruch Hu wanted more than just being good and so the ones who weren't good enough to come out with us to receive the Torah at Har Sinai were sifted out. When the days of darkness came, three days of darkness, very many Jews died out. Hakodosh Boruch Hu picked out the good ones and saved them and that became the Am Yisroel. It was the loyal ones, the strong ones, the stiffnecked ones; they're the ones who went out.

The Happy Ending

And it won't be different in the future. If people are facing Hawaii, if they're facing far away, so Hashem says, "Stay there. I'm looking for My people, the ones who stayed with Me." Now, it could be that the people who were born in Hawaii, they don't know, they're *tinok shenishba*, so מְקַבֵּץ נְרוּחֵי עָמוֹ – *Hakodosh Boruch Hu will gather them together*. But those who are trying to get lost, will succeed in getting lost.

And therefore it's so important to make sure that you get found without waiting till it's too late. When

the time will come, it'll be too late then. Just like in Mitzrayim; when they went out of Mitzrayim those who had to remain behind said, "I changed my mind. I want to go out." No, nothing doing. You missed the boat. They missed the boat. When the time comes to go out, you have to be ready for the call. You have to be prepared.

And that's our career in this world, to become better and better; to become ready for that great day. That's the greatness of our nation, to remain the best, the most loyal we can. And the better we realize that, the sooner will come the day when we will be able to stop saying **מִפְּנֵי הַטָּאִינִי**; we'll merit to see an end to the *tzaros* and we, the ones who remained strong as the sifter was shaking, will **נִעְלָה בְּרִנָּה**, we'll go up to Eretz Yisroel with song and happiness.

Have A Wonderful Shabbos

LET'S GET PRACTICAL

Surviving the Golus

Among the many purposes of Exile one of the more important ones is to act as a sieve, sifting out the weaker and less faithful of our Nation so that Hashem's people who merit the final redemption will be a perfect nation of *ovdei Hashem*.

This week I will *bli neder* spend thirty seconds each day thinking about this purpose of *golus* and what I can do on a practical level to strengthen my attachment and my family's attachment to the Am Yisroel. The more loyal I am to Hashem and the more separate I remain from the attitudes of gentiles, the more of a chance our *golus* will end soon and my family and I will merit to be redeemed along with Hashem's People in the coming Geulah.



What is the greatest Zechus a person can merit?



By means of being *nitpal l'osei mitzvah* - taking part in a Mitzvah endeavor, you can achieve the greatest of merit. Zechus harabim means benefiting the public spiritually and it's one of the greatest things that can be done.

I'll quote to you what the Chovos Halevavos says of this great deed of helping bring the public back to Judaism, back to *avodas Hashem*.

He says like this: "No matter how perfect you are in all the forms of *shleimus*, in every kind of perfection, it is as nothing compared to the perfection that comes from causing the multitude to become virtuous." And he explains that it's because all of their subsequent good deeds are credited to your account. Zechus harabim pays off very well in the World to Come!

But you think "What can I do already? I'm a simple Jew in Flatbush; I don't have influence, I don't have money." But we're learning tonight that by looking to join others who are performing good things there's always something you can do.

There are ways and means of doing good things, only that you have to have an interest in it. You have to be interested in wanting to join in. Now if you do that, so you've joined in to the great project of the Am Yisroel of trying to bring back our lost brothers.

So when you hear about good things being done so you think, "Ah! It's a very good thing." You have to express happiness about it. Think, "Yes, I'm full of *simcha* that they did it." Of course, if you can send five dollars, or a bigger contribution, even better. And Hakodosh Boruch Hu gives you credit for joining in with them.

-Toras Avigdor Parshas Shoftim

TAKE PART IN THIS ZECHUS HARABIM

See details on the following pages >>

This week's booklet is based on tapes:

52 - The Keg and The Serpent | 197 - Loyal Servants

566 - Had We Not Erred | 604 - Exile | 743 - Redeemed from the Gentiles

Listen: 718.289.0899 Press 1 for English and 2 for Thursday Night Lectures

Voice of the Rabim

Thank you, I love this weekly email so much! I love how practical it is and how it always is something I can discuss at the shabbat table and it gives me something practical to work on during the week.

-R.L

Thank you to Toras Avigdor for transforming the way I think and act!

-Y.T.

We love Toras Avigdor because it is so extremely enjoyable and in read, written with R' Avigdor Miller's keeping with R' Avigdor Miller's words, ideas, and expressions. It is so inspiring and practical at the same time and the tip at the end really solidifies the takeaway message! A true oneg Shabbos! Thank you!

-S.W

I really enjoy reading - no, LEARNING the Toras Avigdor each week. I specifically enjoy that Rav Miller's words are preserved so I get a flavor of his wit, passion, and voice. I also appreciate the "lets get practical" section at the end of each parsha, it helps me take action and keep growing.

-S.M.W.

B"H I am just a simple Baal teshuvah Jew. I can barely read Hebrew. One thing I do know and sense in every fiber of my being: R. Avigdor Miller ztl did not deviate one iota from Hashem's eternal truth.

-D.B.

It's just moredigi!! Its my Shabbos morning oxygen!!!!

-Y.A.G.

The weekly Toras Avigdor keeps me focused on the important things in life. Thank you!

-M.K.

Toras Avigdor is amazing - spreading das of Hashem on another level altogether! Your project is having a worldwide effect! Keep up your amazing holy work!

-Y.G.



We read Toras Avigdor Junior at our shabbos table and it is enjoyed by all!! The regular Toras Avigdor provides the adults with a kedusha injection! It's a breath of fresh air in today's cloudy climate! Thank you for all you do, What a tremendous zchus!!

-T.B.

TORAS AVIGDOR

AUTHENTIC TORAH THOUGHT FOR LIFE



A Message from our founder:

Dear Reader,

For over twenty years now I've been listening to tapes of Rav Avigdor Miller's Thursday night shiurim. I've found them to be enlightening, entertaining, thought provoking and in many ways life changing.

I especially enjoy the Question and Answer session that takes place after every shiur - it's open to questions on any topic and the Rav zatzal specifically asked for questions on the "burning issues," that people wanted to hear about. I gained a lot from the wide variety of questions that touched on so many subjects.

One day, a few years ago, I heard the Rav discuss an interesting topic and I transcribed it for myself to review; however, once I had it typed out I decided to email it to a few friends who I thought might appreciate it. The feedback was positive and that's how Toras Avigdor was born.

I began sending out a weekly Q&A email, which quickly became a daily email. The email list grew pretty quickly - it went from 10 to 100 and then 500 and today six years later, we send out a daily Q&A to more than 15,000 people across the globe.

About a year after I began sending out Q&As, I added a weekly parsha sheet every Thursday which I compiled from Rav Miller's tapes and seforim and to my surprise it was well received and there were individuals who began to print them up for their shul or family and like the daily Q&A, the parsha sheet - which by this time expanded into a Parsha Booklet - suddenly morphed into something that was much bigger than planned. The siyata dishmaya that I experienced helped me keep up with the demand and today we print and distribute about 60,000 parsha booklets every week in more than a hundred cities all over the world.

I borruch Hashem have the zechus of spending more than fifty hours a week listening to tapes, transcribing, collating and writing so that we can go to print with a complete booklet every week, while a group of dedicated chaverim have undertaken the yoke of everything involved in printing and distributing such a large amount of booklets every week. It's not easy for those involved but the tremendous feedback we get from readers all over the world - from Jews of all walks of life has kept us going.

All of this costs a **tremendous amount of money** and it's a weekly expense that doesn't go away. We need to continue our work and it's up to YOU. I'll be very grateful if you could help out.

I thank you in advance and I appreciate you reading my letter.

Sincerely,

Amichai Markowitz
Amichai Markowitz



This Shavuos be a



Because of you, Rav Miller's Mussar, Chochma, and Hashkafa will be spread to the Jewish People all over the globe

The costs of keeping Rav Miller's Torah **easily and freely accessible to Klal Yisroel** are overwhelming. Even after sponsorships, we simply don't have the funds to cover the costs of compiling, printing, and distributing 60,000 booklets every week.

And, still, demand continues to grow as we add new cities and drop-off points every week. We need your help to continue providing life-changing Torah ideals to Am Yisroel.

Everyone reads Toras Avigdor, from talmidei chachamin to those who are still mastering the aleph beis. Kollel yungerleit and ba'alai batin grow from Toras Avigdor. Mothers and their teenage daughters won't go to Shabbos without it.

Please open your heart and take part in this Torah revolution. Donate today and grab a share of every step forward in avodas Hashem that the Toras Avigdor readers take.

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