



פרשת במדבר

WITH

R' AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"L

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

Accursed is Their Anger

Contents:

Part I. Rage and Indignation - 1

Part II. Rage and its Application - 4

Part III. Rage in Giveah - 6

Part I. Rage and Indignation

The Chosen People

In this week's *sedrah*, when the counting of the Am Yisroel is taking place, we notice right away that the tribe of Levi is singled out to be the special portion of Hashem. וְאֲנִי הֵיכָּה לִקְחֹתִי אֶת הַלְוִיִּם מִתּוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל תַּחַת כָּל בְּכוֹר – *And behold I have taken the Levi'im from the midst of the nation and they will be for Me instead of the bechorim* (Bamidbar 3:12). Instead of the firstborn who had functioned until now as the family priests, now the *shevet* Levi, the Kohanim and Levi'im, took over, and they were set aside for the special service of Hashem.

וְהָיוּ לִי הַלְוִיִּם – “*And the Levites should be Mine,*” Hashem says. And our Sages tell us, בְּכָל מְקוֹם שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר לִי, אֵינוֹ זֶה לֹא בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה וְלֹא בְּעוֹלָם הַבָּא – *wherever Hashem says “They’re Mine” it means that they’re Mine in this world and they’re Mine in the Next World too.* Because when you find favor in Hashem’s Eyes, that favor is forever and ever.

So if you’re a Levi, if your last name is Levy or maybe Segal, which means *sgan* Levi'im, whatever it

is, you should know: you’re a fortunate person in this world and in the World to Come. Of course, you have to hold on to that ticket, not lose it. But if you hold on to it, if you walk in the ways of your ancestors, so when you come to the Next World and you present your ticket – ‘I’m a Levi’ – you’ll be set apart forever. It can’t be helped. Hakadosh Baruch Hu gave that reward.

Now, why were they chosen? Something like that doesn’t just take place on a whim. Everything that is recorded by the Torah is intended to teach us lessons forever. What happened with *shevet* Levi?

The Great Catastrophe

And so we go back to the *eigel*. You remember when Moshe Rabbeinu came down from Har Sinai holding the two stone tablets in his hand? He saw that some of the people, the converts from Egypt and maybe some others too, were dancing around a golden calf.

Now, there’s no question that they meant well – these people didn’t worship the golden calf; that’s only child talk. They were worshipping Hashem. When

EasyPrint edition sponsor:

Please contact us for sponsorship opportunities.

Call/Text 732.844.3670

they said about the *eigel*, “This is your G-d Who took you out of Egypt,” they knew a calf didn’t take them out of Egypt. They knew it was Hashem – they knew very well that it was Moshe’s word that Hakadosh Baruch Hu put in his mouth that took them out of Egypt. But now that Moshe wasn’t there, they needed some concretion and so they made that image in order to honor Hashem.

But whatever their intentions were, they did it in a way that was illegal. When Hakadosh Baruch Hu said, “לֹא תַעֲשֶׂוּן אִתִּי – You shouldn’t make with Me any images,” it means “no matter how good your intentions are.” Intentions will never atone for wrong deeds! It won’t wipe away your sin! And therefore to Moshe Rabbeinu it was a catastrophe.

The Angry People

And so at that time Moshe called out, מִי לָהּ אֵלֵי – “Who is for Hashem, should come to me.” It means: “Whoever is filled with righteous indignation about what happened here, should come to me now so that we can make judgments and set things right.”

Now, when Moshe Rabbeinu made that proclamation, I’m sure there were some people from all of the *shevatim* who came to help. But it wasn’t all of them. Because some of the people didn’t allow themselves to get too excited – they tried as much as possible to be stolid about the incident and they spoke with self-control, “Let’s not act with anger and indignation. Cooler heads have to prevail here. We don’t want to get embroiled in a fight now. After all, some of these people are newcomers to Judaism and therefore we can’t be so strict on them.” And so even though Moshe Rabbeinu called for reinforcements, not everybody hurried to him.

But there was one group that moved unanimously. וַיֵּאָסְפוּ אֵלָיו כָּל בְּנֵי לֵוִי – All the Bnei Levi now hurried to Moshe Rabbeinu’s side. There wasn’t a single one that held back because they were the ones who were angry. They were the ones who were agitated. And they didn’t ignore that fire of indignation that burned in their hearts when they saw something wrong.

Angry and Ruthless

And when they gathered around Moshe he said, שִׁימוּ אִישׁ חַרְבּוֹ עַל יָרְכוֹ – “Let each one of you put his

sword by his side and go through the camp and arrest everyone who has some complicity with the calf. And we have to set up courts immediately to judge the people and we’ll sentence them and execute them.”

Now that was some job. It was their brothers after all; in some cases it was blood relatives. As difficult it was, as uncomfortable it was to even come to Moshe Rabbeinu’s side – but included in the mitzvah of *ahavas Hashem* is to be agitated in the cause of the honor of Hashem; to take up for Hashem, to defend the words of Hashem.

Not only to be agitated; to become *incensed*. The Mesillas Yesharim says that that is the true secret of *kana'im*. A *kanai* is somebody who loves Hashem so much that he cannot remain quiet when he sees something is being done against Hashem’s will; it hurts him to see anything being done against the will of Hashem. Yes, those who love Hashem, cannot tolerate anybody who’s an enemy of Hashem.

Not only he doesn’t tolerate the atheists, he doesn’t tolerate *any* infraction of the words of Hashem. And that’s the *madreigah*, the level, that *shevet Levi* achieved on that day when they let loose a *koach* of wrath and went forth to fulfill the word of Hashem.

An Old Story

And it was at that time, because of that, that Levi was chosen forever. בָּעֵת הַהוּא הִבְרִיל ה’ אֶת שְׁבֵט הַלְוִי – Because they reacted with righteous indignation by the *eigel*, that’s why Hashem separated the *shevet* of Levi. Up until that time, the service of *korbanos* was in the hands of the firstborn but now Levi supplanted them. Hashem separated the tribe of Levi and they became His Chosen ones as a result of their indignation which they exercised when the time came.

Now, I want to tell you something that it could be never crossed your mind. This greatness that *shevet Levi* achieved began with a curse. It was an *arur* that led to this great achievement. What does that mean?

So we go back in time, more than two hundred years earlier, to the great grandfather of these Levi’im

in the Midbar, to Levi, who one time incurred the wrath of his father, Yaakov Avinu.

What happened? Everyone remembers how that Canaanite had kidnapped the sister of the *shevatim*; and Shimon and Levi, her loyal brothers, decided to take action. The town of Shechem wouldn't surrender Dina because their prince, this low fellow, wanted to keep their sister captive. And so Levi and his brother Shimon decided that the only way to get her loose was to attack the townspeople with a stratagem, a ruse.

And so they said to the townspeople, "You would like to be one with us, to join us? Ok, we're good with that, but you'll have to circumcise. We cannot join uncircumcised people."

Anger and Cursing

So the townspeople got together and they said, "Look; these people have many flocks, a lot of sheep, and they're willing to become one nation with us, their property will join our property. All they want is that we should circumcise, so why not?" What won't a gentile do for Jewish money? So they all circumcised themselves.

And then on the third day when they were all ailing, Shimon and Levi came into the town and in each house they made an operation; they walked out leaving all the inhabitants of the house dead and they walked into the next house and did the same thing until they finished off the town. And they took their sister and departed.

Now, when Yaakov was apprised of what they did he was very upset with his children's actions. Because when they acted in their wrath, they endangered the existence of the family. Like Yaakov said, "You're going to make all the inhabitants of Canaan our enemies now! All the nations of Canaan will now rise up against us because you slaughtered an entire town. You should have consulted me first. Instead you let your anger get the best of you. It was a foolhardy and rash undertaking and it almost brought ruin upon us." That's what Yaakov said at the time of this occurrence.

And later, when he was on his deathbed and it came time to say goodbye to his children, he cursed

their anger: אָרוּר אַפֵּם בִּי עַז וְעִבְרַתֶּם בִּי קִשְׁתָּהּ - *Apom* means their anger. *Evrosom* means their anger. He cursed this quality of *ka'as*. He didn't curse them, but he cursed their anger.

Accepting Sage Counsel

Now, when Levi heard his father's curse, אָרוּר אַפֵּם - *accursed is their anger*, he could have reacted with indignation: "I wasn't angry for nothing! We took revenge on this fellow who defiled our sister." Because what else could they do? If they had tried to make negotiations it would have been futile; the people of Shechem wouldn't have surrendered Dinah. And if a *goy* doesn't want to surrender the plunder then the *din* is he has to be killed. The *din* of a ben Noach is that if he robs so he has to be put to death. And therefore, Levi maybe had reason to complain against his father's curse. "Why shouldn't I be angry?!" But instead of complaining he listened. Levi listened and listened and never stopped listening.

You know, Yaakov Avinu, before he began to speak he made a preface to his remarks. And it's noteworthy that he said, שִׁמְעוּ בְּנֵי יַעֲקֹב - "Listen, the sons of Yaakov." And he said it again, וְשִׁמְעוּ אֶל יִשְׂרָאֵל - "and listen to your father Yisroel." So we see that he was warning them that in order that his words should be effective, in order that they should know how to utilize it properly, they must listen while the instructions are being given.

How important it is to listen when the wise man is giving counsel. Let's say you're granted an audience with a great man for a few minutes. Imagine you have an audience with the Lubavitcher Rebbe or you're given an audience with Reb Yankev Kaminetzky or some other *adam gadol*. They can't spend much time with you and therefore when you come in, you should sharpen your ears and try to remember every word. Don't think it's like a friend of yours who is talking, with random, superfluous words.

Pay rapt attention to what he is saying. And when you leave, don't walk out in a daze or in a cloud of glory that you're happy that you visited a great personality. When you leave, immediately try to recall exactly every word and if possible write it down. You should weigh every word. And even better, if you're fortunate enough that he's going to criticize

you – could be he might even curse one of your *middos* – you have to know that it's an admonition that if used wisely could lead to your greatest success.

That's what Levi did. The words of reproof, the bitter criticism, the curse against his anger, became the greatest benefit for Levi. Because he listened and utilized the instruction and thereby changed the fate of the Levite families. When Levi heard that his anger was misused, it was misappropriated and used at the wrong time, he took that lesson to heart and decided that he must make a great change in his character. And that's the introduction to tonight's subject.

Part II. Rage and its Application

There Are No Bugs

Now when Levi listened, the first thing he heard was that his father was cursing *the way he utilized his anger*. אָפּוּם אָרוּר אָפּוּם doesn't mean 'Anger is accursed' – *Apum* means 'their anger,' meaning the wrath that was exercised improperly, without enough regard for consequences.

But Levi understood that it's not the quality of anger in itself that is not good. It *can't* be no good because there's no such thing as wrong qualities in a human being. הָאֱלֹהִים עָשָׂה אֶת הָאָדָם יָשָׁר – *Elokim made a Man right* (Koheles 7:29). And that means that if He put anger into the repertoire of a man's character, He intended it for important and useful purposes.

Hakadosh Baruch Hu is certainly just as capable, *lehavdil*, as a Japanese company that makes tape recorders. And when you look into a tape recorder you understand that everything has been planned to be as efficient as possible. You're not going to see something that was put in without some purpose, something that is harmful for the recorder. There are no extra wires or superfluous electrical connections. If you find something extra – let's say you see an insect crawling around inside a tape recorder, so you know it wasn't supplied by the company. You can be sure that everything in that machine is purposeful. And therefore you can be all the more sure that when Hashem made Man, He made him *yashar*; which

means that all the traits of human character are useful.

Anger, arrogance, envy, stinginess, are wonderful traits. They motivate people to to live normal and successful lives and even to accomplish great things. It's only when they're misused that they become dangerous. It's the same as if you would open up the Japanese tape recorder and cut the wires and try to make a fire or give someone an electrical shock. That's not the fault of the one who built the recorder.

The Gift of Anger

Anger is a wonderful gift from Hakadosh Baruch Hu. You know, when you get angry there are biological changes occurring in the body that can be beneficial. The adrenal glands on top of your kidneys squirt out extra sugar into your blood and you become full of energy – that's *kaas* – in order to carry out certain things, to give you added energy to overcome a position which ordinarily you wouldn't be able to overcome.

You know, sometimes even a little man who is too weak to confront a bully, but when his anger boils up in him – the bully is starting with him – the little man gains more energy and sometimes he can give the bully a blow that knocks him down. I'm not advising it, by the way. If he's bigger than you are, take your time about giving him a punch because he can punch back. And so it might be best to just scat. Just turn on your heels and run.

And anger is good for running too. The extra sugar, the adrenaline, gives you more energy to run away. It also causes your blood to clot more quickly in case you get a wound while fighting. And so we see that anger is very useful at times.

Of course, if used unnecessarily it's dangerous for the body. You know, when a person conditions his organism to react frequently with anger, so his metabolism becomes upset. There's a very delicate balance that's maintained in the body and it's something that has to be guarded.

The Right Kind of Anger

But there's no question that *kaas* is a gift *min hashomayim*, a wonderful tool, when used carefully

and sparingly. And not only for the biological results, for the self-preservation of the body that it encourages. In *hilchos middos*, when it comes to our character, it's an excellent *middah* to be angry. Only that the same rule holds true – it's something that must be used judiciously; only to be angry against wickedness.

The Rambam says that; he says that anger is proper when it is used against wrongdoers. Anger is necessary against criminals. Against people who commit injustice, you must have righteous anger.

That's the trouble today; this ingredient is missing in the courts. The judges don't have that. Today we have terrible judges. The judge is sitting there in his robe and you think he's listening to the arguments, but really he's thinking, "What's for supper tonight?"

Or even worse he's thinking, "Let's get this over quick. Plea bargaining; one, two, three. Let him out on probation. It's not his fault he abused and killed that poor lady. It's society's fault for not giving him more food stamp money."

And it's safest for the judge that way. Otherwise, the criminal might take revenge on them. That's what all the judges are thinking in the back of their heads. They know that the victim is dead already. She won't take revenge on them.

The Place for Revenge

A judge, if he wants to be a righteous judge, has to get *angry* at the murderer. Not like the judge who said "The courtroom is no place for revenge." Just the opposite – a judge has to rise up in anger against the criminals.

We must exercise anger against wrongdoers. We must rise up and see that justice is carried out on those who are harmful to society, those people who corrupt society. You cannot stand by patiently and tolerate criminals or be generous. **וּבְעֵרְתָּ הָרָע מִקִּרְבְּךָ!** The Torah commands us to destroy the evil from your midst!

Now when people are too tolerant, when they don't get angry, they find it difficult to fulfill that commandment of fighting against wickedness. Don't you see people all the time, they hear all kinds of

things take place in the world but they don't react. They hear in newspapers, somebody was killed; to them it's just a news item. An idealist, a Torah Jew, reacts with excitement. Only that today people, even good people, have lost their idealism.

The Good Old Days

Once upon a time, even the gentile world had a great deal of idealism. People don't believe it but forty, fifty years ago, even the public schools were hotbeds of idealism. Not only patriotism, but idealism. The teachers took every opportunity to preach character and good behavior in the classrooms. They preached *tzniyus*. They preached temperance. They preached morality.

And so, in those days there was indignation when they saw immorality, when they saw crime. But today, things have changed. Psychology has moved in. Psychology plus evolution, these two. Psychology is the child of evolution. These two moved in and they have destroyed all idealism and therefore people don't react today. And they're getting it back; all the results of the wickedness is returning on their own heads; people are suffering as a result.

Once upon a time, there was no such thing as security guards. Who needed guards? A public school should need guards? It was ridiculous. The best guard was the teacher. A teacher saw a boy making trouble, so the teacher came over with a ruler and gave it to him. Today there would be a board of inquiry.

Not only the teachers had righteous anger. The students too. You know why? Because in the public schools, every day they read the Bible. In every class! Of course, it wasn't such a big benefit to Jewish children to hear the New Testament read, but they read the Old Testament too! They read the Bible every day! And therefore they reacted with indignation. When the teacher punished somebody, all the children were on the teacher's side because everybody had some idealism.

Using Dynamite

Of course it was nowhere near the idealism of the Am Yisroel. The idealism of the old Jewish people, way back in Europe a number of years ago, there's no

comparison to that. That was an idealism, a nobility far above what any nation ever possessed! But even among *goyim*, they reacted with indignation when they saw wickedness, injustice and immorality. That's how human beings always reacted; they reacted with indignation and anger. Yes, anger! Because it's a good quality when used properly.

Now, dynamite is also very useful when used properly. When you need to break through mountains in order to make roads, dynamite is wonderful. But let's say you want to come home at night and your wife made a fish supper instead of chicken supper and you're very disappointed; you can't hurl a stick of dynamite into the refrigerator. No, for a supper you don't use dynamite.

That's why the Rambam is careful to tell us that when you come to this *middah* of *kaas*, you have to use it very sparingly. It's dynamite – worse than dynamite – and you have to know when yes and when not.

And that's why Yaakov cursed the anger of Levi. Don't make any mistake about this. *Arur apom!* It was a curse. Because it's the most dangerous instrument and they misused it and endangered the existence of the family, they almost brought ruin upon the family.

Levi Learns

And yet it was this curse that made Levi great. Because the Bnei Levi lived with that curse, with that warning of how to use dynamite. They didn't abolish anger but they trained themselves. Levi listened to his father who said, "Listen," and he said again, "Listen," and Levi took it so seriously that he made a career of working on his anger. Levi took the curse and he studied it and he saw the blessing in it, that he must restrain his wrath and use it only for idealistic purposes – to be indignant against wickedness.

"I'm going to be angry only for certain things," said Levi. "I'm going to put a check, I'm going to hold myself back from being excited at anything except those things that deserve excitement." Levi took this quality of anger that he possessed and he turned it into a *kli shareis*, into a holy vessel that he used only for the service of Hashem. And that's how he taught his children to live.

And now you know why Hakadosh Baruch Hu appointed the *shevet Levi*. They were chosen to be the *shomrim* who stood guard outside; and the *kohanim* were inside standing guard. The *shevet* that serves in the Beis Hamikdosh has to guard that there shouldn't be any infractions when visitors come. They shouldn't trespass beyond the permitted limit. They shouldn't touch where they're not expected to touch the sacred things. They shouldn't do anything that's improper in the Sanctuary precincts. And so it would be *shevet Levi* – the *shevet* who learned what it means righteous indignation, when and what and how much – they would be the ones most efficient in guarding the Sanctuary.

The Job of a Torah Teacher

And that's why the *kohanim* were always the Torah teachers. Because that's their job – to preserve all their practices of the Torah. If they see any infraction, it's their job to be angry. Because if you're not angry, you're going to let things slide and the breach will grow wider and wider and bad practices will begin to spread. And so *kohanim* won't stand for it. They're indignant when they see something wrong.

And so when a *kohen* was summoned because of a question – let's say you mixed *milchigs* and *fleishigs* and you called the *kohen* to ask him the *shailah*, to give a decision – so the *kohen* didn't only look at it like a professor who was studying a specimen. He didn't merely look at it in a cold and academic way; he rebuked the *ba'al habayis*: "Why did you let this happen? Why were you so careless?" That's what a *kohen's* job is. He has to reprove. He has to scold. He has to make sure it doesn't happen again.

And that's what our forefathers of *shevet Levi* learned from their father. They learned that this gift, the quality of being able to become angry, must be utilized only for certain causes, only in defense of the principles of the Torah and the honor of Hashem.

Part III. Rage in Giveah

Camping in Giveah

Now, this brings me to a subject that contains these two aspects of anger – anger that is cursed,

and anger that is praised – and this subject comes by request. A few of our group approached me recently and asked if I could speak about the story of Pilegish B'Giveah; to explain the story from an authentic Torah perspective.

Now Rabbosai, I want to tell you beforehand that I won't do justice to the topic. Tonight surely not. I have a good deal more to tell you than you'll hear now but it's quite late already so we're going to focus just on the subject of tonight, the subject of righteous indignation.

So here's the story – with a lot of missing details. There was once a Levi who lived in the area of Har Efraim and he had a *pilegish*, a concubine. Now this *pilegish* wronged him in some way. It's not stipulated in Sefer Shoftim what she did but the Gemara in Mesichta Gittin tells us it was a minor thing, nothing too important. Only that this Levi was a hot-tempered man, he was a Levi who had never studied the curse that his ancestor Yaakov Avinu had proclaimed, and he flew into a rage. And because they had a quarrel so she left him and she went back to her father in Beis Lechem Yehudah.

After some time this hot-tempered man came after her and he persuaded her to try again. So they made up, and he took her and they set out on the way home. But when the sun began to set before they arrived home, they had to make a detour and stop off for the night at Giveah, a small town in Binyomin. And so they encamped in the marketplace of Giveah until an old man saw them and insisted that they come into his house for the night.

Emulating Sedom

Now while they were sitting in the old man's house and they were refreshing themselves, a very unusual thing happened. Some young fellows, Jewish boys from the town, got together and they started knocking on the door. And they said, "We hear that there's a stranger in your home. Bring him out to us so that we can do what we want with him."

Now, such a thing was never heard of among the Bnei Yisroel. You know where it was heard of? Among the Canaanites. The Canaani had a wicked custom: when strangers came to town, they were molested

by the people of the town. You remember when the angels came to Sedom and the people of Sedom gathered around the house? But it wasn't only Sedom. That was the practice of the Canaani everywhere – strangers were molested; they were misused in a filthy way.

That's why when the Bnei Yisroel came into the land, they were warned to beware of any of the ways of the local people and to wipe them out. Because if you're going to allow them to remain, then you're going to learn their bad ways. Only that the Jewish people were kindhearted and it was hard for them to destroy the Canaani. Israelites always were kindhearted people. So they allowed many of them to live and they became friendly with their neighbors.

But what happened as a result of this kindliness? Well, environment is a powerful influence. Even good people, if they live among *reshaim*, after a while adopt their ways. Wickedness is contagious, especially among the youth. You know there are bums in every nation. Of course, our bums are superior to their aristocrats, no question about that. The dregs of the Jewish people are better than the saints of the *goyim*.

Dreadful Delivery

But still there were dregs. And some of them, in one town once attempted to practice this Canaani custom. Forbidden things always seem to be inviting and interesting – and when this Levite came with his concubine to visit in that town one night, so these low fellows gathered around the house and they imitated the Canaani way. They said to the host, "Send him out, and we'll have some fun with him." Now, the details of the story you can see there inside, in Sefer Shoftim, but there was arguing and protests but after some negotiations and tussling they got hold of his concubine, took her into the town streets and they abused her.

Now, when the Levi opened up the door of the house early in the morning, he found his *pilegish* lying dead on the threshold. She had staggered back after she had been abused and she died right outside the door, a terrible story. And so when this Levi saw his dead concubine, he blew up. He fell into a rage and did what most people do when they're angry.

They do drastic things without thinking. He took her dead body and cut it into twelve pieces and decided he'd send one piece of his *pilegash* to the Sanhedrin of every *shevet* so that they should take some action on his behalf.

Immediately he got people to help him and he sent a messenger or a committee with every piece of the body to the elder Sages of the twelve tribes.

Now we can imagine the picture. A Sanhedrin is sitting in judgment in their city and suddenly there bursts in a man carrying a package and he opens it up and puts it on the table in front of the Sanhedrin. They're stunned! And the messengers tells them the story.

Excising the Cancer

As soon as the *batei dinim*, the Jewish judges saw that this was taking place, they realized the great peril to the Jewish nation caused by the proximity of Canaan. And so they decided that this has to be stopped immediately, once and for all. The blood of the Jewish nation boiled in indignation.

When the Sanhedrin of *kol Yisroel* heard about this, they were frightened. "What's happening to our people? They're becoming corrupted by the wicked ways of the Canaan!" It happened only once and it was just a few boys, a few ruffians, but that was more than enough for our pious forefathers. And they didn't say, "Tut, tut, stop behaving like that." No. They saw a cancer was growing here.

And so they came together, and they said we have to put our heads to this subject. So they got together and took counsel, and they came out with a terrible decision. They decided that they have to make an operation, a terrible operation, a radical surgery.

The Sanhedrin came out with a terrible *psak* and they said, "Not only do we have to execute these men, but the whole town has to be destroyed. If a town was silent after this incident, it means they are accomplices." Now, according to the *din* of the Torah, you can't do that, but in exceptional cases where there's a danger to the Jewish nation, *beis din* can make such a *gezeirah*, and they made a decree to

wipe out the whole town, to wipe out seven hundred men.

Civil War

Now when this terrible verdict was passed, the whole tribe of Binyamin protested. "You can't destroy a whole town because of a few bums." You know how it goes – they were all relatives; the people in Givas Binyamin were blood relatives and therefore they didn't feel enough abhorrence, enough righteous outrage, about their youth. You know, *lehavdil*, a gangster's mother when she hears that her son murdered somebody so she says "But he's a nice boy otherwise. He always brings me things from the store. He buys me chocolate on Mothers' Day." It's her son after all.

So *shevet* Binyomin would have said, "Well, look. We don't have *eidim* and *hasra'ah*. They weren't probably warned beforehand and there were no good witnesses either so the best we can do is perhaps to give them stripes, to give them *malkos*." That's what I think they said. Or maybe if worse came to worst Givas Binyamin may have executed a couple of them.

But the Sanhedrin *shel kol Yisroel* said "No. That won't be enough, because how did it happen that from your midst such vipers came forth? There's something wrong in this town if you didn't prevent the youths from following gentile customs." The Sanhedrin was afraid that if you'll be lenient now, even though you'll execute the criminals, what's going to happen? It will crop up everywhere now.

Holy War

And so they said there's a Gemara in Yevamos: *mutar la'akor davar min haTorah bekum veaseh lemigdar milsa*, in order to prevent some wickedness from spreading it's permissible to do something against the Torah. So even though they weren't the criminals, only a handful of wicked youth, there was passed a sentence that the town must be wiped out.

Now Jews are not sitting and looking for fights. Every man had a field to till. He had cows to milk. A farm is full of work. Besides he had children to teach Torah and he had himself to take care of. But they dropped everything. They left their farms, they left their cattle, they left their families and they went to

war. It was unequaled in history. Four hundred thousand men came together and they said “We are going to war in order to make a radical operation. Never again should this be repeated.”

Of course, before they went to war, they asked the permission of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. They went to the Kohen Gadol who had the Urim v'Tumim and they inquired of the Urim v'Tumim. They asked, should they go to war? And the answer was, “Go.”

And the result was a war. This was a holy war. All the people came together, they left their farms to wage war against their own brothers, *shevet Binyomin*.

The end was that the whole tribe of Binyamin, not only Giveah, was almost wiped out. And the few survivors had no wives. And so they were in danger of entirely becoming extinct. The rest of the story you'll read yourself what they did, but this story is a monument to the nobility of those generations. And that's why never again did this recur. It's the sole instance of bums who were acting like gentiles; the immorality of the gentiles. Even though the Canaanites continued to live there, but never again did the Jews imitate the Canaanites in this because they took a terrible step. And it was wiped out once and for all and never again is such an episode mentioned in our history. That's how our forefathers were. They didn't take any nonsense.

Which Anger is Criticized?

Now you should know that when it comes to blame, for putting blame for all those lives that were lost, the Gemara says that it's all due to one man, the hot-tempered Levi. It was his *kaas*, his anger. First of all, why did he have to get in a fight with his concubine in the first place? They could have sat together in peace. And if he found her dead in the morning, why did he cut her up? It was all actions of a scandal maker, and therefore he was the match that set fire to the magazine; he caused a great conflagration in the Jewish people. He's blamed terribly for the deaths of so many Jews. Our Sages use him in the Gemara as the model, the paradigm, of someone whose anger causes terrible destruction.

But there's no criticism in the words of the Gemara anywhere, in all of the *Chazal* as far as I ever heard – and I heard about this from great men – there's no word against this war, no criticism of the anger of the Bnei Yisroel who waged war. Why is that? Because it was a war of righteous indignation.

And not only are they not blamed. Centuries later, when the *navi* is upbraiding, rebuking, the people of Yisroel he uses *them* as the model to emulate. “You people,” he said, “you look at injustice and you're silent.”

So the *navi* (Hoshea 10:9) said like this. He said you people, he said, nowadays you have no indignation. He doesn't mean they didn't have. They had plenty but not enough. מִיָּמֵי הַגְּבֻעָה הַטָּאָתָּ יִשְׂרָאֵל – You are not as good as they were in the days of the Givas Binyamin, שָׁם עָמְדוּ – had you lived then, לֹא תִשְׁיָגַם בְּגִבְעָה מְלַחֶמָה עַל בְּנֵי עֲלִיָּה – there wouldn't have been a war against wicked men. You would have swallowed it; you would have let it pass without taking angry action.

Like today, we're silent. We're accustomed to it. People are accustomed to seeing wickedness. Nobody reacts. They don't even write letters to Mayor Lindsay. Lindsay is an arch *rasha* – he and all of his Democrat pals are the authors of all the wickedness we see today; they are licking boots of the murderers in order to get their votes by keeping quiet. On the contrary, the more viothe lence they do, the more they flatter them. The more they yield to their demands.

The Loyal Nation

But the Am Yisroel are expected to react. We are expected to be the the paragon of indignation. And so the Navi Hoshea was commending them. Actually, the *navi* wanted even more from them; that they should have risen up against other *avlahs* too. “If you're going to stand up for Me, you should do it to the hilt! Don't stop!” Because what happened then was one of the noblest efforts that was in our history.

The entire nation got up *ke'ish echad*, like one man, to take a stand for the ideals that Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants from His people. Because in each one's heart there burned a desire that this should be

a holy nation and we should follow the Torah of Hakadosh Baruch Hu and not do what the gentiles do, and we have to stop it once and for all.

Each Jew felt upon his shoulders that he bore a responsibility of loyalty to Hashem – a loyalty that comes before everything else – and when they heard about a wickedness that was committed, so four hundred thousand Jews came together in anger for war against *shevet* Binyamin. They didn't want to accept any deviations from the Torah, and that's why Hashem loved them!

Because those are the ones who Hashem always chooses; the one who stands up for Him with righteous and calculated indignation. The one who understands that **אָרֶר וְאָפַם**, that anger, when used inappropriately, is cursed, but when used judiciously as an expression of *ahavas Hashem*, that's the one who Hashem chooses for Himself forever and ever. It's the ones who train themselves to not be displeased over just anything; not to be upset and angry about things that don't matter. Instead they are angered by wickedness; and with forethought and planning, with control and judicious determination, they become excited and agitated for Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

Have A Wonderful Shabbos

LET'S GET PRACTICAL

The Right Anger

Nothing in the human being – the perfect creation of Hashem – is superfluous. If Hashem created us with anger there's a good reason for it. But chances are we're using it for the wrong reasons. This week *bli neder* I will try to review the ideas I learned in this booklet every day, and whenever I feel myself beginning to get angry I will ask myself if this is the type of anger Hashem intended when He created it.

This week's booklet is based on tapes:

- 11 - The Concubine at Giveah | 246 - Prophecies and Names
 - 340 - Chanukah VI | 447 - Anger, Middos and the Afterlife
 - 544 - Middos, Whom Hashem Chooses | 801 - Middos and Opinions
- Listen: 718.289.0899 Press 1 for English and 2 for Thursday Night Lectures



Why is there so much divorce in America?



Why is there so much everything else in America? Why is there so much crime in America? What is there so much suicide in America? Among the youth, suicide is increasing rapidly. Why is there so much narcotics in America?

And the answer is America has thrown away its discipline, its law and order. The liberals have seized control of the media and they have ruined the nation. We have to worry what's going to be in twenty years from now when the ruined youth will become the judges.

Even today we have terrible judges who are the result of the 1960's; criminals who are sitting in black gowns. These criminals are the result of the 1960 youth, the rebels. What's going to be twenty years from now? America is in a very bad state and it's important we should do something about it.

So therefore, what's wrong with America is that they are raising up generations of dragon's teeth; we're going to sow a crop that's going to be *chas v'shalom* a disaster. The children in public schools today are being ruined by an education that promotes disorder and immorality, and divorce is merely one phase of the decay of American society.

TAPE # 506 (April 1984)



You can get these booklets delivered directly to your door.
(Only \$2.50 a week - US residents only)
Email: subs@torasavigdor.org
Call/Text: 862-800-7905