



בהר-בחקותי

WITH

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BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

The Lost Ones

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Part I. Going Lost Among Enemies

The Fearful Verse

In Mesichta Makkos (24a) we have a statement from one of the great Torah leaders in our history: אָמַר רַב – Rav said, מִסְתַּפֵּינָא מֵהַאי קְרָא – There is a certain verse in the Torah that I am afraid of. “There’s a *possuk* in Parshas Bechukosai that frightens me very much.”

Now, this week’s *sedrah* contains a boatload of warnings and threats – very many different *tzaros*, terrible punishments, are promised to come on our people if we sin. And yet Rav didn’t make a general statement, that he’s afraid of what’s written in the *tochachah*. He was afraid of that surely – every Jew who has *yiras Hashem* believes in all the statements of the Torah – but still, it is one of the briefest of statements, just two words, that Rav chose to say he fears: וְאַבְדֶתֶם בְּגוֹיִם – And you will go lost among the nations.

“Of all the curses and punishments in the Torah this is one I’m afraid of; this threat that the Am Yisroel might go lost among the nations.”

Rav shuddered when he read that *possuk*.

Lost and Found

Now, the truth is that a few generations after Rav lived there were those who tried to alleviate the severity of the Torah’s threat. אָמַר רַב פָּפָא – Rav Papa said, דְלָמָא בְּאַבְדָּהּ הַמִּתְבַּקֶּשֶׁת – Maybe ‘lost’ means like a lost article that is sought out by its owner. That was Rav Papa’s consolation: *K’aveidah hamisbakeshes*. Hakadosh Baruch Hu will gather in all those who went lost among the nations and He’ll restore them as of the days of old. They belong to Him after all. That’s how Rav Papa wanted to blunt the blow of this *possuk*.

Along comes the Gemara and it says: it’s true. It’s true that if it was only those words, וְאַבְדֶתֶם בְּגוֹיִם, so maybe Rav Papa’s consolation would be acceptable. It’s an *aveidah*, a lost article, *hamisbakeshes*, that will be sought out and returned.

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אֵלֶּא מִהָאִי קָרָא – but actually it was the end of that *possuk* that Rav was afraid of, the last few words: “You’ll go lost among the nations, וְאָכְלָה אֶתְכֶם, אֶרֶץ אֲיִבֵיכֶם – and the land of your enemies will consume you, will eat you up. That’s what Rav feared. If somebody lost an apple and it was found by a stranger and eaten up, there’s no hope of restoring it. And that’s what our *possuk* says: וְאָכְלָה אֶתְכֶם – the land of your enemies will devour you. Oh! To be eaten up! That’s already a different story. There’s no hope anymore.

Slippery Seeds

So along came Mar Zutra – he lived one generation later – and he sought a consolation even on those words. אָמַר מַר זוּטְרָא – Mar Zutra said that even those words can be made more mild; they can be understood less severely. דְּלִמָּא בְּאֲכִילַת קִשּׁוּאִין – *maybe it’s like eating melons.*

It’s true that once a watermelon is consumed it’s lost; but the seeds remain. And from the seeds, new generations of watermelons grow.

You know, in case you’re interested in chewing watermelon seeds, you’ll find that it’s not so simple. You try to chew them but the pressure of your tongue, your cheeks and your teeth cause them to fly out in all directions. It’s not an accident by the way. Hashem made it that way so that the seeds should escape and new watermelons should grow. The watermelon seeds are covered with a slippery mucus. It’s not the moistness of the watermelon that is causing the seed to be slippery. There’s a slippery mucus on the watermelon seed *for the purpose* of helping the seeds evade you. If you were out in the country, the seeds would shoot out and land on soft ground and they’d begin growing again.

“Once We Were Slaves...”

That’s why when I once went to visit a place, an old farm with Negro cottages, so I saw watermelon vines growing all around the steps of the cottages.

“What’s this?” I asked the farmer. “Is that a convenient place to plant watermelon, right near the steps?”

He said, “I didn’t plant it. The slaves were sitting here on the steps at night playing on their banjos, eating watermelon and spitting out the seeds. And these watermelon plants are from those seeds.”

And so, Mar Zutra said, there is hope yet. Maybe we’ll be devoured like a melon and yet whatever is eaten up will grow back again. And so like Rav Papa, Mar Zutra had a way of being *poiser* the *nevuah* in a better light: ‘lost’ doesn’t mean lost forever, and ‘devoured’ doesn’t mean forever. One day everyone will be found and restored again.

Favorable Interpretations

Now we are willing to accept both Rav Papa’s and Mar Zutra’s explanations. Why not? They have a right to differ with Rav after all. It’s a *possuk*, and we can understand the *possuk* in other ways. The truth is that Hakadosh Baruch Hu prefers that we give kindly interpretations to His words. It’s a principle that whenever *chachmei Yisroel*, sages, come along and make statements that are kindly and beneficial to the Am Yisroel, Hakadosh Baruch Hu likes those statements and to a certain extent He follows them. He agrees: “Yes, that’s the *pshat*.”

And so if Rav Papa, who certainly had a lot of influence with Hakadosh Baruch Hu, and Mar Zutra too – if these two great men interpreted these *pessukim* there’s no question that Hakadosh Baruch Hu is going to honor their opinion and it’s going to help.

But we have to know that there is no guarantee. It’s true, it’s a consideration – if the right man gives a favorable interpretation, because of his *zechus* it might turn out that way. And therefore we’re grateful to Rav Papa and Mar Zutra – their words are in the Gemara and we hope that their words will bear a great deal of weight.

And yet as much as we hope, we have to shudder along with Rav. After all he said “*mistapina* – I’m afraid of this *possuk*”. And Rav was wise enough to

learn *pshat* like Rav Papa and Mar Zutra – Rav had a very good head after all – and he said he’s afraid anyhow, which means that he did not accept those explanations as the final word. And so we see that despite all the consolations of these two great men there remains a place for fear of getting lost among the nations and being consumed by them.

Friendly Nations

Now before we go on, we should first understand what it means that “the land of *your enemies* will consume you.” Because there’s something I have to say that might surprise you: The Christians in the Middle Ages were not really our enemies. When a Jew lived in Christian Europe he was among friends. You know why I say that? Because in Christian Europe it was the fashion to believe in the Bible.

In the Middle Ages if a Jew was accused to the local gentile magistrate that he was disloyal to the Jewish laws so the magistrate used to punish the Jew. Jews *had* to obey their rabbis. The Christians demanded it. That's how it was. Unless you were willing to come over and join them, then they gladly welcomed you. But as long as you were a Jew, you were forced to be a Jew. And if a Jew was not religious, he was a vagabond, he could be chastised severely by the gentiles.

There was no such thing in Christian Europe of disbelief in the Bible. Of course, they added on their nonsensical commentaries and foolish explanations. But the fact is that if anyone would speak up and say he does not believe in the Bible, he would end up being treated to an auto-da-fe; he would be burned at the stake.

Enemy Nations

In Christian Europe you had to believe that the world was created in six days. You couldn't be a Modern Orthodox rabbi who says it means six eras, six geologic ages. Oh no. You couldn't have such a thing like was written up in the Jewish Action last year: that the Torah can believe that Adam and apes come from the same source, an ancient algae, a prebiotic soup. You didn't have to be busy combatting

evolution in Christian Europe. They wouldn't accept such nonsense in those days.

What about moral perversion? Nothing doing! What did they do with an adulteress? She was put to death. In the good old days – not only in the Middle Ages. In America the pilgrims used to take an adulteress and put her to death. The Bible was upheld. And therefore it was easy for a Jew to avoid very many wicked forms of sin.

Not like today; today the New York Times advertises a book advocating all sorts of immorality. You know, the New York Times has a special office for accepting advertisements. They won't take just any advertising. There's a special office where any questionable advertising is examined to determine if it could be admitted to the 'august' columns of The New York Times. But this they put in. An ad for such a book.

Now such things, that's what it means to live among enemies. Today, an Orthodox Jew has to worry about combating various forms of immorality; immorality in dress, in coeducation, in advertising, on the street, even in government propaganda. There are thousands of things you have to fight for today to be an Orthodox Jew. There was no evolution education in the Middle Ages. There was no fornication education like they have in the schools today.

With Such Friends...

And so in Medieval Europe many of today's problems were solved. And therefore there was a statement that Jews used to say “*avi es kristalt zach azoi yidelt zich.*” It means “as Christians go so the Jews go”. So since the Christians were religious, the Jews were religious too. They weren't our enemies. It was a fertile soil for Judaism to flourish.

And therefore this wasn't the land of our enemies. It was the land of our good friends! Only that they were the type of friend who, if they had a chance, they might kill you. Many Jews were killed by Christians on the road. If you look in the *shaalos uteshuvos* in the Middle Ages, even late Middle Ages,

recent times, you'll see many questions of women whose husbands disappeared and they wanted to get married. They're *agunos*. Then it was discovered a *goy* who came and he said, "I heard that your husband was killed by this and this gentile on the road."

Again and again. The Jewish *sefarim* are full of stories how our friends killed us. It's true that they persecuted us – oh did they persecute us. All down to modern times. I recommend people to read a book called, "The Foot of Pride," by Malcolm Hay (Editor's note: later republished as "Europe and the Jews"). And it'll give you a list of stories of the "kind-hearted" church. They were very difficult friends to have.

So you'll say that's what Rav was afraid of. Blood libels and pogroms. No, that's not what Rav was afraid of, because even in the Holocaust when they were burnt up, the good ones weren't eaten up. They were not 'devoured by enemies'. Yes, they were divested of their bodies but they went to a better place; they're still alive in Olam Haba right now.

Rav's fear was much greater than that. Just to lose your flesh and blood covering, to be devoured in this little world, that's not being "devoured in the land of your enemies." Because **וְאֶכְלָה אֶתְכֶם אֶרֶץ** **אֵיבִיכֶם** means to go lost forever. And that is what Rav feared.

Part II. Going Lost Among Friends

No Asian Hate

So what was Rav afraid of? I wanted to get right to the point and tell you that he was afraid of today's America, that he was afraid of today's London and Tel-Aviv and Australia. But in order that you should accept it, we'll speak about other examples first, examples that won't hurt your feelings.

Rav was afraid of what happened in China. Now, in China there was no anti-semitism. The Chinese

didn't have any old false grudge against the Jewish people. The Jews didn't crucify Confucius so what was there to hate? Of course we didn't crucify that other one either – crucifixion was not a Jewish system; it was the way of the Romans – but at least in the imagination of the Christians they were able to pin it on the Jews. But the Chinese had no grudge against us. They didn't make pogroms or crusades. And no Holocausts either.

And yet the Jewish people were devoured by the Chinese. Not that they were cannibals – the Chinese used to eat rats and other things, snakes and bats, but they didn't eat people. They were a very civilized nation; the Chinese didn't devour anybody. And still, the Jewish people were devoured in the worst fashion in China. What happened? They lived there so peacefully that they were lost forever.

挑筋教: **Tiao Jin Jiao**

At first the Chinese Jews kept everything. You know the old Chinese Jews, the Jews in Kaifeng, were called with a special name, Tiao Jin Jiao. Now I can't speak Chinese fluently so I'm not pronouncing it correctly, but the name meant this. It meant "those who pull out the sinews from the thigh." It means that they kept the *dinim* of *gid hanasheh*. A remarkable thing! The old Jews in China were called "the people who pulled the sinews from the thigh."

If you look in old encyclopedias, you can still see pictures of old Chinese Jews. They all wore pigtailed like the Chinese used to wear. In the encyclopedias you can still find a drawing of the Jewish synagogue in China, and it shows two *gabba'im* standing on the *bimah* with a *sefer Torah* and they're dressed exactly like Chinese mandarins. And wonder of wonders I saw photographs of families of Chinese Jews of generations ago and their eyes were slanted. It means that many Mongolians converted – they joined our nation. There was a constant infiltration of Chinese blood among us and that's why Jews in China after a while began to resemble the Chinese. But they kept everything. They had Shabbos and shuls and Yomim Tovim. They were *frum* Jews.

Only what happened? Because things were so peaceful, so comfortable. So sooner or later the mixing went the other way. Besides for slanted eyes – nothing wrong with that – but now you had Jews with slanted *ideas*, twisted attitudes. And after a while they all got lost. They were eaten up by the Chinese and today there is nobody left.

And that's what it means וְאֶבְרָתֶם בְּגוֹיִם. That's what Rav was worried about when he read the words in our *sedrah*, וְאֶכְלָה אֶתְכֶם אֶרֶץ אֲיִבִיכֶם. Because those who go lost among the gentiles like the Jews who were swallowed up in China are lost *forever*. Forever! In the Next World! Oy vey! We must weep without end for the *churban* of the Jewish people in China. All went lost. Nothing remains. For that great *kehillah* we have to weep, we must mourn.

Hodu and Kush

Now like I said earlier, China is only one example of many. Once upon a time Jews lived in India – there were Jewish communities in India. And they considered the Indians as friends. It's true they wouldn't touch Jews, but that wasn't hatred; they wouldn't touch low-caste Indians either. An aristocratic Brahmin, a high-class Indian, didn't want to be contaminated even by other Indians. But they didn't have any special grudge against Jews. And yet they were the deadliest of enemies. Just because of that friendliness, by and large they went lost forever.

Now of course some Jews survived. Some Jews came more recently by way of Persia into India and they survived to some extent, but there were older settlements who came before them, way before them. You remember in the *Megillas Esther* it says *meiHodu vead Kush*. There were Jews in Hodu, but what happened to them?

Not only the ancient kingdom of Persia. Do you know how many Jews went lost in today's Persia, in the Shah's Iran? Under the Shah, under the friendly regime of the Shah, many Iranian Jews were going lost. Only when Khomeini came to power he put a stop to it. They tell me that Khomeini now fines

Jews who profane Shabbos. I was told that this week. Khomeini demands that Jews must go to the synagogue in Iran on Shabbos.

Best of Times and the Worst...

And now we come to the subject of tonight's lecture; we come now to America. I say 'America' but it means the entire Western world; all of the cultures and societies that are under the influence of liberalism, of freedom, of enlightenment. America means London and Australia. It means Tel-Aviv and Yerushalayim too.

So you'll say "America?! America isn't 'a land of our enemies'! America is the place where we have the greatest opportunity to succeed. Since we were sent out to golus there hasn't been a better place."

The answer is, you're right. And the truth is that those Jews who understand what the function of life is, they can utilize freedom and liberty and equality, yes. On the contrary, why shouldn't we utilize this opportunity that America gives?

Many Orthodox Jews today are succeeding in America in raising big families, making *parnassah*. Some have prestigious occupations, yes. Even in City Hall. A lot of them. A black man once said that. "Too many *yarmulkas* in City Hall."

The Judges and the Sultan

Recently, I had to go to court. I was sitting in court for about three hours. I was amazed by what I saw. There was a man sitting up front near the judge – an important official there – with a big beard and a *yarmulke*. He was at home. He was an authority there. He announced. A big *macher*.

Near me sat another man with a big beard. I thought, he's just an immigrant maybe. I started talking to him. He's an ex-judge! He was a judge. He had a big beard as a judge; now he does something else. He had a black hat and a big beard. It looked like a *beis medrash*.

Today, there are *frum* Jews in the highest positions. Why shouldn't they be? Aren't they the most capable? Wasn't the Rambam the chief position

of the Sultan? The Rambam didn't shave off his beard. He dressed like a Jew; he didn't take any other kind of *begadim*. He walked in every day in the Sultan's palace and he was respected. He was an authority, famous as a physician. and the Rambam was carrying high the banner of the Torah wherever he went. And therefore, when a *frum* Jew is capable of being stubbornly loyal to the Torah, even to its minutiae, we're very proud of that. And we want to have more and more of them.

The American Holocaust

But unfortunately very many people are unable to succeed in a good climate of tolerance. Very many Jews are going lost – to one degree or another – and so when it comes to the most important of all successes, remaining attached to the Am Yisroel forever, America is not only the land of opportunity but it's also אֶרֶץ אֲיִבִּיכֶם – the land of our enemies.

Of course we are grateful to America. America is wonderful! But because we misuse it it becomes the biggest crematorium, the most potent killer of Jews. In Europe they cremated Jewish bodies but on this side the *goyim* were cremating Jews spiritually – it's a thousand times worse. If a Jew becomes disloyal, if he doesn't know anything about the Torah and he walks in the ways of the gentiles – he might even intermarry – he is lost among the *goyim* and it is better to die a thousand times than to go lost.

So when the German Jews came here in the 1870s and so on, they started battling for the right to enter gentile clubs – they thought that was the happiness, to sit with gentiles and to live in gentile neighborhoods – they didn't realize they were battling for their own destruction.

Hundreds of thousands, millions, of Jews went lost in America. If you get an old telephone book of forty years ago, you see the many names that no longer exist. Entire families were lost, lost entirely. I remember. Families and families. None of them are surviving anymore. Their children got lost among our enemies.

School Choice

If it's an alien culture, even though they do not persecute you, that's called your enemy. If a Jewish child goes to a public school and there is a nice friendly teacher there and there are friendly children, schoolmates, that Jewish child is among the very worst enemies. And even if it's a Jewish school and he's among children who are all born Jews, but if the teacher is a only nominal Jew and the lessons being learned in that school are empty of authentic Torah ideals so that Jewish child is being devoured by his enemies even worse than if he had fallen among a pack of wolves.

Not only the schools. The atmosphere of the street, the environment, everything is filled with *apikorsis* and materialism. Even amongst the *frumme*, so many *nebach* are gentiles covered with a thin layer of *frumkeit*. If you just scratch the surface, if you peel off the paint on the surface, underneath is America. Underneath are gentile attitudes.

And so as safe as we might be, as safe as our bodies might be in America, our *neshamos* are going lost. And let's not make any mistake. We're not in this world to protect our skin. We're not in this world to remain safe and sound. We're here for the purpose of protecting our eternity, and the only way to do that is to remain attached, in the greatest degree possible, to the Am Yisroel – to cling with all of our might and main to the authentic Am Yisroel.

And, therefore, even though we here today represent the successful ones – the Jews who understand how to use tolerance properly – nevertheless, we have to watch out too. We and our children have to be on guard all the time because we're in the land of our worst enemies. It's the place of our worst enemies because the environment is against us in every detail and so many, so many *rachmana litzlan*, are being devoured and lost forever. So many are loosening their attachment to the Am Yisroel – and that means that so many are loosening their attachment to eternity.

Nobody is Guaranteed

And that brings us now to one of the most important attitudes that a Torah Jew must always have in his mind. You know which attitude that is? It's to feel attached to the Am Yisroel; to always be *thinking thoughts* of identifying with your people. That's one of the most fundamental ways of remaining attached forever to the Am Yisroel.

And you have to know that anything else means that you're treading on the thin ice of **וְאִבְרַתֶּם בְּגוֹיִם**, of going lost forever. Hakadosh Baruch Hu doesn't owe anybody anything. It could be you were paid back in this world already for your good deeds. So many good breakfasts you ate in your life! So many suppers! Mountains of food you've eaten in this world! So many breaths of fresh air! So many good times! A person has to worry about that! Maybe he was paid off already.

Nobody is guaranteed all the *brachos* promised to our people – the promises of this world and of Olam Haba and Yemos Hamoshiach – merely because of his merits. You know how you're guaranteed to be forever with the Am Yisroel? By means of identifying with the Am Yisroel.

That's what it says **כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל יֵשׁ לָהֶם חֵלֶק לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא** – *All of Yisroel has a portion in the Next World*. It doesn't mean that you are worthy of Olam Haba. No! You wouldn't get Olam Haba on your own merits. It's only because you're a *chelek* of kol Yisroel! It's because you are part of Am Yisroel. Hakadosh Baruch Hu promised it wholesale to the Klal Yisroel and only as much as we feel united with them, in that measure will we be *zocheh* to what they're *zocheh*.

The Bobover Taimani

We have to work on that. Whether *kol Yisroel* are *frum* Taimanim or *frum* Syrians or *frum* Lakewooders or *frum* Bobovers, whatever it is, if it's an *eidah* of *frum* Jews, we identify with them! It doesn't mean you have to become like them! You

have a right not to be a Taimani. You have the right to remain a Bobover. But you have to identify with all of your people and to be loyal to all of them.

What does that mean? Well, the barebones requirement is you don't look down at other groups of *frum* Jews. Here's a woman from Virginia; she was once visiting here in Brooklyn and she called me up. Someone gave her my number. She was an Orthodox woman and she was talking to me against the Jews of Boro Park; that the Jews of Boro Park have programs, illegal things.

I said, "What are you talking about? Jews of Boro Park?!" When I walk in Boro Park – I'm rarely there – but when I walk there I'm thinking that I'm walking *mamesh* on *admas kodesh*! Blocks and blocks, all *shomrei mitzvos*; every single one of them!

Hakadosh Baruch Hu loves them! *Frum* Jews who in every detail of their lives, they're *mekayem* everything. How can you say such a thing about Boro Park Jews? Besides, there are *geonim* and *tzaddikim* also in Boro Park. *Chassidim*! *Geonim*! Holy people in Boro Park! But even the *hamon* of *frum* people, how can you say that?!

Our Wonderful People

There's a man who used to come here every Thursday night. He heard me say this, he stopped coming! He liked to talk against *chassidim* and I told him to his face, "You can't talk against *frum* Jews. If you talk against Boro Park, you're an *apikores*." He was angry at me.

Too bad on him. I was trying to help him. Because many Jews go lost just because of that, because they don't feel connected to the Am Yisroel. Am Yisroel doesn't mean the ones who *daven* in your *shtiebel* or the ones who wear your type of *yarmulke*. Hakadosh Baruch Hu says you have to be loyal to all of His people, all of the *shomrei Torah u'mitzvos*.

Now, I say Boro Park because they're especially good. But I'm talking about all the communities of *frum* Jews. A person must spend time thinking

about the greatness of his people. He must spend time appreciating them.

Nobody in the world ever was as good as *frum* Jews – even today's *frum* Jews. We cannot end singing the praises of the *frum* Jewish community. Men and women and their children are striving to fulfill the Torah and they're living lives that are saturated with *avodas Hashem*. They want to know what Hashem wants and all the time they come to ask questions about *kashrus* and *hilchos Shabbos*, other things, the most personal things. The Jewish nation is soaked through and through with *kedusha*.

They're devoted to the cause of bringing up Jewish children in the way of the Torah! So many people are sacrificing so much money to educate their children in Torah institutions when they could get away with paying nothing in the public schools. The truth is they would get nothing too – they'd get worse than nothing.

Connecting with the Past

Of course, in the generations past they were even greater. To be part of the Am Yisroel means you identify with them too. We have to be loyal to our *frum* ancestors. Are you connected with all the *ovdei Hashem* in the previous generations? Do you feel loyalty and affection to our Avos and to all of our great men of the past? All of them! Avraham, Yitzchok and Yaakov and all the *tzaddikei hadoros*, the *nevi'im*, and the Tanaim, we have to love them. All the *gedolei Yisroel*, we have to love them! We have to be loyal to them and think about them and love them.

It can't be empty ideals however. You have to back up that ideal with action. Do you name your children after them? Do you give names after our Avos, after all the *kedoshim* of our nation, the *tzaddikim*?

Do you try to imitate the ways of behavior of the *frum* Jews? Or do you attempt to imitate the amusements and entertainments of the nations of the world, while at the same time you think by doing some ceremonies and *mitzvos* you still maintain

your connection with the Klal Yisroel? Oh no! It's the mode of life of a Jew that identifies with whom he's really interested.

Hospitality and Modesty

Of course, there are many things to imitate. Are you practicing hospitality, *gemilus chassadim* like Avraham Avinu? And *tzedakah*? Do you practice *hachnosas orchim* like our ancestors always did? When a *meshulach* comes along from Eretz Yisroel do you offer him hospitality? He may not eat your meat, he may not drink your milk – but if you give him an apple, a glatt kosher apple, he'll enjoy it.

All of these ways of behaving are important parts of identifying with the Am Yisroel. *Tznius* too. Are your daughters trained in *tznius*? Do they wear dresses that cover them up as much as possible? That's the way of the Jewish nation. A woman who wears pants does not belong to the Klal Yisrael – and she may be the most *frum* woman but she is not identified with us – the Jewish nation doesn't do such things.

The Jews dress like Jews. They're proud to give names that identify with our people. They're proud to display the signs of Judaism on them. Jews wear *tzitzis*. Jews wear *tefillin*. Jews wear beards. A Jew wears a hat or a *yarmulke* or a *kipah* at all times. Jewish women are dressed decently. They wear *tzniusdige* skirts and *sheitelech*, snoods. All these are signs of demonstrating your allegiance to the eternal nation.

Amusement and Bowling

Even our amusements identify who we are. We have to identify with our great-grandmothers and great-grandfathers. And once we do that a great deal of simplicity will result, a great deal of frivolity will be cut out, and a lot of money-wasting will be cut out.

Bowling for instance. Now, there's nothing wrong with going bowling. Bowling is exercising; fine. But to go bowling among gentiles? What kind of business is that for Jews? Jews live their lives

among Jews and only among *frum* Jews - even in the *gashmiyus* of our lives, we have to emulate and identify to live together with the *frumme*, to be together with them physically.

Now, I don't want to start enumerating more things because you'll say I'm a killjoy. You'll say Rabbi Miller is taking away a lot of things from us, a lot of enjoyment. But I'll say that in general our mode of life has to emulate our forefathers. There are many, many things. You'll have to supply the details yourselves, but the principle is to live in a way that the Am Yisroel has always lived.

Pianos, Elegance and Class

I'll tell you something - don't be astonished; please don't be hurt if it applies to you - our forefathers didn't teach their daughters to play music. They didn't have pianos in their homes. Is it necessary to have a piano in a Jewish home? Now, there's no sin if you have a piano, but is it so important for a Jewish girl to have a piano? Aren't there more important things for her to learn?

I'm not saying it's a sin but the idea is imitation of *umos haolam*. Usually a piano in the house is nothing but a demonstration that you're wandering after the ways of the *umos haolam* and that's what Rav shuddered from; that's what he thought about when he read the *possuk* in our *sedrah*.

Now if you walk into a house and see a piano, don't quote me. I have enough enemies already. Don't say anything. If your wife has a piano and she insists on it, keep quiet. Don't make a scene from it. But the piano is only an example. It's the attitude, the ideal of identifying with what the Am Yisroel identifies with; of identifying with what our ancestors, the Torah nation, always identified with.

Many Happy Days

Shabbos was their amusement. Purim was a day of amusement. Even Chanukah had a certain amount of joy - although Chanukah is only for *halel*, *lehodos ul'halel*, not for *seudos* but still they enjoyed even Chanukah. *Chamisha asar b'Shvat*, they

enjoyed. They took *peiros* together and they made *brachos* on the *peiros* and they thanked Hashem for the *peiros*.

The Jewish nation lived happy occasions all the time. Simchas Torah was a great day! And Shavuos was even greater! By the way, Shavuos was even bigger than Simchas Torah in the olden days. The whole Jewish calendar was studded with joyous occasions. And therefore, nobody ever thought of Thanksgiving - it didn't even enter their minds. Nothing of the gentile world penetrated into the Jewish heart because the Jew identified with his people. He knew that the Shechinah rested on the Klal Yisroel and in order to be part of the Shechinah he wanted to be bound up only with the Am Yisroel.

You have to work on it. And I must tell you it's of the utmost importance. It's a condition! In order to be part of the Am Yisroel you have to want to a part of *kol Yisroel b'chol lev v'nefesh!* You should practice that! When you walk down the street and you see a *frum* house, a big *mezuzah*, a *frum* house, practice saying *brachos* on them. Say *brachos* on them. They don't have to listen. Say it anyhow. Practice all the time because everything depends on that - everything depends on your connection to the Am Hashem.

Grab the Rope

And therefore when a Jew starts *Shemoneh Esrei* and he says *baruch atah Hashem*, what does he do the first thing? He identifies who he is. *Elokeinu ve'Elokei avoseinu, Elokei Avraham Elokei Yitzchak ve'Elokei Yaakov*. We identify immediately with who we are.

You know how important those words are? It means you're taking hold of a rope, a rope that on one end is tied to our three *avos*. And holding on to that rope are also all the *tzaddikim*, all the *frum* Jews, in our history. Millions of *frum* Jews holding on to the rope. And all the *frum* Jews of today are also hanging on. The Jews in Passaic and in Los Angeles and Sydney and London and Lakewood and Williamsburg and Baltimore; everywhere where

there are *frum* Jews, they're all holding on to that rope that our Avos are holding onto on one end.

And the other end goes all the way to *techiyas hameisim*, all the way to Olam Haba. All the way to all of the *brachos* that the Torah promises to our people. וּפְנִינִי אֲלֵיכֶם וְהִפְרִיתִי אֶתְכֶם וְהִרְבִּיתִי אֶתְכֶם וְהִקִּימֹתִי אֶתְכֶם אֶת בְּרִיתִי אֶתְכֶם. All of the promises will be fulfilled in us. And that's why we're hanging on for dear life – because the other option is וְאִבְדֶתֶם בְּגוֹיִם.

And that's what it says בִּי הִנֵּה רִחֲקִידָא יֵאבְדוּ, those who are far from You, Hashem, are going to go lost. There's nothing worse than going lost. וְאַתֶּם הַדְּבִקִים וְאַתֶּם אֲלֵיכֶם בְּה' אֲלֵיכֶם, *But you who cling to Hashem, your G-d,* חַיִּים בְּלַכְּם הַיּוֹם, *you all live today.* Live means you'll live forever and ever.

Have A Wonderful Shabbos

LET'S GET PRACTICAL

Connected with the Eternal People

The great sage Rav was very afraid of the verse in our *parshah* which describes how some of our people will go lost among our enemies, how they will be devoured. Our greatest enemies are those who show a friendly face while causing us to forgo eternity. The only way we can fight back against assimilation is by clinging fiercely to the holy nation which is forever. The *brachah* of Avos connects us to our great forefathers who originated the holy nation. This week I will *bli neder* think about this every day during *davening*. As I begin *shemoneh esrei*, I will think about our great forefathers and my connection with all of their descendants who follow in their footsteps.

This week's booklet is based on tapes:

- 509 - Lost Among The Nations | (Q&A - 592) | 668 - Shmoneh Esreh 18
- 780 - The Night of the Locked Doors | E-31 - He Loves The Loyal
- E-271 - Havdalah

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Q:
Is the recent rise in anti-semitism something to worry about?

A:
Absolutely! How could we not worry about it? But we have to know that there is a fundamental reason why it's happening. It's because Hashem is worried about us. וַיִּטּוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵעֵלָיו - *Yisroel has to turn away from Eisav.* We're too much involved in gentile ideas, and it's necessary to erect a wall. And that wall is anti-semitism. Always it happens, again and again in history – when Jews start getting lost among Gentiles then it's time for the Gentiles to begin building a wall to prevent that.

And the first reaction to anti-semitism has to be *not* to contribute to the Simon Wiesenthal Center or other organizations that combat anti-semitism. No, no! In most cases those organizations cause anti-semitism. The way to combat anti-semitism is to build more *yeshivos* where children will be taken in for less *schar limud*; tuition should be made very low. The *yeshivos* should be so prosperous that they should be able to afford to take in children almost for nothing. That's the ideal. And so, the Jewish child, sitting in the *yeshivah*, will be the one who is fighting against anti-semitism in the most efficient manner.

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