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He Came Shining

*Tape #S-15*

מהדורת  
אהבה רבה

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# He Came Shining

Transcribed from Tape #S-15

We will attempt to study a piece of Gemara together. It's in Mesichta Avoda Zara on ב:ג. If you have an Ein Yankiv, you'll look in the beginning of Mesichta Avoda Zara, and you'll see our Gemara.

## THE SUMMATION OF HISTORY

The Gemara tells of a vision of prophecy, regarding an event that will take place באחרית הימים, at the End of Days, when finally *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* will come in all of His glory and will appear to all of mankind. And there will be a final reckoning, a summation of history. And at that time *Hashem* will take a *sefer Torah*, so to speak – it's a figure of speech – and hold it to Himself, and He will proclaim the following: "All those who have performed acts of virtue throughout history should now come and claim their reward." And as the nations will come, one by one, *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* points out to them that the sole purpose of their existence was selfishness. It wasn't virtue at all. They lived only for themselves.

And the prophetic vision continues: *Hashem* then points to one nation that was persecuted throughout all the centuries. The nation that suffered persecution because they were loyal to the *Torah* that *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* gave to them. And *Hashem* says, "They, the *Am Yisroel* are going to take the reward of the rest of

the world.” Now, the nations at that time, are going to say something. And actually we can say it for them, even today. And it is with those words that we will begin our subject.

#### WHY ARE YOU BLAMING US?

The Gemara says, *אומרים לפניו* - “The nations will say to Hashem,” *כלום נתתה לנו ולא* - “Master of the World,” *רבונו של עולם* - “Did You give us the *Torah* and we refused to accept it? You gave it to the Jews, and not to us. So why are You blaming us for not having a *Torah*?”

Now the Gemara immediately interrupts this argument of the gentiles: “What do you mean that *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* did not offer them the *Torah*? *ומי מצי למימר הכי* - How could they say such a thing?! *והכתיב* - “Isn’t it written,” *ויאמר משה* - *Moshe Rabeinu* made the following statement in *V’zos Habracha*, the *parsha* we’ll be reading on *Simchas Torah*: *השם מסיני בא* - “Hashem came from *Sinai*,” *וזרח משעיר למו* - “And He was shining to the *Am Yisroel* from *Se’ir*.” *הופיע מהר פארן* - “Hashem revealed Himself from the Mountain of Paran.” And it also states: *אלוקה מתימן יבוא* - “Hashem came from Teiman” - that’s another nation of the *umos ha’olam*.

#### THEY REFUSED IT

So the question the Gemara asks is *מאי בעי בשעיר ומאי בעי בפארן* - “What was the Presence of Hashem doing in these gentile countries of *Se’ir* and *Paran* and *Teiman*? What was *הקדוש ברוך הוא* doing in those nations that you say, ‘He came shining to the Jewish people from *Se’ir*.’ That He came shining from *Paran* and from *Teiman*.” The various places mentioned means to tell us that He came to the *Am Yisroel* from all sides. From all the nations, the Glory of Hashem came to the Jewish people. What does that mean? Does *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* have to come from the nations to give His glory to the Jewish people?

So the Gemara answers that we learn from these *pesukim* the following: *מלמד* - “This teaches us,” *שהחזירה הקדוש ברוך הוא על* - “that *Hakodosh Baruch Hu* carried the *Torah* around to every people and to every language,” *ולא קיבלוה* - “And every nation refused it.”

### WHY ARE THE REJECTERS COMPLAINING?

Now we'll soon understand this in a logical way. Every nation, every civilization, refused to accept the *Torah*. עד שבא אצל - "Until Hashem came to the *Am Yisroel* and they accepted it." Now, we'll soon come back and explain that, because the way people understand it is too juvenile. To take it literally that someone went to the nations with a *sefer Torah*, before even *Moshe Rabeinu* and his people looked at it, and it was displayed to the gentiles and they turned it down?! That's the way people ordinarily understand, but that we won't say. We'll explain it soon.

But the principle that we learn from here is that the nations of the world did, in some way, reject the *Torah*. So what are they protesting now that it's not their fault because the *Torah* wasn't offered to them?! They can't claim that! It was offered to them! That's what the *gemara* asks.

### THEY REJECTED IT BECAUSE THEY WEREN'T FORCED

So the *Gemara* says, אלא הכי קאמרי - "This is what the nations will say:" - כלום כפית עלינו הר כגיגית ולא קבלנוה - "Did you force us to accept it, and we refused?" That means the following: If we didn't accept it, it was because You didn't use enough persuasion on us. כמו שעשית לישראל - "Like You did to the Nation of Israel." "Because when it came to the *Am Yisroel*, You actually forced them to accept the *Torah*. You forced it upon them, and therefore what credit do they deserve?"

"And how do I know that they were forced?" the *Gemara* asks. דכתיב ויתיצבו בתחתית ההר - "They positioned themselves at the foot of the mountain" (Shemos 19:17). The people of *Yisroel* encamped around the mountain of Sinai. And they positioned themselves at the foot of the mountain. But תחתית can also mean "underneath." How was their encampment underneath the mountain?

### YOU DIDN'T SHOW US OUR GRAVE

So the *Gemara* says, אמר רב דימי בר חמה מלמד - "*Rav Dimi bar Chama* says that these words teach us the following," שכפה הקדוש ברוך הוא הר כגיגית על ישראל ואמר להם: אם אתם מקבלין את

וְאִם לֹא שָׁם תְּהֵא קְבוּרַתְכֶם -הַתּוֹרָה מוֹטֵב, וְאִם לֹא שָׁם תְּהֵא קְבוּרַתְכֶם “*Hakodosh Boruch Hu* raised up the mountain like an overturned barrel over the people of Yisroel, and He said to them: ‘If you accept the *Torah*, good. And if not, here will be your grave.’ ” And that’s why they accepted the *Torah*. There wasn’t a choice. And that’s why the nations have an argument. “You didn’t do that to us,” they argued. “If you had shown us such methods of persuasion like you did to the Jews, we also would have accepted the *Torah*.”

Now let’s go back and understand the words that we just heard. Because the words of the sages are shorthand. They embody important principles in a few words. And sometimes they use figures of speech that are only “picture-words,” in order to describe ideas.

#### THE SHVIGGER COMES TO VISIT

So we will explain as follows: There was once a woman who lived in a fairly sumptuous apartment in Flatbush. She had six rooms, two bedrooms. They had two garages, as well as other accessories for comfortable living. But she had visited a relative someplace on the Island, somewhere in Long Island, that lived in style. And when she returned, she was full of dissatisfaction. The rooms are too few, and too small. That’s how she felt.

So her husband is listening to her complaints, and he says, “Let’s stop talking about this for now because my mother is coming over to visit with us for a while.” So the mother-in-law came over to visit, and she remained a couple of weeks. At the end of the two weeks, the mother finally left. And then the wife said to her husband, “Isn’t it nice how roomy it is in our house now and how comfortable our home is now?”

#### THE GOATS AND CHICKENS COME TO VISIT

I’ll tell you another story, and then we’ll get down to our subject. We’ll go to a small town in Europe. And there was a woman who complained that the one-room shack wasn’t big enough for the family. So the husband, “You know it’s cold weather now outside. Let’s take in the goats and chickens into the house. It’s a pity on them; צַעַר בְּעֵלֵי חַיִּים.” And they stayed there in the house for two days. And finally, after the two days, after the

family had almost suffocated, he took the livestock and poultry out of the house again. And now the house became as spacious as a palace. There was so much room, and even enough left over to spare.

So what does that mean for us? We'll explain that. Now, when *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* wanted to visit His people, He didn't have to come sideways, via Paran, or via Se'ir, or by means of Teiman. He could have come from above, straight to the *Am Yisroel*. That's the way that would befitting for Him to come. Straight to the *Am Yisroel*. So why the detour to Se'ir?

### THE SHALOM BAYIS IN SE'IR

And the answer is this. It is the contrast between the *Am Yisroel* and the rest of the nations that makes our greatness even more evident. Like the lady who has enough room in her home, but she only realizes it when she contrasts it with the suffocation she felt when living with the goats, or with her mother-in-law. If *Hashem* would have come from above, from the world of spirit, the world of purity and angels, and He'd come straight down and view of people of flesh and blood - even the best people - He would be cognizant of human faults. Even the best people sometimes have squabbles. And the best people have human weaknesses. And so *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* first went to view the nations of the world. And He took a good look at them first. He visited with Se'ir. And after the Presence of *Hashem* was in Se'ir for some time, to see the Edomites who dwelled there, it was then that He came from Se'ir to His people, and He was shining. זרר משעיר למו - "From Se'ir, He came shining to His people." Now, why was He shining at us?

In Se'ir, He saw men who were beating their wives. That was the standard practice in Se'ir. Every man, every week - at least once a week - he would give his wife a good beating. It was a principle in those Eastern countries that the lady of the house should be put in her place. And from time to time she would forget, so there were frequent reminders. He would beat her up. They were wild fellows - and it was on principle.

## ARABIAN SHALOM BAYIS

There was still an old Arabian custom that they inherited from their “good old days,” that when a woman spoke fresh to her husband, he locked her in the woodshed. It was an Arabian custom and it was sanctioned by Mohammedan law, by Sharia law. To teach her good manners towards her husband, he would lock her in the woodshed, and the duration of her stay depended on his judgement, his whims. Sometime he got busy and forgot. And by the time he remembered and returned, she had already been humbled. She had been taught the lesson.

And so when *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* took a look at *Har Se'ir*, and He saw this – and other similar practices as well – so, וזרח למו משעיר למו – “He came shining from Se'ir.” He didn't just “come” from Se'ir to the *Am Yisroel*. He came *shining* upon our nation from Se'ir. He came now to a nation of equity. A nation of decency. A nation where people honored each other. The women looked up to their husbands, and the husbands honored their wives. That's a Jewish principle. אוקירו לנשייכו – “Honor your wives.” That's a *Torah* principle. And אשתך גוצא – “If your wife is short,” גחין ולחיש לה – “bend over and whisper to her.” What does that mean? If her *seichel* is short, if she doesn't have enough intelligence, don't despise her. Speak to her according to her own level. And sometimes the wife has to speak down to the husband's level as well. But whatever it is, the *Am Yisroel* respects the mother of the house. The wives and the mothers are the builders of our nation.

## JEWISH SHALOM BAYIS

And that's a *Torah* principle. Once a husband contracts to marry a woman, it's a *bris*, a covenant, and it's a covenant with a promise of respect. Like it says in the *kesuvah*, דמוקרין לנשייהו – “They honor their wives in truth.” It's written in the *kesuvah*. It's a good idea, by the way, to read the *kesuvah* once in a while and know what you committed yourself to. It's important to translate the *kesuvah* in a language that the *chossan* understands. דמוקרין לנשייהו בקושטא – “They honor their wives in truth.” And therefore, when *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* came to Se'ir, and He viewed

their ceremony of putting the wife in her place, and then He came to His people, He came shining to them.

But what do we need Se'ir for? Let's go to modern London. London 1890. There was a writer, a Jewish writer, who was describing Whitechapel, the Jewish district in London. And he describes it like this. Saturday night in Whitechapel, he says, was like a little island of decency in a world of moral corruption. From all sides, he writes, from all the gentile quarters, you could hear the wails of women being beaten. Because Saturday night was drinking night. They received their pay on Saturday, and everybody went straight to the pub. And that's where they spent a good deal of the money before bringing the leftovers home for the family.

#### THE FINE ENGLISHMEN

And then, when they were well-inebriated, they went home and they practiced up their fisticuffs on the closest object they found - their wives. And he writes that on all sides you could hear the wails of beaten women. That's how Israel Zangwill describes London in his times, in 1890. The drunkenness and debauchery of London! And don't think that London is any better today. In some ways it's much worse.

And in those days, they didn't have any sort of society for prevention of cruelty to women. And no society for prevention of cruelty to children either. They did though, already have a society for prevention of cruelty to animals. That, they had. Prevention of cruelty to animals! Now that's a civilized country! But not for the women and children. Oh no, women and children had nobody to speak up for them, because it was a self-understood natural law in London that you have to put them in their place, even with a fist. And if you wrenched off the leg of a table and used that as well, nobody would criticize you.

#### ARCHAEOLOGICAL ALTAR EXCAVATIONS

And in ancient Se'ir, that's what the Shechina saw. And when He came to the Am Yisroel after visiting Se'ir, it says וורה משעיר למו - "He was shining from Se'ir to the Am Yisroel." And then *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* decided that it's not enough. And so He

took a visit to Paran. You know who was in Paran? In Paran was Yishmael. In Se'ir, Hashem had found Eisav. Edom, that's the family of Eisav. And who was in Paran? In Paran was Yishmael. Like it says **וַיֵּשֶׁב בַּמִּדְבָּר פָּאֲרָן**, Yishmael dwelt in Paran. And so *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* visited Se'ir and Paran and Teiman. He visited all of the civilizations that were around.

Now all this that we are learning in the Gemara, is just a figure of speech. Hashem didn't have to visit anybody. He knew just well what was doing there without having to make a visit. But it's a poetic expression. It means that He examined the behavior of Paran. And when He took a good look at Paran, He saw that in Paran that they were slaughtering babies. Little babies in Paran were being killed. Why were they slaughtering babies? Well, when they saw that the crops were failing they decided to propitiate the gods of fertility. And that god apparently had a special diet. It was the fat and blood of little children. And therefore, they used to take their own children - and in case a person didn't have any, they would seize their neighbors children - and they slaughtered them as offerings. And that's why when the archeologists began to dig around the ancient altars, they found heaps and heaps of children's bones. Big heaps of children's bones around the ancient altars.

#### THE CIVILIZED ROMANS ENJOY POPCORN

And we shouldn't think that this was only in Paran. All over the world, the nations were busy destroying human beings to propitiate their gods. The Aztecs had a nice little *minhag* of taking a young girl and throwing her down into a deep well where she would be offered up as a drowning victim to their jealous gods. And the Central American Indians were not wild savages like today. They were very "civilized" at that time in their history. They had great big cities. Today those cities are buried under jungles, but in those days they had teeming countries full of people and cities and organization. And we know just well how they spent their "civilized" days. They used to wage wars for the purpose of gaining more victims for human sacrifice.

And the Romans! Ahhh, the "blessed" Romans. The exponents of European civilization! The Romans had a principle

that if a father was angry at his son or daughter, or a grandfather was angry at his grandson or his granddaughter, they could take the child and have him thrown to the lions. And the family would gather, together with the rest of the Roman aristocracy, for a Sunday afternoon of good culture – Sunday was a big day for the Romans, that’s where the Christians got it, from the Romans – and so they would sit there Sunday afternoon munching popcorn and watching the performance. And they would converse with each other about the goings-on. Let’s say, as the lion would bite into the victim’s skill, the master of the house would turn to his wife and say, “Paulina, did you hear that crunch? Now that was a crunch!” And they munched their popcorn with more appetite as they enjoyed the scene. And they discussed the proficiency of this lion versus that lion.

#### THE REMARKABLE JEWISH LAW

And the victims? Nobody thought about them. And who were the victims? It might have been a boy who said something unseemly to his father, or to his grandfather or even great-grandfather. It was the law of *Patria Potestas*. The law of “the power of the family father.” A family father was entitled to sentence any one of his descendants in the male line – his daughters too, as long as they were in the male line – he could sentence them to be put to death. The law also empowered him to kill his slaves and throw them to wild beasts. Tacitus, the eminent Roman historian who delighted in defaming our nation, grudgingly admits that among the Jews “it is esteemed utterly unlawful to kill any of their children” (Tacitus, *History of the Jews*, Book V, Chapter 2). I suppose he considered this a most remarkable point. Of course he did, because in Ancient Rome they killed deformed children, and even healthy ones. That was the culture of Rome.

And if we turn our attention to Greece, we’ll also come shining back to the Jewish people! In Greece, everybody knows, we have the Spartans. The Spartans, whenever anybody was old, instead of taking him and placing him in a nursing home, in a home for the aged, they took him on their backs and they carried him out to the forest, in the dead of winter, in the bitter frost. And

they deposited him on the snow. They left him, and he became an ice cube. That was the honorable end of old Father and old Mother in Greece. Ice cubes in the forest!

#### THE INDIAN ALMANAH

And if we go to the Indians, we will also come back shining on the Jewish people! We can look at what Mitchiner writes in his book on the Indians. He considers himself an authority on Indian culture, so let's hear what he says. Here is an Indian warrior, a hero who gave his life to save his tribe. He fought heroically but, *nebach*, he lost his life. And his fellow Indians were not ungrateful. They gave him a hero's burial. They put him on a wooden pallet, and they carried him in state to a certain tree-grave and they buried him in that certain tree-grave that they had prepared. They put the pallet, like a wooden bed, on the tree and there he lay for the birds to come to pick at his eyes and consume his flesh. That was the hero's burial.

But he left over a widow. He left over a widow in his tent. So what happened to his widow? So here Mitchiner describes with a little note of apology - all little preface of apology - that there was a "cruel and inexorable law of the prairies." As soon as this man's funeral was over, all the *chusheveh* ladies, the sisterhood of the tribe, descended upon her, and they took away every last thing she possessed. That was the rule; that was the law. Now that there was nobody to protect her, it's the law of the tribe to take away every shred, every stick that she possessed, except for the clothing on her back. And she was left without a wigwam, her tepee. They took her wigwam apart as well, as midwinter arrived.

And nobody invited this widow into their homes. Of course not. That was against the procedure. And so what did she do? She went to live among the horses in order to try to maintain her life a little longer. And in the morning they found her frozen to death. And that was the standard procedure among Indians.

#### THE CONTRAST SHINES BRIGHTLY

So *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* when He came from the Indians, He came shining to His people and He said, "Here is a people, the *Am Yisroel*, who have pity on widows." And that's why He gave

us a *Torah* where it states that if you even speak harshly to a widow and she complains, then **וַחֲרָה אִפִּי** - "My wrath will be kindled," **וְהִרַגְתִּי אֶתְכֶם בַּחֶרֶב** - "And I will kill you by the sword" (*Shemos* 22:23). If a man speaks harshly to a widow or to an orphan, that's the punishment he will get.

And the Jewish nation was the people that already had that. That procedure of caring for the downtrodden was followed by the Jewish people even before the *Torah* was given to them. From the beginning we were a special people. We'll soon talk about that. And that's why *Hashem* came shining to them. And that's why all these nations are enumerated - because *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* contrasted our forefathers with the nations of the world, and He came to *Har Sinai* shining, to give us the *Torah*.

#### THE NEW YORK TIMES IS FAKE NEWS

The moral depravity of the Oriental peoples is well-known. Until recently, widows were burned alive on their husbands' funeral pyre. In 1398, two thousand wives of King Hari Hara II of Vijayanagar were burned alive with his dead body. The human sacrifices of the Shaivas, the ritual murders of the Thuggi, and all other forms of cruelty have enslaved India for long centuries. And so *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* shined upon the nation that rejected all these forms of wickedness.

Now this may seem to people like propaganda. It may seem to you like exaggeration. But whose fault is it that you are not aware of ancient history? You should read about Ancient Rome and Ancient Greece in the sources. Not in the New York Times! Not what the New York Times tells you. The New York Times speaks glowingly about Ancient Greece. "Ahh, Ancient Greece, the cradle of democracy and human rights." Let me tell you about Ancient Greece. Ancient Greece was a place where Socrates, the greatest Greek who ever lived, was put to death. And for what? He was put to death because he did not urge his disciples to be respectful enough to the Senate of Athens. That was the reason. His disciples, the Stoics, sat on the porch and they studied philosophy. Porch is a stoa in Greek. And the Stoics means the "porch men." A Stoic means a porch man. Not like we think that Stoics means that they were tough people. No, Stoics

means people who sit on the porch. So as you pass down the street in East Flatbush and you see people sitting on their porches, those are Stoics. It means loafers. That's the real meaning of Stoics.

### THE GREEKS EMULATE THEIR GODS

And so Socrates taught his Stoics, his porch men, that there are more important things in life than politics. Sitting on the porch and philosophizing is much more important than being a politician. He gave his students this idea that philosophy is much more important than being a soldier or a politician. And he didn't speak enough about the gods. He sometimes mentioned the gods of Greece, but he didn't speak about them enough. So this was seized as an excuse and the Senate sentenced Socrates to death for the crime of impiety. And Socrates had to drink the hemlock poison. That's how Athens treated its greatest citizen.

Now, if we go back and see what was the practice of general decency in Athens, we'll see the following. In Athens, they worshipped a certain god - I won't mention his name - he was the chief god of all of them. And according to their literature it is unanimously accepted that he had a male concubine. The chief god of the Greeks had a male concubine! His name I can tell you because he wasn't a god. His name was Ganymede. Ganymede was the male concubine of their chief god. And the Greeks weren't ashamed to practice *mishkav zachar* because they worshipped a god that practiced it himself. Now of course we understand why the Greeks did that, why they attributed such a thing to their god. The best way to get a license to do something wicked is to attribute that behavior to your gods. You say your gods do it! And so naturally, everybody follows suit.

### THE WILD PHANTASMAGORIA OF GREEK MYTHOLOGY

All throughout their history, the Greeks have corrupted themselves by all the evil attributes which they ascribed to their gods. Unbounded lusts are ascribed to almost all of these gods. I don't want to waste your time or fill your mind with the wickedness of the Greeks, but it's important to know why *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* shines on our nation exclusively. The chief god is found deluding the goddesses and making them pregnant. And then he puts them in prison or drowns them in the sea.

Sodomy is ascribed openly to their gods, and the gods express envy - envy! - at those who were caught in the act of adultery. In this wild phantasmagoria of their mythology, the Greek gods committed every crime and practiced every vice. And so, the Greeks, like the Romans, and like all the idolaters before them, contrived these gods and their behavior, as an apology for their own unbridled lusts, and in order to permit themselves every form of licentiousness and wickedness.

And therefore when *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* came to His people from His visit to Greece, He was shining! And that's why this preface to the giving of the *Torah* is related. That's how He came to our nation. He looked at the nations of the world and He said, "I'm trying to find other candidates to receive My *Torah*. Who else? The Egyptians?!" The Egyptians worshipped the asp, the crocodile, and the baboon. And Josephus tells us that the worshippers imitated their gods. He said that they emulated the qualities of these gods.

#### BEAUTIFUL BLACK LONGPIG

Now the qualities of an asp, I suppose are not too enviable. The qualities and good manners of a baboon? But these were the manners and the morals of Ancient Egypt; they lived lives imitating their gods, the asp and the baboon. Now, that's not what I say. Josephus wrote this two thousand years ago, and he knew Egypt. He lived right next door to them so I imagine that he had some knowledge of Egypt.

So you might say, well, the white peoples were never any good anyhow. The white peoples were always a wicked bunch. If you want to see real virtue you'll have to look to the black people. They are the real ones. Black is beautiful! So we'll imagine now that the *Shechina* took a visit to the Congo. And not two thousand years ago, but even two hundred years ago. And the *Shechina* saw in the Congo, and elsewhere all over Africa, that there was a quaint little custom. When you wanted to make a wedding feast for your children, you wouldn't waste your efforts on such cheap viand, cheap food, like ox meat or fish. No! You went out at night and you concealed yourself in a bush. And when a neighbor, a neighbor of your own tribe, was passing by, you pounced on him

from behind and you felled him with one blow. And now you had what they called "long-pig." And that person was broiled for their wedding feast. That was a delicacy! And now the *Shechina* is looking at how beautiful black really is. How they're sitting there celebrating a wedding, and they're chewing on the bone and saying, "He was a nice neighbor, a really good fellow. We're enjoying him to no end!"

#### THE BEIS YAAKOV GIRLS ARE COUNTING

And what I'm telling you is not propaganda. This is well-known that their neighbors were their victims. And it was considered a wisdom and a virtue to be so cunning that you were able to cut down your neighbor and destroy him. And people think – it's a pity what people think. If you read such propaganda as *Roots* – that book *Roots* – you'll read about how it was a great pity that the blacks were transported from the Congo and brought to America. But they don't realize that it was actually a salvation for them. They were saved from being devoured by people of neighboring tribes. Because that's all they did! They fought incessant wars. They never stopped fighting with each other. And eating each other.

And the same with the American Indians. Only that the Indians didn't eat each other. They just took a souvenir when they killed somebody. They were satisfied with that. They took off his scalp. They didn't shave his scalp – they actually cut off the skin of his head with a scalping knife and they hung it on their belts. And then they came back home to the village and they danced a victory dance. And the admiring young women were looking on, and these maidens were counting how many scalps are hanging from this warrior's belt. And the more scalps, the more virtuous. He was the most decent one. It's like, *l'haodil*, today a girl from Beis Yaakov. She wants to know whom to marry from the yeshiva men. So she looks to see how many *mesichtahs* did he learn. He learned five *mesichtahs*. And this one learned two *sedorim*. This one knows three *mesichtahs* by heart. That's what the Beis Yaakov girls count instead of scalps. Well, that's how it used to be anyhow. In the good old days she wanted to know, "How much did he

learn?" But there, by the American Indians, they wanted to know how many scalps he had cut off from his fellow Indians.

#### THE CONCERNED FATHER

And in South America, they wanted to know how many teeth of his enemies did he have hanging as beads around his neck. Enemies?! They weren't really enemies. Everybody was your enemy! All the nations of the world were your enemy. And they lived only for homicide! It was an ideal to murder people. And if you looked all over the world, it was the same story.

Now let's take a brief visit, a quick visit over to the nice people of China and Japan. Oh, the Japanese! Now that's an orderly people. Certainly they are orderly. The Japanese used to kill baby girls in a very orderly way. They didn't do it in a messy way, the Japanese and the Chinese; they were very orderly. And so when the woman was about to give birth, her husband was standing by. And he was very concerned. He wasn't saying *Tehillim*, but he was very concerned. And not about his wife. But, "Would there be another boy?" That's all he wanted. And then when the midwife told him that it's a girl, so the husband did like this with his hand. It means "to heck with her." And the midwife knew what that meant. She had already prepared a piece of wet paper just in case - you know the Chinese and Japanese invented paper - so she took this wet paper and put it over the infant's nose, and she kept it there for ten minutes.

#### THE PERFUMED GERMANS

Pearl Buck, when she visited China in about 1915, she wrote that she spoke to many of her friends there. She wrote about a book, *The China I Knew*, and she writes there about a gathering of Chinese women, and almost every one of them admitted that they had killed at least one girl baby in their family. She writes that in a conversation with eleven Chinese friends, nine of them admitted that they had murdered at least one baby girl. So now you know, when you come back to our people, why *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* was shining on the *Am Yisroel*.

And if you think the Norsemen were any better - "Oh yes," you'll say. "They're Saxons, they're the real white people. A

different white people, with blue eyes and yellow hair.” Oh, they’re wonderful, those Norsemen. So why go back to two thousand years ago when we can go back just thirty years [*this shiur was given in 1972*]. Thirty years ago, look into the homes of these beautiful, nice-smelling Saxons, the Germans. They were perfumed. You know that they washed themselves with soap every day, a few times a day. And the soap was sometimes made from human fats. Out of Jewish fats. All over Germany.

#### WERE THE NAZIS CRIMINALS?

So here is a dirty filthy Jew, who is being dragged to the crematorium, and a clean shaven, nice smelling German is hitting him over the head with the butt of a gun. Now let’s see, who stinks in the eyes of *Hakodosh Boruch Hu*? The Jew who hasn’t bathed in months? The Jew who can’t remember the last time he put on a clean shirt? The Jew who is wretched in his suffering? Or this well-rested and well-fed German who has bathed every day without fail, and shaved every day without fail. And he even put perfume in his underwear. So who smells bad? You understand of course that the smell of the Jew was like perfume that went up to heaven. The suffering Jew, that was the one. And the German was a swine, the filthiest swine. Only that I have to apologize to the pigs. We have to apologize to the swine for comparing them to the Germans.

And these Germans weren’t nobodies. Don’t think that they were the criminals. They were criminals of course, but they weren’t of the criminal class. They were professors and pastors. German pastors stood there with their guns – their Tommy guns – shooting down men and women and children and babies. German pastors! Don’t deceive yourselves. There is evidence for this [See *Hitler’s Willing Executioners* by Daniel Goldhagen]. It was clear that the German people on a whole willingly joined in, in this “Great Prank” of mass murder. So this Teutonic *yetzer harah* got free leeway, free reign, for a little while. And after that, again they’re nice people; they’re quiet people for a little bit. And when the Allies came, the Germans put up a big squawk, “The Russians are not giving us enough vitamins. We’re not getting enough proteins. Our children are going to suffer from vitamin

deficiency.” And the Americans became so excited about the humanitarian needs of the Germans folk. We have to make a special airlift to supply the Germans with all their needs. They were *moser nefesh!* American fliers died in the airlift to supply the Germans with all good things. And there was even an airlift for toys for the children.

#### WE LOVE AMERICA

But nobody got excited about an airlift for the poor Jews when they were being massacred. One airplane, one bomber, could have put out of commission the railroad that led to Auschwitz. And the United States government was informed about it. If you would bomb that line you would stop the whole devilish performance. But no, they couldn't spare a bomber for the Jews. But when the time came to supply toys for the German children, all of America melted away in sympathy. And so, I don't want to talk too much about America. We love America because it is our home and it has given us a great many privileges. But when Hashem comes from America to the Jewish people, He is shining as well.

In Milwaukee, it happened that a bird, a mallard duck, laid some eggs on a drawbridge over a big commerce river. Well, when a duck lays eggs, you can't disturb the eggs of that bird, can you? To disturb the nest of a bird?! Oh no! Americans couldn't do a thing like that. And so the drawbridge wasn't opened up anymore. Police were stationed there, and down at the river tugboats were circling around to drive away all boats. All traffic had to be rerouted for many miles. You couldn't travel under this bridge anymore. And every day, from hour to hour, there were reports on the radio. Reports on how are the birds doing. It cost many thousands of dollars for the city. And at that same time, Jewish children were being thrown into the crematoriums. Not birds. Children. Real children! And there wasn't even an echo in Milwaukee. They knew about it. But it wasn't important enough; it wasn't as important as the eggs of the mallard. And therefore, when *Hashem* comes from Milwaukee to the Jewish people, He is shining!

## WAS THE TORAH IN A LEATHER BRIEFCASE?

And so, *Chazal* are telling us that when *Hashem* visited all the nations of the world, and then He came to the Jewish people who wanted to accept His *Torah*, He was shining. זרה משעיר למו. הופיע מהר פארן.

Now we go on to what the nations said to *Hashem*. The nations had a big claim against *Hashem*. They said, "What do you want of us?! You didn't give us the *Torah*!" So *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* answered back to them, "You didn't accept it."

Now what does that mean that the nations didn't accept the *Torah*? *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* didn't send anybody around with a *Torah* in his suitcase, making appointments with the kings of the nations. What do you think?! That someone made an appointment with the king and said, "I have something to sell you," and the king said, "OK, let's see your merchandise." So the salesman opened up his suitcase and showed the king, "Here's the *Torah*." And then the king said, *מה כתוב בה*, "What's written in the *Torah*?" No, it wasn't that simple. That's childish. It was something much more profound than that.

## NATURE IN CONVULSIONS

*Hashem* sent salesmen around. Yes, He sent salesmen around. You know what was happening at that time? At that time, when the *Am Yisroel* came out of *Mitzrayim* and stood at *Har Sinai* to accept the *Torah* the world was in convulsions. Nature was very much in convulsions. There are records, historic records, that at that time there were great changes in nature. There was great deal of volcanic activity all over the world. There were earthquakes all over the globe. I could recommend a certain book that gives details, but it's against my principles however to name in these lectures any book that is written by an atheist. He's an atheist who is a researcher, and he has brought together material to show that all of over the world, at that time, nature was in great turmoil.

And the nations of the world began to ask each other, "What's this about?" In those days people still believed in a divine power. You remember, in the book of *Yonah* that we just read on *Yom Kippur*, when *Yonah* was on board the ship and a great storm arose. So the gentile sailors said, *בשלמי הרעה הזאת לנו* - "Because

of whom is this bad thing happening to us? It's no accident," they said. (*Yonah* 1:7). And they threw lots and the lots fell on *Yonah*. He is the one because of whom the storm took place.

#### BILAAM'S TALMIDIM

At that time the nations believed. They weren't buffoons like the people today. And therefore they began to ask questions. And there were great men among the nations. Men who began to say to them, "You know, maybe we should change our ways. Maybe our immorality, maybe our rapaciousness, maybe our selfishness, is not the right way for us to continue. Maybe this is a message from heaven." At that time, the *Medrash* tells, the gentiles came to Bilaam, and they asked him about what was taking place. And Bilaam said, "A big change is coming into being in the world right now. The *Torah* is being given to the Jewish people." Now, that is also a figure of speech, that *Medrash*. But everywhere at that time there were men of spirit who raised the question, "Maybe we should start changing our ways?!" But the nations refused to listen. Today we see even among Jews, there are Reform Jews, Conservative Jews, atheistic Jews, even many Orthodox Jews, who don't interpret events in a divine way. "It just happened that way," they think. And they find materialistic reasons for whatever happens. As long as they won't have to admit that they're living lives of *sheker*, of falsehood, and that they have to change their ways.

And so, at that time, the nations fell short. And that's what is meant by refusing the *Torah*. So the nations now say, "What do you want of us?! To the *Am Yisroel* you came with a threat, and you forced the *Torah* upon them. Why didn't you force the *Torah* upon us? We would have accepted it too. We could have done a good job with the *Torah*. We didn't know. We had to guess from the upheavals of nature. We had to use our intuition and understand that You were hinting that we have to change our ways. But to the Jewish people You came openly, with thunder and lighting, and they heard Your voice speaking at *Sinai*. And *Moshe Rabeinu* came down and spoke to them. Why didn't You do that to us?"

### TAKE THE FIRST STEP, EVEN A TINY ONE

And now we come to our subject. And the subject is this: It depends on how you make the first step. Now, let's listen prayerfully to this because it's a very important subject. *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* has taught us a principle: פתחו לי פתח כחודו של מחט - "Open up for Me, make an opening for Me, as big as the tip of a needle." Do you know how big of an opening the tip of a needle can make? Take the tip of a needle and stick it into, let's say, a piece of paper. How wide is that doorway? You can't drive your car through it yet, can you?

It's a very small hole that you made, a very small opening. But still, *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* tells you: פתחו לי פתח כחודו של מחט - "If you'll open up for Me a hole as wide as the tip of a needle," "I'll open up for you a doorway like the doorway of a palace" (Shir Hashirim Rabbah 5:3).

### THE MOST DECENT PEOPLE IN THE WORLD

What does that mean? It means that everything depends on how you start out. Everything depends on your first step. And as a result of your first step, you'll be amazed at what happens. There's a reward for opening up that small hole, for making that first step, and the reward is that you'll make a second step. But the second step is far bigger than the first one. The second step, *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* already intervenes. The first step you have to make yourself, but the second one, He gives you a push!

*Yirmiyah Hanavi* said קודש ישראל להשם - "The Jewish nation is sacred to Hashem." Do you know why? Because ראשית תבואתו - "Because they are the first of His produce" (*Yirmiyahu* 2:3). We are sacred because we are the first. What does that mean? Why doesn't it say "because we are the best"? That's the truth! We really are the best! Where do you find a nation that hates violence as much as the *Am Yisroel*? Where do you find a nation that has as much chastity and decency as the *Am Yisroel*? We're talking about real Jews now, not imitation Jews. The real Jews are the most decent of all peoples in the world.

### RAV MILLER "STARTS UP" WITH A LITVAK

I was in Lithuania for six years. Now you might think that the Lithuanians were nice quiet people. Let me tell you

something. Every Lithuanian carried a knife in his boots. He didn't carry it just for ballast. If you started up with a Lithuanian goy and you got away without having a knife drawn on you, you would consider yourself a very lucky fellow. I once started up with one of them, but I walked rapidly away from him. I made my getaway. He was drunk and he could hardly walk, and that's why nothing happened to me. But my friends who were with me scolded me. "You don't start up with a Lithuanian goy," they said. He had said something about me, "a dirty Jew" or something. So I gave him a push. I was an American so I wasn't accustomed to bowing my head. So my friends said to me, "What are you doing?! Are you crazy?!" and we quickly walked away. He could hardly keep his balance walking, so we just quickly walked away.

Every Lithuanian had a knife in his boots. Every Monday morning the *Letivus Idis* came out. That's the Lithuanian newspaper. And there was a long list of stabbings - stabbings that took place on Sunday. A long list. "Mikolis Antonis stabbed so and so. Sanjonis Andrius stabbed Morijonus Kronos." A whole long list of stabbings. It was a regular procedure.

#### THE CHILDREN WALK DOWN THE AISLE

And getting married was a waste of time in Lithuania. If somebody saved up enough money to get married, so *the children* would come to the wedding. I myself saw it.

And Wednesday was a spectacle in itself. Wednesday was the fair day, the market day, in the small town where I lived. So on Wednesday the peasants would come, the poor peasants; they were as poor as anything. They came and they sold their produce. They sold their chickens, they sold their sheep, they sold their wood, their lumber, they sold their linens. And they took their money and they went straight to the saloon and they got drunk. I can't say it was every single one of them, but I'll tell you what I saw. I saw a shocking sight. A heap of men and women, lying dead drunk, all on top of each other, like a pile of old clothing. And with vomit all over them. I was shocked, but people told me that this is the regular procedure for every week. That's the blue-eyed, fair-haired people! And they were much better than the

Poles. The Poles were worse, a hundred times worse. The Poles were terribly wicked.

### DID HASHEM PICK US BECAUSE OF OUR NOSES?

But even though we were always the best, the *Navi* tells us that we are holy to *Hashem* because we are the *ראשית*, the first. From all the nations, we made the first step. And therefore, when *Hakodosh Baruch Hu* looked for a nation to be His nation, He found *קודש ישראל להשם ראשית תבואתו* - "They were a sacred people for *Hashem* from the beginning, because they were the first of His produce." He looked around and found that it was our nation that had taken the first step towards Him. We were the *ראשית*, the first to come close to *Hashem*. There wasn't any impartiality. He didn't give the *Torah* to our forefathers because He liked their noses or anything else like that. Somebody made the first step! Who made the first step? You know who made the first step?

### THE FIRST STEP

The first step was made by Noach's son, Shem. Shem made the first step. Noach had three sons, Shem, Cham and Yefes. And one day Noach made an error and he got drunk, and he lay uncovered on his couch - he laid naked. And in came his son Cham, and Cham took a look and he came out and made a joke. He told it to his brothers. He said, "Look at the old fellow. Look at the old man now." So Shem said, "Stop it now! Keep quiet!" And he took a blanket to cover his father. And the second brother, Yefes, a decent fellow, also took hold of the blanket. But he wasn't the initiator. He wasn't the first one though. *ויקח שם ויפת את השמלה* - It says *ויקח*, singular. "And he took, Shem took. And then Yefes also." Yefes had the good sense to join in on a good thing. And it paid for him, by the way. It paid off for him handsomely.

So Shem and Yefes took a blanket, and "they walked backwards," the *Torah* says. They walked backwards, not to look at their uncovered father. "Ohhh," said *Hakodosh Boruch Hu*. "That's one good step in the right direction. Shem, you were the first one!" And therefore, Noach put his blessing on Shem. That's where we get the Semites, the Semitic people. Now, it doesn't mean that all the Semitics are good - the Arabs are also Semites, and they're far from good. But that was the beginning. That was

the first step. Shem did what was right. Shem was a decent man. And he did more things than that. Many more things. But that was one little incident related by the *Torah*.

#### AVRAHAM ASKS QUESTIONS

And after Shem, nobody could choose any longer to be privileged, except for the families of Shem. The die was cast. History gives opportunities and everybody can choose to be great – up to a certain time. After the opportunity is missed, it's too late. And so the die was cast and the greatness had to come from Shem.

From Shem there came forth an Avraham. Avraham chose greatness. He lived as a little boy in a house of idol worshippers. His father made money from manufacturing idols. So he had vested interests in idolatry. But Avraham started asking questions. Now, as Avraham matured, he asked better and better questions, but even as a young boy he asked questions. "What good are idols? If it's a piece of wood, and half of it we chop up for firewood and the other half we make into god, so this god's brother is burning in the fire, and we're worshipping him?!" And Avraham started arguing to himself these points, and then he started speaking to his parents. And his parents scolded him and slapped him. "It's bad for business to talk that way." And finally, after asking questions and questions, and searching the depths of his mind for answers, he recognized that this world is managed by a Supreme Intelligence. There is a Great Designer, he realized. He saw that there is so much design, so much wisdom, in every detail of the Universe, that he came to the realization that there is a Creator.

#### HAMMURABI TRIES TO KILL THE YOUNG APIKORIS

And then Hammurabi, Nimrod, heard about him. He heard that this young little "*apikoris*" was making trouble, so he summoned him and spoke with him. "Young man," he said, "I know that you mean well, but you better change your ways. And quick! Because if you continue what you're doing, you're going to find yourself in hot water. You're going to find trouble because you're breaking our traditions." And Avraham put up an argument – I'm sure it was a good one – and Hammurabi felt inside that his belief was a little bit shaky now. After he got

through talking to Avraham, he didn't feel as secure in his beliefs anymore.

So what did he reply? How did he deal with these new questions? He had a big pit dug, and he had his servants put stones and fire into the pit, and he had it burn for days until the stones were red hot. And then he summoned Avraham and he told him to take a peek into the pit. "Take a look," Nimrod said. "Will that persuade you to change your foolish ideas?" And Avraham took a look into the fire and refused to change his mind. And he was cast into the fire-pit.

#### RIGHTEOUSNESS IS AWAKENED FROM ITS DEEP SLEEP

And Avraham didn't perish. He didn't perish because his ideas are imperishable! Remember that well! The *Torah* ideals are imperishable! And so, because Avraham chose, that's why *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* chose him. Avraham was the first! He was the first in righteousness. He was the first in kindness. מי העיר ממזרח צדק - "Who awakened righteousness in the Orient?" (*Yeshaya* 41:2). Righteousness was asleep, fast asleep. And Avraham awakened it. There was no ideal in the ancient days to be kind to people, to be kind to strangers. It was a new idea introduced by Avraham! Today you have a lot of hypocrites who throw around around those words, "kindness," "be kind," "love your fellow man," "love everyone," but these people are actually as wicked as could be. If you analyze modern society you'll see that these loving liberals are as cruel as could be.

But in ancient times, when Avraham came along, the people were open about their true principles. They weren't like the fakers of today. They were real. And they had only one principle - "live for yourself." And Avraham arose, on his own, in that generation, and he began the institution of welcoming wayfarers. Not just welcoming them, but he went *all out* for wayfarers. He almost gave his life for wayfarers. When somebody came by, he threw himself on the ground and he begged, "Please don't go away! Please partake of my hospitality." Because Avraham wanted to emulate his Creator. Avraham studied the world around him and he saw that Hashem had made this wonderful inn, the beautiful hotel of this world, and that He was

supplying the world with all good things, and that we are His guests. So Avraham wanted to emulate Hashem; and so he also made a place for wayfarers, and he went *all out* to welcome them.

#### AVRAHAM AVINU'S WAYS

Avraham took the first step. He took that first step by studying this world to see the *chesed Hashem* everywhere around him, and emulating what he saw of Hashem. He established the institution of hospitality for wayfarers. He made the first step forward, and he taught the world the concepts of doing kindness to others. And when Sedom, the wicked cities of Sedom, were being destroyed – these were his enemies, his ideological enemies. They were against everything that Avraham taught. They were actively opposed to his teachings. In Sedom, when a poor man you used to come by, they would punish him for being a beggar. To be a beggar was a crime in Sedom. It shows that you're shiftless, that you're not ambitious. That you're just a burden on society. You're a parasite. So in Sedom they used to punish poor people. They used to kill poor people for begging. And Avraham lived not far from Sedom. And he was the opposite of Sedom. They were his enemies.

And yet when Avraham heard that Sedom was being destroyed, he prayed and bargained with הקדוש ברוך הוא. "Don't destroy Sedom," he said. "Aren't there are some righteous people there?" So *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* said, "Well, if you can show me fifty righteous people in Sedom, I'll let them go." But he couldn't find fifty righteous people, so Avraham started bargaining for forty. So Hashem said, "Show me forty." Finally it came down to ten righteous people. And Hashem agreed. But there weren't even ten righteous people. So Sedom was destroyed.

But Avraham supplied the model of having pity even on the enemy. And therefore *Hakodosh Boruch Boruch Hu* said, אדם מקדש את עצמו מעט - "If a man makes himself a little bit holy," then מקדשים אותו הרבה - "I'll make him very holy" (Yoma 39a). That's called accepting the *Torah*. You take the first step, you get the ball rolling, and Hashem helps you succeed.

#### THE FORCED CIRCUMCISION

The Jewish nation had already accepted the *Torah* principles and so now, they were forced to go even further. Now, I'll give you an explanation of how they were forced into the *Torah*. Imagine here's a man, a gentile, and he saw Orthodox Jews. He saw how the families lived, how they lived decent lives. He saw how they lived with devotion to the *Torah*. Every day, all day long, they were mindful of *Hashem*. They remembered the *Torah*, and they made a blessing over everything they ate. And they would eat only things that are pure, that are **כִּשֵׁר**. They lived according to noble principles.

So finally he decided that he wants to become a Jew. So he made an appointment with the rabbis and they laid him down on the table. To become a Jew he has to undergo an operation. At that moment, this gentile thought, "Maybe this is too much already. What was I thinking?!" And he starts struggling a bit to get away. So the rabbis did him a favor and they pinioned down his hands. They held him down and didn't let him move, until they finished the operation.

#### THE GREAT SUCCESS OF COERCION

Now whether or not that's the proper way, let's imagine it happened that way. And after it's over, so he says to the rabbis, "Gentlemen, thank you. I nearly missed the opportunity. But why did you go *all out* to circumcise me? Why didn't you just let me go?" So they said, "Look, if you were idealistic enough to go all this way, then you deserved that extra push. We wouldn't go out into the street and kidnap a man and circumcise him. But you went all the way! You already paid for it. You deserved that extra push." It costs money to be circumcised. It's not cheap. And he wouldn't get his money back. "You already showed that you wanted it, You already paid for it. And therefore we rewarded you."

That's the principle. Once you you do something voluntarily, then **הוא** **הקדוש ברוך הוא** rewards you by forcing you to make progress. And it's this forcing, this coercion, that is the biggest success in life

#### THE CHAIN REACTION!

Sometimes a Jew joins a good group of Orthodox Jews; he joins a nice Orthodox synagogue, he gets close to a good Rabbi, an

authentic Rabbi, or to a group of idealists, or his son joins a good yeshiva, and now the environment forces him to be nice. Many times he hankers to go back to his old ways. But he's ashamed now. He's embarrassed because of his good environment. That's a reward for him! He's being forced. At first it was free-will. It was his own choice, his own volition. But now he's being forced.

To be forced, that's the reward for the initial step that you make. It's important to make the first step in the right direction. After that, things start happening by themselves. You'll be amazed by what's going to happen. One thing follows another.

#### THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS MOSHIACH

That's what happened to Rus. She decided that she wasn't going to forsake Naomi. She was loyal to her mother-in-law. She was a gentile girl but she couldn't forsake her mother-in-law. She was a widow, and she was her mother-in-law, and she wasn't going to abandon her. And so רות took the first step, and that first step led to Dovid Hamelech, to Shlomo, to Shir Hashirim and Koheles and Mishlei. And to Moshiach!

And the עם ישראל made that first step as well. They always looked back at their forefathers, even before they were given the *Torah*, to learn which path to trod in life. And that was the path of recognizing *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* always, and living with that palpable recognition always. In *Mitzrayim*, among the wicked and morally corrupt Egyptians, they kept to their own, they kept far away from the wickedness of *Mitzrayim*, and retained the teachings of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov. And when *Hashem* saw that the עם ישראל had taken that first step, He contrasted them with the nations of the world, and He shined His Presence upon them, by choosing them as the only ones worthy of His *Torah*.

#### LET'S TAKE THE FIRST STEP

And therefore, it was that first step that Shem took, and the first step that Avraham Avinu took, and the first step that the עם ישראל took, that made them worthy of being coerced into more and more greatness. And there's no greater coercion, than being pushed closer and closer to *Hashem*.

And therefore, every one of you, should always be looking to make that first step in עבודת השם. There's so much to do, so much to accomplish, so much perfection to achieve, and we're going to need *Hashem* to hold the mountain over our heads and force us towards that perfection. But we'll need to take that first step, those first steps towards *Hashem*, those steps that all the nations of the world never take. And all these ideas, all these *Torah* ideals that we speak about at these lectures, are great opportunities for your first steps. We have to open that little hole, the חודו של מחט. And then *Hashem* will shine upon us. He'll open up wide for us כפתחו של אולם, and continue leading the עם ישראל towards our rendezvous with Him in the Next World!

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מנוחה חיה בת דליה טובה

In honor of my wife, **Temima**.

May we continue growing together,  
guided by the light of Rav Miller Z"l

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תורת אביגדור

"שאל אביך ויגדך זקניך ויאמרו לך"



## Q&A With Rav Avigdor Miller Ztz"l

Q:

What is meant when people say that Hoshana Rabah is the final sealing of the decree that was sealed on Yom Kippur?

A:

The truth is that the final sealing of the decree is done on Yom Kippur. That's the end. Finished. Hoshana Rabah is actually only נידונין על המים. It's only that we're judged for parnasa, in the form of water that we need for all food to grow.

But הקדוש ברוך הוא always leaves some little last resort for the losers. So if somebody in that little interval between Yom Kippur and Hoshana Rabah is able to generate a great effort of teshuva he will be able to alleviate to some extent – to some extent – his גזר דין, his final decree.

But not ordinarily. Ordinarily, for all practical purposes the גזר דין is made on Yom Hakippurim. It's only the kaballah seforim that revealed to us that there is a little back door left to get in. Because according to the Gemara it's only that בחג נידונין על המים – that on Sukkos we are only judged for water, for parnasa, and that's all. So don't wait for Hoshana Rabah. Get busy on Yom Kippur doing teshuva and don't rely on Hoshana Rabah.

TAPE # 140

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