

בעזרהש"ת

Purim!

A World Upside Down

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Purim

A World Upside Down

WHY DO THE BLACK GOATS GO FIRST?

ויהי ערב ויהי בוקר יום אחד. This *possuk* is not only important because it is one of the statements in the Torah - where everything is important - but also because it teaches us a lesson of the most profound significance. Everyone knows that our day begins the night before. The Am Yisrael calculates the day beginning from the night before. ויהי ערב ויהי בוקר יום אחד. It is night, and then it is day, יום אחד. That's a day.

There's a certain question in the Gemara (שבת עז:). Someone asks, "Why is it that when the shepherds lead the flock from the town into the fields the goats always run ahead? The flocks consist of goats and sheep, and in those days most of the goats were black. They were dark. And this man noticed that the goats run ahead. And when they run ahead, it's an advantage for them because when they come to the best places to pasture, the best grass, they're the first ones to get there. מאי טעמא עיזי מסגי ברישא. So why is it that the goats go ahead?

Now, he's not asking a silly question. He's asking about the way Hakodosh Boruch Hu made the world. There's a purpose Hashem had in mind when he created the nature that the black

goats should go ahead of the white sheep. This man understood that Hashem does everything for a reason.

DARKNESS COMES FIRST

So the Gemara answers, **כבריייתו של עולם**. We learn from the way of the world. **ויהי ערב ויהי בוקר יום אחד**. First it's night, then it's morning. First it's dark, then it's light. So too, first come the black goats. And only afterward, come the white sheep. Now, we must understand that this exchange of words in the Gemara is a fundamental lesson in understanding all of the history of the world. There's a secret here that explains a great many historic phenomena.

Everyone knows that Eisav is compared to a goat - a *sa'ir*. In this world Eisav was born first. And it made a big impression. **ויצא הראשון אדמוני**. He was the first one who came out; he came before Yaakov. And he was ruddy too. Ruddy means that he looked like he was full of blood and strength. And not only were other people who noticed this impressed, but even Yitzchok Avinu was impressed. And he said, "Why did Hakodosh Boruch Hu make him, of the two twins, come out first? He came out before Yaakov. Is it not a sign *min hashamayim* that he is going to be the superior one?" And therefore, from then on, whenever he looked at Eisav, he tried to see in him reasons for his superiority. And when you look, you find! So whatever Eisav did, Yitzchok had a good head, and he explained that Eisav did it for some good reason. If he goes out in the fields - great men walk out in the fields - for solitude. Don't we know that the seforim tell us that **היקר מן הכל הוא ההתבודדות** - the most precious thing is to be alone? To be alone with Hashem. Big tzadikim went out alone in the forests, in the mountains, to be alone with Hashem. So Yitzchok Avinu was *milameid zchus*. He defended Eisav, saying that he was out in the fields communing with Hakodosh Boruch Hu. Now, it could be that it was partially true. That could be. But it wasn't as much as Yitzchok thought.

EISAV DECEIVES THE WORLD

Now, from the story of Eisav we see that what happened when he was born was a deception. His coming out first was only a trial - a test - to deceive the world. And it did deceive. It deceived Yitzchok too. He wanted to give Eisav the *brachos*; he was deceived by what he saw with his eyes.

And that's what the answer of the Gemara was. Why do the goats go first? Because this is a world of darkness. ויהי ערב. This is a world of ערב, a world of *choshech*. And in darkness you make mistakes; the darkness makes it easy to stumble.

STUMBLING THROUGH THIS WORLD

The Mesillas Yesharim says that you make two kinds of mistakes in darkness. When you see a post, you think it's a man. And when you see a man, you think it's a post. Two different kinds of mistakes. In the darkness of this world, when you see something worthless you think it's a man - you think it's important. And that's why we find that in this world, worthless things are admired by very many people. But when you see a man, you think it's only a post. The important things in this world are ignored. So two great errors take place in this world. People ignore what's important and they worship and aggrandize and make great what's unimportant.

FIGHTING TO SEE THE TRUTH

And that's why Hashem made it that darkness should come first. In order that people who are living in the darkness of this world, should fight back against the mistakes, against the frauds, against the Eisavs. The Medrash says, עשו - הוי שוא. "Eisav - how false it is." Eisav is false! Therefore, this world is intentionally made by Hashem to deceive. תשת חושך ויהי לילה. You, Hashem, make darkness and it becomes night. The Gemara in Bava Metziah says תשת חושך - זה העולם הזה הדומה ללילה. You, Hashem, made darkness - this refers to Olam Hazeh which is

similar to the night. Hashem intentionally made this world a place of darkness in order that it should be like the night, a place of error. And our function in this world is that despite the darkness, we should exert ourselves to see the truth.

Now, understanding that, that's why Shabbos begins on Friday night, when it's dark. **ויהי ערב** - that's the *remez*, the hint, to this world. And tomorrow, when Shabbos comes in the morning, when it's daytime, that's a *mashal* of Olam Habah, when it's daytime and you see the truth. In the World to Come, we're going to see the truth; there won't be any darkness in the Next World.

Therefore, when you come into a place like a hospital or a university, and you see the professors in the medical school all dressed in white, they all seem to be kind-hearted *malachei ha'shareis* of *rachamim*. No! That's the darkness of this world, making you see a post as a man. They are *malachei chabalah* - demons of destruction - because they teach atheism. They fill the world with their darkness, with their *sheker*. Anyone who spreads ideas of atheism in this world, you have to know, that he is the darkness for which the world was created. And our function in the world is to ignore them. That's our function. That despite them, we should be able to see the truths of the world. Despite the universities, despite the colleges and the high schools and all of the other institutions that are spreading darkness in the world, the Jewish nation is busy building Yeshivas and spreading light. We're the ones spreading the *ohr ha'Torah*. Bais Yaakov schools and Bais Ruchel schools. We're providing the light in this dark world.

IT'S DARKER IN MANHATTAN THAN IN AFRICA

Our job is to fight back against the darkness. It's not easy. But it's supposed to be that way. We see that first comes darkness. **ויהי ערב**. That means that this world is a place of darkness. A vast majority of the world is dark. Not only is it dark in Africa. It's

dark everywhere else. It's dark in Germany. It's dark in Austria. It's dark in Russia. Everywhere it's dark. It's dark in Manhattan. Wherever you go, it's dark. And we have to know that it's a *choshech*.

The *possuk* says, הנה חושך יכסה ארץ. Behold, a darkness covers the earth. וערפל לאומים. And a dark cloud envelops the nations. ועליך יזרח ה'. And upon you - only on you, the Jewish people - Hashem shines. It's only a little ray of light. And it's only on you.

THE MOON GETS SMALLER

And this is the famous *agadata* which is not really understood by most people. It says that Hashem made the שני מאורות הגדולים. So it seems that Hashem made both the sun and the moon as large luminaries. But then it says המאור הקטן when it mentions the moon. So how is that? We are told by a *ma'amar chazal* that when Hashem made the two luminaries, the moon asked Hashem, "How could the world have two leaders?" If there are two luminaries of the same size it would disturb the proper functioning of the whole world. Suppose there was light by day and by night. No one would ever go to sleep. They would drop dead from overworking. And so we can't have light all the time.

THE SIN OF HASHEM

So Hashem told the moon, "You have said a wise thing. So go make yourself small." And that's when the moon became smaller. So the moon said to Hashem, "Because I said something correct, because I said the right thing, I should be the one to suffer?!" And so, Hashem listened to complaint of the moon and said, "Every month, I'm going to bring a *korban chatas* to be *mechaper* because I made you small." That's why it says by the *korban* of *Rosh Chodesh* the words חטאת לה. Every month when they brought the *korban* of *Rosh Chodesh*, it was also a *chatas* for Hashem, to atone for Hashem for making the moon small.

Now this *ma'amar chazal* is **אומר דרשני**. It's begging to be explained. It needs an explanation. And it's as follows. According to what should have been the right plan, the Am Yisrael should have been at least as numerous and powerful as all the other nations of the world together. After all, we are the people of Hashem. We are the people of the Torah, the nation that bears the truth. And therefore, let's say, all of Asia, all of Europe, maybe Australia also, should be for us. If Hashem wishes, He could give the *goyim* Canada and North America. Maybe South America - maybe. But we, the Am Yisroel should take up at least half of the world. And it's a big *kasha*. Don't make light of this question! After all, Hashem is in charge. And He knows that our function in the world is to say "*Hashem Echad*." We're the ones who uphold His name in the world. So why shouldn't we be at least as numerous and powerful as the other nations?! That's what we say to Hashem. That's what we ask Hashem.

So Hashem says, "You're right! So, go and become small now. You become little." The moon is Yaakov, the Klal Yisrael. That's because we calculate the seasons by the moon, not by sun. The gentiles look at the sun to calculate the months but we calculate by the moon. And therefore, the moon represents the Am Yisrael. So Hashem said, "Make yourself small." So the Am Yisrael says to Hashem, "Is that *yosher*, is that right?" After all, we are the most important. Why should we become small?!" So Hashem says, "Every Rosh Chodesh you should bring a *korban* and I'll be *mechaper* for my sin of making you small. " What does that mean? Hashem is saying, "Every Rosh Chodesh I want you to remind yourselves that it's an injustice." We really should be big. We shouldn't be small.

WHY ARE WE THE SMALLEST NATION?

So let's understand that. Why are we small? The answer is that Hashem is making the world for the very great purpose of giving us the biggest success that he could possibly give us. And

that is the success of achievement when it is difficult for us to uphold our principles - and we uphold them anyway! And because we are small, we are a minority against a great big world of **עובדי עבודה זרה**, a world of liars and false religions, a world of academicians, atheists, and scientists who preach evolution. We are the ones who uphold the banner of **בראשית ברא אלוקים** - that's how our Torah begins. Just because we are the ones who carry the banner of truth, therefore Hashem says, "I'm going to make you the smallest." **המעט מכל העמים** - You are the smallest of all the nations. Why? Why are you the smallest? In order that you should fight back and uphold the truth." And **לפום צערא אגרא** - according to the difficulty will be the reward. By being in opposition to the great empires of the world; by being surrounded on all sides by enemies, and despite everything, we stand up and proclaim, "Yes, Hashem Echad!" No matter what the world says, we are proclaiming **השם אחד**!" So Hashem says, "For that, you are going to get a reward that you could have never gotten had you been a great and powerful empire." When it is easy to be a Jew, what reward should you get? But the fact that you're **מעט מכל העמים** - that's your greatness and that's your success. We're in this world to gain the great reward of fighting against the *apikorsim*, fighting against the atheists, fighting against the colleges, fighting against the libraries, fighting against the newspapers, fighting against the *Umos Ha'olam*, the churches and the cathedrals, fighting against the mosques. And they know - they know that we're speaking against them. What can they do?! It's a miracle! We're still here! And that's the purpose of our being a minority. In order that we should have the opportunity to stand up against the whole world and proclaim, **ה' אלוקי ישראל אחד**, and get the great reward of **לפום צערא אגרא**.

HASHEM LIFTS UP THE CURTAIN

However, from time to time Hashem picks up the veil of darkness in this world, and even in this world of darkness, He lets

us have a glimpse, a look, and see the truth, even in this world. Even in this world of darkness, we are shown a little bit of truth from time to time. Sometimes, you can see the truth in this world. The Rambam says this in his *Moreh Nevuchim*. He says that in this world we walk in darkness all the time, but sometimes Hashem lifts up the veil of darkness for a moment and you can see the truth. You get a glimpse of the truth, for a moment, and then the curtain of darkness comes down again.

And one of those times when the curtain was raised for a little while and Hashem gave us a glimpse of the truth of this world was on Purim. Here is Haman with the King's ring on his finger. A real *k'nocker!* He has all the power in the world. And then, all of a sudden, there is Haman hanging! ונהפוך הוא!! It's an upside down world! Haman is hanging! ונהפוך הוא! אשר ישלטו
היהודים המה בשונאייהם!

THE JEWISH POGROM

It's a world upside-down. The Jews are making a pogrom on the goyim! Not long ago, the *New York Times* was complaining that the Jews, when they have a chance, they make pogroms against the goyim. And they mentioned that in the times of Haman, the Jews made a pogrom on the goyim. The *New York Times* doesn't like that Jews should make pogroms - they prefer it the other way around. But in the time of Purim it was ונהפוך הוא. "It's an upside-down world," they said. "Haman is hanging!"

AN UPSIDE-DOWN WORLD

Now, the Gemara in *Bava Basra* tells a story. A certain wise man, a big *talmid chochom* passed away. Now, I can't tell you if he actually died or if he had a vision. But he was definitely out of commission for a while. And then, finally, he came to life. He was revived. So his father said to him, "Such an experience, you had! What did you see there? You were already in the threshold of the other world. You took a look at what was doing there. What's

doing in the next world?" So his son said, "It's all mixed up over there. It's an *olam hafuch!* It's an upside-down world! Everything that is important in this world, there it is on the bottom. And everything that is unimportant in this world, there it is on the top." "No," said his father. "עולם ברור ראית". You saw the true world, the world of clarity. This world is the upside-down world."

RAV PAM IN THE OVAL OFFICE

This is a lesson of very great importance. This world is an upside-down world. If North America is full of goyim, churches everywhere, colleges everywhere, and the frum Jews are a small minority, it's an upside-down world. It should be just the opposite. The Jewish Nation should have filled up all the continents. Eretz Yisroel should be too small for us. All the lands would become Eretz Yisroel after a while. The whole world would be full of Jews! That's how it should be. So, at that time of Purim, Hashem lifted up the curtain of darkness of Olam Hazeh, so that we should see how it really should be. All the Hamans should be hanging. Farrakhan should be hanging. All the other *resha'im* should be hanging. That's how it should be. That's where they belong. Up there hanging. And who should be sitting on the thrones? The Roshei Yeshivas. The big Rabbonim. They should have golden crowns on their heads. They should be sitting in Windsor Palace. And who should be in the White House? Rav Pam, let's say, the Rosh Yeshiva of Torah Vada'as. He's the one who should be sitting in the White House. Yes, Rav Pam! Why not?! He's a טייערע יוד, a big *chochom*. Rav Pam in the White House! An עולם הפוך!

When Mordechai went into the palace of Achashveirosh it was a crazy thing. It was an עולם הפוך. "What's this?" people said. Mordechai Ha'yehudi went out with all the kingly garments. ומרדכי יצא...בלבוש מלכות תכלת וחור ועטרת זהב גדולה ותכריך בוץ וארגמן. Mordechai the Jew was wearing a golden crown of a king!

"What's going on?!" people asked. A Jew, a talmid chochom, with a great crown on his head?! What was it? It was Hashem letting everyone take a little look - for a moment. It wasn't long. But the purpose was to show us that that's how it should be.

The Gemara says: מאן מלכי? רבנן. Who are the rulers, the real kings? The רבנן. It means the *talmidei chachomim*. They are the ones who should have power in this world. We're accustomed to the idea that they persecute us. But that's only a crooked thing. It's a wrong idea; a wrong attitude. So Hashem says, "It's my sin. I made you small. I did it. So bring a *korban* for me on Rosh Chodesh. Bring a *korban* to remind you that what I'm doing for you is the biggest favor. It's a favor for you. חטאת is a כפרה - a cleansing, a wiping away. It's a favor for you because it purifies you. It's for you, to remind you not to be fooled by the עולם הפוך."

HASHEM LOOKS FOR A PLACE TO REST

At the beginning of the Torah there is a statement that needs explanation. ורוח אלוקים מרחפת על פני המים. The spirit of Hashem was hovering over the waters. Now, what's the purpose of that? The spirit of *Elokim* is hovering over the waters? Hashem is מלא כל הארץ with His glory. So why tell me that His spirit is hovering over the waters? And so you'll say that it's because the waters covered the whole earth at that time, so Hashem was hovering over all the water. And then Hashem separated the waters from the dry land. So when it became dry then Hashem couldn't get his feet wet anymore. So therefore He moved to the dry land?! That doesn't make any sense. Hashem doesn't get wet. We know that. So what does He care if there's land or water?

I'll tell you what it means. The answer is that the Torah is telling us that there is a spirit of *Elokim*. Not *Elokim*, but a *ruach Elokim*, a spirit of *Elokim*. And that spirit was made to hover over the waters because it was looking for a place to rest. And Hashem said, "Wait. Wait. The time will come and you'll find a place to

rest. I made this *ruach Elokim* hovering over the waters because I wanted you to know, that you, the *ruach Elokim* is going to find a *makom menucha*, a place to rest sometime. And where will be that *makom menucha*? The place where the *sh'china* will rest will come when the Am Yisroel comes into existence. The spirit of Hashem is going to rest on the Am Yisroel. When we were created into a Nation, into the Am Hashem, the spirit of Hashem came down and rested upon us - and it's still there to this day. It's of utmost importance to understand that! The *ruach Elokim* is resting upon us right now. Yes, upon us. Each one of us - men, women, children - our heads are supporting the *ruach Elokim* that is hovering over us. In the beginning, it hovered over the waters. It was waiting for a time when a nation would be created that would support it. Then we came into existence and the *ruach Elokim* settled upon us forever and ever. And it will never move away from us anymore. It will never leave us.

Now, it's important for us to take this principle into our heads because this is going to be the **יסוד היסודות**, the foundation for all of history. Everything is going to be explained by this great principle; by this great principle that the Am Yisroel is the nation that upholds the spirit of *Elokim*.

THE QUINTESSENTIAL TITLE: YEHUDI

איש יהודי היה בשושן הבירה ושמו מרדכי בן יאיר בן שמעי בן קיש איש ימיני יאיר: שהאיר עיניהם של ישראל. He illuminated the eyes of Klal Yisroel. Each title describes some great achievement of Mordechai. So you have here, a list of names, a list of titles, of achievements. Now, imagine you have the King of England who issued an edict. Of course, nowadays he's a nobody. It's Parliament that passes the laws, but let's imagine. And the edict comes out in the name of "Chaim

Yankel, King of England, Ruler over Scotland, Regent over India, Regent over the Commonwealth of Canada." All belong to him. But what's the first thing that is enumerated? What's the first title? King of England. That was his greatest *kavod*, his greatest honor. The first title, King of England, is the one that is most important.

Now, *איש יהודי היה בשושן הבירה*. So the first title is *Yehudi*. That's his main title. Other titles follow. *ושמו מרדכי בן יאיר בן* *שמעיה בן קיש איש ימיני*. So the Gemara says, *מוכתר בנימוסין היה*, He was crowned with various titles. One title after another. *איש יהודי*, this and that, and this and that, and this and that. But the first and the greatest title is the title of *איש יהודי*. Now, we have to understand - why is that such a great title?

THE ANTI-SEMITE GETS REWARDED

I always tell the same stories so you heard this already. But I'll tell it again. Reb Moshe Montefiore was the Lord Mayor of England. And he was also a baron. He was knighted by the king. That's why he was *Sir* Montefiore. Now, when he heard that in Russia they were persecuting the Jews, he decided to go to Russia and intervene with the Czar on behalf of his fellow Jews. So he travelled all the way across Russia with his own chariots. His own horsemen and a fancy carriage. The horsemen sat in the front, driving. And he was in the back. And on the side of the carriage were like private guards who could protect him if needed. And he was riding through Poland. He was riding through the streets of Warsaw. In Warsaw, in Poland of old, they were all anti-Semites. They hated the Jews. And here they saw a Jew riding in a carriage. A Jew who's a big *k'nocker*. So there was a goy who couldn't contain himself. A boy, a *shaygetz*, came running after him and he shouted, "Zhid!" Zhid means Jew in Polish. It was a derogatory way of referring to a Jew. So Reb Moshe Montefiore stopped the carriage and told his footmen to go run and catch the goy. They caught the goy and he was trembling because he knew that this

Jew was a powerful Jew. They brought him to Reb Moshe and his hands and feet were trembling. So Reb Moshe Montefiore said, "Look here. In London they call me the Lord Mayor of London. The Sheriff of this and this district. Baron and Sir and so on and so on. But the biggest, the most important title, is the one you called me. 'Zhid.' There's nothing greater than that in the world." And Reb Moshe Montefiore gave the boy a quid - a half pound - and he sent him away. He thanked him and sent him away.

And that's because it's an honor to be called a "zhid." We have to understand that *yehudi* means, "The one who has the function in this world of elevating Hashem." That's our function. We have to make Hashem great in this world. It comes from the word **הוד**. And *hod* means elevated, majestic. And so when Yehuda was born, his mother said, **הפעם אודה את ה'**. This time, I'm going to elevate Hashem. I'm going to thank Hashem and elevate Him. And that's where we get the word *yehudi*. A *Yehudi* is the one who elevates Hashem. This means that we are in this world as representatives of the greatness of Hashem. Our job is to make Hashem great. **הודו לה' קראו בשמו הודיעו בעמים עלילותיו**. Elevate the name of Hashem with words of gratitude. Make known among the nations His great deeds. Of course, in the ancient times, we used to do it. Nowadays, we can't do it so loudly because the goyim get a little irritated. But at least among ourselves we are always speaking about Hashem. When a Jew goes to daven early in the morning, the gentile neighbors say, "Where are you going every morning? Every morning?!" Then they see you again in the afternoon going to Mincha, and they say, "What's this?" Then they see him by Ma'ariv again. "What's he doing here? What's going on?" They don't realize that a Jew's whole life is **הודו לה'**. That's a Jew's life. To us, it's not merely *agav urcha*. Like when a goy does a sin, that's when he goes to the church to get a *kaparah* for his sin. He asks the *galach* to give him a *kaparah* for his sin. But the Jew goes and goes and goes. That's his

business in life. We're *yehudim*. That means that our job is to elevate Hashem. We have nothing else in life except that. And even when we learn Torah and do mitzvos, our only intention is to elevate Hashem. And when a Jewish mother is feeding her children and doing the laundry, her only intention is to elevate Hashem.

YEHUDIM FOREVER

Now, since that's the purpose of the Am Yisroel, we can understand the following. In the beginning of our history, we were called various names. We were called **לוי** and **ראובן, שמעון**. The different *sh'vatim*. But now all these names disappeared as a way of differentiating among ourselves. Today, there's only one name for all of us and that's *yehudim*, the name that Leah gave her son. It's not an accident! People think that it's an accident. That the *aseres ha'shvatim* got carried off, they went into captivity, and the names went lost. No! The plan **מראש ומקדם**, from the beginning, was that we should be called *yehudim* because that is the function of the whole Klal Yisroel.

So now you know what your job is in this world. Your job is to elevate Hashem. To speak about Hashem. To think about Hashem. All day long, **ברוך אתה ה'**. A drink of water, **ברוך אתה ה'**. You go to the bathroom, **ברוך אתה ה'**. You eat a piece of bread, **ברוך אתה ה'**. You wash your hands, **ברוך אתה ה'**. Everything you do is **ברוך אתה ה'**. All day long, all day long. And so when Leah foretold this prophecy, she was telling us, "That's going to be the function of the Am Yisroel. And they're going to be the ones on whom this *sh'chinah* is going to rest forever and ever."

NOBODY SAID IT'S GOING TO BE EASY

But in order that it shouldn't be easy, Hashem introduced into the world the **יצרא דעבודה זרה**, the Yetzer Ha'rah of idolatry. And therefore, in the time of Avraham Avinu everyone worshipped idols. We have no idea how powerful it was. The

truth is, that even today, if you go to India - if you want to waste your money, you can go to India - and see how they're celebrating one of the holidays of their idols. It's tremendous. It's impressive. They bring out elephants, clothed in golden garments. Expensive golden cloths. And diamonds! Big elephants! And riding on the elephants are riders with turbans - with diamonds in their turbans. And there's music and flags. And thousands of people are lying on the ground, bowing down to the idols. On the back of the biggest elephant is a big *avodah zara*. A big piece of dead wood, and they're all bowing down to it. With loud music playing. It's tremendous! And other people are there - let's say, a stupid Jew - a dope addict. Instead of smoking marijuana in a cellar in Manhattan, he decided to smoke marijuana in India. That's what they do, you know. After a while, they graduate from the basements of Manhattan and move on to India. So he smokes marijuana in India. And he sees what's happening there and he's so enthralled. This is a true story, by the way. He was so enthralled and he said, "Oh! Now I know this is the true religion!" He sees such a panoply, such a pomp. And he's overwhelmed by what he sees.

Now, that's only today. But in the ancient times, it was a thousand times worse than that. And it was there, in that darkness, that along came one man, Avraham Avinu. It says, **כל העולם מעבר הזה ואברהם מעבר הזה**. The world was on one side, and Avraham stood on the other side. One man stood up, and he said, "It's all *sheker v'chazav*. It's all lies!" And they wanted to kill him! They threw him into a fire to get rid of their problem, and by a miracle he escaped. And he had to run away and hide in order to save his life.

The Jewish Nation is always being persecuted because they don't agree with the goyim. We're being persecuted. Now, the question is, how do we continue to exist? And to flourish? Let's say, in Catholic Europe in the Middle Ages, how could the

Jews exist? The Catholics weren't tolerant. How could they allow Jews, who they knew vehemently disagreed with them, to live among them? They made all kinds of גזירות, decrees against the Jewish people but we still survived. We did more than survive. The truth is that we existed. We made a living. We never worked in their homes as servants. They worked in our homes as servants. Yes, they worked in **our** homes as servants! We didn't work in their homes. No, we didn't. How could this be? A society that was dead set against us with the biggest *sin'ah*, the strongest hatred - even in later times in Poland, before World War II, there was a terrible *sin'ah* against the Jews. Not only Germans. Catholics everywhere were *son'ei Yisroel*. And in America when I was a boy, you couldn't walk in a white neighborhood. It wasn't safe to walk in a white neighborhood. Things have changed a bit since then, but the white gentiles were big *son'ei Yisroel*. It was terrible to walk in a white neighborhood once upon a time in America. Today we worry about the black neighborhoods. The white neighborhoods were a lot worse. A black man is not a *son'ei Yisroel*. He's just a פרא אדם - a savage. But the whites hated the Jews. Their blood was full of *sin'ah* against the Jews. And still, the Jew existed in Medieval Europe. We have to know that this was one of the great miracles. It was a *neis*. Now, the Kuzari said that if you want to see a *neis* nowadays - he lived about a thousand years ago - if you want to see nowadays a miracle like they used to see in the days of old. Just look at the *Am Yisroel*. We don't have any *nissim* today but the fact that we still exist among the nations despite the fact that we stand in opposition to them is a *neis*, says the Kuzari.

THE MIRACLE OF THE JEWISH NATION

Today already, there's equality. There's liberty and the Constitution. There was a revolution in France and in America, so people are already accustomed to the idea that we have religious freedom. But once upon a time, there was no such thing. If you

didn't agree with my religion - with the religion of the country you lived in - then you had no place in this world at all. So it was *mamash* a miracle that the Jewish nation continued to exist.

Now, in the Far East it was exactly the same. When Muhammad first came out of his tent and said that Allah spoke to him, at first he had a hard time. He came out with his book and said that he was now the teacher of the true religion. At first, he approached the Jews in his area. He thought maybe the Jews would listen to him. And he saw that the Jews wouldn't listen to him, he became very angry at them. Muhammad, you know, when he converted the Arabs, he didn't convert them with arguments, with *svaros*, with logic. He converted them with fire and the sword. It was either or. The choice was between the new religion or death by the sword. That's how it spread among the Arabs. The Mohammedans are not a tolerant people. If you don't accept their religion then you have no place in this world. And miracle of miracles, the Jews lived among them. Generations passed. And in some countries they even flourished. It's a remarkable thing. And that's what Rav Yehuda Halevi points out in the Kuzari. It's a *neis*, he says. Don't think it's just one of the facts of history - a natural thing. No! It's so unnatural. It's a miracle that we still exist.

THE LITTLE SHEEP SURVIVES

And he gives a *mashal*. Suppose you have a pack of seventy wolves. Seventy wolves somewhere in the forest. And suddenly, one little sheep gets lost and wanders along into the forest among the seventy wolves. What's going to happen to him? If there is a case where the one sheep continues to exist, we can be sure that it's a *neis*. So the seventy nations of the world are worse than seventy wolves. And the *tzon Yisroel* is the one little sheep. So we see that it's a *gzeirah* that Hashem decreed that we will survive among the wolves.

And that *gzeirah* you'll find in Megillas Esther. The Gemara asks, "What's the proof that Megillas Esther was said with *ruach hakodesh*? What's the proof that it wasn't merely a chronicle written down for historical purposes? How do we know that it was said *b'ruach hakodesh*? The Gemara brings a number of proofs. And among them is the following *possuk*.

וימי הפורים האלה לא יעברו מתוך היהודים וזכרם לא יוסף
מזרעם The days of Purim will never depart from the Jewish people. They'll celebrate Purim forever and ever. Now, that was said 2,500 years ago. And during those 2,500 years, all kinds of things happened. The *Churban Beis Hamikdash* was considered by many people to be the final end. And then the war of Beitar was even worse than the *Churban Bayis*. And then we were dispersed. We left *Eretz Yisroel*. To have a people that is chased out of their land and dispersed among the nations - and nevertheless, these days of Purim have been celebrated for 2,500 years!! That's a statement of *ruach hakodesh*.

Now, we think it's because the Jews are a stubborn people. We don't think that it's Hakodosh Boruch Hu did anything for us. We just made up our minds that we'll keep Purim no matter what. No! It doesn't work that way. Now it is true, certainly it's true, that we are a stubborn people. עם קשי עורף. We are a stubborn people, no question about it. וסלחת לעוונינו כי עם קשי עורף הוא. Forgive us because we are a stubborn people. Those words mean that it's a *ma'aleh*. It's a good thing about us that we're a stubborn people. Please forgive us because we're a stubborn people means the following: Forgive us because once we accepted the Torah, we accepted it forever. We'll stick to it. We're stubborn - we're serious about it.

HASHEM SAYS "YOU'LL BE AROUND FOREVER"

But that's not enough. No! Hashem was speaking when these words were said. It's Hashem who is saying, וימי הפורים

האלה לא יעברו מתוך היהודים. There will always be Purim. Even when Moshiach comes, there'll be a Purim. And that's because Hashem made a decree that Am Yisroel is forever. And that's written openly in other places as well. Other places, it's in the *kisvei hakodesh*, so it's not so surprising that they said such a *nevuah* that the Jewish nation is forever. But now we hear it in Megillas Esther which on the surface looks as if it's just a chronicle of the history of Persia. ויהי בימי אחשורוש. It's the story of the king of Persia. And it tells us the story about his palace and the glory of his kingdom and his wealth. So it looks like a chronicle, a history of the kingdom. No, no! Hashem is speaking in the Megillas Esther. And He's saying, וימי הפורים האלה לא יעברו מתוך היהודים. There will always be Purim!

You should know that this is mentioned in the *tochacha* as well. In the *tochacha* it says like this: Hashem says, "I'm going to visit you with retribution if you don't keep everything in the Torah. I'm going to scatter you among the nations and I'm going to send the sword after you." The sword means Haman and similar tyrants. Hashem says that even over there, in the lands where I scatter you, I will send the sword after you. Over there too, you'll have enemies. Now, after you finished reading the *tochacha*, and you're frightened and discouraged - you know that the *ba'al korei* reads the *tochacha* in a low voice so as not to frighten the people too much - so all the way at the end of the *tochacha* it says, ואף גם זאת בהיותם בארץ אויביכם - when they will be in the land of their enemies, לא מאסתים ולא געלתים - I will not reject them and I will not spurn them, להפר בריתי איתם - to break my covenant with them. Do you hear that? Even if they're scattered among the nations, even when they'll be in *golus* and they'll be persecuted, my covenant that I promised them, that they'll be My people forever, that will never be broken. Forever and ever they're My people. And that's in the *chumash*. And that's also what the Megillas Esther is telling us with these words: וימי הפורים האלה

לא יעברו מתוך היהודים. That's Hashem's promise to us that He will never forsake us.

THE GOLDEN TABLE OF THE JEWISH NATION

Now, you know that when Dovid Hamelech became king, he sat down at the royal table. At a golden table with golden dishes and golden cutlery and many servants. He was a king! But Dovid had many enemies who were jealous of him. And some of them were important people. Now, they were not in his palace. They were someplace else, but they looked on as Dovid came into the palace like a king. He had a crown on his head and they were jealous. And Dovid said like this. He said the following words. And these words were not said for him alone; they were said for the Jewish Nation. תערוך לפני שלחן נגד צררי - "You set the table before me, in front of my enemies."

You have to know that it's a great pleasure when you finally become king of a nation. You're the leader. It's a big *zchus*. And there was a tremendous happiness when Dovid became king. He was able to have the people sing his songs, ושירי דוד עבדיך. And he was able to build Yerushalayim Ir Hakodesh. He was the king now and he was able to accomplish everything. He was singing in happiness and he understood that it was such a big *zchus*. But among the good things that made him rejoice was that when he sat down at the table, it was despite his enemies. "You set the table before me, in front of my enemies." The enemies were outside, gritting their teeth - gritting their teeth that Dovid has finally made it. He's the king! They were so angry about that. They were eating themselves up. And for Dovid, and for us, that's part of the pleasure. Let them grit! That's part of the fun. Don't think it's a small thing. That's part of the fun!

And that's what's going to happen *l'asid lavo*. It says about *l'asid lavo*- "The time will come," Hashem says, "that there will be a great banquet." The Next World is a big banquet. הנה עבדי יאכלו

- "My servants will eat at this banquet." ואתם תרעבון - "But you, the enemies of the *frum* Jews, you'll be hungry. You'll be standing and watching." The *Umos Ha'olam* will be standing and watching while the Jewish People are sitting at the banquet. It's the type of banquet where one course follows another course forever and ever. And they never tire of eating. It's even better than eating. They'll enjoy it so much, and the goyim will be standing on all sides and looking at us. And they'll start crying out, "What about us?! What about us?!" הנה עבדי יצעקו מטוב לב - "And my servants will cry out in happiness." ואתם תצעקו מכאב לב - "And you, the *Umos Ha'olam* will cry out from heartache." So the Am Yisroel will be sitting at the tables in Olam Habah and singing, and the *Umos Ha'olam* will be standing around and crying out in agony. And this will go on and on and on. Forever and ever. This is a picture of Olam Habah. And it's not a *mashal*. That's what's going to happen. But as much as we picture it in our minds, it's still not even a fraction of the truth. The truth is that it's much greater than we can imagine. So the time will come when the sun will rise and dispel all of the darkness of this world, and we will see the truth of the world. The darkness will be dispelled.

PURIM: A GLIMPSE OF THE TRUTH

And Purim gave us a little glimpse - for a moment - מעין **הבא**. Look, Haman is hanging and Mordechai is on top of the world! And then the curtain went down again. It became dark again. We're still in *galus*. We're still in the *choshesh* of Olam Hazei. The Gemara says, אכתי עבדי דאחשורוש אנן. We're still the slaves of Achashveirosh. Wherever we are in Olam Hazei, we're still slaves to our non-Jewish masters. And we're slaves to all the darkness and falsehood of the goyim. אכתי עבדי דאחשורוש אנן. He's still our king. Even after Purim. He's still our king. He rules over us. ויהי ערב. It's a world of darkness. It's a great pity. Esther is still captive in his house. אכתי עבדי דאחשורוש אנן.

But for that little while, Purim gave us a glimpse of the truth - that Hashem is still with us. A glimpse of the truth that Hashem is with us all the time. It's a glimpse of the truth, that if internalized properly on Purim, can last all year long. It's like the sun behind the clouds. Although the clouds cover the sun, the sun is still there. Don't worry about that. And then the time will come. ויהי בוקר. The morning will come.

We have to look at what was said by Rav Simcha Zissel *zichrono l'vracha*. Rav Simcha Zissel said that when you look in the *tochacha* it's terribly discouraging. You lose hope. But you must understand what actually took place, he said. Let's say, the Jews in Europe, for example. They were of the lowest status that we reached in our *galus*. The Romans never degraded us as much as the Jews in Europe were degraded by the nations. We had to wear a badge, a yellow garment sewed on to our clothing. Sometimes we had to wear different kinds of hats. And as we walked in the street, the goyishe boys spat on us. They set their dogs on us. It was the lowest in our history.

THE AM YISROEL THRIVES IN GOLUS

And yet, there in Europe, were composed the greatest Torah works in our history. Libraries of *Rishonim* and *Achronim*. Yeshivas flourished. They built big synagogues all over Europe. There were big *kehillos*. The Jewish Nation lived a rich and flourishing Torah culture. I say culture, *l'havdil*. Everywhere, wherever you went, you could find Jews, Jews and Jews. Wherever you went, *seforim* and printing houses with new *seforim* always coming out. The Rambam's *seforim* and Rif's *seforim*. The Ritva and the Rashba and the Rosh. *Seforim* and *seforim* and *seforim*. More and more. Libraries. Huge works were composed. Rav Yosef Karo and the *Tur*. The *Shulchan Aruch* and the *Rama* came along. And the *sifrei shailos v'teshuvos*. So many *mechabrim*! It was a very vibrant existence. The Jewish Nation was fully alive. On Simchas Torah they went wild the happiness of being

Hashem's chosen people. On Purim they went wild with simcha! They lived with happiness in the ghetto. Despite the persecution, the Jew lived a vibrant and rich internal life. They were concealed from the goyim, separate from the *sheker v'chazav*. They lived separate from the goyim and lived a life of Torah.

I remember in Europe. When I married in Europe, it was on the street. Jews used to marry on the streets in Europe. And the goyim didn't say anything. "It's the Jewish religion," they said. "What could we do?" So we were all in the street. The whole wedding company was on the street. The goyim passed by and they didn't say a word. It's the Jewish religion - what could you do?

SPITTING IN SHUL

The Jews practiced their religion openly. And everybody knew that when the Jew said *aleinu*, when he said **שלא עשנו כגויי** *להבל וריק* - "That You did not make us like the nations of the world, who bow down to empty gods, to nothing gods" - the Jew used to spit. You know that we used to spit by *aleinu*. We stopped that, you know, because spitting is not sanitary. But once upon a time, all Jews would spit by *aleinu*. And the goyim knew very well why we were spitting. They should have rushed in with their hacks and swords to do something about it. No, they didn't do anything! It's a *neis*. They knew that we disagreed with them and that we didn't respect their religion at all, and yet we were allowed to live. So while it's true that we were a stubborn people, that's not enough to explain our survival.

PURIM FOREVER

Hashem said, **וימי הפורים האלה לא יעברו מתוך היהודים**. Hashem said that there has to be a Purim every year forever and ever and ever. The *yehudim* must always be able to see the lifting of the curtain for that glimpse at the truth, in order to survive in the darkness of Olam Hazei. You have to always know, that you

are the purpose of the creation of the whole universe. Don't let yourself be swayed in the least bit by the fact that the moon was made smaller. Once the Am Yisroel was chosen, the *ruach Elokim* rests only upon us. And therefore, says Hashem, no matter what the goyim want, my nation will exist forever and Purim will exist forever.

TWO FUNCTIONS OF THE AM YISROEL

Now, there are two functions that we have to fulfill in order that the *ruach Elokim* should rest upon us. One is *pnimi* and one is *chitzoni*. One is internal and one is external. Internally, a Jew must make it his business that the spirit of Hashem should always be in his heart. That's why it's so important to learn Torah. To inspire yourself by learning all the *inyanim* that cause a Jew to be a thinking Jew. וְהִיגַת בּו יוֹמָם וּלְיָלָה. As much as possible to be thinking thoughts of Hakodosh Boruch Hu. Inside your mind with your thoughts. That's one way of upholding the *shechina* on your head forever and ever. And that's so important. Like the Gemara says, כָּל אָדָם שֵׁשׁ בּו דְעָה - if you have in your mind *dei'ah*, and *dei'ah* means the right kind of ideology, then כָּאִילוּ נִבְנָה בֵּית - it's like you built the Beis Hamikdash. You're the Beis Hamikdash. If you have in your head the Torah ideology, *emunah*, thinking about Hakodosh Boruch Hu. If you're thinking about the stories of the Torah, if you're thinking about the Torah ideals and all of the Torah principles, then you become the Beis Hamikdash and you're upholding the *shechina* on you. So in the beginning it was רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֵף עַל הַמַּיִם. And where is it now? It's on the Am Yisroel now. Because inwardly you're creating a *mikdash* and Hashem says, וּשְׁכַנְתִּי בְתוֹכְכֶם. You make yourselves a *mikdash* with your thoughts, and Hashem says, "I'll rest in that *mikdash*."

PUBLICIZING THAT HASHEM IS WITH US

But in addition to that *avodah pnimiyus*, that internal service of Hashem, there is also the very important function of

pirsumei nissa. That's the function of publicizing the important principle, that Hashem is watching over us and is taking care of us forever. We publicize the *neis*. That's what we're doing right now. We're publicizing the *neis*. That's why in the old days the Jews went all out on Purim. I wouldn't recommend it today, but Jews went all out - all out - on Purim. They used to make big fires in the street. Gentile streets. A big fire in a hole in the ground and they used to jump over the fire. Chazal tell us that. They describe it. They used to make a hole in the ground on the street and fill it with fire, and on Purim they jumped over it. And the goyim were looking on. "What's all this?! The Jews are jumping over big fires!" It was to show that we are jumping over a fire and we're surviving. We're making our way through the fire of exile and we will survive. It was a dangerous business, but the Jews did it and they went all out for Purim.

WE DON'T CELEBRATE PURIM

In the olden days, every Jew was inebriated on Purim. Every Jew was drunk on Purim. Now, drunk doesn't mean that he became a *meshugah*. When somebody gets so drunk that he is **הגיע לשכרותו של לוט** - that he's drunk like *Lot* was drunk and he doesn't know what happened to him, that's not Purim anymore. Then he's a log. If you're just a log of wood, that's not Purim anymore. In ancient times the Jews were able to take it. They drank a lot of wine and they went wild with *simcha*. And they were *mefarseim* the *neis* and the lessons of Purim. Purim has that purpose of *pirsumei nissa*- of making the *neis* well known. Purim has to be a very big day in the Jewish calendar. Not to celebrate. No, no, not to celebrate. "Celebrate" is a Gentile word. We are publicizing the *neis*. We are publicizing the principle that Purim will be forever and ever. That Hashem is with us forever and ever and that His **שכינה** rests upon us.

THE MIRROR YESHIVA: PIRSUMEI NISSA

So, in addition to the *primiyus*, that we have to build the *sh'china* within us, we also have a most important function of publicizing and advertising the fact that the *sh'china* is with us. So when the Jews build a Yeshiva and the goyim pass by in their cars and they see a big building, with big letters "YESHIVA - SCHOOL FOR BOYS," and they see frum boys pouring out of the doors, it's a *kiddush Hashem*. Any *Beis Haknesses* and even a kosher butcher shop - with a big sign "בשר כשר - KOSHER MEAT" that's also *pirsumei nissa*. Certainly! That means that we're still here. We're still around and we'll continue to be around forever.

TROOPS AND TROOPS OF JEWS

And another form of *pirsumei nissa* is the *ribui*, the multiplication of the number of Jews. When you have a few Jews who are very devoted to Torah and *yiras shamayim* that's very good. Very good! But suppose you have, let's say, troops and troops of Jews. You walk by a big Yeshiva, and when the boys come out, let's say, on *erev Shabbos*, there are twenty buses waiting to take them home. Twenty buses! Twenty buses packed with children! You walk by a big girls' school and there are twenty buses lined up. You go outside on Friday, *erev Shabbos*, and the streets are filled with buses. Everybody's going home for Shabbos. And walking home, as well. You find thirty girls walking, with long skirts. צניעות'דיגע girls. Thirty girls here. Twenty girls there. Wherever you look, you see people going home from the Yeshivas and girls' schools. That's a *kiddush Hashem* on a very big scale! Hakodosh Boruch Hu wants that we should multiply and those mothers that are busy raising families, they're the ones who are being *oisek* in *pirsumei nissa* in one of the very biggest ways. The Gemara says that if you're *oisek* in *pirya v'rivyah* then you're being *mikayem* the *shechina* to rest on the Am Yisroel. Those who don't get married and don't have children are being *mima'eit* the *shechina*.

The Gemara says, על מי ישען - On whom should the *shechina* rest? על העצים ועל האבנים? The *shechina* should rest on logs and stones?! The *shechina* has to rest on people. ורוח אלוקים מרחפת. It's hovering, but on whom will the *shechina* rest? On people! Not on the water. Not on עצים ואבנים. So those mothers who have more children, are building the foundation for Hashem's *shechina* to rest. And those mothers are being *oisek* in *pirsumei nissa* every day of the year by raising their children in the *derech Hatorah* and publicizing that the one Nation that is dedicated to Hashem is still around and that we're here to stay. And the fathers who work hard to support them, and pay *schar limud*, as well. And the Jewish people continue to increase and multiply. That's the dream of Avraham Avinu. He wanted to have many children, many descendants. Hashem said, "Yes, I'll give you like the stars of the sky." ככוכבי השמים. But Hashem wants more and more. כחול אשר על שפת הים. That's *pirsumei nissa*. Not only in quality but in quantity.

And so, when you see a Jewish truck-driver come out of the delivery truck. A big kosher truck - "MEHADRIN" is written on the side of the truck in big letters. And he jumps out of the truck with a beard and *peyos*. A truck-driver - it's a *kiddush Hashem*. Instead of a bum walking out of the truck, a frum Jew walks out. He's driving a big truck bringing kosher food to the nation of Hashem. He's driving a big truck like that. It's *pirsumei nissa*. It's a *neis* that we're still around. And we're increasing and multiplying. It's such a happiness to see. And it's a *kiddush Hashem*!

A GANTZ YUR PURIM

So if you show that you're a frum Jew and you walk in the street that way, so all of the goyim are gritting their teeth. Let their teeth fall out! What do you care? Let them grit! Hashem wants you to do that. Hashem wants you to advertise that you're still around. And that we'll always be around. And that's because

you're advertising the name of Hashem. That's what we're here for, in this world, to advertise the name of Hashem. Am Yisroel - that's the *kavod shamayim*. That's the honor for Hashem. The more Jews there are, the more honor for Hashem. Of course, quality is also important. If you have many Jews, *bnei Torah*, who have תורת בליבם, no question about it, they are a Beis Hamikdash. Like we said before, they uphold the *shechina* in themselves. When you think thoughts of Torah, of the *yesodei emunah* of *avodas Hashem* and *shleimus*, then you are creating the *makom* for the *shechina* to rest. That's the internal function that we mentioned before. But more than that, on all sides we have to work that it should be Purim all year round. Not that *yimei hapurim* once a year should לא יעברו מתוך היהודים. No; the days of Purim shouldn't pass away from the *yehudim* every day! Every day, לא יעברו מתוך היהודים. Every day should be a Purim. Always, always *pirsumei nissa* to publicize the name of Hashem in the world.

REFORMERS ARE NOT JEWS

Every day we say, הודו לה' קראו בשמו הודיעו בעמים. עלילותיו. Let the world know that the Jewish nation, the Am Hashem, is around. Reformers are not Jews. All the modern Jews who like to drift after the goyim, they don't belong to us at all. But it's the Jews who are proud of showing that they're Jews, those are the Jews who are upholding the *pirsumei nissa* principle of publicizing Hashem in the world. It doesn't mean that you have to go among the gentiles like missionaries. No, no, that's not necessary. But in your own communities, in your own homes, make a very big Purim in your house and raise the roof with simcha. Dance with the children. Call in the *chaveirim*. Make it a great day. And the more noise you make, the more *pirsumei nissa* it is, and the bigger mitzvah it is.

And it's not only on Purim. Purim is just that special day set aside for reminding us of this truth. But it's Purim all year

round. All year round, whatever you could do, build Yeshivas, raise large families, learn Torah, make *shiurim*, speak about Hashem - yes, it's so important to speak about Hashem all day long - and build a Beis Hamikdash in your heart. All these are various ways of *pirsumei nissa* in order to fulfill that great principle - that great eternal truth - that the *ruach Elokim* should rest on the Am Yisroel forever and ever.

TAPE #E-3 - Purim: A World Upside-Down

תורת אביגדור

"שאל אביך ויגדך זקניך ויאמרו לך"



Q&A With Rav Avigdor Miller Ztz"l

Q:

How do I utilize drinking **עד דלא ידע** in order to serve Hashem?

A:

פירוש I'll tell you one **מירוש**. It means **עד ולא עד בכלל**. You drink up to the point of losing your da'as. You drink just enough. But not enough to lose your da'as. On Purim you have to have **דעת**. You have to have more on Purim, not less **דעת**.

Now, a little bit of **דעת** can be gained by drinking. A little bit. Oh yes. It's like an airplane that needs high octane gas to get up in the air. A little bit of alcohol helps your spirit go higher. Yes, a little bit of **משקה**. But too much alcohol will sink you. And therefore, there's no use in falling asleep in the middle of Purim like a drunken goy and then they have to call Hatzalah. On Purim you should be gaining **דעת**. If you utilize the day properly, it'll be a day of **דעת**. And you won't be gaining any **דעת** lying on the floor waiting for Hatzalah to come.

TAPE # E-225

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