

תורת אביגדור

The Rav Avigdor Miller Lecture Library

Together at Sinai

Shavuos

Tape #E-12

מהדורת
אהבה רבה

Rav Miller's recorded lectures are the property of Yeshiva Gedola Beis Yisroel and the Simchas Hachaim Foundation.

Lectures can be ordered at SimchasHachaim.com or 718.258.7400 x 103

Copyright 2018
TorasAvigdor.org
info@TorasAvigdor.org
347.556.7302

נדבת הרוצה בעילום שמו

להצלחת

שרגא צבי בן מינקא גיטל

Dedicated by
Mr. Ira Zlotowitz



ליזכות רפואה שלימה
מנוחה חיה בת דליה טובה

ליזכות רפואה שלימה
חיה מלכה בת בתשבע

Don't miss out on great new content!

Subscribe to our daily email
for a jolt of Torah-True Hashkafah each morning

Subscribe to our weekly emails for
life changing Parsha booklets

Bit.ly/TorasAvigdor

Shavuos

Together at Sinai

Transcribed from tape #E-12

THE RAMBAM'S IGERES TEIMAN

Bruchim ha'ba'im. Welcome everyone. We are about to begin *b' ezras Hashem* number E - 12. And we cite from the Rambam in his *Igeres Teiman*, which is his famous proclamation, the one he made when there was a *shmad* in the land of *Teiman* and he wrote this to encourage them to persist in their loyalty, in their *emunah*.

OUR ENEMIES ARE MADE UP OF THREE GROUPS

Now the whole letter will not be read here but we'll read certain portions. And so, we begin. The Rambam states there are three enemies that the *Am Yisroel* face. Who are they? The first is the group who try to force us to forsake our *emunah* by *shmad* -that means: brute force. This happened again and again in our history. The Romans made a *shmad* and much earlier Antiochus in Syria made a *shmad*. The Rambam calls that group the *כת האנסים*, those who try to force us. Again and again they have tried.

In Europe, in Portugal, they dragged thousands of Jews to the baptismal altar against their will. They took away the Jewish

children from their parents. It happened again and again. Nikolai tzorer *ha'yehudim*, the Russian czar took away Jewish boys from their parents. He tried to bring them up as gentiles. That is the **כת האנסים**; that's one group. The group that tries to force us away from the Torah.

Another group; are those who argue against us, those who attack our minds. These include the philosophers of Greece, the academicians, the so-called scientists of today, the academic community which today, of course, includes all the newspapers and all the schools. That's the second group, the **כת הטוענים**, the group who try to convince us to forsake Hashem with their *ta'anos*, their arguments against us.

And the third group is **כת המתדמה לנו**, those who imitate us. It means the Nazarenes and the Mohammedans, the imitating religions.

ALL OF THEM WILL GO LOST

It's these three whom we must face throughout our history. And the Rambam says **כולם יאבדו**, all of them will go lost. All of them will go lost! And if you see for the time being that they might have some power, any power that they might have, or a seeming victory at certain times, you should know it will *not* continue forever - that temporal victory will finally come to an end. And so, our Creator, the *Borei yisborach*, made a decree and He promised us forever and ever - that whenever enemies will rise against us; whether it's a *shmad* or any other kind of attempt against us, that He will cause it to depart and disappear.

Now before we go on, it's important for us to know that Hakodosh Boruch Hu has already demonstrated in history a most impressive phenomenon to illustrate this point. We have no

concept of how powerful idolatry was in the days of old. All the nations brought proofs how they had been saved by their idol worship. This one said this god saved me, and this one said this god helped me, and they had testimonials - *in the millions*. It was overpowering. And the *gemara* states that the *yitzra d'avodah zarah*, the *yetzer harah* of idolatry was so powerful that even big *talmidei chachamim* had to fight to resist it.

NAVI FORETELLS "THE IDOLS WILL DISAPPEAR"

Now, we have to imagine what it was like in those days to be a Jew. It means you were alone against a very great world. They all believed implicitly in the idols. And along comes the Navi and he says וְהָאֱלִילִים כָּלֵיל יִחַף - "The idols will disappear entirely" (Yeshaya 2:18). Now, at that time it was extremely difficult to accept that statement. And there were certain people who couldn't believe it. Even the best of our people had a hard time accepting such a statement.

And yet, if you look back - today we must admit, idolatry is already dead. There are certain forms that still persist in uncivilized parts of the world, but nobody considers that a temptation any more. The *yitzra* of *avoda zara* has been slaughtered entirely. Not only among us, even among the gentiles. Almost all of humanity today has rejected the worship of idols. How did this happen? In those days, all of Africa worshipped idols, all of Asia worshipped idols, all of Europe worshipped idols. Everywhere. Greece and Rome and Persia, "Bavel" -all the nations of antiquity believed that idol worship is absolutely true. And the fact is that many Jews thought that idols were true too, only, they said "Hakadosh Baruch Hu is more important than all the other idols. But "the idols are something", they thought. And that's what the *nevi'im* had to battle. כִּי כָל אֱלֹהֵי הָעַמִּים אֱלִילִים - "All the gods of the nations are nothing-gods, there's nothing to them."

That's what *elilim* means - nothing gods. The *nevi'im* told the people, "It's only stone and wood that you're worshipping." But in those days it fell on deaf ears. It was unbelievable to people what the *navi* said in those days. Nothing gods?! It was hard to accept such a statement.

But today we see that it all came to an end. And today, idolatry, as far as most of humanity is concerned, is dead. And the Rambam says that all the others will disappear as well, all the philosophers of Greece and the academicians of today, all the universities and the press and the literature - they'll all come to an end.

THE SILLINESS OF EVOLUTION

Evolution will someday be ridiculed. The truth is, evolution is as silly as can be. It's only because of one reason that it has any power. And that's because there's great numbers of those who advocate it. Anyone could ask himself the question: "How could non-life become life?" And to this day there's no answer. They're twisting their minds. They're trying to find ways and means to show that this happens, but it never happened yet. In all the laboratories they're trying their best; nothing doing. The simplest form of life must have *at least one trillion* bits of data recorded on it. Again, the simplest cell must have at least one trillion bits of data in order to have life. You know what a trillion is? More than all the letters in the biggest library in the world. Not "books", *letters*. And each bit of data, each one of these data is necessary. A trillion essential bits of information for the simplest form of life. So how can a piece of iron, or a piece of copper, or an atom of oxygen turn into life?

Now, most of the evolutionists dodge that question. They'll say "In some way - we know not how - life originally

appeared.” But how did it appear? They try not to answer that question *because there is no answer*. It's so silly, but because there are so many that are upholding that theory, it's accepted; that's the force of *avoda zara*. I had a rebbe once who said that because in ancient times they were wiser than today, they couldn't have preached evolution in those days. But today the world has turned silly. And therefore a silly *yetzer hara* is being preached to a silly world.

THE GOYIM CAN'T SUCCEED

Now back to the Rambam who tells us that Hakodosh Boruch Hu promised us that all of these different enemies that we face will sooner or later disappear. He continues: And that's what Dovid said with *ruach hakodesh* when he was speaking about our nation. How we complained of the persecutions of the idolaters against us and how their power spread from the beginning of our history against us. And still they don't have the power to destroy us and to erase our name. And although they pursue us and they try their best with *shmad* and with *gzeiros* and other methods; still they have not succeeded!

Now this didn't just begin today. They have started from the beginning, during the times of Avraham Avinu! And they've been working hard throughout all the generations. And yet they've failed! And he quotes רבת צררוני מנעורי יאמר נא ישראל - “How greatly they have harassed me from my youth says the Am Yisroel (Tehillim 121: 1). And yet, even though they harassed me greatly from my youth, גם לא יכלו לי - But still they weren't able to overcome me. That's what Dovid said.

The Rambam continues: “Our brothers, don't you know that in the days of נבוכדנצר הרשע they forced the Jewish people to worship idols? They assembled all the Jews they could find, and they said ‘If you won't bow down to Nevuchadnetzar's idol you'll

be destroyed.' And most of the Jews bowed down to save their lives. And the only ones who didn't bow down were Daniel, Chananya, Mishael and Azarya, these four. But what happened in the end? The end was that Hakodosh Boruch Hu destroyed Nevuchadnetzar and He destroyed Bavel and the religion and culture. And the truth was restored."

Now, when Nevuchadnetzar was in his full power, you must know he had the greatest civilization in the world at that time. Even today, when people visit the ruins of ancient Bavel they're amazed at the degree of civilization and achievements; buildings, huge edifices, tremendous roads, huge gateways. We can admire it even today. And at that time when they had full power over all the nations around them, the Babylonian Empire was supreme. Nobody ever dreamed that the time would come that Babylon would be lying underneath the ground as it is today. It's all ruins!

EXTENT OF THE SHMAD

And so it happened in the *Bayis Sheni* when the Syrian Greeks had power over us and they decreed very terrible *shmad* edicts against us to destroy our Torah. Anyone who kept Shabbos would be put to death. Anybody who circumcised his son would be executed. Every Jew had to put a sign on his garment that he does not believe in *Elokei Yisroel*. You couldn't walk on the street unless you had a badge on you stating "I do not believe in *Elokei Yisroel*". And on every ox, on their horns, they were forced to engrave that same slogan. So when the oxen were used for plowing everybody saw that this person was demonstrating this belief.

THE SHMAD WILL PASS

What happened? For fifty-two years this situation continued. But then Hakodosh Boruch Hu destroyed them entirely and their religion went lost. Today all the gods of the Greeks are only in museums! In poetry sometimes they mention them, but nobody comes to worship them anymore. Even the Greeks themselves don't worship them anymore today. And the Rambam quotes what the gemara says: שְׂמָדָא עֵבִידָא דְבִטְלָא (Kesubos 3b), the *shmad* will eventually become *batel*. Don't become Don't become overwhelmed. Sooner or later the decrees will pass away.

And it is that promise, the promise that all of the goyim that oppress us are עֵבִידָא דְבִטְלָא, that stands as our salvation forever. That's what the Rambam says: "Hakodosh Boruch Hu gave His promise to Yaakov Avinu, that even though the nations will oppress Yaakov's children and afflict them, and even have power over them, but Yaakov's children will remain, and they will persist. And those who persecuted them will eventually go lost and disappear.

THE GRAVES OF HIS OPRESSORS

I must interrupt, because it's good to hear what a *goy* says too. Everybody knows how I always quote Mark Twain. Mark Twain said "The Jew walks on the graves of all his oppressors." They're all gone and we walk on their graves!

Now, the Rambam goes further: וְהָיָה זֶרַעְךָ כְּעֹפֶר הָאָרֶץ - "Your seed will be like the dust of the earth (Bereishis 28:14). Why does it say like dust? So listen to this: Although everyone tramples on the dust, the end will come and all those who trampled on the dust will be covered up by the dust. All the goyim are buried in the ground. And the Am Yisroel will eventually bury all of them like the עֹפֶר הָאָרֶץ buries all those who walk on it.

And he quotes Yeshaya Hanavi who said in the name of Hashem that in all the days of our nation's exile, if anyone thinks that he can overcome us and force us; it could be that for a certain time he will succeed, but the end will be, Hakodosh Boruch Hu will send a deliverer and will remove from us that persecution. And he quotes חזות קשה הוגד לי. Yeshaya says: "I have seen a very difficult *nevuah*" (Yeshaya 21:2). It's a *nevuah* that foretells persecution. חזות קשה, it will be a difficult thing to see. - והבוגד בוגד - "The wicked will continue to be wicked for some time." והשודד שודד - and the robber will continue to rob for some time. עלי אילם - צורי מדי - Eilam and Madai were empires in their time and they rose and ruled over us. And what was the end? כל אנחתה השבתי, all of the sighs, all of the groans of our nation will come to an end. Because finally Hakodosh Boruch Hu will destroy all those nations.

Now, you must know that this happened again and again. Who destroyed the Beis Hamikdash the first time? Bavel. Where is Bavel today? Who destroyed the Beis Hamikdash the second time? Rome. Where is Rome? Rome is in Italy, but it's not Rome anymore. Rome was finished long ago. Nothing remained of Roman culture and Roman religion, nothing at all. Nothing!

YOU, BNEI YISROEL WILL NEVER GO LOST!

And Hakadosh Baruch Hu promised us by means of His נביאים, He said "You will never go lost". He'll never make an end of our nation and we will never stop being a pious nation. Of course there'll be certain Jews who will want to go lost and they'll succeed in going lost, but there will always be a part of the Jewish nation that will remain loyal forever. And the Rambam explains, just as Hakodosh Boruch Hu's existence is impossible to stop, it can never end, He continues forever, so too, it's impossible that *we*

should go lost from the world. And he quotes from Malachi (3:6).
אני ה' לא שניתי ואתם בני יעקב לא כיליתם - "I Hashem have never changed. I have not changed ever, and you the sons of Yaakov will never come to an end." Now these *pessukim* are good to keep in mind -that Hakodosh Boruch Hu says: "Just like I am forever, the Bnei Yisroel are forever."

And He also told us that despite any sins that we may commit, He will never reject us entirely. ואף גם זאת - "Even despite all those things that are foretold in the *tochecha*", לא מאסתים ולא - "I will never reject them or despise them to bring them to make an end to them" (Vayikra 26:44). Forever and ever they'll continue!

And that's what Yirmiyahu Hanavi tells us in the name of Hashem: כה אמר ה' אם ימדו שמים מלמעלה - "If somebody can measure the height of the heavens" גם אני אמאס בכל זרע ישראל - "If you can measure the height of the heavens, then I'm going to reject the Yisroel" (Yirmiyahu 31:36). It means, nobody can measure infinity of space. Space is millions and millions of miles. It's beyond the ability of any human being to measure space. And so too, it is impossible for the Am Yisroel to ever come to an end.

THE POWERFUL EFFECT OF MATAN TORAH

And now the Rambam adds a certain statement. שכל מי שאינו מזרע שנטה מדרך הדת הנתונה במעמד ההיא - "Anybody who departs from the way of the Torah that was given to us at Sinai" "He doesn't belong to the seed of those people who received the Torah." The Rambam is saying that *Matan Torah* had such a powerful effect on the Am Yisroel that it made them *eternal* in their loyalty. It went into their genes, and their children inherited that quality. If anybody strayed away from the Torah, it's a sign that his forefather did not stand at Har Sinai.

And then he speaks to the people of Teiman and he urges them to work on one very important ikar of the Torah which is one of the biggest forms of encouragement; at all times. What is that? "You, my brothers, you should raise your children with the description of that great episode of Your Ma'amad Har Sinai. Speak about it in public. Speak about it in your homes with your families. Talk about that great episode because that is one of the most important of all subjects that the Jew has to keep in mind". Not only on שבועות. Always and forever and ever. Teach it to your children - כדי שיגדלו על תלמודו "So that they should grow up with the thoughts of Ma'amad Har Sinai in their minds." Now that Hakadosh Baruch Hu is the best of all witnesses. And He testifies that there never was such a day, and there never will be such a day. כי שאל נא לימים ראשונים אשר היו לפניך למן היום אשר ברא אלוקים. "You should inquire now about the early days that preceded you, from the day that Hashem created Man upon this earth, and from one end of heaven to the other end of heaven, הנהיה כדבר הגדול כזה או הנשמע כמוהו - Has there ever been anything like this great thing or has anything like it been heard?! Has a people ever heard the voice of Hashem speaking from the midst of the fire as you have heard, and survived?!" (Devarim 4:32-33).

THE GREATEST DAY IN HISTORY

We must understand, that the day of *Matan Torah* was the biggest day in all of history. The world was created only because of that day. ויהי ערב ויהי בקר - Why was there evening and morning? Every day the world was functioning only for one purpose - יום השישי, just for the sixth day of Sivan, the day of

Matan Torah (See Rashi: Bereishis 1:31). The world was created for *Matan Torah*. That's the heart of history.

Now here we're going to think about one of the *ikrei hada'as* - the awareness that Hakadosh Baruch Hu gave the Torah to a huge multitude of witnesses. And what was the purpose? The purpose was **כִּי לְבַעֲבוֹר נְסוּת אֲתֶכֶם בֵּא הָאֱלֹקִים**, "in order to *elevate* you, Hashem came" (Shemos 20:17). **נְסוּת** means "elevate" from the word **נָס, נִשָּׂא** to lift up. *Matan Torah* came to elevate us forever. **וּבַעֲבוֹר תְּהִי יִרְאָתוֹ עַל פְּנֵיכֶם לְבִלְתִּי תַחֲטְאוּ**, "And in order that the fear of Hashem, the belief in Hashem - the awareness of Hashem should be on your faces and you should never sin (ibid.). And what that means is that you'll never stray away from the Torah.

THE TORAH WILL NEVER BE FORGOTTEN

There will always be a frum and loyal Jewish nation. **כִּי לֹא** **זָרְעוּ** (Devarim 31:21), the Torah will never be forgotten in all generations (Rashi ibid.). You can take a walk today, in Boro Park, Flatbush, Williamsburg, in frum Jewish neighborhoods and you'll see! People are studying the Torah like they did in Bavel, like they did in the great Yeshivos in Eretz Yisroel.

Long after the Rambam wrote this letter, Torah learning continued to flourish, and not less, no! Huge libraries were composed after the Rambam, great *kehillos*. And today, everywhere, young people are studying Torah. The Jewish nation is forging ahead in all the places where they live. Frum Jews everywhere are founding institutions; hundreds and hundreds of *yeshivos ketanos* and *mesivtas*, even in America alone! Bais Yaakov girl schools, Bais Rochel schools, they're everywhere. Frum children, Frum families, everywhere. So *boruch Hashem* we see today how the prophecy that was foretold is being fulfilled and will continue forever. *Boruch Hashem!*

What about all the others nations of the world, all the false religions of the world? The others will go lost! They'll all go lost. עד ארגיע לשון שקר - The false tongue is only temporary (Mishlei 12:19). Christianity, it will disappear. It's disappearing today too. It's breaking up. There are two hundred and fifty six sects fighting each other, calling each other liars, and we believe *all* of them! All of them are liars! And the Mohammedans and the Christians are fighting each other. They've had wars against each other. They slaughtered each other on the battlefield and each one called the other infidel. And of course, it's true; we agree with both of them; they're *all* infidels. The truth is, although there's an upsurge of religiosity among some of the Islamic people, the end will be that it will all disappear. I have no doubt about it. והאלילים כליל יחלוף (Yeshaya 2:18).

Now it's worth reading the *Igeres Teiman*. If you have time, I recommend it. And even better, people should read it in the original. It's full of *chochma* - not only עידוד, encouragement - but it's full of *chochma*, *da'as* and important information.

THE MOON'S COMPLAINT

And now, this brings us to a very important question. There is a *mashal* which the gemara tells us. At the beginning of Creation it says that Hashem created את שני המאורות הגדולים - The two great luminaries", the sun and the moon (Bereishis 1:16). So the moon spoke up and said: אי אפשר לשני מלכים שישתמשו בכתר - אחד - "Can two kings rule over the same kingdom?" Is there such a thing as two kings equal in power ruling over the same kingdom?

So Hashem said "You're right. You're right, so you go make yourself smaller." And the moon became smaller. So the moon said, "Because I said something right, I should become

penalized; I should become smaller?! So Hashem said you're right again. And therefore I want the *Am Yisroel* to bring a *korban* every Rosh Chodesh for Me. It says in the *korban* of Rosh Chodesh that it's a 'הטאת לה - "A sin offering for Hashem" (Bamidbar 28:15). Only one place in the Torah do we find such words. A *chataas l'Hashem!* It's an atonement for Hashem!

WE ARE A MINORITY IN ORDER TO BE TESTED

And this idea we'll explain as follows. that Hakadosh Baruch Hu said it cannot be that the truth should be so easy to see in the world. If the כלל ישראל were just as numerous as the אומות העולם, it would be very easy, it would be too easy to be a Jew. But we're *not* in this world to have it easy. Our purpose is לעמוד בנסיון, we're to withstand the tests of this world (Mesillas Yescharim Chapter 1). And Hakadosh Baruch Hu made us a minority for that purpose. כי אתם המעט מכל העמים - "You are the smallest of all the nations of the world" (Devarim 7:7). We're the smallest. We're a minority. And the purpose of that is that we should fight back against the influence, the overpowering influence of a great majority.

We learn in the Torah, לא תהי אחרי רבים לרעות - "You should not follow the multitude for wrong things" (Shemos 23:2). That's the test that we're passing through in our history. And that's why Hakadosh Baruch Hu gave us His great gift, the gift of the opportunity to לעמוד בניסיון, to stand on our own feet and refuse to be influenced by the power of numbers. We can use *seichel* and withstand the blandishments of the outside world. You can see the weakness, the emptiness of all their claims. Mohamed has nothing to say at all. The Rambam calls him "the *meshugah* that came out of the wilderness; a lunatic." He doesn't have a single proof to uphold anything he says.

But at Har Sinai, להבדיל אלף הבדלות, there were two million people present. At least that's what we claim. Our claim is that Hashem spoke to at least two million people at Har Sinai. And what does he claim? He doesn't claim that, no. He claims he came out of his tent where Allah spoke to him privately. Who was there to testify for that? Not one person! And therefore the Rambam calls him the משוגע who came out of the desert. And אותו האיש, who testifies for him? He came out of the grave, they say. He had *techiyas hameisim*. You know who testifies? Two harlots were present. Two *zonos* - they testified that he came out of the grave.

THE RAMBAN'S DEBATE WITH THE KING OF SPAIN

It's well-known, it's documented, the encounter that the Ramban had with the King of Spain. He was confronted by the king who wanted to force the Ramban to admit that Christianity was true. Now, the Ramban was caught in a tight place there, in the presence of a great public and he had to answer. The king said you must accept Christianity. So the Ramban said: "I'm willing to accept. But under one condition. The Torah was given to us in the presence of an entire nation. So if Hakadosh Baruch Hu will come once more and address our entire nation and tell us that He abolished our Torah, then I'm willing". And the king didn't answer anything. There is nothing to answer. The Ramban won the debate but he had to leave the country though. That's how it was in those days. If you win the debate against the king, you have to leave the country.

Now the Rambam quotes from Shir Hashirim (7:1) שובי השולמית - "Come back to us you perfect one." What's it talking about in that possuk? The שולמית, is the perfect nation that is looking for Hashem. We once had Hashem with us openly. We

could see Him. In the *Midbar*, every day we saw the ענני הכבוד. We saw the שכינה once upon a time. But then the שכינה went into hiding. ואנכי הסתיר אסתיר את פני מכם. I'll hide My face from you (Devarim 31:18). So now we're wandering around looking for Hashem.

We're looking for Hashem. ישמח לב מבקשי השם (Tehillim 105:3). We should be happy that *we're* the ones who are seeking Hashem. But we're not done yet. We're still seeking. We're looking for Hashem and we say הוא ישמיענו ברחמי שנית לעיני כל חי. We're waiting once more to hear that voice again like we heard at Har Sinai (Kedusha Mussaf). י שקני מנשיקות פיהו - "Let Him kiss us once more with the kisses of His mouth - the way He kissed us at the Har Sinai (Shir Hashirim 1:2). So we're seeking Hashem. We want to be closer to Him.

THE NATIONS TRY TO PERSUADE US

So the nations say to us שובי שובי השולמית, come back to us. Run away from your quest, from what you're looking for. *We* have it already; we have what you're looking for. So the Rambam said a משל - there's a beautiful woman and there are wicked men who are trying to persuade her, to seduce her, and they're giving her hopes that they'll make her great if she'll come with them.

So the wicked nations are saying to us שובי שובי, "Come over to us. We have it all; we'll show it to you, happiness." ונחזה בך, "We foresee great things for you." Come with us, we foresee great things for you. You'll be in גן עדן, together with אותו האיש! Only they don't know but he's in Gehenim, that's where he is. You can tell that to a goy by the way, in case he starts up and begins missionizing with you.

And that's how it's going to be. All the nations promising you heaven will go join him eventually, what a heaven they'll

have - *ah glick oif columbus*. שובי שובי השולמית ונחזה בך “We foresee great things for you,” they try to tell us. So the שולמית answers מה תחזו בשולמית - “What can you foresee for us?” Can you foresee for us what we once saw already? כמחולת המחניים, “Like that great gathering at Har Sinai?” Will you foresee anything like that for us?

That's a very important principle here. Nobody in the world, no nation had ever claimed that their entire nation has heard the voice of their deity speaking to them. Nobody ever said that. At least, let them claim that. No, that's too much for them to claim, because people will say, “You know it's not so. You can't pull the wool over our eyes.”

And therefore Hakadosh Baruch Hu wrote in the Torah, the very last words in the Torah tell us that it was done לעיני כל ישראל. These are the last words in the Chumash. Everything was done לעיני כל ישראל. These are very important words. Everybody saw what happened.

EMUNAH IN GEORGE WASHINGTON

Once a Rosh Yeshiva was talking. It was in America. A Rosh Yeshiva came from Europe and he was talking to American boys. And I was there; I was listening. So an American boy asked him, “Can we prove what happened in the days of old? What's the proof?” So the Rosh Yeshiva asked him, “Do you believe in George Washington?” The boy said, yes. “Did you see him?” No, he never saw him. Did you see anybody who saw him? No.

How many people saw George Washington when he was alive? Maybe 10,000 people at most. A million people didn't see him. When George Washington was alive, nobody in Poland knew about him, nobody in Africa knew about him. Nobody

knew a George Washington. Even today, go to Africa, they never heard of him! In America they talk about him a little bit, but in other countries who knows about George Washington? In Poland, they don't know about George Washington.

MOST OF THE WORLD ADMITS TO MATAN TORAH

When you're asked however: How many people were present at Har Sinai? At least two million. How many people know about Moshe Rabeinu? Millions! All the Mohammedans believe that there was a Moshe Rabeinu and a *Matan Torah*. All Muslims believe that Hashem gave the Torah at Har Sinai. There's no question about it. It states openly in the Koran. All the Christians believe that Hashem gave the Torah to the Jewish nation. It's in the New Testament openly, they all believe in it. So the whole civilized world believes that the Torah was given to us. The whole civilized world admits it!

And therefore the Rambam says גדלוהו על כל גדולה, "Talk about *Ma'amad Har Sinai* and make it the most important subject of your conversations at all times." Not only on Shavuos. All the time!

And the Torah says (Devarim 4:9) השמר לך be careful. פן ושמוך נפשך מאד and guard yourself very much. What about? תשכח את הדברים אשר ראו עיניך, perhaps you'll forget the thing that your eyes saw at Har Sinai. Now, we're transgressing this every day, we're forgetting. Don't forget what took place at Har Sinai! והודעת לבניך ולבני בניך - "You should make it known to your children and to your grandchildren!" Talk about it! And talk about it more and more.

IMBUED WITH CONFIDENCE OF OUR TRUTH

Now, this brings us to a great subject that is one of the secrets for achieving success in this foundation of *Matan Torah*.

And that is the subject of being imbued with a confidence, a strong *emunah*, that all the nations of the world are all *sheker v'chazav*, and only with us is the *emes*. And that subject is as follows:

The Gemara says כל בי עשרה שכינתא שריא, when ten Jews come together, the שכינה rests on them (Sanhedrin 39a). So you'll say because a Jew is ממלכת כהנים וגוי קדוש. So when ten *kedoshim* come together we understand that the *shechinah* should rest on them. Now, I'm going to tell you a *chiddush* in this *maamar*. Not to contradict the idea of the *kedusha*, but a different idea in addition to that.

600,000 BY THE LEVAYA

The Gemara (Kesubos 17a) discusses the obligations, לא עליכם עלינו ולא עליכם, at the time of a funeral. And the following question is posed: "How many people would be enough to honor the deceased at the *levaya*?" So the Gemara says ששים רבוא, six hundred thousand. Why so many? The Gemara says נטילתה כנתינתה; the taking away of the Torah from a man when he dies has to be like when the Torah was given. That's a remarkable statement. When a man dies he loses the Torah. במתים חפשי, he is now free of *mitzvos* (Tehillim 88:6 -Niddah 61b). And that man can be covered by *shatnez*. He no longer has any *issurim* on him. He lost the Torah.

Now in order to demonstrate how great the loss is, you need ששים רבוא people to come and participate. What's the proof that you need ששים רבוא? Because at the *giving of the Torah* there were ששים רבוא. Now that's a queer thing. At the giving of the Torah you needed ששים רבוא because they all wanted to hear the word of Hashem. They all wanted to be *mekabel* the Torah. But when the Torah is taken away, why do you need ששים רבוא? But

this *maamar* reveals to us a new aspect. Another aspect why we needed **ששים רבוא** at *Matan Torah*.

ENCOURAGEMENT FROM OUR NUMBERS

The fact that you saw so many other Jews who were accepting the Torah at that time made a tremendous impression on each one of them. You weren't alone. **איש את רעהו יעזורו**, "Each one helps his fellow man, **ולאחיו יאמר חזק**, "and he says *chazak!* he gives encouragement to his neighbor." (Yeshaya 41:6) The fact that there were so many Jews who were *mekabel* the Torah, caused each one of them to be more convinced of the necessity of taking the Torah forever and ever. **ועל בנינו ועל זרענו** forever and ever.

The numbers that were present had a tremendous effect. Imagine if today you could get together **ששים רבוא** - that was only the men - it was two million all together. At least two million people will get together, and they're all *mikabel* the Torah. I think Moshiach would maybe come. It would be such a revolution that the whole world would be shaken up! *Goyim* would run to be *misgayer*. It would be earth shaking!

The effect on each one was so powerful, because everybody shouted **נעשה ונשמע** - *everybody* shouted! **אמרו כאחד** - "They said it together." Everybody said the same promise, the same *kabbalah*, with the same dedication and devotion. And they meant it forever and ever. It went into their blood and it changed them from the top to the bottom. It changed their nature, it changed their *neshamos*, it changed their genes forever. It was a tremendous experience!

That's the great success in the *ribui* of *maaminim*. If you have people who are together with you, it causes you to have

much more loyalty, much more steadfastness, much more strength.

THE CHIZUK CAUSES THE SHECHINA TO REST ON YOU

Now when you have ten Jews all united all with one purpose, all wanting to serve Hashem together, it's a *chizuk*. It's not a tremendous *chizuk* like *Maamad Har Sinai* was, but still it's something. Ten Jews coming together? It's a *ribui*, it's a *chizuk*! So Hashem says: That *chizuk* causes the *shechina* to rest on you. Don't think it's a small thing. When you're more confident in the *shechina*, when you have more *emunah* in the *shechina*, more aware, then the *shechina* comes and rests on you.

And therefore the gemara says *שובה השם רבבות אלפי ישראל*. Moshe Rabeinu says: "Come rest your *shechinah* Hashem on the thousands of ten thousands" (Bamidbar 10:36). That's two times ten thousand and two times a thousand. So the Gemara (Yevamos 64a) says, from here we see that the *shechina* rests on 22,000 of Yisroel. That's a different kind of *shechina*. If you could find 22,000 of Yisroel that come together at one time, then a different *shechina* comes on them. Because he sees so many people. Each one is fortified, you become *oifgelebt*! 22,000 *frum* Jews all together! It's a tremendous encouragement, a tremendous *chizuk*. So Hakadosh Baruch Hu says if that's the case, if you have the spirit in you, if you're excited about Me, then I'll give you more spirit, and the *shechina* rests on them.

The Ramchal says that when 600,000 Jews came together; so Hakadosh Boruch Hu said: Now, I can come down on Har Sinai. *וירד ה' על הר סיני* (Shemos 19:20). Now I can descend. Hashem came down *because* there were 600,000 - just because there were 600,000 that's why Hashem came down on Har Sinai. That number brought them to a certain degree of enthusiasm, of

spiritual strength. And now they were so convinced, and so enthusiastic that Hakadosh Baruch Hu said, "If that's the case, then I'm going to show Myself to you". וידבר אלוקים את כל הדברים. האלה לאמר: אנכי השם אלוקיך. And Hashem began speaking to them, *just because* there were 600,000!

Now, when a man passes away, a frum man passes away we want to understand how great is the loss. So the Gemara says that you need 600,000 Jews at the *levaya* in order to demonstrate how great is the loss of Torah. To lose the ability to learn Torah, to lose the opportunity to become successful in Awareness of Hashem, that's a terrible loss. Up till the last minute you could learn Torah. Up to the last minute you could do the *mitzvos* of the Torah. And now it came to an end. It's over. So even 600,000 Jews is not too much to come to his *levaya* to show what a great loss has taken place. It's not overdoing it. כנתינתה כך נטילתה. At the time of the giving of the Torah, 600,000 Jews were necessary to create that spirit of understanding and impress upon us what a great gift was being given to us at that time. And so too at a *levaya*, the Gemara says that the great number of Jews present, impresses upon those there, to appreciate the loss of the great opportunity to serve Hashem.

IMPORTANT TO BE SURROUNDED WITH MANY FRUM JEWS

So now we learn that it's important to have a big number of *frum* Jews around us. The more you have Jews who demonstrate that they are loyal to Hashem and to His Torah, the easier it is for you to be *mischazek*, to strengthen yourself, in your *emunah*. Not because there are arguments. You can always find arguments to show how ridiculous all the theories of the nations are. Even if you're one Jew by yourself, and you're living let's say, in China. A frum Jew in China, he could easily show how ridiculous Christianity is. He could bring proofs to show how

Islam is nothing and nothing. He could show how evolution is *ah pusta chalom*, empty dreams. But in order to have the *spirit of enthusiasm*, it's important to live among frum Jews. A very important lesson. And we shouldn't disdain the effect of others on us.

There's a woman who wanted to move. I said "Where does your son go, to which *yeshiva*?" So she tells me that he goes to Ateret Torah. Ateret Torah is a very great institution. I asked her, "Where are you going to move?" "I want to move to West Orange." Oyyyy! West Orange!? What kind of environment will your son have? "No, we're Orthodox Jews!" she says, "We'll never give up our orthodoxy." No, no, that's a terrible mistake. That's what you hope, but you should know that once you move away from a frum neighborhood where you have many frum Jews, you're not the same person anymore. As soon as you move away, you're already a changed person.

That's an *ikar* - to always make sure to be among many of our people. And therefore Moshe Rabbeinu said **שובה השם** - "Come to rest Hashem." Where do You come to rest? On **רבבות** **אלפי ישראל**, where there are "ten thousands and thousands" of Yisroel. Because each one is so full of a fire because of the numbers - the power that numbers give. That's a very important point what you're hearing now.

HASHEM ELEVATED BY THE RICH MAN

It says **נדיבי עמים נאספו**, "The great ones of our nation; the princes of our nation, are assembled together." **עם אלקי אברהם**, "they are the people of the G-d of Avraham." **כי לאלקים מגיני ארץ** "Because when all the shields of the world are for *Elokim*," when the great men, all the wealthy men, all the prince's, they all come together to show that they're for *Elokim*, then **מאד נעלה**, that's

when “Hashem becomes exceedingly elevated” (Tehillim 47:10). When a rich man comes to shul in the evening to learn, it's a *kiddush Hashem*! When a poor man comes in, he has nothing else to do! He comes in, it's also something. But when the wealthy man comes in; he's a powerful man, and everybody knows that the rich man is a *chacham* and a capable person, and he sits down in front of the Gemara to learn the dvar Hashem, that's a *kiddush Hashem*. And so, when he comes into the shul, it's a big encouragement.

The Gemara says in Mesichta Sukkah (29a-29b): מפני מה - נכסי בעלי בתים נמסרין למלכות - Why is it that wealthy people sometimes become poor? And the gemara says that it's because they didn't use their influence to bolster up *Yahadus*. A wealthy man should not think that his wealth is just money alone. It's much more than that. His power, his influence, can be put to good use for the benefit of *Yahadus*. And by doing that, he's utilizing his position among the people. So כי לאלקים מגיני ארץ, when all the shields of the land are for Elokim, all the wealthy people, the prince, anybody who's important speaks up for Elokim, then מאד נעלה, then Hashem becomes even more exalted. Hakadosh Baruch Hu doesn't need anybody's help. He doesn't need to be exalted. But it's in *our own minds*, that's where we have to exalt Him. And our own minds need enthusiasm and encouragement. And when we see so many people especially the leaders, the important people, they all come together to serve Hashem מאד נעלה, He becomes more and more elevated because of that.

ויהי בישורון מלך, When did Hakadosh Baruch Hu become a *melech*? בהתאסף ראשי עם, when the people come together, all the leaders come together (Devarim 33:5). Imagine the olden days. The king came to the Beis Hamikdash to bring *korbanos*. When the

king came all the princes came. All dressed in their wealthy garments. And everybody saw that the king and the royal house bowed down to Hashem and they all fell down on the ground with all the people. It was a *kiddush Hashem*! Everybody became *frummer* and *frummer* as a result.

וליהי בישורון מלך, Hashem became a king in Yeshurun, בדהתאסף ראשי עם יחד שבטי ישראל, all together. When the שבטי ישראל came together there was a tremendous *kiddush Hashem*. Do you know why? Hashem came down with His *shechina* on them, just because they had more fire in them now. And the fire was a result of seeing more from Jews around them.

OLEH REGEL TO GET CHIZUK

And that's one of the reasons why it says שלוש פעמים בשנה (Devarim 16: 16). Three times a year all men had to go up to Yerushalayim . You know what that meant? Everybody came to Yerushalayim to show themselves to Hashem. There was *shevet* Reuven, Shimon, every *shevet* was there. Don, Naftoli, all of them! It was a *kiddush Hashem*, a tremendous encouragement. By seeing that alone, without any kind of *sevaros*, without any kind of logic, any kind of persuasion. You saw the Klal Yisroel, all were unanimous in serving Hashem. It had a tremendous effect on every one of them. We look back what we once had and we grieve over that great loss.

Of course, let's say they all come together and see the Rebbe making Hoshanos. I once went to see the Satmar Rav, the old Satmar Rav *zichrono livracha* on Hoshana Rabbah. The place was packed, it was jam packed with people and the Hoshanos were four hours! Kiddush Hashem, a great crowd of people, *kiddush Hashem*! You don't have to be a philosopher only learning

sefarim. Just seeing so many from Jews for hours and hours is enough to have a profound influence.

And you can go to other places. When the Agudas Yisroel made a *siyum*, twenty thousand Jews came. It knocked the eyes out of the New York Times. It hurt them to no end. Very good! Even more than an eye should be knocked out. It was a *kiddush Hashem*. Twenty thousand Jews at a *Siyum Hashas*!

When the Belzer made a *chasuna*, it was a tremendous *chasuna*, a royal convention - bigger than a convention. All from Jews, all wearing *shtrimmelach*, it was a *kiddush Hashem*. Think of this idea. Each one went away from that *chasuna* with a new *chizuk*, with a new kind of loyalty.

DEMONSTRATE THAT YOU'RE FRUM

And therefore it's so important when Jews demonstrate in the street that they are from Jews. You walk with a black hat in the street, a *kiddush Hashem*. The more black hats, more from Jewish children with yarmulkes, more from Jewish women pushing baby carriages, two inside the carriage and five running alongside the carriage—*kiddush Hashem*!

A reporter came from the New York Times to Brooklyn. He said, "There are so many baby carriages in Brooklyn." That's what an impression it made on him; his heart hurt him when he saw that. In Manhattan there are no baby carriages. Gays don't have baby carriages.

And so it's a *kiddush Hashem* when you see a great truck almost a block long, with the big words *chalav Yisroel*. *Kiddush Hashem*! And so the more we show our presence, the more we have big families, *kein yirbu*, the bigger *kiddush Hashem* it is. When the *yeshivos* close down on Friday and the buses start rolling down. Twenty buses from this *yeshiva* and twenty from that

yeshiva. All over the town, buses full of *yeshiva* boys and *yeshiva* girls are riding home. Baruch Hashem! *kein yirbu!*

You know what that means? A tremendous *chizuk*. You may not admit it. You're a philosopher, you're a *chacham*, you want to read the Kuzari, you want to read the Chovos Halevavos. Fine. But this is more important than anything else. And that's why *Matan Torah* when there were **ששים רבוא** present, *then* **וירד ה' על הר סיני**. Because, the people themselves became so *mechuzak*, so strong when they saw everybody together. **יחד שבטי ישראל**, all together.

Now, we should not ignore this principle. And we should know that whenever you go to a place where you see a big number of Jews, you're going to come back *not* the same person anymore.

Now the effect of a *rabbim* is very important to counteract this great *nisayon* of being **מעט מכל העמים**, of being the smallest of all the nations. And that's why Jews should always live together in the most densely populated frum neighborhoods.

WE SAW THE TRUTH OF THE TORAH

At *Matan Torah* everybody saw the truthfulness of the Torah. They saw that Moshe was Emes and his Torah was Emes. Because at Har Sinai Hashem spoke to Moshe, and everybody heard Hashem speak to Moshe.

Now this attitude that they gained at Har Sinai was the most precious of all the gifts, more important than the actual Kabbalas Hatorah itself. More important than learning each mitzvah separately. **משה אמת ותורתו אמת**, that's what we have to gain from Shavuos. Moshe is **אמת ותורתו אמת**. And these words are important for us to say at all times.

KORACH BOILING IN GEHENIM

Now we'll tell the story, everybody knows the story in Bava Basra (74a). There was a group of people traveling in the wilderness, in the Sinai desert. And they came to a certain place where they were told that here is where the ground opened up and swallowed Korach. They were told that if they would stay there, so after a little while, they would see Korach too. Because it's like a pot where they're all boiling, they're all boiling in Gehinnom. It's a vision, a *nevuah* - they're all boiling in gehenim. And when they would look down into the ground they would see how they're boiling in Gehenim.

Now when things are boiling in a pot, sometimes they go to the bottom and sometimes they rise to the top. That's what boiling is; things are in motion, not always in one position. So in Gehenim, sometimes Korach is at the bottom and sometimes the boiling of Gehenim brings him to the surface. If you wait long enough you'll see Korach.

So they stood there near that opening and finally Korach appeared. And he was shouting at the top of his voice with a broken heart. He was shouting *משה אמת ותורתו אמת*. Again and again and again and again he was shouting these words as his heart was breaking. Now, why was he shouting these words? Because Korach knew that these words are the words he should have said *when he was alive!* He now knew that this was his greatest mistake! Now, Korach didn't deny *Matan Torah*. But Korach had a theory that Moshe Rabeinu had found favor with Hashem and Hashem was therefore granting him his requests. He didn't fully understand that *משה אמת ותורתו אמת* while he was still in this world. Had Korach understood to say *משה אמת ותורתו אמת*, it would have saved his *neshama*.

Now, imagine this. ותפתח הארץ את פיה - The earth opened up its mouth and Korach began to fall in (Bamidbar 16:32). He's falling but he's still alive. As he's falling, suppose he would have shouted משה אמת ותורתו אמת. Then he would have fallen into Gehenim. He would have been saved; he would've been saved forever. He might have needed to take a detour to Gehenim, but he would've been saved. But, he didn't say it. He clenched his teeth together and refused to say it and he fell into Gehenim forever. And now, he's tearing his guts out. He's tearing his heart apart. He knows, now he knows the truth and that's what's hurting him. He knows that this is why he's in Gehenim; that's why fire is burning him up. If he could only say these words now, with his own free will, that would be his salvation. It would be his *yeshuah*.

ONE'S FLAWED THINKING IS HIS GEHENIM

The same is also with Bilaam. The Gemara (Gittin 57a) says that they showed Bilaam to somebody in a vision and Bilaam was asked: "Who is great in the next world?" So Bilaam said "The *Am Yisroel*, no question about it." So they asked "Should we join the *Am Yisroel*?" And Bilaam said, No! לא תדרוש שלומם וטובתם כל - "Do not seek peace or goodness for them; do not seek to make things easy for them, ever".

Now, of course, Bilaam knows better *now*. He knows better. He knows that the only salvation for a person to get *Olam Haboh*, is to be part of the *Am Yisroel*, to be attached to Hashem's people. That's the only way! ככל ישראל יש להם חלק לעולם הבא; it's the *Am Yisroel* who are assured of a portion in the World to Come. And Bilaam said it when he was alive too. He knew it. He said תמות נפשי מות ישרים ותהי אחריתי כמוהו - "I want to have the end that they have" (Bamidbar 23:10). What do you think Bilaam meant?

That he should merit to be buried in a Jewish cemetery? Is that what he meant? That's not what he was saying! He knew that the Next World was for the *Am Yisroel*, and *that's* the end that he desired, *that's* the end he was speaking of.

But when it came to *l'maaseh*, when it came down to it, he couldn't say those words. Now in the next world Bilaam knows that this is his Gehenim. If Bilaam could change his language and say "Yes! Join them!" then he would have been able to come out of Gehenim. But he can't change it. Once you die with a certain wicked error, that error stays with you forever and that error is your Gehenim. You don't need any other Gehenim. That's the fire of Gehenim. The *ta'us* you have in your mind, the flawed thinking itself, that is the fire of Gehenim.

LET'S SAY "MOSHE EMES" WHILE WE HAVE THE CHANCE

And so, we're alive now and we all have to say **משה אמת** **אמת ותורתו אמת**! That's the purpose of *Matan Torah*. And the fact that there were so many people who were present to reinforce it, made it so much more strong, so much more effective. It makes our **משה אמת ותורתו אמת** that much stronger.

And that's why Dovid Hamelech when he spoke about death, he called it **יורדי דומה** - "They who go down into silence" (Tehillim 115:7). The end is called silence. Now we understand that there are good things that you can talk. You can talk *divrei Torah*, *divrei tefillah*; certainly it's a good thing. But the most important of all things that you can speak is that you can say the *emes*. As long as you are alive you must be saying the *emes* as much and as often as you can. As long as you have the ability to speak you can say these great words, **משה אמת ותורתו אמת**. And when the time comes for *dumah*, for silence, that's the greatest loss of all.

WE ARE HASHEM'S WITNESSES

And therefore, when we talk about what was the great gift of *Matan Torah*; certainly many things were given to us. Torah is many things, not merely one thing. But we should always remember that the *chizuk* we received at that time when the *klal Yisroel* was all together, *כי לאלקים מגיני ארץ*, everybody was united, *יחד שבטי ישראל*, and they heard the voice of Hashem. At that time there came in them a spirit that changed them and they became the *eidim*. "You are my witnesses says Hashem" (Yeshaya 43:9). *We're now* the witnesses. The *klal Yisroel* are witnesses forever and ever. We say, "Yes! *משה אמת ותורתו אמת*. No matter what the world says, we're not going to bend even one iota. Moshe Rabeinu is true and the Torah that he brought down to us is true! That's our testimony to the world. We saw it with our eyes and we'll continue to testify forever! And the fact that we are the witnesses, Hashem says, is why we'll always be around. Because our job in this world is to testify to this greatest of all principles, the truth of Hashem and His Torah, forever and ever.