

תורת אביגדור הגאון ר' אביגדור מיללער זצ"ל

Rav Avigdor Miller on the Parsha
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Rav Avigdor Miller ztz"l on

פרשת וירא

WHAT'S ON HASHEM'S MIND?

In Parshas Vayeira when Hakodosh Boruch describes His eternal covenant with our forefathers, He says as follows: **אברהם** **לגוי גדול** - "Avraham, you're going to become a great nation" (Bereishis 18:18). One day there will be a tremendous people that will look back to you as their first father, as the progenitor of the an eternal nation.

And listen to what Hashem said at that time about Avraham Avinu: **כי ידעתי**, "Because I know him (ibid. 19). Now what does it mean when Hashem says "I know him"? And who *doesn't* Hakodosh Boruch Hu know?! He knows every bird and every blade of grass. He knows every microorganism, every cell. What *doesn't* he know? The Almighty's mind is infinite and He could think about everything at once. And He does - all the factors of the universe, every detail of whatever is taking place, whatever will take place, and whatever did take place, it's all included in the intelligence of the Infinite Mind. There's nothing that He's not thinking about right now! Nothing! And so what does He mean when He says **כי ידעתי**, that it's *Avraham* that I know? And the answer is that "I know him," means I'm interested in him. "As far as I'm concerned," said Hashem, "Avraham is the center of the

universe. כי ידעתי - "My *da'as* is on him. *He* is the one that I love and I'm most interested in." (Rashi *ibid.*)

Now, such an idea, that there is one man out of millions that Hashem pays most attention to, that takes a lot of talking and a lot of thinking before it will penetrate our minds. And it would be wise of us to try to better understand *why* is it that Hashem was especially interested in Avraham? It's an important question because that's what *we* want as well; we want Hashem to be interested in us too. We also want that Hashem should know us, that we should be on His mind more than anything else. And although the end of the *possuk* briefly tells us the answer, למען אשר יצוה את בניו ואת ביתו אחרי - "Because he will command his sons and his household after him," we have to first understand a little bit of the greatness of Avraham in order to understand these few words.

AVRAHAM'S HOME SCHOOLING

Now, our father Avraham was a great theorist. Many people don't know that. He was an extraordinary and original thinker. The Rambam in *Hilchos Avodah Zarah* describes how Avraham developed as he lived among idolaters. He had no teacher. Of course he *had* teachers, but they taught him idol worship. There was no one to teach him *the truth*. His parents insisted on idolatry. Not only his parents, but all of society around him revolved around the worship of the moon and other gods. And yet this boy when he was very young began to look around and use his eyes and his mind and he began to free himself from the errors of his countrymen. He saw that the world demonstrated purposefulness that it was not a chaotic world supervised by a pantheon of warring gods. He saw cause and effect, and infinite planning and purpose in all the phenomenon that he observed. And he began to ask questions. "How could this be? Who made all this?" And finally he arrived at this great world concept, the *chiddush* of the *ba'al habirah*, that there is One Hashem, the *Hashem Echad* who is in control of all phenomena, and whose wisdom and kindness is fathomless. Avraham Avinu developed the outlook on the universe which the Jewish nation still follows today.

But you have to know that this alone, the recognition of Hashem, and even living with the ideals that he discovered, wasn't the reason why Hashem chose Avraham. The recognition of the truth was only a drop in the bucket of who Avraham was and why he was chosen.

IF YOU COME LATE, YOU MISS OUT

The truth is that we say every day in davening *why* Hakodosh Boruch Hu chose Avraham. And if you would come to shul on time and have time to think about the words that you're rattling off, you wouldn't need to hear it from me in this place. But just in case I'll tell you anyhow. Every day we say: **אתה השם אשר בחרת באברם**, You Hashem chose Avraham and his descendents to be Yours forever. It's final, there's no going back on the choice of the Am Yisroel. And why did You choose Him? Because **מצאת את לבבו נאמן לפניך** - You found that His heart, his mind, was *ne'eman* before You. Now what does that mean he was "*ne'eman* before you"? So let's study what the word *emunah* really means.

You remember that after leaving Mitzrayim the *bnei Yisroel* waged a battle against Amalek when they encountered them in the wilderness. And you'll recall that in that story Moshe raised up his hands in supplication to Hakodosh Boruch Hu that He should come to the help of the *bnei Yisroel*. And as long as his hands were held up in prayer to the Almighty, the *bnei Yisroel* were winning the battle (Rosh hashanah 29a).

And in order that his hands should not weaken and be lowered, they put stones under his arms, under each arm, and his hands were therefore supported by the stones. And that's how Moshe Rabeinu remained the whole day, with his hands raised in tefillah. Now listen to the language of the *possuk*. **ויהי ידיו אמונה עד בא השמש** - "His hands were *emunah* until the sun set" (Shemos 17:12).

HIS HANDS BELIEVED?!

What does that mean "his hands were *emunah*"? His hands believed?! So we know that the only way to translate the *possuk* is that "his hands remained steadfast", they didn't budge. *Emunah* doesn't mean "to believe" but "to remain steadfast." And so when

the Navi tells us that Hashem chose Avraham Avinu because he was נאמן לפניך, we understand that we are being told *not* that Avraham was a believer, but that *he was loyal*; “You found that his heart was *loyal* to You.” And how did He find that? He saw *persistence* of this lonely man, a man who stood on one side, while the world battled and belittled him from the other side. The loyal Avraham didn't budge from the truth. Throughout everything, Avraham remained steadfast, and stubbornly held tight to his ideals. And he carried it out at the greatest sacrifices. He never yielded!

In order to follow the truths that he had discovered, Avraham did not hesitate to offer his life. He demonstrated his loyalty by undergoing ordeals of the worst kind. He stubbornly fought the whole world, he turned his back to everyone, and he suffered greatly because of that. He was put into danger constantly. Did you know that Avraham was put in prison for ten years? And for part of his life he was a refugee in the wilderness. He was hiding in caves and in thickets. The Rambam says that. He fought, he argued, he was ridiculed, he was threatened, and at the end, when Nimrod had had enough of this little “*apikoris*” he was finally thrown into a fire pit to be burned to death.

AVRAHAM DOESN'T MISS HIS APPOINTMENT

You all know about how Nimrod offered Avraham Avinu the choice, “Bow down to my idol or else take a look at this pit of fire that's been burning for seven days. The stones are white hot and I'm going to treat you to an appointment with these stones if you don't bow down.” Now Avraham Avinu had a choice - he could have backed down. He didn't have a Torah; it was only that his clear thinking mind had told him that he should be serving the Creator of the whole universe instead of idols. Now it's a nice idea, a beautiful and true idea, but it's no easy feat to put that into practice - not when you're staring down at a flaming pit of fire. But still Avraham Avinu was so loyal to Hakodosh Boruch Hu and His ideals that he looked at the white hot stones, he thought it over, and he told Nimrod, “I choose the stones!”

And that made Avraham so great that he became chosen by Hashem. “A man who chooses the fire pit over bowing down

to an idol, a man who is *that loyal* to Me, that's My man," said Hashem. And that's what the Navi meant when he said that Hashem "found Avraham's mind to be loyal and steadfast in front of Him." Not simply that he believed, but that he *stubbornly* believed and wouldn't budge from the truth.

AVRAHAM MAKES THE SHADCHAN SWEAR

And so now we can better understand the *possuk* that we mentioned before: **כי ידעתיו** - "Avraham is the one I'm interested in." And why? **למען אשר יצוה את בניו ואת ביתו אחריו**, because he is going to command his children and his household after him, **ושמרו** **דרך השם**, and they will guard the way of Hashem. Not only did Avraham arrive at the truth while living among the falsehoods of the environment, and not only was he dedicated to his ideals with his blood, his life, but he was so stubbornly dedicated to these ideas that he was willing to do *anything* to make it last forever. He knew that Avraham would apply himself to teaching his children, the same way he applied himself to teaching himself the truths. And he would see to it that everything is so arranged that they're going to do it. He'll exert the greatest efforts to make sure that it happens - to make sure that these ideals will be attached to his children and children's children forever.

That's why we find something queer when Avraham went looking for a wife for his son, Yitzchok. He was desperate to find someone who would help Yitzchok carry out the ideals that he had persisted in. The choice of a wife for Yitzchok was the matter of the greatest concern to Avraham because the entire future of the holy nation would rest on her shoulders. And Avraham therefore went to such extremes that he took his trusted man Eliezer and he made him swear - he didn't merely rely on the word of his trusted disciple - *he made him swear* that when you go to look for a wife for my son you have to choose only the one from that place that I tell you. That's how Avraham exerted himself to see that his children would carry out his great tradition. He went to extremes because he had reached the conclusion that he was in this world only to serve Hashem. And that service would include the creation of the holy nation that would forever serve Hashem loyally. And therefore he did everything with farsightedness, with the utmost stubbornness, because his whole life depended on it.

Like a man does something to save his life, that's how much Avraham did to establish the nation that would be loyal forever.

WHAT'S YOUR DEAREST WISH?

That's what the Rambam says in his *Moreh Nevuchim*. He says there that the chief desire of Avraham Avinu was להעמיד את השם - to raise up a nation that would serve Hashem. His greatest longing was for a large nation that would stubbornly persist in the ways he had discovered. Because the true idealist, the one who is truly loyal to his ideals, is not satisfied that he alone should cherish his ideals in privacy. The fire of loyal enthusiasm burned so hotly in Avraham Avinu's heart that it became his dearest wish to raise up a nation to follow in his footsteps. And that's what Hashem found in Avraham - the man so loyal, so stubborn, and so idealistic, that He knew that this was the man He had been waiting for. This was the man upon whom He could say, "I know that יצוה את בניו ואת ביתו אחריו - ושמרו דרך השם. And that Avraham can be relied upon to transmit to his posterity forever the teachings of My ways."

And it's still going today. Avraham gave such an impetus; with his great heart and great spirit, he gave such a push that we're still running from that push! When you see a Jew running to the shul, it's Avraham who gave him that push. And we'll be "running" till the end of time. Till the end of history we'll be around. Like Hashem promised us; listen to these words: אני השם לא שניתי, "I Hashem have never changed, and I'm not going to change." ואתם בני ישראל לא כיליתם, "And you *bnei Yisroel* will never come to an end." That's a promise. "You'll be around here as long as I am," says Hashem, which means forever and ever.

THE REFORMERS ARE A ROTTEN BRANCH ON OUR TREE

And we'll be here forever only because we won't change. We *can't* change! The only ones who change are ignoramuses who don't know about this. But the loyal Jews? Nothing is going to change. Just like a tree; sometimes a branch gets rotten and falls off. Reformers, Conservatives, Modern Orthodox, whoever has to, will fall off. But the Jewish nation will always be around. "And that's why I love this man!" said Hashem. Because I know that

this is what Avraham wants more than anything else, and that he is going to stubbornly do whatever it takes to create that nation.

And that's exactly the type of nation Avraham created. He was so loyal, so stubborn, that he was *zoicheh* to be the father of the עם קשי עורף the stiff necked nation. You know that, don't you? *We are the stiff necked nation*, the most stubborn people to walk the face of this earth. And it's not me saying that. Because when we look for descriptions of the Jewish people, what we were like in the olden days, so in the Torah we find one adjective that is repeated a number of times: עם קשי עורף - we are a people with a stiff neck, a most stubborn nation.

Now if that's said in the Torah, and it's repeated again and again, it means it's so. The only question is, is it a fault? It seems like it's being used to accuse us, to criticize us. That's how it's normally understood by those who read the words of the Torah superficially. But in order to properly understand our subject we'll study this "criticism" of the Am Yisroel a little more deeply.

WHAT TYPE OF DEFENSE IS THAT?!

Our great teacher, Moshe Rabeinu, when he spoke to Hashem on our behalf after the *cheit ha'egel*, he said לעווננו וסלחת, You should forgive our sin, כי עם קשה עורף הוא, because this nation, the Am Yisroel, is a stiff-necked nation. Our great teacher, our *rebbeh*, is pleading with Hakodosh Boruch Hu, "Please forgive this people for their great sin because they are a stiff necked nation." We have to understand, what kind of a defense is that? That's how you defend your people?! So some say that כי here means even though, "Even though we are a stiff necked nation, still forgive us." But the plain meaning of כי is "because" - "Forgive them *because* they are stiff necked," and that has to be understood. It seems to be a queer way of defending the Am Yisroel. On one hand he's accusing of them of being stubborn, and then he's asking for forgiveness *because they are stubborn!*

Now Moshe our teacher was an *oheiv yisroel*, he loved the Jewish nation, and he could have advanced a number of reasons why we deserve to be forgiven. Even we, with our little heads, could think of a number of reasons. And here was Moshe, the

genius of mankind, and what does he do? He gives this queer reason, "forgive us because we are stiff necked."

And so we will have to understand that there was no accusation here at all; it was a *defense* of the Am Yisroel. "Don't give up on this nation," said Moshe to Hashem. "I can vouch that they are a stubborn stiff necked people and that's the best defense, that's the highest praise I can give them." The fact that we are a stiff necked nation in the eyes of our teacher is the foremost recommendation for the Jewish people.

YOU WON'T BREAK YOUR FINGERNAILS IN BUTTER

We can compare it to a slab of marble, or a copper plate, and somebody wants to inscribe words in it. He'll need chisels and hammers. He'll bang his fingers and break fingernails; it's a difficult job. And he says "This stuff is so hard! It takes too much work to write on it." And of course it's true, it would be much more convenient if you brought him a slab of butter instead; he'd be able to inscribe on it much more easily. But of course you understand how permanent that would be! If you want to engrave something on a cake of butter, it's a pleasure; it's so easy. But it doesn't last.

So when you complain about the marble or the bronze for being too hard, too tough, there are two aspects to it. It's true it's hard to get it to yield to the engraver, but once it's there, it'll remain forever.

And Moshe Rabeinu was a good lawyer; he was an advocate for the *bnei Yisroel*, and he understood that having a stiff neck was a crucial characteristic for a nation that would be the eternal nation of Hashem. And so he said, "Look Hakodosh Boruch Hu, what do You have against them? That they're stubborn?! *That's* what You need, *that's* what You're looking for. They're a very tough people. It's hard to change them, it's hard to get them to listen, to obey. But that's exactly what you want!"

THERE HAS ALWAYS BEEN RUBBISH IN THE WORLD

And you know why our being so stubborn was so important? Because our stubbornness prevented us from listening to anyone. And in those days, just like today, there was a lot to

listen to. All kinds of rubbish and superstitions. And all kinds of priests and cults. From every corner they came and preached, "Come worship this idol and this star." It was a flood of false ideologies, a flood of ideals and "isms". And what did the children of Avraham do? They turned down everybody! They turned their stiff neck to them all. Avraham and his seed listened to nobody!

You remember when Yehoshua took charge of the Am Yisroel, so Moshe Rabeinu warned him, "*Kontrunim heim*, they're a troublesome people. Don't think you're taking on an easy people, they're very difficult to deal with. It's going to be a lot of trouble for you to be a teacher to these people. They're tough, and they're stubborn." You know, it's a terrible job to get Jews to do something. But Moshe said in the name of Hashem: על מנת כן - "On this condition, that's why I *want* you to lead *them*. I know that they're tough; I know that they are *sarvanim*. But that is the best material to work with. There is no better investment.

MOSHE RABEINU IS WORLD'S BEST SALESMAN

And that's why when Moshe came to offer them the Torah they were no different; they were stubborn. To convince the Am Yisroel to accept the Torah was a hard job, a hard sell.

And Hashem told Moshe Rabeinu, "That's exactly the people I want. Because only a tough nation will have the fortitude to stick with Me forever." "Look," Hashem said. "Once they'll accept, once you chisel My ideals into this people, they'll never back out again. If we can get them to say נעשה ונשמע, then they'll be My people forever.

And that's why a super salesman had to be sent. Moshe Rabeinu was the best salesman the world ever saw. And for a long time he was trained for that job. You know where that happened? He was especially trained to deal with this tough nation in the house of Pharaoh. He was brought up in a royal house, and he had royal manners. He knew what it meant to be a king. He wasn't a pushover at all! And he didn't flatter anybody. You know a weakling, a poor little milk toast with an inferiority complex, yields; he yields to everybody. But not Moshe Rabeinu. He wouldn't take no for an answer.

THE JEWS ARE DANGEROUS CUSTOMERS

And he had a good head on his shoulders, he was a genius. And yet, when this genius of a man applied himself to the job of selling the Torah to the Jewish people, he found it very difficult. He was spitting blood! That's the kind of customers he was dealing with! Imagine a salesman who comes into an office to sell something, and the customers are trying to kill him. That's how it was! Moshe Rabeinu said, *עוד מעט וסקלוני* - "They're going to put me to death" (Shemos 17:4).

And that itself was Moshe Rabeinu's great defense of the Am Yisroel. When Hashem told Moshe Rabeinu that He wanted to destroy the nation for being so obstinate, so difficult of a nut to crack, so Moshe Rabeinu said, "That's exactly why You should forgive them. They are the *עם קשי עורף*, the stiff necked people who will remain loyal to You forever. The stubborn nation is the nation that You need, because with a stiff necked people, once it's there, it will be there forever. And therefore, *כי עם וסלחת לעוונותינו*, *כי עם קשי עורף הוא*, forgive our sins, *קשי עורף הוא*. They will walk with You forever. This *עם קשי עורף* will make sure it that it should be forever.

And there's no question that Moshe Rabeinu was right! Because what have we been for the last three thousand years if not stubbornly loyal to Hakodosh Boruch Hu and His Torah? To this day we're still loyal. Jews still make a bris; every baby that is born - unless you're a reform Jew - every boy has a bris to this day. Thousands of years have passed by and we're still making the same bris that Avraham made. The Jews still stubbornly keep the covenant that we made with Hashem at Har Sinai.

YUSHKAH WOULDN'T EVEN TALK TO THE POPE

There is no other nation in the world that has been loyal to its religion. No religion has survived the test of time. Christianity?! Christianity died when as Yushkah died! As soon as that *mamzer* passed away, it died out. I'll show you simply. When he was alive he called gentiles "dogs." A gentile woman, a Syrophoenician traveler, came over to him to ask him to pray for her sick daughter; so Yushkah said "I don't pray for dogs." It's in the New Testament! Yushkah was a Jew - an ignorant Jew, but a

Jew nonetheless. He was an *am ha'aretz* but he was a Jew. When Chanukah came, it says openly that he kindled Chanukah *licht*. If he got out of his grave, if he would be given permission to come out of Gehenim, he wouldn't even *talk* to the Pope. The Pope is uncircumcised; Yushkah would look down at him. If you would look in the New Testament - don't look, you can trust me - you would see that Yushkah despised uncircumcised people. He wouldn't talk to the Greek Orthodox patriarch who was an *arel*. He looked down at them.

He made a *seder* on Pesach; he kept the Torah. Look, in some things he was what we call a *kal*, an ignorant Jew, someone who was lax, but in general there's no question that for him the bottom line was Judaism. And he was like all Jews; he wouldn't budge from Judaism. Only that he had an insanity in his head that he was Moshiach. So he was *meshugah*, so what? If somebody would tell him that he's more than Moshiach, that he's the son of this or the son of that, so he might feel happy about it, maybe; he *was* a *meshugenah* after all; but he wouldn't preach it. There's no question that he wouldn't preach that he's *more* than Moshiach.

PAUL CAN'T FIND BUYERS!

So when Yushkah died his followers were nothing but Jews. Anybody who wanted to become a Christian had to circumcise himself, he had to keep Shabbos, he had to eat only kosher. And this continued until a Jewish crook came along, a Jew named Shaul who later changed his name to Paul in order to flatter the Romans. And Paul saw that the Jews weren't listening to him, he wasn't getting anywhere with the Jews. No Jews would listen to his new religion. Why would they? They were the **עם קשי עורר**, they were stiff necked to all the falsehoods. They weren't butter that you could just smear something else into it so easily.

So what did Paul do? When he saw that he wasn't going to be able to carve anything new into this nation of marble, so he went to the gentiles. But the gentiles weren't going to listen to him if they would have to circumcise themselves. They would just find something better, a religion that wouldn't require that. So Paul had to make a "bargain price" in order to make "the sale." And that's what he did. But you know that for a real bargain price you

can't sell good merchandise. At a low price you can only sell imitation merchandise. So he sold them an imitation of Judaism. He said you don't have to circumcise yourselves, and you're just as good as anyone else.

PAUL'S "SHTEY DINIM" LOMDUS

And here was the argument he gave. Listen to the "*lomdus*" of this smart man. He said that there were two Avraahams. It's in the New Testament what I'm telling you now. There were two Avraahams. One was before he was circumcised, the original Avraham, and one was after he circumcised. "You be like the original one," he said. You hear this "genius"? "We'll all follow the original Avraham and we won't circumcise," he said. Now to whom could he sell this garbage? Only to gentiles who don't know anything. Stupidity like that you can only carve in butter.

And that's when the new Christianity was born. But don't think that Paul's Christianity lasted too long. Because in the Council of Nicaea, that was two hundred years later, they got together and they abolished Saturday. Now Paul would have never listened to such a thing. Even though he was rotten, but to him *Saturday was the day*. That was the day Hashem rested; nothing could change that. He wouldn't even think of changing such a thing. But at the Council of Nicaea they got together and scratched something new into the butter. The church got together and they abolished Shabbos and changed it into Sunday.

THE CHRISTIANS GET A BARGAIN

So what kind of religion is this?! They're always changing their coats! And it didn't end there. Because three hundred years ago if somebody would have said something about worshipping Mary, they would have thrown him out of the church on his behind. "What are you saying?! There are only *three* in the corporation! Nobody else!" And they'd kill him, they'd burn him. And then three hundred years ago they finally admitted Mary into the corporation - it's a bargain now, you get four for the price of three.

So this shows that there's nothing to it. They're just changing all the time, changing constantly. They're just trying to please the people. They don't change as fast as the Unitarians change, but they change. And now you cannot recognize them anymore. It's not Christianity anymore; Christianity is a dead religion.

So you think that out in the Far East it was any better?! Not a chance. Buddhism died when Buddha died. Buddha didn't believe in idols, he didn't believe in worshipping idols. He had certain moral principles, but when he died it became mixed up with all the idolatry, and today the Buddhists worship idols, they worship demons. They're the craziest idol worshippers around today! Look at the Buddhists priests - they put on crazy masks, hideous masks, and they make crazy dances. All that garbage Buddha didn't preach. You see that everything the gentiles went with was short lived. It died out. There are no real Buddhists anymore, they're just idol worshippers.

RELIGIONS CREATED BY SPIDERS

And it has to be that way. Why is it that all the religions change? Because no other religion in the world ever claimed that a Torah was given to them before a multitude. They themselves wouldn't *dare* make such a claim. Yushkah didn't claim that in the presence of the multitude Hakodosh Boruch Hu appeared to him and told him what to do. No! He just said he knows what to do, and the dumb people followed him. Where does Paul's "*torah*" come from? It's no secret; he said he was riding on a donkey on the road and all of a sudden a vision came to him. He had heat stroke for all I know! Who saw it? Nobody. He just comes and tells us that he had a vision.

So such things that are founded on cobwebs, on nothing, anybody feels justified to change. Man-made laws you can change. Why are *your* cobwebs better than *my* cobwebs? And that's why they've been changing all the time.

THE JEW'S MOTTO: SEEING IS BELIEVING

It's only because the stubborn Jewish nation said that "seeing is believing," - they wouldn't buy anything unless you

showed them - so Hashem had to come down on Har Sinai and He had to speak to Moshe Rabeinu, with the Jews looking on. The Rambam says that Jews didn't believe in Moshe because of any miracles that he did. No, we don't just believe because of miracles. Listen to what the Rambam says: The Jews believed because *they saw* what Moshe saw, *they heard* what Moshe heard. Those are the Rambam's words. We claim, it's our history, that millions were present and that all of us heard Hashem's voice speaking to Moshe telling him, "Go and tell the people My law." And that's it, we accepted it forever then. We were a stubborn customer but beyond a certain point it's hard to resist. When we saw with our own eyes, and we heard with our own ears, we just couldn't resist anymore. And therefore we accepted and now it's engraved forever.

It's just like that story with Rav Yisroel Salanter. He once visited in the Jewish town of Memel and he was staying at the home of an observant Jew who had already become a little Germanized. Now this host remarked to him, "Why is it that we do not have miracles today to convince us? If we would see miracles today like our forefathers did, we would be so much stronger in our convictions."

At that time the host's daughter happen to arrive at home from her singing school, from a school of music. And the host remarked to Rabbi Yisroel that his daughter was one of the best singers in Germany, and that she had even been awarded a certificate of excellence by the government. And to this Rabbi Yisroel said, "Why should I rely on a certificate? I don't really believe what they say; let me hear it for myself how well she sings."

Now the girl became incensed. She said, "Do I have to give a rendition to every person who comes along and questions the certificate?! Does that mean that every day when someone else comes, I'm going to have to stand up in the middle of the dining room and sing, in order to prove that I'm worthy of the certificate? At the time of the examination there were experts present, a lot of them; and they were stubborn, they wouldn't let me get away with anything. And at that time I proved my ability and I was awarded my certificate. That should be enough for all time."

HASHEM PROVED HIS "SINGING" ABILITIES LONG AGO

And so Reb Yisroel turned to his host and said, "She is absolutely right! And Hakodosh Boruch Hu says the same thing." The certificate was already given! And it attests to the wonders and miracles that our forefathers saw. At that time there were present the very best of our people - Moshe and Aharon and Miriam and Yehoshua and all the elders of that great nation. And the whole nation was present as well, the עַם קָשִׁי עוֹרֵף who wouldn't accept anything unless it was verified a thousand times over. And they made sure to discern that these events were the Hand of Hashem. And thenceforth you can't expect that every day, any individual should have the right to challenge the certificate, the document of the Torah, and say "Let me see for myself a repetition of these miracles." They were given back then for all the generations to rely on the eminent witnesses who were present when the miracles took place.

And that's why the Torah is still here to this day. It's still in New York, it's still in Yemen, it's in Moscow - it's underground over there, but it's there. You know that there are pious Jews in Russia who keep *more* than we do. They build *mikvaos* even today without licenses. And if they're caught they go to Siberia, and they don't come back *chas v'shalom*.

AND YOU THOUGHT THE ARI'S MIKVAH WAS COLD!

And that's how it's always been. The Jew lived a life that was permeated with *mesiras nefesh*. Every step of his life was loyalty. When the time came in the winter that someone had to go to the mikveh in the small town, villages that were too poor to afford a mikveh, so in the dead of winter when the rivers were frozen over, they went out at night, late at night, and with axes they chopped a hole in the ice. And our great-grandparents were lowered with ropes into the icy water; it was a *sakanas nefashos*, that's how they lived. Our forefathers lived with heroism every moment.

And that's how it is today as well. All over the world the stiff necked people are turning a stiff neck to the environment around them, and they're keeping everything. And they will forever! Because that's the Jewish nation. It's instilled in us from

our great fathers, למען יצוה, and we are tough. We don't yield! And the עם קשי עורף won't ever yield.

And this explains a *gemara* that many have studied but few have understood properly. The *gemara* says (Beitzah 32b) שלושה ישראל באומות, Yisroel is the toughest among all the nations. כלב בחיות, the dog is the toughest among all the animals. ותרנגול בעופות, and the rooster is the toughest of all the birds. Now what characteristic is meant here when it says עזין, that they're the strongest, the toughest? What is the strength of a dog, what is its toughness? The fact is that if we were asked, we would pick *different* animals. A leopard let's say would attack a human being. A jaguar could rip a person to pieces. An ox or an elephant is more powerful than a dog. So why is the *kelev* singled out?

DOGS GET BETTER SERVICE THAN KINGS

If we consider the dog we'll see a queer thing about him. All the animals that we possess are either kept in a zoo or kept in a backyard. The only one that is admitted into the house and lives together with the owner is the dog. But what does a dog have to offer us already? He doesn't give milk, he doesn't give wool, he doesn't pull wagons. And still he's privileged - sometimes he even sits in his owner's lap. You see the people in the morning, they take out the dog, and he gets such service when he goes to the toilet that no king ever gets! I saw a lady in a fur coat, a noblewoman, yesterday and she was humbly waiting for her dog to perform his functions, and then she dutifully leaned over, fur coat and all, and cleaned up after him!

So what is it that he delivers? What goods does he produce or what service does he perform that he earns such treatment? And the answer is that he gives *nothing but loyalty*. That's all he gives; he's a loyal animal. Of all animals, that's the one that expresses its loyalty most.

TRAIN STATION BECOMES A BEIS HAKVAROS

Just to illustrate I'll tell you a true story. There was a dog that used to come every day to the station to greet his master. At five o'clock when the train came and the travelers came off, so this

dog ran around looking, sniffing, until he found his master. One day the train came in and the people disembarked but his master wasn't there. So this dog didn't leave the station. He waited and waited. And each train that came in, he ran and sniffed the trousers of the passengers, but his master didn't come.

The dog didn't go home so the station people had pity on him and they threw him some scraps of food when they could. Until finally they gave him a place, a box or a crate, whatever it was, and he slept there. *Years passed by.* And every train that came in, this dog ran to greet the travelers, stubbornly waiting for his master. It's a true story. And when he died they buried him in the station, by the side of the tracks. They were so touched by his loyalty that they buried him right there. And there's still a marker there today. *That's* true loyalty, stubborn loyalty that never comes to an end.

So when the *gemara* tells us that the Jewish nation is the most נאמן among all the nations of the world, it's referring to their loyalty. They don't weaken! No matter what happens to them. Sometimes a Jew might have reason to think that his Master has departed from him, that He's hiding from him, and that he won't see Him anymore. But no matter, he doesn't give up. Even when we don't see our Master - it's אנכי הסתר אסתיר פני מכם - the Master is not showing Himself so easily today. But no matter; we know He's around and we remain loyal.

THE ORIGINAL VEKKER: THE ROOSTER

Now the *gemara* also says that the most נאמן of all birds is the rooster. Let me tell you about the rooster. When everyone else is sleeping, and it's pitch dark, he has a sense, he's aware that daybreak is approaching. Before the day breaks he gets up on a fence, or on your windowsill, and he makes a big racket. Cockadoodle-doo, Cockadoodle-doo! It's still dark, and it's cold outside, and so nobody wants to listen. The farmer is under his feather blanket, and his head is on the soft pillow and he prefers that the night should continue. And here the rooster is crowing and making a fuss and not letting him sleep. So the farmer opens up his window, he takes his boot from under his bed and he aims it right at the *tarnegol* and he throws it right at him. But that

doesn't stop the rooster. Because if it's true, he has to say it, no matter what. Whether you want to hear it or not. And he gets no encouragement! And morning after morning he continues - that's his nature; he has to announce the truth to the world.

And the Am Yisroel is considered a stubborn nation in this respect too. You can tell us whatever you want. You can throw shoes at us and put us into ovens. It won't help. You can bring us proofs, theories, ideas and discoveries. You can write books and build colleges. You can make a whole literature against the Torah and we still won't budge. We're sticking to Hakodosh Boruch Hu and that's it!

WE'LL SAY THE TRUTH WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT

No matter what, we continue to proclaim the truth to the world. No matter what you tell him, he believes **בראשית ברא** **אלוקים**, the world was made by Hashem in six days. All the foolishness of evolution, all the other ideas, the Big Bang, all the garbage of the gentiles, he ignores them. He knows they have no proofs; they're only forced into saying ideas in order to explain the lack of a Creator. Otherwise how could there be such a world without a Creator? But *we* know that there *is* a Creator. And He's the reason for everything. He stands behind everything in this world. And we're stubbornly loyal to Him.

And that's called *emunah*. When we say that we are a nation of *ma'aminim*, you have to know what that means. We don't mean that we're a nation of *believers*. When we talk about *emunah* we're really talking about *the virtue of loyalty*. Like we said earlier, the word *emunah* comes from *ne'eman*, loyal. So when a Jew has *emunah* it's not that *he's a believer*. It means *he's loyal*.

Here's a man who tells me, "If only I would be convinced of the truths of Judaism, if you could prove to me that the Torah is true, then I would go straight ahead; I would be a *tzadik*. There wouldn't be any problems anymore." But if that would be true, then the whole virtue of believing would have to be reappraised - because how could a man be rewarded or punished for believing and not believing? It's a mental attitude; it doesn't depend on his free will. If he just isn't convinced, how could you blame him? Reward and punishment are applicable to a man's righteousness

or wickedness, but not to an involuntary state of mind. If he just isn't convinced, so what's the sin?

But the truth is that the problem of *emunah* is only to a small extent a problem of conviction. The basis of lack of *emunah* is actually something entirely different; it's a lack of this quality of character of loyalty. The crux of a man's *emunah* is his state of mind of *willingness to be loyal* - not just loyal but stubbornly loyal - to his nation's ideals and to his family traditions. It's the love for the ideals of his nation and his stubbornness to stick to it no matter what. And when he has that loyalty in him, he has chosen virtue.

It's not a matter of being convinced. Now, being convinced is a good thing by the way. And a loyal Jew tries to convince himself. But it's on the basis of that virtue of loyalty that he can come to the truth. A loyal Jew tries to answer his doubts; he researches, he studies, he finds redeeming features, he would explain, and he would understand. He would seek and he would become convinced. If he's a loyal man he'll find ways and means to believe, no question. It's very easy for a Jew to refute all the ideologies. If he has the will to be loyal to his nation, then it's very easy.

But the man who doesn't have that virtue in him, he's a disloyal fellow and nothing counts to him except comfort and convenience. That's the fellow who will yield to the environment. And he's the one who is looking for excuses not to believe just in order to justify himself. And therefore whenever there are two sides to a question he's always choosing the wrong side. Because that's his free will; he already chose to *not be loyal* to Torah attitudes and ideas.

A JEW FROM ALL LANGUAGES IS THE SAME LOYAL JEW

And that's why he deserves to be punished for lack of *emunah*. Because he didn't want! And that is what Hakodosh Boruch Hu is judging us for. For not being loyal enough! Because it's not just a matter of logic, *it's a choice of the free will*. You choose to be loyal. And that's the core of a man's soul; to stick to something through thick and thin. Whether you live in Canada, or in New Zealand. Whether you live in South America, wherever a

Jew go, he remains a Jew; he's a Yid, a zhid, a zwid, a Judean, a Judah, a kike; whatever it is they'll call him, in all languages, and in all climes, he doesn't budge and he remains what Avraham Avinu was.

Not like the Jews today in Canada who think they have to admire Canadian culture and get lost in it. Or the Jew in South Africa who appreciates the stupid culture that surrounds them. Or the Jew who lives in America and celebrates Thanksgiving and watches baseball. Of course, we have to be loyal citizens of any country we live in, but we're just transients; wherever we are, we don't imitate the environment. And actually we *spit* at the environment. We stubbornly make our way through *galus*, and we remain loyal to Hakodosh Boruch Hu no matter what.

And it's because of our loyalty to Hakodosh Boruch Hu and His ideals that the end belongs to us! Yeshaya Hanavi when he foretells the end of days, he says that a great proclamation will be made and here is how it goes: פתחו שערים, Someday it will be announced, "Open up the gates to Eretz Yisroel," ויבוא גוי צדיק, and let the righteous nation come in." And who are they? What makes them the righteous nation worthy of coming back to Eretz Yisroel with Hakodosh Boruch Hu? שומר אמונים - It's the nation that kept the loyalty. So what will be the key to admit us to our land when Moshiach will come? The fact that we kept our loyalty to Hakodosh Boruch Hu and His Torah. Whenever it's going to be, whether it'll be tomorrow or next week or next year, whenever Moshiach finally comes, the reason that the gates will finally open up for us will be this quality of stubbornness. Of all the things that the Jews possess, of all the things we accomplished, the quality that Hashem will recognize and for which He'll reward us is our obstinacy in not yielding to the world around us, the world that is clamoring against us day and night.

THE NATIONS COME BEGGING

And clamor they did! In Shir Hashirim is depicted a scene of how all the nations are speaking to the *shulamis*, the perfect woman, who represents the Jewish people: שובי שובי השולמית - "Come to us, turn your head to us, O' you perfect one, שובי שובי - Come to us and we will gaze at you." That means,

“Come to us and we will accept you; we will give you the highest acclaim; the highest recognition and wealth.”

And the Rambam explains in his *Maamar Kiddush Hashem* that all the nations are cajoling us to come over to their religions. They attempted it in all the generations. And the Jewish nation always resisted all the blandishments of the nations around them.

When we were in the ghettos, and the surrounding nations were begging us to come out, with one word out of our mouths, with just one word, had we just said “Yes! Yes, I accept,” they would have thrown down the ghettos walls. In the Medieval ages, in the most glorious period in Jewish history, we were in Christian Europe, surrounded by an angry mob of ignorance, and priests who roared at our obstinacy. “Why won’t you give in, you stubborn people?!” And we had to refrain again and again. And they punished us, they pillaged us, they expelled us from our homes and we were massacred because of that. Any Jew would have gained honor and livelihood by giving in; and still there were so few who did so, that the Christians were frustrated. They were frustrated beyond belief at our stubborn loyalty. It was something unimaginable to them.

UNSUCCESSFUL MISSIONARY WORK

About a hundred years ago, there was a magazine “Punch” in London. So they once published an article about all of their “success” in their missionary work among the Jews. It said there that after all the missionary effort that the England church had spent so much money on, they had been “rewarded” with only one or two half-witted Jews in all of England. It didn't say half-witted there; that's my addition, my *peirush*. They wrote there that “at this rate, England will have to spend all of its substance to convert the Jewish people.” You can't get anywhere with these stubborn people! That's what they were complaining.

That's how it used to be. Today the ignorant Jews come running on their own to every new form of garbage introduced, because they have no sense of their own; they've lost all contact with the Torah. But when Jews were Jews, when they understood what was what, you couldn't get them to budge even though the rewards offered to them were very great.

WE ARE PRINCES NO MATTER WHERE WE END UP

Wherever they went in *galus* they remained stubborn and loyal to Hashem. It made no impression on them because they knew who they were. We're a noble people. Imagine a prince leaves his palace, he still knows who he is. Maybe he runs with paupers now, he's mixing with bums. He can't help himself. He lost his crown and his royal garments, *but he knows who he is*. He knows these are bums and he's a prince.

So the Jewish nation always knew that we are *bnei melachim* and all of the others, *הן גוים כמר מדלי* - the goyim are just a drop on the bottom of the bucket. *כאפס נחשבו* - they're considered to Me like nothing and zero. And so the Jewish nation maintained its stubborn loyalty and didn't kowtow to the zeros.

CONTRASTING A "SIMPLE" JEW WITH A GREEK

And that's why all over the world Jews always have provided scenes of the greatest heroism. Jews have given their lives under circumstances that we couldn't even imagine. Today the Jewish nation has lost its backbone. But up till recently a Jew would let himself be skinned, to be skinned alive, and he'd be screaming from pain. Don't think that it was easy once the decision was made. It hurts terribly to be skinned alive. The Jew would scream from pain, but he wouldn't say yes. How many times did it happen? Countless times. And it wasn't just the great sages, the *tzadikim*. No, it was women, boys and girls. How do we know? We don't have to rely on our sources because the gentiles themselves have made these statements again and again.

Josephus quotes ancient Greek writers - a whole list of them - who describe how Jews went to death by torture rather than say one word against their Torah. And Josephus adds that among the Greeks there is not one who would suffer the least pain for such a thing. If you would threaten a Greek that he'd better curse Homer or else you're going to take a quarter out of his pocket, he'd curse Homer to save his quarter! Among the Greeks not one would suffer the least loss for his ideals.

The stupid history writers didn't see that. Lady Magnet, one of the fools who wrote history, wrote a book in England and she's talking about the ghettos. "There was nothing heroic there; it

was a dismal existence.” That’s how people *with closed eyes* see it. If you close your eyes, you see nothing! The ghetto in Medieval Europe was of the most noble heroism. Here were a handful of people fighting against a huge mass of opponents.

OUR ANCESTORS WERE UNBELIEVABLE!

And when the enraged mob came battering at the gates of the ghetto, our fathers knew that soon the walls would come down. And the enraged gentiles would come in and they would force the Jews to the baptismal font in order to baptise them against their will. So when our forefathers saw what was awaiting them, so what did they do? They took butcher knives and they slaughtered all the little children, the weakest ones who would yield. The mothers crawled under beds to get the children. The children saw what was happening so they were screaming and they ran under the beds for refuge. So the mothers pulled them out by their little feet and the mothers slit their necks. And then the mothers killed themselves and then the fathers did the same. And finally when the gentiles entered, they found a city of dead Jews. There was nobody to force to the baptism waters. And it didn’t happen once. It happened again and again and again all over Europe. If you want to know how grand is the history of our people, the Middle Ages is one of the most glorious pictures of heroism that the world ever saw. Because every Jew, if he would have said one word, “Yes - yes, I accept baptism,” he could have gained honors and wealth. Any *meshumad* would gain wealth and honor. But they didn’t budge! They chose the ghetto, and they were proud to be stubborn and they stayed in the ghetto. Actually they were so stiff-necked that they looked down at everyone outside the ghetto walls.

And in the ghettos in medieval Europe they were crowded into stinking little streets and they were forbidden from making a decent living. They had to sell old rags. And they couldn’t move out. Forget about moving out; they couldn’t even *walk* out of the ghetto walls. And if they did sometimes go outside they had to get off the sidewalk for the gentile boys. A gentile boy would say “*machmoress yudah*” and he drove him off the sidewalk. And any goy could send his dog on a Jew and laugh at the the Jew running away with his trousers torn. There was no redress in a court.

You'd be lucky if the judge would let you go home alive. That's how it was in Medieval Europe.

WE NOT ONLY SURVIVED BUT WE FLOURISHED

We don't understand today how they survived. But they didn't only survive. They were so proud, so vigorous in their loyalty that we should have a fraction of their devotion, of their happiness in their stubbornness and dedication to Hakodosh Boruch Hu. If we would have a fraction of their Shabbos celebration we would be inspired to no end.

When we were in Christian Europe all around us were cathedrals. You have no idea how Europe was dominated by the cathedrals. In the shadow of the church, the Jews, overwhelmed in number, survived and flourished. It was in the shadow of Christian persecution and crusades that Rashi sat and wrote his *peirush* on the Talmud. And Rabeinu Tam and his *chaveirim*, the *baalei tosfos*, asked their good questions under this shadow as well. Every day there were big processions in the streets, people carrying idols with music playing. The Jews were spat upon; they were considered outcasts, worse than dogs.

CHADASH ASUR MIN HATORAH

And now is no different than our ancient past. Only that today, instead of threatening us with daggers and crematorium, they tempt us with milk and honey. We have to be very careful because on all sides we're surrounded by the ideas, the *minhagim*, and the attitudes of the people around us. The *yetzer harah* comes and says, "Make a little change here, a little bit there." "Nothing doing," you say. "Nothing doing! I'm walking in the path of Avraham Avinu and the path of my *zeideh* and my *zeideh's zeideh*, and I'm going to continue stubbornly to be שומר דרך השם."

That's why the frum Jews are called שלומי אמוני ישראל, the people who are complete in their loyalty. *Akshanus*, stubbornness! Not like the Modern Orthodox who are changing. They're dropping practices, they're adopting gentile ideals. Little by little the Modern Orthodox are changing and it's because they're not loyal.

רעדטס בלויז יודיש!

But the ultra-orthodox *frummeh* won't change. We refuse to change. I must tell you that if you're a family that speaks Yiddish, keep on speaking Yiddish. Don't change. Don't change! And if you can't speak Yiddish, then at least everything else. Don't give up *anything*! Don't listen to the Modern Orthodox at all! The Modern Orthodox are not what Hashem intended when he said ושמרו דרך השם.

You have to be stubborn and stiff necked to all the newfangled ideas that come around. Pesach in a hotel?! What are you, *meshugah*?! No hotels. No "hotel *sedarim*." You have to say, "I'll have a *seder* in my house!" Even the best hotel is a joke compared to the *seder* in the home. And everything else as well! Everything should be done only according to the old customs of the Am Yisroel and that's a sign of our loyalty. אל תישוש תורת אמוך, don't forsake the *minhagim* of the Am Yisroel, that's the *toras imecha*. We keep the attitudes and ideals of the Am Yisroel forever, because no matter what, we remain loyal to Hashem. And that's going to be the clarion call of the *geulah*. פתחו שערים - Open the gates wide open! And who will come in? ויבוא גוי צדיק שומר אמונים - The loyal nation will be welcomed back into the arms of Hakodosh Boruch Hu.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL ABOUT SAYING AMEN?

Now listen to a queer thing the the *gemara* says (Shabbos 119b) about that *possuk*. It says אל תקרי אמונים אלא אמנים, don't read the *possuk shomer emunim*, a nation that guarded its loyalty, but *shomer amenim*, the nation that guarded the *amenim*. The people who made sure to say *amen* all the time, those are the ones for whom the gates will open. *Amenim*?! What's that got to do with it? Answering *amen* is only a small detail. Are *Chazal* going to take that great statement of Yeshaya Hanavi about a nation that kept its loyalty, about the nation that loyally took their own lives to avoid the baptism, and telescope it all into the simple act of answering *amen*?! From such a grand idea to reduce it to such a minute point?!

And the answer is this: Loyalty is composed of many things. It's not enough to say I'm a Jew. You have to live like a Jew

and you have to fulfill all the *de'oraysas* and *de'rabanans* and all the *minhagim*. That's the loyalty of a Jew. But loyalty is such a tremendous quality that even a little bit of it is priceless too. It's like a diamond; a little diamond is also worth something. Even a tiny chip is precious. And a lot of little diamonds is surely worth something.

EVEN THE LOYALTY OF AMEN

And therefore the *gemara* is telling us that we should treasure our loyalty in the smallest, minute detail. Even when it comes to backing up the *chazan*, the *shatz* is saying a *bracha* and we muster enough interest to say *amen*, so that's also a chip of our loyalty. Why do we say *amen*? It's not a formality, a meaningless word. *Amen* means "Yes, we're behind you. I'm *maskim*." Here's a man who makes it his business, he'll never miss saying *amen*. He sits in shul listening obediently, carefully, to his fellow Jews praising Hashem and beseeching Him; everything is Hashem, Hashem, Hashem, and he's answering *amen, amen, amen*. *Amen* after all is only a word. It's not an act; it's easy to say *amen*. But he always makes it his business to chime in *amen*. He wants to show, "I'm loyal!" He won't talk in the *shul*, he doesn't want to slack off in his loyalty to Hashem. He never misses an *amen* because the Am Yisroel is praising Hashem and he won't miss that for anything. "Yes, *amen!*" And again, "*Amen!* I'm as loyal as ever."

Now that's an easy thing to do. You're not sacrificing your life for it, but even that small thing is precious. It might be only a small act of loyalty, but it's the persistence, the stubbornness, that makes it so great. So great are these small acts of loyalty that in those small acts is telescoped all the greatness of *שומר אמונים*, the nation that guards the loyalty of dedication to Hashem, and who will be worthy of being redeemed.

THINK "I'M BEING LOYAL"

And it's not only *amen* - answering *amen* is an example of a small way of showing loyalty. And you should try it once - try sitting quietly, attentively, in the shul, listening to every word and answering *amen* because you're loyal to Hakodosh Boruch Hu. Every *amen* becomes a precious diamond of loyalty. And just like *amen*, there are so many small things, that when done with the

proper intention, can be the greatest demonstration of loyalty. All of us, all of the *frummeh*, are living with loyalty. Every step of our lives are *emunah*. It's not only in the once in a lifetime sacrifice that the loyalty of our people is recognized. It's in all the dedication of our daily lives that lays our latent greatness. The Am Yisroel, every single loyal Jew, makes his or her way through life stubbornly serving Hakodosh Boruch Hu, our days filled with acts of loyalty. But without thought, it's worth so much less. Think "I'm demonstrating my loyalty to the *ratzon Hashem*." And so when you walk the street with your *tzitzis* out, or you put your sheitel on your head, when you call out *Amen yehei shmei rabbah*, or when you stop your day to daven mincha - and hundreds of other things that you're doing all day long - that's your opportunity to be found **נאמן לפניך**, to be found loyal by Hakodosh Boruch Hu.

That's the way to walk down the path of life, with thoughts of loyal dedication to Hashem. And instead of a day filled with empty actions, your life is transformed the way Avraham Avinu's life was. And by doing so, every person in his or her own "little" way is demonstrating loyalty, and it's valuable beyond your imagination.

LET THE GATES OPEN WIDE!

And those demonstrations of loyalty, as it permeates your life in all of its many details, that will be the quality that opens the gates when Moshiach comes. We've followed in the path of **ושמרו** **דרך השם** that Avraham Avinu forged for his descendants and we've been the **שומר אמונים** since then. And just like Hashem said about Avraham Avinu: **כי ידעתי** - "It's only him that I think about," so too Hashem says about Avraham's descendants, His loyal nation, "It's only you that I'm interested in." Because that is the Jewish nation, *ma'aminim bnei ma'aminim*, the loyal ones, the nation that refuses to yield and stubbornly keeps the same Torah today exactly as when they first received it on Har Sinai.

HAVE A WONDERFUL SHABBOS

Dedicated by

**Rabbi & Mrs. Yaakov
Shapiro**

לזכות רפואה שלימה

מנוחה חיה בת דליה טובה

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

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

לזכות

אהובה בת מרים

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תורת אביגדור
"שאל אביד ויגד זקניך ויאמרו לך"



Q&A With Rav Avigdor Miller Ztz"l

Q:

How does one deal with an abusive boss?

A:

Always be nice to him. Always be nice to your boss. If you can, shake hands with him every morning when you come in to work and greet him warmly. Smile at him always. And whatever he says, you should say, "Yes, yes, yes." And keep looking for a better job.

But he should not know that you're looking for a better job. No, not at all. He should just know that you're doing the best that you can right now. And that applies to all people. No matter what type of job you have, you should always keep your eyes out for a better job. But while you're on this job, make sure that you're doing the best that you possibly can. You must always be a loyal employee.

Lavan was a very abusive boss. Much worse than your boss. And the pesukim tell us that Yakov Avinu remained a loyal worker till the end. Loyalty is so important that the Torah goes out of its way to tell us details about Yakov Avinu's loyalty to Lavan. So make sure to treat your boss well and work hard. And keep your eyes out for a new job.

TAPE #E-180

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