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May you merit to see much nachas from him as well as from your other children, in health, happiness, prosperity and siyatta dishmaya.

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nations were created with a certain function of providing the *Am Yisroel* with the opportunity to excel in virtue.

Hashem is not merely relating here the praises of the Chosen People; He's telling us how we *remain* the Chosen People, how we achieve being "the uppermost" of all the nations of the world. And the secret to that greatness is the "nations that *He made for that purpose*."

The Jewish Empire

All of the billions of people across the globe – the Eskimos and the Irish and the colored people and the Americans and everyone else – were all made by Hashem so that we should have endless opportunities to elevate ourselves. "To put you uppermost over all the nations that *He made for that purpose*."

Because actually there's a big *kasheh*: Why *are* there so many nations in the world? What's the purpose of the billions of gentiles scattered across the globe? After all, we are the ones who are the *am Hashem*; we should be the greatest empire in the world! It should be billions and billions of *Bnei Yisroel* and the *goyim* should have almost no place in this world except to be our *shamashim*, to serve us. We need firemen and policemen and sanitation workers, other important jobs too; but just for that we don't need so many of them.

Strength Is Not In Numbers

And the answer is that's how they are serving us – just because there are so many of them that's how we gain most from them. We'll explain this idea as follows: If the *Klal Yisroel* were the numerous ones in the world then the entire purpose of living would be vitiated. It would be too easy to be a Jew and we're not in this world to have it easy. Our purpose here is to be *oimed b'nisayon*, to withstand tests, and Hakodosh Boruch Hu says: אַתֶּם הַמְעַט מִכָּל הָעַמִּים – *I made you the smallest people of all so that you can struggle against the multitudes – that's your success.*

That's why the Torah says, לֹא תִהְיֶה אַחֲרֵי רַבִּים לְרָעָה – *you shouldn't follow the multitude for bad things*, אַחֲרֵי רַבִּים לְהַטּוֹת – *don't lean after them just because it's a lot of people* (Shemos 23:2). We're talking about *pshuto shel mikrah* now. That's what this *possuk* is saying; that's the big test – not to yield to the vast masses of humanity; to their ideals and fads and styles and trends. No! We have no business with them. We have our own lives! Our own greatness! Of course, we're always friendly to the *umos ha'olam*. We're polite and kind to everyone! But we're talking now about having any kind of sympathy, any kind of relationship, any sentimentality with the *ideals* of the *umos ha'olam*.

That's the big test of this world. We live in a world where there are churches everywhere. There are colleges in every little city. Atheism, materialism, and false ideals surround us on all sides. We're a small island of truth in an ocean of *sheker*. And all the time big ocean waves are crashing down on this little island! And the question is, as the waves rush up on the beach, as they roar and they splash, will they wet us as well? Will we yield? Will we be influenced or will we be able to maintain our pride in the truth of the Torah ideals?

That's the test that the *Am Yisroel* must surmount throughout its history! The multitude of our opponents is our opportunity for greatness.

Idolizing the Idols

That's how it's been from the beginning. In the ancient times, the majority of the *umos ha'olam* worshipped idols. You think it was easy for the *Am Yisroel* to resist that? Nowadays it seems easy, but even today when *avodah zarah* has been for the most part discarded by the multitudes, if you would live in certain countries in southeast Asia you'd find it difficult to be convinced that there's nothing to idolatry. Even in America you see today so many Jewish boys and girls that have been trapped by the Far Eastern religions – and it's nothing but plain idolatry. And that's here in America where there's so much opposition to it – how much more so was the pressure in the ancient times when everybody believed in idols!

You have to imagine what it meant to be a Jew in those days; you were alone against a very great world. The *nisayon* of *avodah zarah* was one of the most severe trials that our nation ever went through! The propaganda of the nations of the world was overwhelming!

It's not too hard to understand. Suppose there was only one religion in the world besides ours – the religion of idolatry. Imagine such a thing; you're living in a culture where the whole world worshipped idols. North, south, east, west, Eskimos, Hotentots, white, black, brown; wherever you go in the world everybody is worshipping idols. And not only worshipping idols, but they're doing it with fire and zeal.

Ancient Multiculturalism and Tolerance

And they didn't ridicule each other's idols; everyone understood that one god specialized in one thing and a different god specialized in something else. There were idols that you would go to when you wanted to be cured of certain diseases; others were expected to help you in battle. For marriage too – if you wanted to get a certain woman as your wife, there was a special idol for that too. There were business idols, idols of commerce, that helped you with *parnasah*.

And everybody had stories to tell; on all sides the gentiles were testifying about the gods that benefited them. "I can prove it to you," the priest would tell you. "I have dozens of stories of people who came to this idol and begged for help and it helped." Everyone spoke about the people who didn't have any children and went to the shrine of the god of fertility, offered them offerings, and as a result they had children. Another man had trouble with his fields; they couldn't produce anything. So he made obeisance at a different idol and in the end he had a bumper crop.

The Gullible Catholics

Don't we know even today, there's a certain place in France called Lourdes where pilgrims come back and they give testimonials. Of course you don't hear about it much anymore because today there's already a lot of competition – the atheists don't have such *emunah*, and there are the Protestants too who don't believe in it, but if you would read Catholic periodicals you would see there testimonials without end.

Here's a man whose doctors had given up in his case; his feet were infected and they had to be amputated – it was hopeless. He came to Lourdes on crutches but as soon as he came there and bowed down to our Lady of Good Hope, or some other name there, immediately he threw away his crutches and he walked out without even a slight limp.

There's another man who says he had multiple sclerosis and he was sentenced by the doctors that he's going to die in a few years. So he went to a certain prelate, a priest in Philadelphia who gave him a blessing, and sure enough, in a short time, he forgot that he ever was sick.

There are stories like that without number, and they are written with the name and the address of the man who testifies. All over the world *shakranim* were claiming that *avodah zarah* helped them become healthy. That's how it is when the religion is dominant; all kinds of stories of success come in and it's very hard to resist this propaganda.

The Little Nation Laughs

And that was the world in which the *Am Yisroel* lived; a world where everybody believed implicitly in *avodah zarah*. When a lie is adopted by very many people, it becomes extremely difficult, almost impossible to withstand it. It wasn't even a *safek*; only a lunatic would ignore the truth of how the world worked. And along comes this little nation, the *me'at mikol ha'amim*, and they were expected to ignore it all; not only ignore but to laugh at the whole world.

And what we're learning now is that it was planned that way from the beginning. כְּלוּם יִהְיֶה לָן אֱלֹא לְקַבּוּלֵי בְּה אֲנָרָא – *Avodah zarah was put*

into this world for no other purpose than we should gain reward by means of resisting it (Sanhedrin 64a).

That's what the sages of the *Anshei Knesses Hagedolah* said. We have to study those words! It's a significant statement made by a group of the wisest men. The allure of idolatry was given to the world by Hashem as an opportunity for the *Am Yisroel* to gain reward. The ability to combat the opinions of the world is one of the great strengths of our people. If you didn't have any difficulty in being a Jew, you wouldn't get much credit. The principle is **לְפִיּוֹם צַעֲרָא אֲגָרָא** – the more difficult it is, the more reward you get.

The Resistance!

Now, it's important to understand that the test of *avodah zarah* was only the beginning of our responsibility to resist against the world. *B'chol dor v'dor*, in every generation, *omdim aleinu*, they rise against us to fill our minds with foolishness; and our job is to turn our backs on them and to ridicule all of the *sheker* of the outside world. No matter how many people are telling us we're wrong, we won't budge. All the false religions, all the idol worshippers, all the false ideas, the false philosophies – humanism and socialism and all the isms; all the false sciences and the *to'eivahs* and materialism; it's all a test of the multitudes trying to overpower the *me'at mikol ha'amim*.

Now you know why there is idolatry in the world, why there are other religions in the world, why there's evolution in the world, why there's so much foolishness and wickedness that spreads in the world. *Elah l'kabulei bei igrah* – it's intended *only* as an opportunity for reward, for greatness. We gain reward by resisting them. And when a Jew is able to turn his back on all the false ideals, when he's able to say that the idols are nothing; he calls them *elilim* – “*al*” means nothing. They're all nothing gods; sports is nothing, the universities are nothing, entertainment is nothing, the newspapers are nothing, socialism is nothing.

By standing in opposition to the great empires that surround us on all sides, the false ideals and cultures that try to tempt you, and despite everything you stand up and say, “I'm not interested! No matter what the world says, I'm proclaiming that *Hashem Echad*,” that's the greatness of the *Am Yisroel*.

Who's Leading In The Polls?

That's our greatness; our loyalty! Being the smallest of all the nations is an opportunity to demonstrate our loyalty to Hashem. Our strength of character is magnified when we oppose the multitudes; by saying no, that causes us to develop in ourselves an eternal resistance. You know, when

you have to fight back against the public, you gain a certain hardiness; you learn to be a fighter and you become tough. Not by making self defense groups or learning karate but by resisting the blandishments of the gentiles. That's how the Jews became tough! That's how we become great!

You know, they once took a poll among people of different religious faiths and it revealed that Orthodox Jews are more resistant to pressure than any other people. And the truth is that it's common sense – Orthodox Jews are more liable to resist the pressure of public opinion because they're trained to say no to the multitudes; otherwise they wouldn't be Orthodox Jews. They'd be reform or conservative; they'd be nothing – whatever it is they wouldn't be authentic Jews. Orthodox Jews are the first in the poll because the poor Orthodox Jew is kicked around and scorned. And if he is able to maintain his principles, that makes him tough; that makes him elevated above everyone else.

Part II. Resistance Today

Dark Shadows and Loud Bells

For many years much of the Jewish world was under the shadow of the cross; wherever you went all you saw were churches and priests; all you heard was church bells everywhere. Even America, once upon a time, wherever you walked – churches and church bells. And the Christians were fortified in their convictions very much by the rapid spread of Christianity. In a short time, it had been accepted all over Europe. I say accepted – it wasn't accepted; it was forced upon them. The kings accepted Christianity and then they issued an edict that their subjects were from now on members of this new faith – or else. But whatever it was, it spread.

And no matter how foolish it really was, they clung to their faith tenaciously. I once saw a man from a cult approach a *goy* on Kings Highway and he wanted to hand him certain pamphlets. But the *goy* said, "I'm Christian! I have my own religion!" He said it with pride! And that's how they all were – and the fact that there were a great number of people like that made it appear so powerful.

Now, let's imagine a Jew in ancient Europe. A Jew in Italy or Spain or anywhere was faced with the *amim asher asah*, the multitudes of people whom Hashem made. And they were pointing with confidence to their faith: "Look how we spread so quickly; we're filling the whole world with our adherents. Don't you see that it's a sign that G-d is on our side and that we are the true faith?"

Resisting the Jihad

And the same with Islam. The Jews in the Islamic countries also faced multitudes of naysayers. When Mohammed the *meshuga* – that’s what the Rambam calls him; *hameshuga* who came out of the desert – when he appeared on the scene of history, he was so crazy that he couldn’t even imagine anyone disagreeing with him. He waved his sword and he said, “If you’re wicked enough to disagree with me, then you must be destroyed.” And he went about doing it himself – he didn’t wait around for Hashem to do it. He promised that they would be destroyed by fire and by the sword, and he provided both. And as silly as he was, *Hakodosh Boruch Hu gave him very great success*. He had phenomenal success!

All of a sudden there was an Islam – millions and millions of people who were telling you that the truth was with them. And it spread like wildfire; in a very short time his credo had conquered all of Northern Africa. The Mohammedans took over Spain and conquered the Byzantine Empire. They swarmed over Turkey and the whole Middle East; important parts of Europe also became Islamic. They conquered Greece and even parts of what is now Hungary belonged to the Turks. There are still mosques in Bulgaria, in Sofia. And then they spread to the Far East too. The Pakistanis are followers of Mohammed; many other places too.

Now, how can it be that one man, one lunatic, should accomplish so much? How could a *sheker* of two false religions spread across the world in such a way? The answer is it was done for us. *Asher asah* means that Hashem made that all for us. *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* was sending them to test us because when people have power and numbers, that impresses the minority. You might begin to think, “Look; if Hashem is giving them victory and they’re spreading, maybe there’s something there?” It was very difficult for a small minority to stand permanently in opposition to a tremendous majority.

Modern Fools

And that’s why today we face the same challenges; the same kinds of deceptions. It’s different *yetzer horahs* but it’s the same challenge of great numbers. Today, all over the world, evolution, evolution, evolution wherever you turn. The truth is that evolution is as silly as can be. It’s such insanity that it’s ridiculous.

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. It’s all garbage; each theory is sillier than

the one that came before it. But the multitude, the *amim asher asah*, confuse the weaker ones.

The Bachur Kept Fainting

Once the *mashgiach* of Mirrer Yeshiva brought in a boy here and the boy was fainting. I said, "Why are you fainting?" He says when he passes by a church he thinks maybe it's true: "There are so many churches! Maybe what they're preaching in there is true." Of course it isn't but he's fainting anyhow. He was fainting; it was hard for him to stand up.

I said, "When you pass by a university, a college where they're preaching evolution, what then?"

"I faint also," he said, "Maybe that's true."

But each one contradicts the other! How could you faint from both?! The answer is the *yetzer hara* says faint anyhow; faint for any reason. You don't need any *seichel* to faint from the *yetzer hara* – you just have to faint. That's why the *yetzer harah* is called an *hafachfach*. He's an upside down man. Today he talks this way, tomorrow the other way; it doesn't have to make sense – all he needs is the *amim asher asah*, many people who are saying it, and he wins out on both ways.

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; the numbers of the opponents and the influence of numbers makes it extremely difficult to oppose their opinions. On all sides, there's a loud *din* as if it was a *davar pashut*, an accepted fact! Evolution is considered the standard teaching of science today everywhere! It doesn't matter if it's true or not – it's the new *avodah zarah* of the world.

Imaginary Molecular Biology

Somebody once showed me a book of molecular biology; he pointed out there were six thousand entries in the index – six thousand entries! Now, out of those six thousand entries only two mention the word evolution. And yet the writer said in his preface, "One of the purposes of molecular biology is to teach people the principle of evolution."

Now in the entire book nothing is mentioned – two places out of six thousand entries. And even in these two places, he doesn't say any proof for evolution. It just says, "It evolved." How could it evolve? It doesn't matter that it's *sheker*. It's the *torah* of the *umos ha'olam* – *toras sheker al l'shonah*.

It's all imagination. That from a bacteria eventually developed into a human being is such insanity that it's ridiculous. They have nothing to

back it up! How did it happen? “Very gradually.” A germ turned into a person gradually.

We Come From Soup?!

Just the idea that a germ came from non-life is the most ridiculous thing! How could non-life become life? And to this day there's no answer. They'll tell you words, “primordial soup,” other things too, but it's a fairy tale. 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 one of these data is necessary. A trillion essential bits of information in 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?

They try not to answer that question because there's no answer. The evolutionists dodge that question. They say, “In some way, we know not how, life originally appeared.” Although in all the laboratories they're trying their best; they're twisting their minds trying to find ways and means to show that this happens and yet they have no evidence. What are they trying to do now? They're spending millions of dollars on the shuttle to go to the planets far off. NASA is very busy wasting your hard earned money. Maybe there's life over there; other places where life developed on its own. They're wasting our money to prove evolution; they'll never find anything.

Silly Scientists

Of course, they're constantly discovering evidence and it's plastered on the front page of the newspaper. Next week, it's not mentioned anymore. It's forgotten. What happened? Somebody came along and showed them it was an error, a mistake. The whole thing is as silly as could be, but because there are so many that are upholding that theory so everyone falls lock step into place – it's the new *avodah zarah*.

Anybody can study this and see that the world is crazy. The world is *poshut* crazy. Of course we have no time to study their books and to find answers to their arguments. Maybe some specialists could do that – I did it to a big extent, by the way. But life is too short and it takes a long time to explain all the lies but if a Jew wants he can study it and he'll discover in the books of the scientists themselves that it's a fraud. But you don't even need that – just open your eyes. Anybody with a brain sees that the truth is that *Bereishis bara Elokim es hashamayim v'ess ha'aretz!*

The world is full of wisdom! Full of planning! You can't have plan by accident! Every little part of the world shows *chochma, Mal'ah ha'aretz*

kinyanecha – the world is full of your *kinyanim*! *Kinyan* means a demonstration that You are the one that made it! Everything demonstrates it was made with *chochma*.

Chewing Over Evolution

If you pass by a fruit stand and stop and look – why is it that the tomatoes are red when they're ripe? When they're not ripe, the tomatoes are green. You never thought about that? That alone is the greatest contradiction to these stupid evolutionists. How did it happen that when it's unripe, it's green and it hides among the green leaves? "Don't look at us – we're not ready to eat yet." And then, when it's ripe and it's good to eat, it becomes prominently red: "Pick me now!"

Apples too! They become red only when they ripen. And not only do they become red and sweet, but they fall down by themselves from the tree. Why do they fall down from the tree? Let them hang on the tree forever! Who told them to fall down just now when they taste good? Take one bite of a red delicious apple and you know right away that there's no evolution. As you chew, you become a bigger *ma'amin*.

And why are there seeds inside? Who put seeds there? Each seed contains a million different data on how to produce a tree from that seed! A million bits of information on each seed! And every fruit, every vegetable, has seeds inside! And so a fruit stand is so open a refutation of all the lies of the *umos ha'olam*.

Don't Sell Out!

But because all over the world the atheists are all aping each other's words – they're all saying evolution, evolution, evolution, so therefore all the ignoramuses in the street, what do they know, so they also say evolution. And Orthodox Jews, the weaklings, they too are saying evolution.

I was once speaking against evolution in a certain *yeshiva*, so one boy came back the next day and he told me that his father – his father was an old *yeshiva* man – his father said, "What difference does it make if you come from a fish or if you don't come from a fish? We still believe that Hashem does everything."

Isn't that the most ridiculous thing?! Here's a Jew, a *ben torah*, who already sold out to the world; he's so sold out that the idea of evolution already seems to him to be no contradiction to the Torah. Because once there's such a great number of people who believe in a false ideology, so if you're a weakling it becomes your ideology too. How does such a thing

happen? Because he never understood the *possuk* in our *parsha*. He never realized that Hashem made them all to test him.

We Don't Care!

Today, when you have so many evolutionists, if you're able to clarify your own thoughts and remain a *ma'amin*; that's a great *hatzlacha*. You say "I don't care what you'll say! I don't care how many you are! I don't care how big your universities are! I still say "Bereishis bara Elokim – Hashem made the whole world out of nothing!"

That's why there is such a thing as evolution. That's why Hashem put into the head of Darwin his stupid theory. So that we should laugh at him! It's to test us. So that we learn to laugh instead of faint. When the Jew is able to combat the combined clamor of the entire world, and say "No!" that's a greatness of character. And the more difficult it is to fight back against all the falsehoods of evolution, all the falsehoods of the colleges and the libraries and laboratories, the greater we become.

Part III. Growing From Resistance

Laughing Our Sides Off

We have to laugh it all away; it's all *hevel havolim*. Everyone knows there's a *megillah* called *Koheles* and the purpose of this work is spelled out right away, up front: הַבֵּל הַבְּלִים אָמַר קֹהֵלֶת. The purpose of *Koheles* is one thing – to counteract the attitudes and ideals of the outside world which make the unimportant things important.

All those things, all the ideals of the gentile world – entertainment, amusement, sports, money, immorality – the whole culture through and through is *hevel havolim*. And therefore even though the world is busy disdaining us – we're too antiquated for them – but it doesn't sway us in the least. The whole world, the millions and billions of people, won't budge us from the Torah ideals. We have no thought of weakening! *Chas v'Shalom!*

Now, what is the result of the *Am Yisroel* standing strong against the world? Hashem says, "As a reward, I'm going to make you עֲלִינוּ עַל כָּל גּוֹיֵי הָאָרֶץ – *You will be elevated forever and ever*. If you're going to elevate Me above everything else, then I'm going to elevate you."

And that's the big principle that the *Gemara* (Chagiga 3a) tells us. It's talking there about the *pesukim* in our *parsha*: אֶת ה' הֶאֱמַרְתָּ הַיּוֹם לְהִיְוֹת לְךָ לְאֱלֹקִים וְהֵשֵׁם הַיּוֹם לְהִיְוֹת לְךָ לְעַם סִגְלָה – *You elevated Hakodosh Boruch Hu to be for you a G-d ... והשם והיום לְהִיְוֹת לְךָ לְעַם סִגְלָה – and therefore Hashem has elevated you to be*

for Him a treasured nation. The Gemara puts words in the mouth of Hakodosh Boruch Hu like this: *Amar lahem Hakodosh Boruch Hu l'Yisroel; Hashem is talking to the Am Yisroel:* אַתָּם עָשִׂיתֶנִי הַטִּיבָה אֶחָת בְּעוֹלָם – “You made Me the most important thing in the world by saying always, *Shema Yisroel Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad*, and therefore, אֲנִי אֶעֱשֶׂה אֶתְכֶם אֶחָד בְּעוֹלָם – I will make you the most important thing in the world like it says ‘Who is like Your people, the one nation in the world.’”

The Heavenly Hanachas Tefillin

That's what Hashem says about us. “You are My one nation in the world.” And not only is He saying it, but it's such a fundamental principle in the mind of Hashem *k'viyachol*, that He wears that *possuk* in His *tefillin*! The *gemara* (Brachos 6a) tells us: *Hakodosh Boruch Hu meiniach tefillin – Hashem wears tefillin*. Of course, we won't say that Hakodosh Boruch Hu goes to a *sofer* and orders *tefillin* with parchment in it; with leather and straps. We'll be *moichel* that and we'll say that it's only a figure of speech. But there's certainly an important teaching here – even a figure of speech like that is an enormous concept! Hashem is pictured as wearing *tefillin* on His arm and on His head! The magnitude of such an idea is stupefying!

Now, the *gemara* asks, הֲנִי תַפְלִין רַמְרֵי עֲלְמָא מַה בְּתִיב בְּהוּ – *What's written in the tefillin of the Master of the World?* Our *tefillin*, we know already what's written there: שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ ה' אֶחָד. There's only one Hashem! A *Yisroel* says this *possuk* as soon as he's able to talk. When a little child begins to talk, right away his father teaches him *shema Yisroel*. And then all of his life, every day, morning and evening, he's saying *shema Yisroel* until he grows old. and then on his deathbed also his last words are *Shema Yisroel Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad*.

Hashem Echad Is Our Credo

Every Jew should try to keep in mind. You won't live forever. There's going to be a last moment in your life and if you're still aware, a Jew tries to gasp with his dying breath these last words, שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ ה' אֶחָד. The Jews who died at the hands of the enemies said this before they walked into the gas chambers. They said it before they were burned at the stake by the Inquisition, before they were beheaded by Romans. *Tzadikim* on their deathbeds and the poorest laborer on his deathbed, all Jews, men and women, when they're about to die, they made it their business to proclaim to themselves and if there was anyone else, they proclaimed it to all those present that all that matters to us is *Hashem Echad*. The last breath of a Jew should express these words because that's the fundamental principle of his life.

And therefore, if a Jew is dying, let's say a Jew, *chalilah*, is dying on the street, so if you're able to you should take his hand and say, "Mister! Mister, say after me these words; *Shema Yisroel*." A lot of people today stand by like dummies when their relatives are dying and say nothing. They should take them in hand and say, "Say something; say *Shema* with me." It's like dying *al kiddush Hashem*. You're not dying in vain. A dog also dies. A cat expires on the sidewalk. Is that how a Jew passes away?! A Jew passes away in a blaze of glory, by proclaiming that *Hashem echad* – our interests are only Hashem; we're intoxicated with the idea of Hashem and all of our thoughts are devoted only to Him. That's why we have that *possuk* in our *tefillin*.

Yisroel Echad Is His Credo

Now, that's our *tefillin*; but what's written in the *tefillin* of Hakodosh Boruch Hu? The *Gemara* tells us that if we would be able to open up Hashem's *tefillin* we would see the following words written there: **מִי כְעַמֶּךָ גּוֹי אֶחָד בְּאֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל גּוֹי אֶחָד בְּאֶרֶץ** – *Who is like Your people, Yisroel, one nation in the world.* Just like we declare that "*Hashem echad*," He declares, "*Yisroel echad!*" And when Hakodosh Boruch Hu declares we are the one nation in the world, He means it with all that He is capable of meaning it. It's an infinite concept; it means that there's only one nation in this world and the next! It means that we are the uppermost nation forever and ever.

That *possuk* is the heart of the principles of the Torah. And that requires us therefore to make a supreme effort to live up to that. **וְלִתְתִירָהּ עָלֶיךָ עַל כָּל הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר עִשְׂתָּה** – *He made the nations for the purpose that you should rise above them always and never go down to their level!*

Chochma V'shtus Bagoyim

I'm not saying you can't learn any technical skills from the gentiles or you can't use their inventions or learn certain facts of nature from them. *Chochma*, no matter where it comes from is still *chochma*. Anything useful – absolutely you hold on to. Instead of walking on foot to go to the *beis haknesses* on the weekdays, we have a right to use a car. And when the time comes, in the days of Mashiach, probably we'll go to Yerushalayim on the wings of a very beautiful and big super airplane. And even though many gentiles participated in designing it, I'm sure we'll use it anyhow. Why not? Here and there you'll find some wisdom among the gentiles. But I heard a great man once say – and this is very important – he said, "We should also know – there's also a lot of *shtus* among the gentiles." Their heads are full of *shtus*! Their books are full of *shtus*! It's mostly *sheker*.

And therefore, we'll never yield to their ideas and their ideals, to their amusements and their pastimes. It's not enough to be outwardly *frum* and to maintain all the *dikdukei mitzvos* but to feel inferior in certain ways. Oh no! We always remain *elyon*, we remain aloof from the *goyim asher asa*, because He made them for that purpose – so that we should fight back and refuse to yield to their influence.

That's the function of our gentile neighbors; they make us great, they elevate us forever by making us aware of our function in history to fight back against the environment, to fight back against the *nisayon*, fight back against the *yetzer hara* forever and ever. They're going to make you great!

Greatness In The Midst of Difficulty

The *Am Yisroel* is flourishing today because we use the *amim asher asah*, the nations around us who make us great. Don't think it's easy; because they've been trying their best that we shouldn't survive, that we should amalgamate ourselves into the gentile culture. They try and try, again and again and nevertheless we're here. We're still here! Six hundred day schools in America! *Mesivtas* all over the place! Some neighborhoods, wherever you go, you see *frum* Jews, *kein yirbu*! Big families are increasing and multiplying! *Eretz Yisroel* is full! The irreligious are going wild with envy when they see that the *Am Yisroel* is increasing and getting the vote too! All the politicians are trying to get the vote of the *frum* Jews in *Eretz Yisroel*. In America too! Boro Park, Williamsburg, Flatbush, other neighborhoods. They're spreading everywhere. Monsey, Lakewood. *Boruch Hashem!*

L'fum tzara agra! All the difficulties were made only for the purpose of testing us and improving us and giving us a merit that makes us so much greater just because of the opposition. *Boruch Hashem!* You know, someday we'll be a majority; we'll be the ones on top even in the eyes of the gentiles. And we'll be sorry then; we'll regret the lost opportunity of *l'fum tzara agra*. Then everyone will agree with us; no more reward. There'll be reward, but not that much.

The Evil Days of Moshiach

When the days of Moshiach will come, we're all going to be very sorry. That's what the Gemara says. "Ay yah yay! We're in the majority now – everyone recognizes the truth. Ah, the good old days! It was such a good thing to be a Jew in the good old days and to fight back against Mankind and get so much reward. But now everybody agrees with us! No more reward!" There'll be reward but not that much.

That's what it says in Koheles: זָכֹר אֶת-בוֹרְאֵיךְ – Remember your Creator, יְבוֹאוּ יְמֵי הָרָעָה, עַד אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִבֹּאוּ יְמֵי הָרָעָה – before the evil days come. Which evil days? אֵלֵינוּ יְמֵי הַמְּשִׁיחַ – it's referring to the days of Moshiach; those are the evil days, וְלֹא חוֹבָה, אֲשֶׁר אֵין בָּהֶם לֹא זָכוֹת – no more reward like the good old days.

It's such a good thing to be a Jew, to fight back against mankind and get so much reward. In the good old days we walked in the street and somebody yelled at us, "Dirty Jew." Oooh! What a *hatzlacha* it is! Boruch Hashem! You could be given a million dollars, it wouldn't be better than that! *Mamash*, a million dollars!

I was standing once on the street corner, years ago. It wasn't the style to have any beards yet in those days. Today everybody wears a beard; bums also have beards today. But there were no beards in those days. I was standing waiting for the bus minding my own business and across the street a man shouted, "Meshugenah! Meshugenah!" It's an opportunity – on the inside we're laughing our sides off! It makes you stronger when you laugh it away.

The Eternal Treasure

On all sides the multitudes are yelling at us. The New York Times, the universities, they're all belittling the *frum* Jews. Today, they enlisted even irreligious Jews helping out now to belittle the *frum* Jews. And we say *boruch Hashem!* We are a minority in a minority! It's *schar* on top of *schar!* It's the great opportunity of standing strong; it's the greatness of the Jewish nation.

And that greatness we achieve in this world is forever and ever; in the next world too. Not only are we *elyon* in this world, but we take along the perfection we gained into the Next World. And the more you recognize the purpose of the *amim asher asah* in this world, the more you laugh, the more you are enabled to enjoy the reward in the World To Come. Because by means of living in this world properly, we gain certain attitudes of perfection in our minds that make us more capable of happiness in *Olam Habah*. And that of course, is the final and the most important purpose of everything. *L'hiyos lo l'am segulah* – "You're my treasure," says Hakodosh Boruch Hu. Like a person treasures the gold and diamonds that he has, Hashem treasures us and he will keep us forever and ever in this world and in the World To Come.

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

שאל אביך ויגדך ויקניך ויאמרו לך

Q:

What is a way for a yeshiva man to prepare for a new zman in yeshiva?

A:

First of all, *tefilla* – you must ask Hashem for help. Say: רבונו של עולם: “Hashem, please give me success in my learning this *zman* – and a little *lishma* too.” Ask for it! By the way, not only in the beginning of the *zman*; it’s a good idea all the time. Every day, when you’re starting a *sugya*, open up the *gemara* and say: “Ribono Shel Olam, help me.” It’s not a bad idea at all.

Secondly, make up your mind that life is short. You only have one hundred and twenty years to live and therefore you can’t afford to waste time. So make up your mind: “In the *yeshiva* I will talk only in *divrei Torah*.” In the *beis medrash* don’t talk about anything else. The *beis medrash* should be only a place of learning.

Number three: Make sure to get along with your *chavrusa*. The *mishna* in *Avos* (1:6) says: קנה לך חבר והוי דן את כל האדם לכף זכות – *Acquire for yourself a friend, and judge everyone favorably*. You can’t keep a *chaver* if you’re not *dan l’kaf zchus*. Many people break off from the *chaveirim* because of some *middos*. So always give him the benefit of the doubt, and try as much as possible to get along with your *chavrusa*. It’s very important to get along with your *chavrusa*. And even though he may not be such a great help in Torah but it’s a great help in your *middos*. Sometimes it helps you in both. Getting along with people – also with your wife – is a very big *shleimus*; it’s a very great perfection of character and a very great achievement.

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