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Year 5 | Issue 25

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פרשת כי תשא

WITH

R' AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"l

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

Speaking Up

Contents:

Part I. Speaking Up From Love - 3

Part II. Always Speaking Up - 8

Part III. We Speak Up - 13

Part I. Speaking Up From Love

The Terrible Event

In this week's *sedrah* the Torah tells us that when Moshe Rabeinu came down from Har Sinai with the stone tablets he had received from Hakodosh Boruch Hu, he saw that in the interim a very terrible event had taken place – some of the people had fashioned a golden calf and they were celebrating, dancing around that image.

Now, these people didn't *worship* the golden calf. That's only kindergarten talk. It's time to let go of those immature ideas of your youth. They were worshipping Hashem! And that's what they themselves said. When they made the golden calf, they said (Ki Sisa 32:4), "This is your G-d who took you out of Egypt." Now, they knew a calf didn't take them out of Egypt. They knew it was Hashem that took them out of Egypt.

But now they became frantic because their redeemer was late. He had promised to come down in forty days and he didn't come down, so they thought he had perished on the mountain. They were frantic! They were afraid that Moshe was lost, that he would never come down again. And so they decided that they needed some form of a tangible image on which Hakodosh Boruch Hu's Shechina should rest – something in place of Moshe Rabeinu.

The Response

Now, although they meant well, they did it in a way that was illegal. Even though the image was made in honor of Hashem, but the Torah says, "You shouldn't make any images of Me." Hashem says "Nothing doing. No images at all!" And now they were dancing around a golden calf, which was a crime. And crimes against Hashem are the worst crimes. Someone had to do something!

What was the first thing Moshe Rabeinu did when he came down? וַיַּעֲמֵד מֹשֶׁה בַּשַּׁעַר הַמַּחֲנֶה – He stood at the entrance to the camp. He didn't go into the camp. He stood at the entrance all alone and called out – he made a big announcement: מִי לְהָשֵׁם אֵלַי – *Whoever is for Hashem should come to me* (*ibid.* 32:26). It means, "If anybody is left who is willing to stand up for Hashem, let him come to me. There's some business that has to be taken care of here."

Now, when Moshe Rabeinu made that proclamation, we are sure that there were many people who agreed with Moshe. "Who is for Hashem?" What kind of question is that?! Of course we're for Hashem! Who isn't?!"

Nobody Moved

And yet nobody moved; the Am Yisroel, the loyal men and women of that great nation didn't hurry to join Moshe Rabeinu. Nobody reacted because it's not always easy to take a stand. Once you go with Moshe Rabeinu, who knows what you'll have to do? Moshe wasn't inviting them to a *melaveh malka* or a *chamisha asar b'shvat* party. This was something else. You might have to kill. It'll be quite uncomfortable.

And so the people were stolid. They understood that there was trouble here but they were calm; they weren't excited. They said it with self control, they said "We'll see what's going to happen here. We don't want to get embroiled in a fight. After all, some of these people are newcomers to Judaism and therefore we can't be so strict on them." And so nobody moved.

Thousands Sentenced

But there was one group that did move. וַיֵּאָסְפוּ אֵלָיו כָּל בְּנֵי לֵוִי – All the *bnei Levi* hurried to Moshe Rabeinu's side. They all came to him; they rallied to the cry of Moshe Rabeinu and they gathered around him. "Here we are," they said.

And Moshe said, שִׁימוּ אִישׁ חֶרְבוֹ עַל יָרְכוֹ – Let each one of you put his sword by his side. Gird your sword on your loins, and go through the camp and arrest everyone who has some complicity with the calf. Walk around the people, discover who are the sinners, and we're going to have to execute everyone who worshiped the golden calf.

And that's what happened. They made courts immediately and sentenced people and executed them. Three thousand were executed at that time.

Judging Brothers

Now that was some job. The Levi'im, you have to know, had relatives in the camp. There were no Levi'im who participated in making the *eigel*, but they had kin, stepfathers and stepsons and so on, half brothers. Among them were the closest relatives of the Levi'im by intermarriage from other *shevatim*. This was before the *shevatim* settled in Eretz Canaan in separate areas. They all lived in one camp so they mingled – there was some intermarriage between the *shevatim*.

And so when the time came to judge people, here was a man who had to judge his widowed mother's husband, his stepfather. He had to judge his half brother, his good friend. But when Moshe Rabeinu told them that they have to act in honor of Hashem they went forth and they fulfilled the word of Hashem. They refused to recognize any relatives and they were the ones who executed the worshippers of the golden calf. הָאָמַר – And he said to his relatives, לֹא רְאִיתִיו – "I don't see you." (Devarim 33:9). Levi refused to recognize his relatives. They didn't care. Relatives, not relatives – anybody who is guilty of the *eigel*, they put him to death. The Bnei Levi had no pity – they had pity of course but what *won't* you do for Hashem.

Out of Love

Now, we have to know that this is the reason that the *shevet* Levi attained greatness with Hashem. בָּעֵת הַהוּא הִבְדִּיל הַשֵּׁם אֶת שֵׁבֶט הַלֵּוִי – At that time, Hashem set apart the *shevet haLevi* (Devarim 10:8). At what time? At the time that they stood up for Him!

"Oooh," said Hakodosh Boruch Hu, "Such a *shevet*, a *shevet* who puts Me first, I'm going to put them first. Just because the children of Levi were

zealous in My honor – they loved Hakodosh Boruch Hu so much that they came to help Moshe Rabbeinu – then **וְהָיָה לִי הַלְוִיִּם**, the Levi'im will be mine (Bamidbar 8:14). Because that's how Hashem deals with those who truly love Him.

Of course, it has to come from that – a love of Hashem. Sometimes, people are *kana'im* not because they love Hashem; it's for their personal motivations. But the true secret of *kana'im* – a genuine *kanai* is somebody who loves Hashem so much that he cannot remain quiet when he sees something is being done against Hashem's will. He can't stand people doing what's wrong *because the One he loves most doesn't want it*.

Memories of Three Gedolim

That's what the Mesillas Yescharim says. When the Mesillas Yescharim deals with the subject of *ahavas Hashem*, he declares that one of the main branches of loving Hashem is *kinah*. *Kinah* means you love Hashem. Speaking up, defending the honor of Hashem and opposing the enemies of the Torah is an expression of *Ahavas Hashem*.

Don't tell me that the *gedolim* don't speak up. I'm not a *gadol* but I can tell you that I saw real *gedolim* and they spoke up. Reb Aharon Kotler z"l gained a number of enemies because he was outspoken. The old Satmerer Rebbe gained enemies also because he was outspoken. There was a writer, a *frum shomer Shabbos* writer who once characterized the Satmer Rebbe in the story, "The Rebbe and the Satan" – a whole story about how the Rebbe made a *bris* with the Satan to attack Jews.

Even Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky – he was a very sweet man – but he had teeth! I was present once at a certain gathering and Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky spoke up against Bar Ilan University. Bar Ilan is a rotten place, a terrible place, and if it would close down, the world would be much better without it. And there were people present there who were big supporters of it and one man had the *chutzpah* to speak up and contradict Rav Yaakov, but he wasn't afraid. He spoke up. He felt it was an important issue and he spoke up.

The Truth about Hollywood

If you see *chachomim* that never say anything then they're not *chachomim*. They look like *chachomim*. Sometimes they have positions where you think they're *chachomim* but not necessarily are they the real thing. Here's a Rosh Yeshiva. He's worried that if he opens his mouth he's going to lose all of his contributors. Suppose he would come out strongly against those who watch television. Let's say he would say the truth –

“you’re all fools, stupid *shotim* who are giving up your *chelek* in Olam Habo” – he knows that’s the truth. But every one of his contributors is a slave to the television! And if he’ll say the truth so he’s worried he’ll have to close the yeshiva. I’m sure he says it to his *talmidim* – they speak about it in the Yeshiva – but in public, sometimes they’re too weak-kneed.

Like me. Do I really speak up against television like I should? I say it but the truth is that I’m not saying it in the way I should be saying it. I know that people have it in their homes. People are putting up a good front – that’s all that they’re doing. Some of them even grow beards, they put on black hats. But I know what’s doing in the homes. There’s a *ruach hatumah* in the homes. And so, if I was real, if I really loved Hashem, I would speak up. I’d blunt your teeth.

That’s what our *parsha* is teaching us – if you want to be chosen by Hashem you have to have a big mouth. You have to speak up. If you’re a nice quiet Jew that’s good – it’s important to be quiet – but most people are quiet at the wrong times. If your wife says something to you that you don’t like, that’s the time to keep quiet, that’s an excellent opportunity to keep your mouth closed. But when it comes to protesting against wickedness every person is *mechuyav* to speak up if he can. And who can’t? You must speak up!

The Fringe Group

Now, I understand that in the modern world this type of attitude is decried – although the liberals themselves are belittling the conservatives all the time, it’s considered wrong today to criticize the wicked. However we are different from the world. We follow the Torah and the Torah says **עַם אֲהַבְי הַשֵּׁם שִׂנְאוּ רָע** - *people who love Hashem, hate evil* (Tehillim 97:10).

And that’s what we need today. We need more indignation at wickedness, at crime, at immorality. Not to sit quiet and let it continue. You have to get up and do things. And even though you’re not popular – people don’t like those who make a fuss – but Hakodosh Boruch Hu *does* like you. I say “like” – He *loves* the *kana'im*, the true *kana'im* who love Hashem.

We have to know, the whole world stands on the merit of a little group of *frum* Jews in Yerushalayim, they are insulted by everybody. They get nothing for their services; they are jailed for protesting against *chilul* Shabbos, they are beaten by the police for tearing down immoral posters. Whatever they do for the glory of Hashem doesn’t pay them in this world, so it seems. And yet they persist. And they get no *kavod* either. The Jewish

newspapers, the religious press speaks against them. The frum Jews speak against them. Even rabbis speak against them. All of a sudden people remember about speaking up! These people are the real heroes of our nation, popular or not, they speak up because it's their responsibility.

Part II. Always Speaking Up

The Cow on Shabbos

There's a Gemara in Mesichta Shabbos (54b). The *mishnah* there tells us that “פָּרְתוֹ שָׁל רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן עֲזַרְיָה הֵיטָהּ יוֹצֵאָה בְּרִצּוֹעָה שְׁבִין קַרְנֶיהָ – Rabi Elazar ben Azaryah permitted his cow to go out on Shabbos with a ribbon between her horns.”

The *din* is on Shabbos; anything that's not required for the purpose of guarding a *beheimah* is considered as an unnecessary thing and is a burden. It's carrying. And therefore just as we must abstain from carrying on Shabbos, so we should see that our animals don't carry on Shabbos. It's a *lav*, וּבְהֶמְתָּךְ... וְלֹא תַעֲשֶׂה כָּל מְלָאכָה אֲתָהּ, *You and your animal shall not do any work.* And here it states that Rabi Elazar ben Azaryah, “permitted his cow to go out on Shabbos with a ribbon between her horns.”

Blaming The Millionaire

So the Gemara asks: that's a surprising thing to say. What does that mean “his cow”, “Did he have only one cow?” He was a millionaire. We know that every year he used to give twelve thousand heads of cattle as his *ma'aser beheimah*! That's just a tenth of what was born to him every year. He gave twelve thousand every year just for his tithe, a tenth of what was born to him. Do the math. So what are you telling me “his cow” went out on Shabbos with a ribbon between its horns?

And the Gemara answers: you're right. “It wasn't his cow, *shel shecheinto haysah* - it was actually the property of a female neighbor of his.” Now, she didn't live next door. Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya had a big estate, many acres of land. Somewhere down the road there was a widow's cottage and she owned one cow; and on Shabbos her cow went forth with a ribbon between its horns.

And so the Gemara asks, “Why is he blamed that ‘his’ cow went out on Shabbos? It wasn't his cow after all?”

And the answer the Gemara gives is our biggest worry! מִתּוֹךְ שְׁלֹא מָחָה, *because he didn't protest against that, it's called on his*

name. You hear that? He should have protested but he didn't, and now, because of that, all the Jews who have learned Mesichta Shabbos subsequently are saying that *mishnah*, "Rabi Elazar ben Azaryah's cow went out on Shabbos..."

A Stain Forever

So here is a great man, a person who accomplished very much in his life. And after his lifetime of *ma'asim tovim*, a lifetime of being *mezakeh es horabim*, of teaching Torah and doing all kinds of good deeds, he goes to the next world and suddenly they're going to slam him with an accusation: "Your cow went out on Shabbos!"

That's what the *mishnah* says. And you should know; each time that a boy sits down in the *yeshivah* and says these words or each time a Jew sits down to say *mishnayos*, it pierces him like a needle. It hurts him. He knows what's going on. He knows that it's a stain on his record forever — and it's because he didn't intervene. He didn't walk down the road and knock on this widow's door and speak up.

Dealing with The Romans

Now why didn't he intervene? He had bigger things to worry about. He was a leader of the nation. He had to worry about the Am Yisrael — especially in that disturbed time. It was after the *churban Beis Hamikdash* and so many Jews had been carried off into captivity, into slavery or worse than slavery, and Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya was very busy redeeming Jews from the Roman prisons. He was saving Jews from the arenas where gladiators would cut them down or where lions would devour them. All the *chachmei Yisroel* in that time were busy with *pidyon shevuyim*, especially the rich ones.

And therefore this man who was negotiating with the Roman government and was leading the Jewish people, so he should think that down the road somewhere there's a widow's cottage and from this humble cottage there emerges a cow on Shabbos with a ribbon between her horns and it's his business to butt in and to put an end to it?

But that's what we're learning now. If you have any authority to influence others to do what's right, then your failure to take action makes it considered as if you yourself did that thing.

The Disciple Speaks Up

And even if you think you have no authority, you're not relieved of your duty. The Gemara (Shabbos 55a) tells a story: A woman came before

Shmuel, *ka tzavchah kamei*, and she was crying out, she was shouting. She was crying for justice and she was demanding that Shmuel should take action on her behalf. *Velo hava mashgach bah*, and yet Shmuel did not look at her.

Shmuel had not had his first encounter today with her. She had come a lot of times and he saw he couldn't do anything for her so this time he didn't answer. Sometimes that's the best way to deal with a woman. Once you get involved with words, you'll be the loser because she's more practiced in the art of talking. She has rehearsed more and she is able to answer you with a torrent of words. So Shmuel saw there was no purpose in arguing with her so he didn't look at her. If he didn't look at her, she'd take that as a signal and she'd let go.

At that time Shmuel's disciple, Rav Yehuda, spoke up. Now remember who is going to talk. Rav Yehuda was afraid of his *rebbe* no end. He feared his *rebbe* so much that his natural impulses couldn't exert themselves in the presence of his *rebbe*. He was like paralyzed with awe for his *rebbe* (Niddah 13a). This disciple was so full of awe, so full of respect for his *rebbe* that he's cited as an example of a man who fears his teacher.

But he spoke up. Rav Yehuda spoke up. When he thought it was necessary to speak he found courage and he spoke up. He forced himself to speak and he said, "Doesn't the Rebbi hold the following *possuk*, *otem azno miza'akas dal*, if a man shuts his ears to the outcry of the poor man, *gam hu yikra velo yeianeh*, someday he's going to call out and won't be answered?"

A Topsy-Turvy World

Those are sharp words to say to a *rebbe*. It's very sharp words for any *talmid* who admires and worships his *rebbe* but for Rav Yehudah it was unthinkable. We feel faint when we read those words of Rav Yehuda. But he did it. He got up enough courage and he said this *possuk* to his *rebbe*. "But Rebbi", he says, "what about the *possuk* if you shut your eyes to the outcry of the poor man then someday you're going to cry out and you won't be answered"?

Now in the Halochos Gedolos, in the *divrei hagaonim* there's a tradition, a very queer addendum to this story. We have an ancient tradition from the *geonim* that is terrible to relate. A certain sage saw in his vision about the next world, he saw Rav Yehuda, the disciple sitting on a throne, on a great chair of a teacher, and seated on the ground before him was his teacher Shmuel.

Now, in this world if you would have asked Rav Yehudah even to walk beside his *rebbe*, he would have considered it sacrilege. He looked up to his *rebbe* like a man fears Hashem, like it says in the Gemara *es Hashem Elokecha tira lerabos talmidei chachamim. Yehi morah rabcha kemorah shamayim*. He feared his *rebbe* like one fears Heaven. We know the statement but he *fulfilled* that statement. And yet in the next world he is sitting on the throne and his *rebbe* is sitting at his feet and listening to his disciple's teachings. And it's not once. That's the permanent situation in the world to come.

Now this tradition has a footnote, and the tradition adds it's because of this incident here in Mesichta Shabbos. Rav Yehudah brought this matter to his *rebbe*'s attention; "look this woman is crying out and you're not answering her."

A Divine Argument

Now, the truth is Shmuel was able to answer. If you look there you'll see he had what to say. Shmuel defended himself. He said, "It's not my fault. The authority belongs to Mar Ukva. Mar Ukva is the *av beis din*. Mar Ukva was of the house of the *nasi*, an aristocrat with a lot of authority. So let her go to him. What does she want of me? He has the power to do things." So Shmuel defended himself.

But in the next world Shmuel couldn't say that. In this world you can talk that way but there it wasn't good enough. Why wasn't it good enough? Because Hakadosh Baruch Hu said to Shmuel "You're right. Somebody else had more authority. But why didn't you speak up and tell them? Why didn't you bring it to their attention?"

So what do you think Shmuel stood like a dummy? He answered back. "Why should they listen to me? Even if I would have told him, he wouldn't have listened."

So Hakadosh Baruch Hu said to Shmuel "I know. I know that if you would have spoken to him he might not have listened. Maybe he wouldn't have listened at all. But did you know it? Did you know he wouldn't listen? Why didn't you try it even out of doubt?"

No Excuses

And that's why Shmuel was demoted in the world to come. It's very hard to say these words because to us Shmuel is sacred. Shmuel is one of the great teachers through whose mouth a great part of the Torah has come down to us. Anyone who learned even a little bit of Gemara knows that it's constantly *Amar Shmuel, Amar Rav Yehuda Amar Shmuel*; all the

time. Shmuel's words are everywhere in Shas. *Hilchasa keShmuel bedina* – we *pasken* like Shmuel in *dinei mamos*. Shmuel, he's one of the pillars of our tradition.

And yet, Shmuel wasn't spared in the world to come. And it's because of this great responsibility of speaking up when he was supposed to speak up.

We're learning now that excuses won't mean so much. In this world you can finagle your way with excuses but it's not going to work in the real world. That's what the Gemara there in Shabbos says again and again, one story after another.

We don't have the time for all of them, but I can't resist to tell you one more.

You Never Know...

Rabbi Zeira once said to Rabi Siman, "Why don't you rebuke these people of the house of the *reish galusa*?" So he answered *lo mekabli minei*, they won't accept from me. They won't obey me. There's no use talking to them. They won't listen to me.

So Rabi Zeira said "That's no answer. Even though they won't obey you, it's your job to criticize them." You have to tell them off even if they won't listen to you. It's your job.

You hear that? Even though they're not going to listen to you, you have to tell them off and tell them they're wrong. And the Gemara says "How do you know it wouldn't have helped?" You think you know. Maybe this time it *would* have helped. Maybe you could have tried again. Maybe a different approach – maybe stronger, maybe more delicately, with more finesse and cunning. But how do you know it's so?

Caught In the Trap

And therefore of all the troubles in the world, of all the worries in the world, this is going to be our main worry. Of all the worries that will occur to us, it's this worry that's the biggest of all, the worry "why didn't we speak up?". Because the Gemara says, *kol mi shebeyadav limchos ve'eino mocheh*, – if a man is able to speak up, to protest and he doesn't, *hu nitfas beeso avon* – he is caught in the trap of that sin.

That's a tremendous worry! Maybe we are responsible for all the people who are doing sins. Of course we'd like to say, "Well, it's no use talking to them because they wouldn't listen anyhow." But those excuses

won't stand up in the next world. And therefore we must speak up. We must speak up for what's right.

Part III. We Speak Up

The Traditional Observance Organization

Now, this subject is a part of *avodas Hashem* that is too often ignored. And it's hard to blame people because it's uncomfortable, it's difficult sometimes. It's a very delicate question. Are you going to constantly rebuke your fellow man? Even though you'll be hated or ridiculed by him? In most cases I'm afraid if you stopped a Jew on the street on Shabbos and told him "please shop some other day" he would take offense, he would take umbrage and he might even insult you.

And yet there are so many ways that we could rebuke people without being insulted and not insulting them. I'll give you an example. To print up circulars, flyleaves, saying, "Don't shop on Shabbos" and hand them out on Kings Highway every Wednesday. Every week, with some positive words about keeping Shabbos. Why not? Shabbos is fun! They should enjoy the Shabbos with their family instead of spending money.

We did that in East Flatbush. Before we moved here, we used to do that. Since we came here I've been so busy that we let go of that. But we did that. In the tens of thousands we distributed our "Don't Shop on Shabbos" circulars, "Don't Travel on Shabbos" papers. We called it our Traditional Observance Organization. We had big propaganda coming out of our little shul. Why can't Jews do that? Where is the Jewish nation? How much does it cost? Today you can Xerox, photo offset. Why shouldn't we do it?

Get Involved!

If you would hand out leaflets, "Send your child to a yeshivah instead of public school," nobody is going to haul off and hit you. So why can't you do that? It's not against the law. If he says, "Mind your own business mister," so what's the worst thing that can happen? The truth is, if you do it with finesse, with intelligence, they won't even insult you. Because today they know already that public schools are dens of immorality. At best, a public school graduate will be a bum, an ingrate with no respect for his parents. At worst – I don't want to say what. On all sides we see the ruination of the hopes of parents who send their children to government schools. So all they need is a push, a little protest.

The truth is that the Orthodox Jews should help a lot more than they're doing; the Jewish Orthodox should identify with the American scene and they should all join in the fight against immorality. It's a pity that the Orthodox *tzibbur* is like dead lumber and doesn't do it. And the fact that we don't do anything puts the blame on us. You can't blame the irreligious Jews; they don't care a thing. The *freiye*h Jews – they don't know and they don't care. But we are organized. We are under one banner of Torah, so why shouldn't we speak up?!

Everybody here should feel it's their duty that you must take action when public issues are concerned. You might be a yeshivah man or a *chossid* or an old woman. It makes no difference.

Fighting The Filth

There's a petition that will be circulated soon to close down the filthy movie theaters in this neighborhood. If you have even a little bit of love for Hakodosh Boruch Hu in your heart, you'll get involved – you have to do *something* to get these filthy theaters closed down.

You'll say it's a free country, they can do what they want. Well, it's a free country for us too – we're allowed to protest. Everyone should make sure to sign the public letter against the filthy movie theaters. Ask your friends, your neighbors. We have one on the *bimah* right here. After the lecture be sure to come up and sign it. Sign it legibly and put your address and your phone number on it.

There's a tremendous amount of work to be done to try and stop the torrent of wickedness. If America won't stop this headlong flight into perversion, who knows what's going to happen. We have to do our part to help the Italians and the Irish win out against the Jewish liberals. Jewish liberals are doing the best to ruin America and we have to stand up to them.

Five Thousand Letters

And so, it's up to us to speak up and write letters; we must write to politicians and protest constantly. If people would just write letters to our assemblyman, to city councilmen, to state senators, if we would write letters to congressmen, letters to U.S. senators on every issue; against crime, against everything else, you'd be amazed how big an effect our letters will have.

Imagine if you would write one letter a week. It costs 20 cents – one letter a week. Fifty letters a year and let's say there are a hundred people here, maybe more. Do you know how many letters that is every year?! A

hundred letters every week! It's the equivalent of a hundred thousand people who don't do anything. You'd have a big effect on the policies of the city, the policies of the state.

Sometimes you can even start a little chain letter. Look in the telephone book. Look for an Italian name. A Jewish name probably is a liberal and he'll throw it in the garbage can. Look for an Italian name. Write him a letter and say "Look, Mr. Mazotti it's your duty to do like I'm doing. We have to stand up." Write a letter to your neighbors and get them to protest against immorality in the schools or on the billboards.

You say, "I'm a yeshivah man." So what about it? A yeshivah man doesn't take time off to look in the paper? A yeshivah man wastes plenty of time *bein hasedarim*. You're afraid you're going to be disturbing the learning? There's plenty of time left to learn.

Rav Miller's Secret

I want to tell you a secret. I spend a lot of money every week sending letters. I personally spend a lot of money every week on stamps. And time! I can't afford the time – I'm very busy. But I spend a lot of time sending letters. Constantly I send letters out.

Now, I understand that people who are lazy and cynical say it doesn't have any effect. But actually it's just a defeatist attitude, an excuse not to do anything, to remain frozen in your ways. And it's not true. Sometimes when we send a petition from here, from the shul, a petition with thirty names, and the recipient, an assemblyman or a congressman, sends thirty letters back to them. If he can read the handwriting, he sends thirty letters to them at their homes. So you see it makes an effect. If everybody would send one letter a week, you'd be amazed at the effect it has.

We should never say it's no use because when we show Hakodosh Boruch Hu that we're interested, that there are still some of us left who are willing to respond to the call of **מִי לַהֲשִׁיב אָלַי**, then Hakadosh Baruch Hu will be interested. Hakadosh Baruch Hu will say, "If that's the case, if you have a *kavanah lesheim shomayim*, then I'll have to help you!"

Florida Governor for President

What about crime? What are we doing to fight crime? Here they shot a Jew, a father of eight children; they killed him. You're keeping quiet?! What about an outcry demanding to restore capital punishment? Everybody should be fighting for capital punishment. There should be a big fuss about it.

Here you have a judge who releases a murderer; he lets him out of jail for no good reason. How can we stand for that?! I'm not saying to do anything against the law – *chas veshalom* I should preach such a thing, but suppose people would call up these judges all hours of the night for years and years until he drops dead of heart failure. The judges have to be afraid of our protests! Why do they let go of the criminals?

I say everybody here ought to write a letter congratulating the Governor of Florida for carrying out the death sentence. Everybody! Write letters to the Governor in Florida saying, "We're with you. We wish you were president." That's what you should do.

Write letters to the state senators, to legislators that you want capital punishment restored, by all means. Do it once and next week write again and write a few times. That's the least you can do.

Don't Trust The Science

And why don't we speak up against evolution in the public schools? I wrote a letter to the State Department of Education and they wrote me a long letter back. They saw it was dangerous. Here's a rabbi already who is demanding that evolution shouldn't be a required subject in the Regents. They wrote me a long letter explaining it's a consensus of educated opinions. It's a consensus and therefore a scientific fact and so on and so forth. They're telling me. I know all about their educated opinions. Let them come listen to me. I'll tell them about evolution.

Where are the Jewish professionals? If you're a Jewish professional, you have a title; a Jewish physician or a Jewish professor, you surely should write letters again and again. Every week Orthodox doctors should get together. What's the Association of Jewish Scientists doing? Holding banquets? Holding conventions? Let them get together and batter away at the gates of evolution.

You have to beware of the yeshivah high school. Yeshivah high school is a dangerous place. Teachers are irresponsible. In almost all the *mesivta* high schools the teachers who teach the secular subjects are irresponsible and they're ruining the *talmidim* with immorality and with *minus*, with evolution and other things. I know this subject well. Boys have complained to me again and again. I've received letters from boys.

We Must Get Busy

Now, you people here have to know that I'm talking practical things here – I'm not saying *drashos*. We have to walk out of this place with an understanding that we have a new job, a new obligation that we have to

get busy with. We have to stand up against evil – in the world, in America, in New York and in our homes. That's the great obligation of **מִי לַהֲשֵׁם אֵלַי**.

And it's more than an obligation – it's a perfection of character that makes you beloved to Hakodosh Boruch Hu forever. That's what we learn from the Levi'im. Because **בְּעֵת הַהוּא הִבְדִּיל הַשֵּׁם אֶת שִׁבְט הַלְוִי** – *At that time when they stood up for Hashem, they were separated.* Hashem said, **וְהָיוּ לִי הַלְוִיִּם** – *The Levi'im belong to Me.* And the Gemara says it means they belong to Him in the next world too.

The Chovos Halevavos says that in the world to come the Levi'im are specially privileged because anybody who stands up for Hashem – no matter what you accomplish – that person is beloved by Him. Just because of this quality of devotion to Hashem, when a person takes up for the honor of Hakodosh Boruch Hu, so He says, "If that's the case, if you'll go out of your way to stand up for Me then you're Mine forever." These are the people who have chosen a way in life that leads them to eternal greatness in Olam Habo.

Have A Wonderful Shabbos

LET'S GET PRACTICAL

Speaking Up Every Day

Speaking up for Hashem is an integral facet of Loving Him. As we witness the moral decay of the society we live in, we cannot be silent. This week I will *bli neder* spend five minutes each day writing letters to politicians and others, to try to increase morality and Avodas Hashem in the world.

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

שאל אביך ויגדך זקניך ויאמרו לך

Q:

Why did Hashem make United States such a rich country?

A:

Why did Hashem give prosperity to America? Now that's a question you'll need Hashem to answer, but I'll take my little one cent brain and I'll say a *svarah*. I'll say that it was because America allowed the Am Yisroel to come here and gave them opportunities to live with full rights. Other countries didn't do that all the way back; but America, right from the beginning, gave us full rights.

It's not America's fault that we misused those rights. It's not America's fault that we came and forced our way into gentile communities where we didn't belong – that's not the fault of the gentiles. But Hakodosh Boruch Hu gave America a certain reward because of its kindness to the Am Yisroel.

In addition, America was once a decent country. At first, America was a very moral country. You still see on the coins, "In G-d We Trust." I don't know how long it's going to last. The Supreme Court one of these days will strike it down. Imagine such a thing – a country that writes on its coins, "In G-d We Trust" They deserve a reward just for that! So America at one time deserved all this prosperity. What's going to happen in the future, I cannot foretell.

Tape # 830 (June 1991)

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