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L'ZECHER NISHMAS JOSEPH RAPHAEL 'JOJO' MARKOVITZ Z"L

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פרשת יתרו

WITH

R' AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"l

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

Together at Sinai

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Part I. Truth in Numbers

Emunah and George Washington

I once heard a certain Rosh Yeshiva speaking to a group of boys in Manhattan. He had come from Europe and he was talking to American boys. And I was there; I was a young man still and I was standing there and listening.

After he finished speaking, there was a discussion and the boys were asking questions, all types of questions about *emunah* and Torah ideology. And I remember how one American boy asked him, "Can we prove what happened in the days of old? What's the proof that there was a Maamad Har Sinai?"

So the Rosh Yeshiva asked him, "Do you believe in George Washington?"

The boy said, "Yes."

"Did you see him?" That's what the Rosh Yeshiva asked him.

“No, I never saw him.”

“Did you see anybody who saw him?”

“No.”

George in Africa and China

He never saw George Washington and he never even saw someone who did see him. The truth is that not many people saw him anyhow. How many people saw George Washington when he was alive? Maybe 10,000 people at most. A million people surely didn't see him. When George Washington was alive, nobody in Poland knew about him. Nobody in Africa knew about him.

Even today, if you go to Africa, they never heard of him! In Poland, they don't know about George Washington. In America they talk about him a little bit, but in other countries who knows about George Washington? The people of China don't have any tradition about George Washington. The Japanese never heard about George Washington. The Hindus never heard of George Washington.

When you're asked however, “How many people were present at Har Sinai?” so the answer is at least two million. Six hundred thousand men between the ages of twenty and sixty. And there were younger ones and older ones. And women too. At least a million women! It means that millions of our grandparents, our *elter zeides* and *bubbes*, stood together at the foot of the mountain and they heard Hashem's Voice: אָנֹכִי ה'שֵׁם אֱלֹהֶיךָ – “I am Hashem your G-d” (Yisro 20:2). So if you believe in George Washington, surely you believe in Maamad Har Sinai.

Muslims and Christians Agree

It wasn't an obscure event, an unknown incident. Like it says, לֹא מְרֵאשׁ בְּסֵתֶר דְּבַרְתִּי – *From the beginning I did not speak to you in secret* (Yeshayahu 48:16). The entire Jewish nation witnessed the giving of the Torah. It wasn't done in secret.

And it's not only us who say that. All Mohammedans believe that Hashem gave the Torah at Har Sinai. There's no question about it. It states openly in the Koran. The Christians too. All the Christians believe that Hashem gave the Torah to the Jewish nation. It's in the New Testament openly; they all believe in it. So the whole civilized world believes that the Torah was given to us. The whole civilized world admits that we were millions standing together.

This is an important point because it's *unequaled* in the claims of all the nations. The only case in history that such a claim is made is by the

Jewish nation. And not only a claim is made but it's stated again and again, in the most open and bold words; פְּנִים בְּפָנִים דְּבַר ה' אֵלֶיךָ עַמְּךָ, *face to face did the Almighty speak to your entire nation* (Devorim 5:4). The story is told at length, in detail, twice in the Torah.

Let another nation come forth and tell us a story that millions of their people heard their deity talking to them. There is no such thing in all of history because anyone who wants to say a falsehood is careful to cover up. That's a very important principle here. Nobody in the world, no nation had ever claimed that their entire nation has heard the voice of their deity speaking to them. Nobody ever said that. At least, let them *claim* that. No, that's too much for them to claim, because people will say, "You know it's not so. You can't pull the wool over our eyes."

Fake News!

What do the other religions claim? Not much. They make big promises, and they tell about incidents, but never will you find a statement by them that Hakadosh Baruch Hu appeared to the entire nation and spoke to them. Because even the biggest falsifier has limits to what he can claim.

Mohammed never claimed that a deity appeared to a multitude of Arabs. At best, some miracles are claimed. But even according to his statement, they were not performed in the presence of a great multitude. He claims he came out of his tent where Allah spoke to him privately. Who was there to testify to that? Not one person! And therefore the Rambam calls him 'the *meshuge* who came out of the desert'. He came out of his tent and he said, "This and this was told to me." So, go believe him.

It's nothing; all garbage. Only that when an empty claim is backed up by a sword – a sword that the Muslim missionary is willing to use – so it has an effect. Mohammed marched with his army into a town and he announced, "Either you believe that they spoke to me from heaven or with the fire and the sword I am going to destroy you." Anyone who went to sleep early that night discovered in the morning when he got up that he was now a Mohammedan. They saw proclamations everywhere on the walls that they're Mohammedans now. That's how he spread his doctrines, with his sharpened sword.

More Fake News!

And Christianity? Same idea. Oso *ha'ish* or even his disciples never claimed that Hakadosh Boruch Hu spoke to him in the presence of a multitude. He was constantly faced by disbelievers but he never did any miracles for the multitudes.

Nobody critical was ever present for his miracles. The great Sages were not present when he did anything. He always waited until they went away. I have notes at home on the New Testament, I had permission from a great man to read it and I took notes with certain pertinent quotes. When they said, "Show us a sign," he said, "No! You're disbelievers!" But then in the next chapter when nobody was around except the ignorami then he showed signs.

He came out of the grave, they say. He had *techiyas hameisim*. You know who testifies? Two harlots were present. Two *zonos* testified that he came out of the grave. The 'best' type of *eidim*.

Missionizing The Kings

So how did the Christian faith spread in Europe? When the missionaries came to Europe, in the beginning, to proselytize for Christianity they didn't bother to talk to the masses - the masses were docile herds of people. The masses didn't have any voice. They went to the rulers. Missionaries came to the kings and converted them - the kings weren't always the sharpest tools in the tool shed - and the king said to the ignorant masses: "This is it. Accept it." The masses didn't know what to do, if the king told them, they accepted it.

Once the rulers for some reason were willing to cooperate, the rulers issued an edict and everybody, whether they wanted or not, was converted. There's no two ways about it. People didn't have anything to say, people didn't have anything to learn. They didn't come together to study the tenets of the church. There were groups of elite in the church itself that knew the laws of the church, but the general masses didn't know anything, they accepted everything. A king, a Roman king decided to become a Christian so he made a proclamation to all the dumb Romans and he said, "From now on, you're all Christian." Alright.

And that's why all Christianity is based on the principle of blind faith. Because if you'll ask questions there are no answers. So they preach the importance of blind faith. They call it "grace." People don't understand what it means. I'll explain to you. Grace means there's no such thing as repenting. There's no such thing as winning out by good deeds. In Christianity you could try your best to be a *tzaddik*. You could be the kindest person. You do the most charity and benevolence that the world can ever see, and it won't help you because you're born no good. It's a built-in gimmick to sell Christianity. You were born a lost soul, and the only way you can gain 'salvation', salvation means help, the only way you could be helped is if you'll sign up on the dotted line.

Open Enrollment At The Club

I told you this story once. Once a Roman came to him and asked him to pray for his sick child, so oso *ha'ish* said, "We do not cast our bread to the dogs," which means we don't pray for dogs. He didn't like you if you weren't from his disciples. Only when this person said, "But master, we believe in you," that was enough. "Oh," he said, "if that's the case, I confer upon you the kingdom of heaven." Right away! He didn't wait for any good deeds. As soon as you sign up, you belong to my club.

But you have to join up. If you don't then nothing will help you. You can be the most righteous man in the world, even *lehavdil* Avraham Avinu, but it won't help. The Christians say Avraham Avinu was in Gehenom, in H.E.L.L. all these centuries. He was waiting for this fellow, oso *ha'ish*, to come along. Oso *ha'ish* came along and he saved him from Gehenom.

Lehavdil, the Am Yisroel. We turn our back on man-made forgeries based on blind faith. Moshe Rabbeinu never once demanded of the people to believe in him. When Hakadosh Baruch Hu told him to go to the Jewish people and speak to them, he said, "They won't believe in me. They're not like that."

So Hakadosh Baruch Hu said, "They will. They're going to believe." And they finally did. You know when? When Hashem showed Himself to us! The Makkos and Kriyas Yam Suf and then finally the greatest event in the history of our nation, Maamad Har Sinai.

A Nation of Prophets

By us there was no need for swords or kings with ignorant subjects. Because when our nation heard the Voice of Hashem at Har Sinai, it was, according to our records, millions who heard that Voice! Millions! Millions claim that they were there! That's our history! Not, one person told one person and then they spread it, propaganda among the masses. At Har Sinai, *lehavdil elef havdalos*, there were at least two million people present.

So who told us about what happened? Millions of parents told it to millions of their children. And the children believe their parents and then the grandparents told them too, the same thing. וְהוֹדַעְתֶּם לְבָנֵיכֶם וּלְבָנֵי בָנֵיכֶם – *Let make known to your children and to your children's children, יום אֲשֶׁר עָמַדְתָּ לְפָנֵי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּהַר סִינַי* – *the day that you stood before Hashem in Chorev* (Devarim 4:9-10). And so these children heard it from their father and from their grandfathers – on both sides. So they believed them; it went into their blood and they told *their* children.

That's why we're still here! We might be the *מֵעַט מִכָּל הָעַמִּים*, *the smallest of all the nations* (*ibid.* 7:7), but our tradition is intact. Our ancestors were

present at Har Sinai and therefore we have a right to stand up and say what our forefathers told us that their forefathers saw. *Moshe emes v'soraso emes!* Hashem spoke to us and gave us the Torah! And He did it in front of millions!

Part II. Loyalty in Numbers

A Transformational Experience

Now, that great day, that great experience, did more than give us the right to claim that we are the bearers of truth in this world; that every other religion is man-made, while ours was received at Har Sinai. It's true that Maamad Har Sinai did that, but it did much more than that.

Listen to what Moshe Rabbeinu said in the name of Hashem about the purpose of that great day: **כִּי לְבַעֲבוֹר נְסוּת אֲתֻבְּמָם בְּאֵי תְּאֻלְקִים** – *I came and Spoke to you, the entire nation, in order to elevate you* (Yisro 20:17). **נְסוּת** means “elevate” from the word **נָשָׂא**, **נָסַ**, to lift up.

At Har Sinai we were lifted and we became elevated above all the nations. That's what Hashem said about Matan Torah. **וְהָיִיתֶם לִי סֻגְלָה מִכָּל הָעַמִּים** – “You, the whole nation, will be for Me a special treasure from all the nations” (ibid. 19:5). “I’m going to do something now,” said Hashem, “that’s going to change your nature. If you’ll stand at Har Sinai and say, ‘*Na’aseh v’nishma* - yes, Hashem, we accept You forever and ever,’ then I’m going to make you into an *Am Segulah*, an exceptional type of people.”

More Than Just a Title

Now, *Am Segulah* doesn't merely mean “I’m going to give you *semichah*; I’m going to give you a rabbinical certificate to hang on the wall and you’ll be honored just by the title.” No; it’s much more than that. *Segulah* means that your character will be entirely metamorphosed and you’ll become an entirely different type of people than you were before. **וְאַתֶּם תִּהְיוּ לִי מְמֻלְכֹת** **וְגוֹי קְדוֹשׁ** – *And you will be for Me a Kingdom of Kohanim and a Holy Nation* (ibid. 6).

What does it mean we became a new creation, a different type of people? Many things. I’m sure that our *neshamos* were transformed from hearing the Voice of Hashem. I’m sure that there was a certain *kedushah* that changed our nature and elevated us above all flesh. It was such an experience that we were transformed in ways I’ll never be able to explain because I myself don’t understand.

But I want to tell you now something we can understand, about a transformation that took place in our loyalty to Hashem. נסות אתכם, to elevate you, means that the great day of Maamad Har Sinai lifted us up in our loyalty. The spectacle of Matan Torah had such a powerful effect on us that it elevated us up to a loyalty from which we could never fall down.

A Permanent Effect

It's because of that great day that there will always be a *frum* and loyal Jewish nation. *כי לא תשכח מפי זרעו* (Devarim 31:21); *the Torah will never be forgotten in all generations*. You can take a walk today, in Boro Park, Flatbush, Williamsburg, in *frum* Jewish neighborhoods, and you'll see! People are studying the Torah like they did in Bavel, like they did in the great *yeshivos* in Eretz Yisroel; the same Torah we were given at Har Sinai. That's all a result of that day – at Maamad Har Sinai the *zera* Yisroel were lifted up in their loyalty forever.

Of course, individuals might go lost. If someone is looking to fall down, *chas v'shalom*, to climb down from the great heights of that day, then anything is possible – a person always has *bechira* and so there could always be backsliders, some weaklings who fall off. But because of Maamad Har Sinai the Am Hashem will always be around, no matter what. Hearing that sweet dreadful Voice of Hashem made us forever *maaminim bnei maaminim*. What was experienced at that time is without precedent and it made such an impression on us that we can't swerve from that loyalty forever.

That's what the Rambam says (Iggeres Teiman), a certain statement that I've mentioned to you other times. *שכל מי שנטה מדרך הרת הנתונה במעמד* – *Anybody who departs from the way of the Torah that was given to us at Sinai, שאינו מזרע האנשים ההם, he doesn't belong to the seed of those people who received the Torah.*

The Rambam is saying that Matan Torah had such a powerful effect on the Am Yisroel that it made them eternal in their loyalty. It was so powerful that it went into their genes and their children inherited that quality. And if anybody strayed away from the Torah, it's a sign that his ancestor did not stand at Har Sinai. Because that day, that *Maamad*, lifted us up forever. It's impossible to give up our loyalty now. We're the Am Hashem now and we're not interested in anything else.

Silencing The King

Why would we be interested? Here is a nation that heard the Voice of Hashem, millions of people standing together witnessing Matan Torah

with their own eyes. Do you want the Jewish people to exchange our Maamad Har Sinai for the empty, made up dreams of liars? It's so stupid.

That's what the Ramban said to the King of Spain. It's well-known, it's documented, the encounter that the Ramban had with the King of Spain. He was confronted by the king who wanted to force the Ramban to admit that Christianity was true. Now, the Ramban was caught in a tight place there, in the presence of a great public, and he had to answer. The king said, "You must accept Christianity!"

So the Ramban said: "I'm willing to accept. But under one condition. The Torah was given to us in the presence of an entire nation. Even you admit that. So if Hakadosh Baruch Hu will come once more and address our entire nation and tell us that He abolished our Torah, then I'm willing".

And the king didn't answer anything. There is nothing to answer. The Ramban won the debate. He had to leave the country though. That's how it was in those days. If you win the debate against the king, you have to leave the country.

We Agree With All Religions

So the loyal Jew leaves the country. The Jew will give up everything – his livelihood, his life, his country – because of that day we stood at Har Sinai. Look, our forefathers lived in the ghetto. They were mulcted, they were harried, they were spat on. They could have walked out of the ghetto and said, "Yes! We give in!" That's all the Christians wanted. "Give in, accept our religion." But who would be that foolish, that shortsighted?

Maamad Har Sinai means not only that we ignore all the man-made religions. Today it doesn't require too much *seichel* or too much loyalty to reject the other religions. It's so easy to see that they're nothing. Today there are two hundred and fifty six sects of Christians fighting each other, calling each other liars. And we believe all of them. And the Mohammedans and the Christians are fighting each other. They've had wars against each other. They slaughtered each other on the battlefield and each one called the other *shakranim*. And we agree with both of them. Both of them are frauds.

But today there are other blandishments that try to wean us away and weaken our loyalty. There will always be tests. New ideologies, new attractions. Socialism and evolution and humanism and liberalism. There's no end to how the *yetzer hora* and the nations are trying. Every generation, every day, new things that try to woo us away.

Gan Eden and Gehenom

The Rambam in his Igeres Teiman describes this – in that letter he quotes from Shir Hashirim (7:1) and he explains that Shlomo Hamelech is telling there how the other nations wish to woo the Jewish nation away from the Torah. He compares them to wicked men who are attempting to seduce a woman. That's how the comparison is made; the nations of the world are like seducers who come and try to persuade the Am Yisroel to forsake her true mate, Hakadosh Baruch Hu, and to come over to their forms of worship or to their ideologies.

And they say to her, **שׁוּבִי שׁוּבִי הַשׁוּלָמִית**, – “Turn back, turn back, you Shulamis”. Shulamis is a name, but here it intends the perfect nation, from the word *shleimah*. The gentiles say to the Am Yisroel, “Turn back you perfect nation,” It means: “Come and join us; be with us. We have it all”.

שׁוּבִי שׁוּבִי וְנִתְּנָה לְךָ – “We'll show it to you. Come with us; we foresee great things for you. You'll be in Gan Eden together with *oso ha'ish*.” Only they don't know but he's in Gehenom; that's where he is. You can tell that to a goy by the way, in case he starts up and begins missionizing with you.

Once I was passing by, and a gentile called me something nasty so I said, “Go to Gehenom.” I didn't say it like that; I said it in his language so he'd understand. So he said “You should go to heaven, to Yushke.” I told him that I meant the same thing. He should go to Gehenom and be with Yushke. And that's how it's going to be whether you tell him or not. All the nations promising you heaven will go join Yushke in Gehenom eventually. What a heaven they'll have.

Our Great Gathering

So the Shulamis answers to all those who want to seduce her: **מָה תִּתְּנֵנוּ** **בְּשׁוּלָמִית** – “What can you foresee for us? Can you foresee for us what we once saw already? Will you be able to give us **בְּמַחֲלַת הַמְּחֻקִּים**? Those are very important words here. **בְּמַחֲלַת הַמְּחֻקִּים**. Like the ring-dance of the camp. And the Rambam said that's Maamad Har Sinai. “Will you foresee anything like that for us,” we tell them, “like that great gathering we already had when we camped around Har Sinai?”

The nations look upon us and they want to wean us from Maamad Har Sinai, when we accepted the Torah – all their efforts are to cause us to forsake that commitment that we made to G-d at Har Sinai. But it's impossible because we already have the real thing. After Maamad Har Sinai, what else can there be to match that great day?

That's why the Rambam, in his letter, reminds the people in Teiman who were facing a *shmad*, he was encouraging them to always remember

that great day. He speaks to the people of Teiman and he urges them to work on one very important *ikar* of the Torah which is one of the biggest forms of encouragement, at all times. What is that? “You, my brothers, you should raise your children with the description of that great episode of Maamad Har Sinai. Speak about it in public. Speak about it in your homes with your families. Talk about that great episode because that is one of the most important of all subjects that the Jew has to keep in mind.”

Not only this week, when it comes up in the *sedrah*. Not only on Shavuos. “Always and forever teach it to your children **בְּרִי שְׂנֵיגְדוֹ עַל תְּלִמְדוֹ** *so that they should grow up with the thoughts of Maamad Har Sinai in their minds.*” Because that’s the source of our *emunah*, our loyalty.

Torah Is Flourishing

And that’s why long after the Rambam wrote his letter, Torah learning continued to flourish; and not less, no! Huge libraries of Torah *chiburim* were composed after the Rambam; there are great *kehillos* of *frum* Jews all over the world who still talk about Matan Torah.

And today, everywhere, young people are studying Torah. The Jewish nation is forging ahead in all the places where they live. *Frum* Jews everywhere are founding institutions. We have today hundreds and hundreds of *yeshivos ketanos* and *mesivtas*, even in America alone! Bais Yaakov girl schools, Bais Rochel schools; they’re everywhere. *Frum* children, *frum* families, everywhere.

So *baruch Hashem* we see today how the great event that took place three thousand years ago in the desert – the entire Am Yisroel together, millions of men, women and children hearing the *dvar Hashem* – will continue forever. Boruch Hashem! Our loyalty to that great event is forever and ever.

Part III. Strength in Numbers

Holiness Brings Holiness

Now we come to a new subject, one of the lessons that we gained from what happened at Har Sinai that many people, even *chashuvim*, don’t appreciate fully. It’s the subject of strength in numbers.

The Gemara (Brachos 39a) says that **כָּל בֵּי עֵשְׂרָה שְׂכִינְתָא שְׂרִיא**. It means that anytime ten kosher Jews get together – not for the purpose of hearing jokes, or for amusement and entertainment, but to *daven* or to learn Torah – so the Shechinah is with them. Of course one Jew sitting by himself is

also *kadosh* but when you come to a *beis haknesses* and there's a *minyan* or sometimes you make a private *minyan* in the house, you have to know that it's something special. You have to walk with respect now. The Shechinah is here.

Now the question is why should that be so? And the answer is because every Jew is a *kadosh*, and so when ten *kedoshim* come together more Shechinah rests on them. Now that's something to practice up. It's a *shleimus* of character to make that part of your mindset; to feel the Shechinah is where *frum* Jews come together.

Holiness in New York

That's why when I go to Boro Park, when I ride through the streets in a car and I see everywhere *frum* Jews, *frum* women, *frum* children, boys and girls, so I always make the remark, "The Shechinah is in Boro Park." Or the *frum* Jews of Williamsburg. I ride through Williamsburg and I see *frum* Jews on all sides. "*Boruch Hashem*," I say, "the Shechinah is *shoreh b'Yisroel!*" I'm not doing it merely to make a remark. It's an expression of *emunah* that the Shechinah comes where *frum* Jews come together.

And that's why Moshe Rabbeinu said, שׁוּבָה הַשֵּׁם רַבְבוֹת אֲלֵפֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל – *Hashem, come and rest Your Shechinah on the thousands of ten thousands* (Bamidbar 10:36). And the Gemara (Yevamos 64a) says that it means: the Shechinah rests on *rivevos*, two times ten thousand, and *alfei Yisroel*, two times a thousand – on 22,000 Jews.

That's already a different kind of Shechinah! Ten Jews, certainly it's a Shechinah. Eleven Jews, even better. But twenty two thousand Jews? Something clicks and a different kind of Shechinah comes down. There's that much more *kedushah* and so there's that much more Shechinah. Even though you don't see it, it's more real than the people there. A special *hashro'as haShechinah*, a special Presence of Hashem is there.

More Than Holiness

Now, the Ramchal in his sefer *Derech Hashem* tells us that this is what happened at Har Sinai. The Torah tells us that וַיַּחַן שָׁם יִשְׂרָאֵל נֶגֶד הָהָר – *And he, Yisroel, encamped there near the mountain* (Shemos 19:2). Who is "he"? So the Gemara says that "he" means they came together like one person, with one purpose, to become the Am Hashem. *Ooh wah!* When 600,000 Jews came together in one place, with one ideal, so Hakadosh Baruch Hu said: "Now, I can come down on Har Sinai. Because 600,000 Jews means that much more *kedushah!*" And therefore, וַיַּחַן שָׁם יִשְׂרָאֵל נֶגֶד הָהָר – *when the Am Yisroel all encamped in front of the mountain*, וַיֵּרֶד הַשֵּׁם עַל הַר סִינַי – *that's when Hashem came down to give us the Torah.*

Now, what is this idea of numbers? Why is it that more numbers means more *kedushah*? The answer is that numbers means strength – strength of conviction, of dedication and loyalty. When you're surrounded by other people of the same spirit that gives you a confidence that cannot be measured with words.

Even when ten Jews come together, that's already something. When ten *frum* Jews come to *daven*, to learn, to tell *sipurei tzaddikim*, any *avodas Hashem*, so each one of the ten sees the other nine and they become *mechuzak* in their convictions. The number, to a certain degree, adds enthusiasm and spiritual strength. And that's what brings the Shechinah down! Hakadosh Baruch Hu says, "If that's the case, if you have the spirit in you, if you're excited about Me, then I'll give you even more spirit." And the Shechinah rests on those ten Jews who were uplifted and strengthened now by each other.

Now what happens if it's even more Jews? Let's say 22,000 Jews come together for *avodas Hashem*. Ooh *wah*! That's already something else because each one of those 22,000 persons sees so many other people and each one is fortified; you become *oifgelebt*! 22,000 *frum* Jews all together! It's a tremendous encouragement, a tremendous *chizuk*; each one is so full of a fire because of the numbers – the power that numbers give.

Strength At the Stadium

You know, when the Agudas Yisroel made a *siyum*, twenty thousand Jews came. Twenty thousand Jews at a *Siyum Hashas*! Oh, it knocked the eyes out of the New York Times. So many Jews! It hurt them to no end. Very good! But that's not as important as what it did for the ones who were there. That's really what the New York Times should have been worried about! Because all of those Jews were strengthened! They became empowered much more than before. So much so that the Shechinah came down there.

When the Belzer made a *chasunah*, it was a tremendous *chasunah*, a royal convention – bigger than a royal convention. All *frum* Jews, all wearing *shtreimelach*, all dancing, singing *shirei kodesh*. Each one went away from that *chasunah* with a new *chizuk*, with a new kind of loyalty to Hakadosh Boruch Hu. Everybody became *frummer* and *frummer* as a result.

So now we understand that at the time of the Giving of the Torah, 600,000 Jews were necessary not only for *kedushah*. *Kedushah* is very good but there was something else that was very important. The multitude of Jews was required to create a spirit of enthusiasm that would enthuse

every individual person. The effect on each one was so powerful because everybody shouted *נְעֻשָׂה וְנִשְׁמָע* together. *אָמְרוּ בְּאֶחָד* – *They said it together*. Everybody made the same promise, the same *kabbalah*, with the same dedication and devotion.

The Most Impressive Effect

It was a tremendous experience because to see so many other Jews who were accepting the Torah made a tremendous impression on each one of them. You weren't alone. *אִישׁ אֶת רֵעֵהוּ יַעֲזֹרוּ* – *Each one helps his fellow man*, *וְלֵאחֲזוֹי לֵאמֹר הֲזֹק* – *and he says "Chazak!"* (Yeshayahu 41:6). Not by saying anything, just because of his presence; he's also there serving Hashem, so that gives encouragement to his neighbor. "We're so many Jews being *mekabel* the Torah together;" it went into their blood and it changed them from the top to the bottom. It changed their nature, it changed their *neshamos*, it changed their genes forever.

And now they were so convinced, so enthusiastic, that Hakodosh Boruch Hu said, "If that's the case, then I'm going to show Myself to you." *וַיְדַבֵּר לְאֱלֹקִים אֶת כָּל הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה לְאַמֹּר*. *Hashem began speaking to them*, just because there were 600,000!

I think that's why the Avos didn't receive the Torah. *Matan Torah* is something that even Avos weren't *zoche* to. Why didn't Hashem come down and give the Torah to the Avos? To them and their families? Maybe to the *shivim nefesh*? They were big enough, so why didn't they have *Maamad Har Sinai*?

The answer is – one of the answers – that as great as the Avos were, they weren't a multitude. If the Torah had been given to them, the impact would have been dulled if it had been given to a small family. So Hakadosh Baruch Hu waited until we were already a numerous nation. Only then did they assemble together for that spectacular event of *Matan Torah*, and then, when this great nation accepted the Torah together, it made its most impressive effect.

Numbers Are Everything

It means that numbers are everything! Quantity! The greater the quantity of good Jews, not only the more *kedushah*, but the more *emunah* and strength of conviction. That's the great success in the *ribui of maaminim*.

That's a very important point for ourselves by the way. Because just like we received the Torah in multitudes, with big numbers, that's the best way to continue being *mekabel* the Torah and to continue benefiting from

the Maamad Har Sinai. It's so important to always make sure to be among *many* of our people. If you have people who are together with you, it causes you to have much more loyalty, much more steadfastness, much more strength.

The more you have Jews who demonstrate that they are loyal to Hashem and to His Torah, the easier it is for you to be *mischazek*, to strengthen yourself, in your *emunah*.

Hoshana Rabbah In Satmar

I remember I once went to see the Satmarer Rav, the old Satmarer Rav, *zichrono livracha*, on Hoshana Rabbah. The place was packed, it was jam packed with people and the Hoshanos were four hours! It had a tremendous effect on me. Such a large crowd of people, standing together for *avodas Hashem*. It had a permanent effect on everyone there.

You shouldn't be a philosopher, only learning *sefarim*. Just seeing so many *frum* Jews for hours and hours is enough to have a profound influence. It was a *kiddush Hashem*, a tremendous encouragement. By seeing that alone, without any kind of *sevaros*, without any kind of logic, any kind of persuasion. You see so many Jews, all were unanimous in serving Hashem. It had a tremendous effect.

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

And therefore it's so important not to waste the opportunity. Nobody has to wait for the Belzer *chasuna* or the Siyum Hashas or Hoshana Rabbah. The best thing is to live among *frum* Jews! Live where it's most crowded with *frum* Jews.

Trucks and Buses

A crowded Jewish block, little Jewish boys and girls playing in the street, it's a big demonstration. They're all demonstrating that we are *frum* Jews and the truth is with us. Black hats, *yarmulkes*, *sheitels*. Boys with *tzitzis* hanging out! The more black hats, the more *frum* Jewish children with *yarmulkes*, the more *frum* Jewish women pushing baby carriages with two inside the carriage and five running alongside the carriage, the stronger we become.

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

And so when you see a great truck almost a block long, with the big words “Chalav Yisrael,” we’re emboldened. So much cheese and milk! Who is that for? It’s because we have so many *frum* Jews eating *cholov Yisroel*! So many! *Kein yirbu!*

When the *yeshivos* close down on Friday and the buses start rolling down, twenty buses from this yeshivah and twenty from that yeshivah. All over the town, buses full of yeshivah boys and yeshivah girls are riding home. Baruch Hashem! *Kein yirbu!*

You know what that means? A tremendous *chizuk*. You may not admit it. You’re a philosopher, a *chacham*; you want to read the Kuzari or maybe the Chovos Halevavos. Fine. But this is more important than anything else. The numbers, big numbers, Jews crowded together in the service of Hashem, that’s what gives us the strength that we need to be around forever. That’s how we became the Am Hashem at Har Sinai and that’s how we’ll be the Am Hashem forever and ever!

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