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SEFER SHEMOS - THE PENSON FAMILY EDITION

IN MEMORY OF REBBITZEN ESTHER JUNGREIS

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פרשת בא

Night of the Locked Doors

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SEFER SHEMOS

THE **PENSON FAMILY** EDITON

IN MEMORY OF REBBITZEN ESTHER JUNGREIS

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פרשת בא

WITH

R' AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"l

Night of the Locked Doors

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Part I.

Closing the Door on the Destroyer

The Terrible Night

Let us imagine that this is the night before Yetzias Mitzrayim. Tomorrow we will finally be leaving Egypt after 210 years and we're sitting now in our homes eating the Korban Pesach. Our bags are already packed and we are wearing our belts, מְתַנִּיכֵם הַגָּרִים, and we have our traveling sticks in our hands. We're all ready to leave.

And then suddenly at midnight we hear a noise coming from outside; צַעֲקָה גְּדֹלָה בְּכָל אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם - All over Egypt a great moaning, a huge outcry is heard. The Mashchis, the Destroyer, is wending his way over the land and striking down people on all sides - no Egyptian home is spared. אֵין בֵּית אִשָּׁר אֵין שָׁם מוֹת - In every house somebody was dying; Loud wails of weeping and cries of sorrow are raised from one house to the next, passing from one street to another, throughout the entire land of Mitzrayim.

It was a terrible scene – but the Am Yisroel saw nothing of it. The Bnei Yisroel, each family in its little house, was huddled together inside their homes listening to the wailing in the street. And they wouldn't dare walk out into the street – how could they?! It was a command given by Hakodosh Boruch Hu: **וְאַתֶּם לֹא תֵצְאוּ אִישׁ מִבֵּיתוֹ** – You shouldn't go out from the door of your house and venture into the street until the morning, **וְעָבַר ה'שָׁם לִגְנוֹף אֶת מִצְרַיִם** – because Hashem is going to pass through the land and strike Mitzrayim down.

"It's very dangerous out there on the street," said Hakodosh Boruch Hu, "so stay inside until the morning and that way you'll remain safe." And so it seems that staying inside was a safety precaution to avoid being smitten down. If they would be in the street, the Destroyer would smite them down too along with the Mitzrim.

The Wonderful Night

Now, if you look into the *Medrash Mechilta*, you'll see that a question is raised there: Why was it necessary to warn the Am Yisroel against going out into the street? After all, they weren't the ones who were guilty of anything. If their oppressors, the Egyptians, deserved to be stricken down – what's it have to do with us? Why *shouldn't* the Am Yisroel be able to walk around and witness the destruction that's being visited upon their neighbors? On the contrary, they'd be more impressed with the *yad Hashem* if they could see His revenge!

It would have been fun to take a walk in the streets of Egypt that night. You walk by the house of Fatmin – that's the name, let's say, of the overseer who gave you a vicious beating – he used to whip your son too – and tonight you'll *shep nachas*. You'll be standing in front of his house and you hear Fatmin wailing and his wife is crying too because their precious little firstborn is dead in his crib. Ha! That's what he deserves to get! And so you'll be standing on the corner with your neighbor and together you'll be enjoying the good weather and the beautiful sights. It would have added to the great *neis* of that night – the Bnei Yisroel are taking leisurely walks on the streets while the nation of Mitzrayim is being struck down.

It would have been a memorable part of that wonderful night in our history. We'd talk about it at the *Seder*; how the weather was so beautiful that night and everybody was walking around outdoors – it should have been the safest night to be out because the *malach* is striking only the Egyptians and not the Bnei Yisroel.

He Does Not Differentiate

And that's what the Mechilta wants to know. Why couldn't the Am Yisroel walk the streets? Hakodosh Boruch Hu, just as He distinguished between the *batei Yisroel* and the houses of Egypt, He wouldn't have any problem distinguishing between a Yisroel and a Mitzri in the street. Why did they have to stay locked up in their homes?

Now, we'll listen to the answer the Mechilta gives, but as we listen to the words we must keep in mind that it's not that simple – it will take some explaining. The Mechilta says like this – it's a gemara in Bava Kama (60a) too by the way, but here it's explained more at length: מִגִּיד – This teaches us, מְשַׁנְתָּה רְשׁוֹת לְמִשְׁחִית לְחַבֵּל – that when the destroyer gets permission to cause destruction, שׁוּב אֵינוֹ מְבַחֵין בֵּין צְדִיק לְרָשָׁע – he will not make any distinction between tzaddik and rasha.

It's a very important principle that you're hearing right now and it applies to all of history. When Hakodosh Boruch Hu decides to send a *mageifah*, *chalilah*, or any other form of destruction in order to punish the wicked, it's not only the *resha'im* who are smitten down. אֵינוֹ מְבַחֵין בֵּין צְדִיק לְרָשָׁע – Once permission is given to the destroyer, he's not going to differentiate between the wicked and the righteous!

It's Common Sense

Now, you might say that it's unfair, but the truth is that it's common sense; it has to be that way. Let's say for example, when the wicked destroyer, Hitler *yemach shemo*, came to Europe. So we understand that the Am Yisroel was overflowing with assimilationists; there were many *resha'im*, very many atheists. And the *apikorsim* were all fighting openly against Hakodosh Boruch Hu – they declared open war on the Torah.

So imagine now if Hitler would come and pick out only the *apikorsim* to be put on the cattle cars and he would leave over the *frummeh* in their homes. Would there be any place left at all for free will? You have to be realistic. You want that the *roshei yeshiva* should be able to say *shiurim* in the Slabodka Yeshiva and in Telzer Yeshiva, and outside of the *beis medrash*, the Nazis would be killing all the Jews who were leftists?! The *yeshiva* men are walking safely through the streets with their *gemaras*, and here the Nazis are chopping off the heads of ordinary Jews who are not *frum*?!

Who wouldn't carry a *gemara*? Everybody would take a *gemara* in their hand – it's a life preserver to carry a *gemara*. There wouldn't be anyone to kill – everyone would become *ba'alei teshuva*. The *yeshiva*

would be so packed that there wouldn't be any place left for the *yeshiva* boys. If Hakodosh Boruch Hu would make such a miracle that Hitler should send off to the crematoriums only the wicked; and all the *frumme ba'alei batim*, all the *yeshiva* men and the *chassidim* would remain behind and be able to continue living, it would be too easy to be a *frum* Jew – there wouldn't be *bechira* in the world. We'd be robots, that's all.

Everyone Would Convert

And therefore, like it or not, it's a fundamental principle of Hashem's behavior that when He brings punishment down upon the world to punish the *resha'im*, He doesn't make distinctions. Like I said here many times before; suppose any Jew who would light up a cigarette on Shabbos would drop dead – you walk out Shabbos afternoon on the street, and you see as soon as a Jew puts a cigarette in his mouth and lights it, he drops dead. The truth is that they will get what's coming to them. The *gemara* (Sanhedrin 37b) says **אִף עַל פִּי נֶבֶלָה סָנְהֶדְרִין** – eventually they get what's coming to them. But if they would get it in such a spectacular way; if they would drop dead the minute they light the cigarette, so all of King's Highway would close down on Shabbos. There wouldn't be any *mechalelei Shabbos* left. All the stores that are open on Shabbos would shut down immediately and the owners would run over to the Mirrer Yeshiva and open up *gemaras*. Even the Puerto Ricans and Italians would convert. And we wouldn't get any reward for being *frum* – it's the first law of nature, self-preservation.

And that, the *Mechilta* explains, is why the *Bnei Yisroel* were told not to go out in the streets at the time that Hashem was passing over Egypt to smite the land – because they would be in the same danger from the Destroyer: **בֵּינָם שְׁנִתְּנָה רְשׁוּת לַמַּשְׁחִית** – Once permission is given to the *Mashchis*, **שׁוּב אֵינוֹ מִבְּחִין בֵּין צַדִּיק לְרָשָׁע** – it will not make any distinctions between the *tzadikim* and the *resha'im*. And so Hashem told the *Bnei Yisroel*, **לֹא תֵצְאוּ אִישׁ מִפֶּתַח בֵּיתוֹ עַד בֹּקֶר** – “You shouldn't go out into the street until the morning.”

Part II. Closing the Door On Mitzrayim

Malachim Can Pick Locks

But we have to study this because a question arises, a very simple question: What's it going to help if the *Am Yisroel* would hide in their

homes? Now that we know that when the Destroyer is let loose it makes no distinction between the good and the bad; so what is it going to help to go into the house? A *Mashchis* can't come into a house? You think the *Mashchis* will be frightened off if a Jew goes into his house and closes the door? Didn't the *Mashchis* come into the house of the Egyptians and kill the firstborns sleeping on their beds? A *malach* can pick a Jewish lock the same way he picks the Egyptian lock. So what did they accomplish by being inside the houses? It's a big *kasheh*.

So you'll tell me that Hashem proclaimed, וּפְסַחְתִּי – “I’ll skip over Jewish homes.” Okay, so He could just as well skip over Jewish people in the street. If a Jew is walking in the street, Hashem will skip over him, just like He’ll skip over a house.

Barricaded in Concealment

But there’s a very important explanation to this. Listen to some more words that the Mechilta adds to this. The Mechilta quotes a *passuk* from Yeshaya (26:20). Hashem is speaking here and He says, לָךְ, וּסְגֹר דְלֶתְךָ, עַמִּי בֵּא בְּחֻרְרִיךָ – Go My people, come into your inner chambers, וּסְגֹר דְלֶתְךָ, בְּעֶרְךָ – and lock your doors behind you, הָבִי כְמַעֲט רִגְעַ עַד יַעֲבֹר זַעַם, – conceal yourself for a little while until the wrath passes by, כִּי הִנֵּה הָשֵׁם יֵצֵא מִמְּקוֹמוֹ, – because behold, Hashem is going forth to visit the iniquity of the people of the land.

Not only that they went into their houses, but it states בֵּא בְּחֻרְרִיךָ – Come into your rooms, your inside chambers; *cheder* means an inside chamber, וּסְגֹר דְלֶתְךָ, בְּעֶרְךָ – and lock the door behind you. So not only did they stay off the streets, but they were told to lock their doors behind them. They put bolts on their door – and if they didn’t have bolts so they put furniture behind the door to barricade it closed.

Now, we understand right away that the Egyptians are not coming in anyhow – they had their own headache that night. They weren’t going to come banging down the Jewish doors. The only one who is causing trouble tonight is the *malach hamaves*, and that *malach*, he’s not frightened from the furniture – you can put a heavy piano by the door; he’ll still get in. But Hakodosh Boruch Hu told the *Am Yisroel* to go inside the homes, to barricade themselves inside, and just because of that they’d be saved – it’s something that needs an explanation.

The Biggest Destroyer

And the answer is that the locking of the doors of their homes was a demonstration; a special demonstration that said: “We are hereby closing ourselves off from the *umos ha’olom* entirely. We’re

isolating ourselves from the people of the land because we have no interest at all in going out in their streets and mingling with them.” And that’s why Hashem said, “If you *are* going to be out that night, if you won’t partake in that demonstration, so the *malach* might get you too.

And therefore, you can be certain when our forefathers fulfilled what they were told, **וּסְגְרוּ אַחֲרֵיכֶם בַּעֲדָה** – *Go into the house and lock the door behind you*; they slammed the doors shut and they bolted it too. Not because they were afraid that some Egyptian would come in and not because they wanted to keep the *Mashchis* out. Oh yes! They wanted to keep out the biggest destroyer there is. Because the biggest destroyer is the influence of *goyim*! If the influence of *goyim* comes into your homes, you’re letting in the real *Mashchis*.

Celebrating American Independence

That night was the beginning of our nation’s history and therefore it had to begin with this fundamental principle, the attitude of **וְאַבְדִּיל אֶתְכֶם מִן הָעַמִּים לְהִיּוֹת לִי** – Hashem said. “I separated you from the nations, so that you should be Mine.” Hakodosh Boruch Hu told them, “From now on you are My chosen people and you have to dwell apart. And so tonight make a beginning of your history by making a demonstration that you have nothing to do with the outside world. The barricading of the door was to show that you mean business, to show that you finished with the gentile world. That night the *Am Yisroel* said goodbye to the *goyim*, forever!

Of course, the *Am Yisroel* pays taxes and we keep the laws. Certainly you should be loyal to your country. We’re just as loyal as anyone else – we should be even more loyal than others. I say that a Jew should hang out the flag on the Fourth of July. I won’t say you’re a sinner if you don’t, but I think it’s a good thing to hang out the flag. It’s not a contradiction to being a *frum* Jew by any means. We hang out the flag from this shul on the Fourth of July.

After all, America is a good country. We came from countries where we were persecuted, and this country gave us all the rights. And therefore you should do everything that a loyal citizen is expected to do – *except for becoming influenced by American society*. You must de-Americanize yourself. The whole *sevivah*, the whole environment, is trying to drown out our ideals. We’re being inundated on all sides by *apikorsus*, *ta’avos*, *shtus*, *avodah zarah*. It’s flooding our homes and therefore everyone must heed the eternal advice of Hakodosh Boruch Hu: **וּסְגְרוּ אַחֲרֵיכֶם בַּעֲדָה** – *Lock your doors behind you*.

Utilizing Their Wisdom

I'm not saying it's a problem to learn any technical skills from the gentiles or to use their inventions – you can even learn certain facts of nature from the gentiles. Why not? *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. Even when we go to Yerushalayim when the time comes Moshiach's time, probably we'll go on the wings of some very beautiful and big super air-flyer. And even though many gentiles participated in designing it, nothing wrong with that. But having any kind of sympathy or sentimentality with the *umos ha'olam* and with their ideals and attitudes – the hankering after the ways of the gentiles – that's when we say that we close our doors to the world.

Standing Strong in Egypt

Everyone knows that in Egypt **לֹא שֵׁנוּ אֶת לְשׁוֹנֵם** – they didn't change their language. That's a remarkable thing because in Egypt they were slaves and the Egyptians didn't speak to them in Hebrew. The *Bnei Yisroel* had to know Egyptian well. But still, they kept their own language. It's a fact that's testified to by the Torah. Look at the names of the Jewish people in Egypt and you'll see every name was a name of *lashon kodesh*. A remarkable thing! And they're beautiful names – names that express a love of Hashem and pride in their people – they were proud to be separate.

And it wasn't easy because Egypt was a cultured and wealthy nation. They had built big cities and they made progress in the sciences. Egypt was famous for its sciences. And nevertheless, this little pastoral people, shepherds who had nothing to show that would equal the materialistic progress of the Egyptians, were not overawed. They didn't fall down and bow to the Egyptians culture. No, they remained loyal for two hundred and ten years! That's a feat, an accomplishment without equal anywhere! Two hundred and ten years enslaved in a very wealthy big country and still they didn't fall prey to the environment!

We Slammed The Door

And that was the purpose of **וְאַתֶּם לֹא תֵצְאוּ** – Don't leave your homes and mingle with the gentile ideas. The fact that they didn't leave their homes that night to wander around on the streets demonstrated that we are **הָיוּ עָם לְבָרָךְ יִשְׁכֵּן**, a nation that dwells in

solitude, **וּבְגוֹיִם לֹא יִתְחַשֵּׁב**, and we're not counted among the nations. It means we don't mix with them, we have nothing to do with them. Their customs are not our customs, and their entertainment is not our entertainment. If they have televisions, we don't; they go to dances we don't; they read filthy books and we don't. We have no connection with the *umos ha'olam* – we are separate from them in everything because we walk in the footsteps of our forefathers who, *al pi Hashem*, made that demonstration on that night of the locked doors.

And that's why the Destroyer passed over their homes; by not going out in the street to walk around and see the sights the *Am Yisroel* made a demonstration that they are apart from the rest of the populace. It's the act of closing the door, slamming the door shut on the attitudes and the influences of the outside world that saves the *Am Yisroel* and makes us the nation that belongs to Hashem forever.

Part III. Closing the Door on the World

The Secret of Our Survival

At the end of *Parshas Kedoshim* it states: **וְאַבְרָל אֶתְכֶם מִן הָעַמִּים לְהִיּוֹת לִי** – I separated you from the nations to be Mine. So the *Toras Kohanim* explains it like this: **אִם אַתֶּם מְבָדְלִים מִן הָעַמִּים, אַתֶּם שְׂלִי** – If you're separated from the nations, then **לְהִיּוֹת לִי**, then you belong to Me. And it says there that when Hashem says, “You should be Mine,” it means “You will be Mine forever.”

וְאַבְרָל אֶתְכֶם מִן הָעַמִּים – That's the secret of the entire history of our survival. Hashem says if you're not separated from the outside world then you're not Mine and we have to part ways. And that's the lesson that we were expected to learn that night; the eternal lesson that if you don't close the doors, then you'll go lost.

The Refinement Process

And now we begin to understand that there was a process here and it's a process that never stops. Not everybody went out. No, not everybody went out. There are some statements that declare that a very large number didn't go out. I wouldn't say it – it seems terrible to say it. I'll tell you the minimum statement. **וְהַמִּשִּׁים עָלוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאָרֶץ מִצְרַיִם**. They went out a fifth – only one fifth went out. Four out of every five were left in *Mitzrayim*?! A terrible thing to hear! It hurts to hear such words. So many went lost in Egypt. But there are worse statements

than that – I won't quote them – but there are other opinions that are much worse. It's very hard for us to accept such a thing.

But what we're going to learn now is that even those that were deemed worthy of going out, Hakodosh Boruch Hu wanted to refine them, one refinement after another. It's like the man who wants to have pure gold so first he smelts the gold in the refining oven and when the dross swims to the surface he ladles it off. Then he takes the gold and again he puts it in the refining furnace; maybe there's still some dross left. He keeps refining it and again to achieve perfection. That's how it is with us – the *Am Yisroel* is always being refined.

Amalek Shows Up

You remember when we went out of *Mitzrayim* all the nations were afraid of us. שָׁמְעוּ עַמִּים יִרְגֹזוּן – All the nations heard and they trembled, חֵיל אֶחָז יִשְׁבִּי פִלְשֶׁת – a trembling took hold of the people of *Pileshes*. *Pileshes* is *Palestine* where the *Philistines* lived. Everyone was in a panic from this nation that had just escaped from slavery in *Egypt*.

But there was one *chatzuf*, one insolent nation. וַיָּבֹא עַמְלֵק, *Amalek* came. Now truthfully, what do we care about *Amalek*? What can he do to us? If Hashem protected us against the great army of *Mitzrayim*. וְשָׁלֹשׁ עַל כָּלּוּ – Pharaoh had many chariots and each one with trained soldiers. It was a tremendous army and yet Hakodosh Boruch Hu gave them such a stunning defeat! We have to be afraid of *Amalek*?! Let them come – they can't do a thing to us anyway!

But not only did *Amalek* come, but וַיִּצְנַב בְּךָ כָּל הַנְּחָשִׁים אַחֲרֶיךָ – They cut off some people from you. You have to understand the word נְחָשִׁים. It doesn't say נַחֲלָשִׁים. *Nechlashim* means people who are weak. But our word, נְחָשִׁים, means stragglers, those who made themselves slow. As we were leaving *Egypt*, the *Klal Yisroel* left with a rapid stride. They didn't look back to *Egypt*. They were happy that the *ananei hakavod* were leading them and they looked ahead, towards their destiny; towards their rendezvous with Hashem.

Don't Look Back!

But there were some stragglers. Some people looked back. They were walking with the rest of the people, but they were looking back and they fell behind. Can you still see anything of *Mitzrayim*? Can you still see the towers of *Mitzrayim*? They were going ahead; they wanted to come to *Har Sinai* to receive the *Torah*, but in their hearts there was still a certain admiration, a sentimental feeling.

There were interesting things to do, to see in Egypt. They had things there – they could go bowling in Egypt. They could go rollerskating in Egypt. Maybe there were art museums in Egypt; Egyptian buildings they could visit. “Nothing wrong,” you say. “I’m a pious Jew, it’s just interesting. It’s fun!” No, it’s very wrong! Because it’s not enough that you’re forsaking *Mitzrayim*. You have to understand that *Mitzrayim* should not deserve your attention or your admiration at all.

And that’s always a difficult test. You might live in a wealthy and modern city with gardens and trees and nice homes. Maybe you like the way the people dress. Maybe some of them have good manners in the streets. It’s hard not to be impressed by them!

Stragglers Go Lost

That’s what happened when Hakodosh Boruch Hu took the Jews out of Germany – many of them didn’t want to go; they loved Germany too much. I told you the story once; I remember a case in my father in law’s house in Lithuania; there was a German Jewish couple that had escaped Hitler Germany. They saved their lives and came across the border and they settled for a little while in a Lithuanian town. It was December the 24th at night and they were sitting and listening to the radio broadcast – it was *erev kratzmech* and the radio was broadcasting *kratzmech* carols from Germany; and these two people were sitting, weeping tears of homesickness for their beloved Germany where they always enjoyed listening to these carols in their home in Berlin. They escaped Hitler, but they were still straggling behind, homesick for their beloved homeland.

Now, when they left *Mitzrayim*, Hakodosh Boruch Hu saw that those who were נִחְשָׁלִים, the stragglers, who were walking a little more slowly behind the rest of the people, had fallen in love – a little bit – with *Mitzrayim*. And therefore, He sent Amalek to get rid of them. That was the purpose of Amalek; וַיִּצָּב – to cut off the tails. We don’t need any tails – that was the *p’sak* of Hakodosh Boruch Hu and that’s why Amalek came and כָּל הַנִּחְשָׁלִים אֶחָרִיד – They chopped off the tail of our nation.

Onward to Sinai

It was a test: Did you understand the lesson of the locked doors? Will you march with your head looking forward with the *Klal Yisroel*? Forward march! Onward to Sinai! Our eyes are only looking forward! That was the preparation for the great rendezvous at Har Sinai.

And it still continues this process. Hakodosh Boruch Hu continue to refine our nation, *tziruf achar tziruf*. To this day there are Jews who go lost – the unworthy ones go lost. Those who make concessions, those who want to live like gentiles, so Hashem is not happy with them. Because even if you live in the best neighborhood but if your door is open, everything seeps in. You let into your house the broadcasts of the *leitzim*? The gentiles are speaking in your dining room day and night and you listen to them? If their books and their magazines are in your home then it doesn't matter how long your *peyos* are; because it's your *seichel* that is beneath those *peyos* that matters most. And as long as your doors are open to the gentile world, your mind is being ruined.

Part IV. Closing the Door on Us

In Every Generation

Now, we have to know that Hakodosh Boruch Hu has helped us in this process of closing our doors to the outside world and being saved thereby from the *mashchis*. And that's by means of the *klal gadol*, the fundamental rule that *Eisav sonei es Yaakov*. Hakodosh Boruch Hu has made it so from the earliest days. Even before there was a Jewish people – when it was just Yaakov and his brother Eisav – already there was a tendency to do whatever possible to oppose the existence of *Am Yisroel*. *בְּכֹל דּוֹר וָדּוֹר עוֹמְדִים עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵינוּ*. It's a fundamental thread that runs through our history.

We'll take an example – I might be wrong, but I'm almost sure that I'm right. What's taking place today (1990), with everybody ganging up on *Medinas Yisroel*, is nothing but a hatred of the *Am Yisroel*. Now, I'm not a big patriot of *Medinas Yisroel*; far from it – and yet it's as clear as day what their intention is. Only it's not polite to say it openly – maybe some Arabs will say it but the diplomats in Washington or the UN can't say it outright. So they are saying 'Rights to the Palestinians', "Self-determination", other phrases they use. But it's only because of appearances sake that they don't come out openly. What they want is to destroy *Medinas Yisroel*, there is no question about it at all – nobody should have a moment of hesitation in his mind.

Political Diplomacy

Now, I'm not going to be an analyst of politics, but if they would yield and give the PLO that wedge of land that they're demanding in the heart of Eretz Yisroel, that's not going to be the end – there'll be

more demands after that. Yerushalayim, certainly. Certainly they want to get the whole Yerushalayim, not only the Old city. And little by little they want everything until nothing remains. That's all they want, there shouldn't be any *Medinas Yisroel*. But it's not *Medinas Yisroel* they're against; *בְּכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר עוֹמְדִים עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ* – it's another form of hatred of the Jewish nation.

Now, this doesn't mean that we shouldn't be diplomatic with the nations, certainly we have to talk to the nations as if they're all decent, as if they all love us. We have to talk to them and negotiate and be peaceful always and never let on that we know the secret, that *Eisav sonei es Yaakov*.

Studying Anti-Semitism

It's a remarkable phenomena that we have to study because it's how it always was and that how it will always be. They can make Jewish organizations from now till tomorrow and spend millions of dollars on studying antisemitism and it won't help. *בְּכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר עוֹמְדִים עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ* – that's the ambition of the nations. It doesn't mean every single *goy* but it's the ambition that Hakodosh Boruch Hu puts in the heart of many *goyim*.

And even today we're not immune to it in the least. Let's say you're walking through the streets right here in Brooklyn. You're in a good mood and you have kind intentions to everybody. It's a beautiful spring day, you just got a big paycheck now and it's in your back pocket or in your wallet – you're happy and everything is going well. Even the *goyim* are friendly – they're nice people. And you're thinking about how good it is that you live in America; an American citizen, with all the rights of the Constitution – you're an American like everybody else and life is good out here on the street.

And then suddenly as you're walking down the street, a loafer, is sitting on the corner and he says to you “Hey you! Jew-boy!” Or maybe the bum throws a banana peel at you, or a bottle. *Ooh wah!* Things were going so well and all of a sudden you're being called a dirty Jew! I had that many times; worse things they did to me. What's that for? It's not an accident – you have to think: What was the purpose of that?

Our Father Is Worried

We have to know that there is a fundamental reason why it's happening. It's because Hashem is worried about us. *וַיִּטּ יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵעַלְיוֹ* – *Yisroel has to turn away from Eisav*. When we become too much

involved in gentile ideas, Hakodosh Boruch Hu finds it necessary to erect a wall. And that wall is anti-semitism.

The purpose of *Eisav sonei es Yaakov* is to prevent you from falling in love with him! That's the explanation of the mystery of why Hakodosh Boruch Hu made it that **בְּכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר עוֹמְדִים עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ**. Don't mingle with them! You might like him; he looks nice enough, he looks like your own cousin maybe. And therefore why shouldn't you do things like he does, and think like he does. Why should you close the door in the face of such good gentiles?

And therefore Hakodosh Boruch Hu said, let him come and show who he is. There's no such thing as a good goy and there's no such thing as a bad goy – it depends on us. If we'll keep away from them, they'll all be good. But in case you make the error, so Hakodosh Boruch Hu is watching over His people and He'll remind you about the lesson He taught us that night in Mitzrayim when we became the *Am Yisroel*. You have to know something's going to happen – you're going to get a punch in the nose, or a stone in the head. At least they might break your window, but something they will be forced to do. Because they're not doing anything, it's our Father who is making them act a certain way. It's Hakodosh Boruch Hu who is doing the good or *chalilah* the bad, not the goyim.

Learning The Lesson

If we try to mingle with them, then even the best ones will become murderers. And that means that the first reaction to anti-semitism has to be, not to contribute to the Simon Wiesenthal Center or other organizations that combat anti-semitism – it shouldn't be the last reaction either. What you should be doing is thinking, “Why did that happen? Why would Hakodosh Boruch Hu do such a thing? And the answer is because Hashem wants that you should fall out of love with them. One of the most important purposes of anti-semitism is to get you to close the door to your house a little tighter. Of course, if you lock the door, but you have a radio inside and you're listening to their music, or even worse, if you have a television and you're looking at their faces, then you brought them inside despite all the locks you might have on your doors.

And therefore we come back to the *possuk*, **וְאַתֶּם לֹא תֵצְאוּ אִישׁ מִפֶּתַח** **בֵּיתוֹ עַד בֹּקֶר** – You shouldn't walk out of your door until the morning comes. So here you have a family – they made the *korban Pesach* and they did all the *mitzvos* of the night; they did everything properly as Hashem commanded and now they finally finished the first Pesach

seder – “Chasal siddur pesach k'hilchaso. L'shana habo in Eretz Yisroel”, whatever they said. And now they got up and they wanted to go out and they'll take a little walk. Like some Jew might think, after the seder, “It's not too late, so why shouldn't I take a little walk to help digest the matzah. Why not? It's nice outside.” In some neighborhoods it's safe and some stores are still open. So he wants to walk in the streets after the seder.

Don't Take Walks

Oh no! You have an interest in the streets yet?! After such a seder, you're still thinking of the streets?! אַתָּם לֹא תֵצְאוּ – Don't go out in the streets because the *Mashchis* will encounter you and אֵינוּ מִבְּחִין שׁוֹב. I know you're a *tzaddik*, but if you're going to walk the streets, then you're still not enough *tzaddik*. אֵינוּ מִבְּחִין בֵּין צְדִיק לְרָשָׁע.

And therefore, לֵךְ עִמִּי בֵּא בְּחֻרְיָהּ – My people; if you want to remain My people forever, so come inside to your inner room. And once you're inside, וּסְגֵר דְּלֹתְךָ בְּעֶרְךָ – lock your doors behind you because it's not enough to go in; you have to show you want to *remain* inside. “I'm finished with the outside.” Of course, you have to go outside sometimes. You have to sometimes walk the streets and you have to deal with gentiles too. But your mind, your attitudes and ideals, should always be locked away in the holy Jewish home.

And we'll stay in that holy home until the final morning comes, when the *geulah* arrives. When the time comes and Moshiach arrives so we'll have to leave America. America was a good country to us. It took us in when our grandparents were being persecuted in Russia and everywhere else. We came here and we gained equal rights. Certainly we're grateful to America. But now Moshiach is here and all of us are getting ready to board the great plane, like eagles *al kanfei nesharim*. We'll fly to Eretz Yisroel all together now. So what's the first thing you should think? Don't look back!

Maybe you want to take one last look at the beautiful skyscrapers of New York? Forget about it. Don't have any interest in looking back. Look only forward to your great future.

Focus Inward

And until that great day, our salvation is by means of לֵךְ עִמִּי – Go My people, בֵּא בְּחֻרְיָהּ – and stay inside of your chambers. Not only that night of Pesach. That is a symbol forever. Don't go visiting places of gentiles. Have no interest in them. The less we evince any desire to see

their things, to know about them, the better off we are because we have so much to see in our own homes.

There's so much greatness in our own *kehillos*. We should spend our lives only concentrating on the importance of the *Am Yisroel* because there's no end to the greatness of that subject. There's so much endless perfection, deep philosophy, קֶץ לָהּ קֶץ. Everything connected to the Jewish people is full of such profound wisdom. Not only our Torah which has no bottom to its wisdom, but our history, the story of our great men; even *sippurim* of *pshutei Yisroel*, plain Jews – there are so many heroic stories to tell.

A Torah Mind

We have to appreciate our own homes – we should have in our hearts an admiration for the *klal* of the past, our great forefathers of all the generations. Closing the door to the outside world means that our hearts are in our Torah literature. A Jew has to have his heart in the *chumash* and in the *nevi'im v'ksuvim*; his heart should be in the *mishnayos*. His heart should be in the *gemara*. A Jew should think along the lines of *nevi'im*, *tana'im* and *amora'im*, *rishonim* and *achronim*. That's how his mind should operate.

And so, as much as possible, הִבָּדְלוּ – separate yourself from them. And the more you're separated from them, וְאִבְדַּל אֶתְכֶם מִן הָעַמִּים, the more לִי לְהִיּוֹת – you belong to me. And belong to Me means in this world and in the world to come. בְּכֹל מָקוֹם שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר לִי. So forever and ever, the loyal Jew whose heart is with his people and his people's traditions, that Jew is going to inherit the future that Hakodosh Boruch Hu has foretold. אֲתֵם אֵלֶיכֶם – Those who cling to Hashem, the great day will come and then Hashem will say, חַיִּים בְּלַכְּכֶם הַיּוֹם – all of you have lived to see this great day.

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

שאל אביך ויגדך זקניך ויאמרו לך

Q:

What is one supposed to think when he cries out to Hashem and Hashem doesn't answer?

A:

We are supposed to think that Hakodosh Baruch Hu wants you to cry out even more. And suppose you cried out even more – let's say a man is on his deathbed. He's an old man, he's 119 years old. Look, he can't expect to live much more. But he cries out anyway on his deathbed, he wants to live. And finally he passes away. Did he waste his time? No! He achieved maybe in his last minutes more than he did all of his life. Because he's thinking about Hashem.

Here's an old man who's crying out on his deathbed. He says "Hashem heal me". "Oh that's so silly!" you say. The bystanders think it's ridiculous. He wants to be healed! How long do you want to hang around here? 119 years is not enough? And the answer is, it's not enough. He wants to live a thousand years. Why shouldn't he? He had a grandfather who lived a thousand years. Mesushelach lived almost a thousand years, so why shouldn't he? So he's crying out; he's allowed to cry out. And don't say that he didn't accomplish what he wanted. He did accomplish! The crying out is the purpose of the deathbed – so that he should cry out to Hashem and become more and more aware of Him. That's the biggest achievement there is. So nobody should ever be frustrated in crying out, because you are achieving. You are gaining more awareness of Hashem.

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