



תורת אביגדור

הגאון ר' אביגדור מיללער זצ"ל

לחג הפסח

MORNING *of* REDEMPTION

RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"l

ON PESACH AND THE COMING GEULAH

THE ROSENBERG EDITION

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תג הפסח

WITH

R' AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"l

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

Morning of Redemption

The End of Slavery

In *Mesichta Brachos* (4b) the *gemara* states the opinion of one of the *chachamim* which we will study now briefly. He says there that *geulah me'ursa nami hava*, that the redemption from Egypt took place *also* at night. Because in the middle of the night Pharaoh came running to the Bnei Yisroel and he said “*Tzei mitoch ami – Please leave!*” He was pushing us to leave the land – we were free to go! And what do you need more than that? That’s *geulah*; that’s freedom.

But the *gemara* continues like this: Even though there was a redemption at night, *geulah m'alyisa lo hava ela metzafra*, but the true redemption didn’t happen until the morning when they actually left Mitzrayim. It was only on the morning of the fifteenth of Nissan, when the Am Yisroel walked out of Mitzrayim, that was the *geulah m'alyisa*; that’s when they were really redeemed.

Now, we should first explain these two *geulahs*; the nighttime redemption that was “also” a *geulah*, and the morning redemption that was the *geulah m'alyisa*, the more perfect redemption. The first was the aspect of *beis avadim* – they were enslaved in Mitzrayim for two hundred and ten years and they couldn’t leave. And now finally, the doors were thrown open before them. They were free to leave – the *shibud* had come to a conclusion.

Pharaoh Chases Us Out

Now, to be taken out of slavery, we have to know what that means. It was a bitter bondage. Being slaves doesn't merely mean that we worked without getting paid. It means many things. It means backbreaking labor and being put to shame constantly. It was heartbreaking for fathers and mothers to see their children suffering in bitter work, building pyramids for Egypt. *Avodas perech* - It was work that broke the body; it was terrible. They beat you mercilessly if you didn't produce the quota of bricks that was expected of you. And we can be sure that many succumbed under the lashes of their overseers. And that's why we eat maror, the bitter herb, and tears come to our eyes. We remind ourselves of the bitterness that our forefathers endured and of the tears that poured from their eyes.

And therefore our gratitude to Hashem for redeeming us from that bitter bondage is something that will never die out. That's why we are always mentioning it - every day, more than once. And on the seder night we celebrate the moment when Pharaoh ran through the Jewish streets trying to chase us out! In every generation, we recall *b'simcha rabah* - with *hallel* too - what Hashem did for us. The strong hand of Hashem that came crashing down on Mitzrayim that night is something that we will never forget. We became free!

And yet, as happy as we are, the *gemara* says that *geulah m'alyisa lo hava* - the redemption that took place in the middle of the night wasn't the true redemption. It's true, they were now free to go, *but they didn't leave yet* and therefore something important was lacking in the *geulah*. That's why it wasn't called *geulah m'alyisa* - it wasn't the real redemption yet. Only in the morning, when they walked out of the borders of Mitzrayim, that's when the *geulah* took place.

An Ancient Metropolis

Now, we'll understand this as follows. Mitzrayim wasn't merely a gentile land like Eretz Canaan. In Canaan the gentiles were farmers; a very plain people lived there. They didn't have huge cities with big buildings and they hadn't developed a culture of any significance.

Mitzrayim was another story however. There, the gentile world had already established itself in a very imposing manner. Egypt was an advanced country, one of the most advanced in the Ancient World. It was a beautiful and fertile land, with huge metropolises. There

were beautiful palaces, ornate temples and magnificent pyramids. And there was one powerful king who ruled over a big unified nation. The *goyim* had great power and they were affluent too; they were very wealthy.

Cultured Chariot Riders

Now, you shouldn't think it was nothing. You have to imagine what it was like – here you have a shepherd nation living in the midst of the most cultured and advanced people of the ancient world. Wherever the Jew walked, he walked among well-dressed Egyptians, aristocrats, and soldiers riding on horses led by magnificent chariots. I'm sure that many looked up to their wealthy and powerful masters. The Egyptians were an educated populace and we were only a pastoral people.

Don't make any mistake about it; we were shepherds. We didn't have any training in astronomy or mathematics. We were trained in serving Hashem and improving our character. We were trained in the many important things that the gentiles don't think about. But they had the materialistic accomplishments that would cause the weaker people to look up to them, to envy them, and worst of all to assimilate their ideas and ideals. And so the Am Yisroel was buffeted to and fro by the prevailing culture of Mitzrayim. And there's no question that it was a difficult job – the daily grind of rooting out the influences that were seeping into their minds.

And therefore, even if Pharaoh sets us free, even to be able to do what you want and to live your own life, but if you're still in Mitzrayim among *goyim* so you're living in a gentile culture – gentile entertainment, gentile education and gentile attitudes. It's a land of Egyptian *chachamim* and *chartumim* and *kohanim* of a gentile religion; an advanced country with a king with his palace and his courtiers and a big army – to be free among them is also a form of slavery. And therefore, even though *geulah me'ursa nami havya*, even though there was a limited redemption that took place in the middle of the night, but the *geulah m'alyisa* however, the real redemption, took place only in the morning when they went out and said goodbye to Mitzrayim.

The Land and The House

And that's why when Hashem spoke to us at Har Sinai, He introduced Himself as follows: "I am Hashem who took you out from the land of Egypt, from the house of slavery" (ibid. 20:2). Two separate statements are being made here: "From the land of Egypt," and "from the house of slavery." So we see that there are two elements here; it's two unrelated kindnesses. One is that I took you out from the *beis avadim*, from slavery. But the first and more important kindness was "I took you out from the land of Egypt."

Because even though we owe a great deal of gratitude to Hakadosh Baruch Hu for taking us out of the *beis avodim* where we suffered terribly and endured many years of *avodas perech*, we must realize there's another kind of subjection of bondage that results from being *avadim* who labor in a gentile land. And it's more perilous than slavery of the body. It's slavery of the mind! A Jew who lives among gentiles is not a free man to think as he would like to – he's not as free as he imagines and it's a *shibud* that requires a very big redemption. We'll take some time to explain that now.

Rejecting Freedom

The *gemara* in *Kidushin* (22b) teaches us about an *eved ivri*, a Jew who is a slave. We're not talking now about an *eved Cana'ani*; an *eved Ivri* is not a real *eved*. *Shesh shanim ya'avod* – He's only a servant for six years and then he goes out free automatically.

Now, suppose at the end of six years he says, "I don't want to go out. I like it here." *Ahavti es adoni* – I love my master. So probably the master is easy on him; he treats him well and the *eved* says, "Ahavti – I love it here." That's the surest sign that it's a good place for him. And so he wants to remain; he's not interested in leaving.

So what does Hakadosh Baruch Hu do? He penalizes him. It says *vehigisho adonav el hadeles o el hamezuzah* – You take him near the door or the doorpost and you put his ear against the door, and you reward him for his loyalty to his master by drilling a hole in his ear with an awl. *Veratza adonav es azno bemartze'a* – a hole goes through this part of the ear, the soft part of the ear. It has to go through the soft part of the ear into the doorway. And he's crying, "Ouch!" It doesn't say anything there about giving him anesthesia so I imagine it was very painful.

And as the awl is being drilled into his ear, the *eved ivri* is thinking, “You’re doing this to me because I’m loyal to you?!” His master is the one doing the drilling; *veratza adonav*, the master is operating the awl making the hole in his ear, and so his *eved* is thinking: “Is this how you repay me for my love of you and my loyalty? An *eved ne’eman* should get so rewarded?” That’s what the *eved* is thinking.

A Just Reward

And why is this really? It seems like a good question that the *eved* is asking. Is that a just ‘reward’ for an *eved* who is loyal to his master? So our sages tell us, yes. Because there’s a Master who is superior to this master. Hakadosh Baruch Hu is the real Master, and we’re all expected to be loyal to His service. *Ki li Bnei Yisrael avadim*, Bnei Yisrael are My servants. *Avodai*, they’re My servants, *velo avadaim leavadim*. He has no right to be a servant to somebody else, says the *gemara*. Because who is this human master anyhow? He’s a servant too. And so this *eved ivri* is making himself a servant to somebody else who is also My servant.

At the end of six years the door was opened for this *eved ivri*. The master said, “The door is open; go,” but he didn’t want to leave. On that side of the door is waiting for him the service of the real *Adon*, Hashem, but he prefers to remain inside and be subjected to the service of a human master. And that’s why they stand him near the doorway and they make a hole in his ear. “You should have listened better,” says Hakadosh Boruch Hu to him as the awl is pressing through his ear lobe. “You didn’t listen well. On Har Sinai I said, ‘*Ki li Bnei Yisrael avadim.*’ I said, “*Avodai hem* – they’re My servants,” and you weren’t paying attention to that. And therefore you’re being taught a lesson now.”

There’s Only One Boss

So you’ll ask me a good question: How is it that if he remains with this master it will interfere with the love of the Supreme Master? It’s a very good question because we have to understand that this *eved ivri* is a servant of an Orthodox Jewish man; his master is a *shomer mitzvos*. In those days everybody was a *shomer mitzvos*. And *Shabbos*? No question about that – even an *eved Canaani* keeps *Shabbos*. An *eved ivri*, surely! He lived in a very kosher home, this

eved ivri; much better than many of our homes today. So what's wrong with being an *eved* to an Orthodox master? What's the big error that he committed when he said *ahavti es adoni*, that he loves his master and that he wants to stay on working in that home?

The answer is that he has to drill into his head that there is no other master besides Hakodosh Boruch Hu. He's the *only* Master you should love and your function in life is to serve *only* Him! *Ahavti es adoni*?! You love your master and you want to stay in his house and serve him? Oh no! You have to know that's a supreme error; a terrible mistake. You don't have a function of serving him. *Ki li Bnei Yisrael avadim*.

Slavery From 9 to 5

Now, of course, you'll ask a question. Any kind of a job that you take, even if you're not sold as an *eved ivri*, it's a question. If you take a job working for the city, or any kind of job with a boss, you're placing a master over yourself.

The truth is, it's not so simple. It's a question in *tosfos* (*Bava Metzia 10a*) if it's *mutar* to work for a boss in order to support your wife. Maybe you can't take such a job because of this *possuk*, *avodai heim - v'lo avodim la'avodim*. And *tosfos* deliberates and then he *paskens* yes, it's *mutar*. You hear that? It's a *chiddush*! It's *mutar* to work for a boss to support your wife – as long as you don't sell yourself. What can you do? You have no option. You have a wife to support and children too, so you sell yourself to somebody from 9 to 5 to support your family. It can't be helped. If you're able to work for yourself, *ashrecha* – you have no boss. But if you must, you'll have to rely on a *heter*, a *kulah*, and you could work for a boss too.

But if you sell yourself for six years like an *eved ivri* sells himself then Hakodosh Baruch Hu is not so happy with you because that's more of a *shibud* than a 9 to 5 job. And now, when the six years are up and the door is open and you choose to remain, oh no, that's already a very big error. It means you didn't listen well. You didn't hear that Hakodosh Boruch Hu chose us as His special people. *Banim atem laHashem Elokechem*. *Banai hem*, they're My children. *Shalach ami vey'avduni*, send out My people so they should serve Me. And because the *eved* didn't hear well so we drill a hole into the lobe of his ear to show him that he wasn't listening well. "You have to drill it into

your ear, into your head,” we tell him, “that you have only one real Master in the world.”

Enslaved Forever

Now, an *eved ivri*, even when he chooses to remain with his master, so it's *v'avado l'olam*, he remains in the service of his service only until the Yovel. Till Yovel is a very long time – sometimes it's almost fifty more years – but still when the yovel comes, he goes out whether he likes it or not.

But when a man is enslaved as an *eved Canaani* it's forever and that's what the Bnei Yisroel in Mitzrayim were – they were real *avadim*, and they were enslaved for two hundred and ten years. They were born into slavery and they saw no way out; no hope. It seemed like forever – for many of them it *was* forever. Many of the Bnei Yisroel were born in Mitzrayim, lived their whole lives in Mitzrayim, and died in Mitzrayim.

Slavery of the Mind

So what happens? After a while, you become enslaved mentally. When you work for somebody, you have to know that not only is your body engaged in his service but also your mind. You are *meshubad*. You know, the word *meshubad* comes from the word *eved*. Your mind too becomes enslaved to that person.

You may not think so. You may not think you have any connection with him intellectually: “I'm only working for him.” But if you spend time in somebody's house, that house is the place where you're going to get your ideas. You have to know that he creates the environment. The place where you work, where you spend your time, has an effect on you. And even though you are willing to rebel against his ideas – you don't like his ideas, you want to be independent – nevertheless you should know that it has an unfailing effect upon your mind.

And so, when Hashem said *avodai heim – v'lo avodim la'avodim* – *they are slaves only to Me*, He was saying: “Their minds should think only according to My Will.” You can't become sold to any other ideals!

Stuck in Egypt

And that's our subject tonight – becoming enslaved mentally is the greatest form of *avdus*. There's no slavery like mental slavery. And therefore when Pharaoh announced that night, “Go out from my

people,” they weren’t finished with Mitzrayim yet. Those hours that they remained in Egypt although they were not slaves anymore, *but they were there*.

We’re learning now that even though you’re no longer enslaved, if you’re hanging around among the gentiles, you’re still enslaved by them! Even if you live there for some reason; not because you have any obligations towards them, you’re still a slave. Could be you’re a free man just like the Am Yisroel were from *chatzos halaylah* until the morning. They were free! But even then it’s called a slavery. Of course it’s not as crude; it’s not as harsh a slavery as before, and now they even have permission to go out, but as long as they’re still remaining in Mitzrayim, in the land of *tumah*, so the spirit of the culture of Mitzrayim is pressing in on them. You have to get out of Mitzrayim, to leave Mitzrayim completely, to make it a *geulah m’alyisa*, a real redemption.

Impressed by Power

We’ll talk more about that subject and we’ll see how important that is. You know, when people have power over others, they’re admired by the people who don’t have power. The *gemara* says in one place (Avodah Zarah 54a) that when the *goyim* are making *gezeiros* on Jews and forcing them against their will to worship *avodah zarah*, so even though everybody is doing it against their will, but there’s always somebody who does it willingly. The *gemara* says there cannot be at least one man that doesn’t do it willingly.

Why not? Why should he not do it unwillingly? He’s being forced after all. The answer is, says Rashi, that when he sees the power of the *goyim* so he thinks they’re right. It doesn’t mean everybody thinks that way but that’s the *derech* of the mind. When you see the power of the *goyim* then even a victim thinks they’re right. They have the power so it must be they’re right. That’s the weakness of the mind, but it’s a fact of human nature. When somebody is wealthy, we look up to him and we adopt his opinions.

Respecting the Egyptians

And so when we were in Egypt, when we were enslaved to them, we couldn’t help but be influenced by our masters. Look how wealthy they are! We’re nobodies, and it’s natural for low people to despise themselves. Who are we? We are nobody. We have no culture. We’re

a plain people that came from Eretz Cana'an. We don't have the wealth that they have. Look at their fine linen garments they all wear. Look at the big buildings they have. And we're their slaves too. We're not even a free people.

So they respected the Egyptians. When an Egyptian walked on the sidewalk, a Yisroel, a Jew, had to get off the sidewalk. You couldn't walk on the sidewalk when an Egyptian was coming towards you – you moved off. After a while, you began thinking he's superior. It's the biggest *sakanah* there is. Once you're a slave in your mind you lose all of your principles.

Slavery in Europe

Therefore, it was a *geulah* not only of the body. It was a *geulah* of the mind, and that's of the greatest importance because a person is a mind and a body. What's more important, the mind or the body? The mind is more important. If the body is enslaved but not the mind, at least he's a free man intellectually. But if the mind is enslaved then he really is enslaved.

That's what happened in Europe. European Jews finally collapsed and they became admirers of the gentile civilization. Before World War I in Vienna, Sigmund Freud said that every Jewish young man in Vienna thought he was a real German. He didn't think of himself as a Jew at all. Every Jewish young man thought he was a real German. He was so proud of being in the German culture. And once that happens, that's the real slavery.

Slavery at The Shabbos Table

What do you do when you're a guest and your host brings up a joke? You laugh at his jokes. Isn't that the truth? If you're a Shabbos guest at somebody's table and the master of the house says a joke, all the guests laugh at his joke. Had you been on the street, if you weren't eating at the table, and he would have made such a joke, it would fall flat on you; you might even criticize the joke. When you sit at a man's table however, you're in his hands. You're eating from his food so you're enslaved to him. Your mind is not at its liberty to act independently.

Even when your host will say some remark on the *sedra*, so you admire it. "Ooh, ah, that's a nice pshat," you'll say. If you had you heard it from someone else, you would have perhaps said, "That

pshat doesn't make sense," or "How do you know it's true?" but at your host's table it's good. When your host sings Shabbos songs, you admire them. It may be that his voice is a bit rusty and his tune is a little monotonous, but because you're his guest, everything is beautiful to you.

So as you're both sipping the scotch and you're saying *l'chaim* and he trades off on you his old Torah jokes that he said for all the other guests before you, he holds out the moth-eaten ideas that he'd been saying for a long time, so you, you're a slave. You lost your free will – what can you do? And so you consent and you approve. Because eating at somebody's table is a dangerous form of *avdus*.

Slavery Today

And this brings us to the very sad subject of being a guest at the table of the gentiles. That's what happened in Mitzrayim and it's what's happening today too. We're in the countries of the *umos ha'olam* and therefore it's natural that we laugh at their jokes and we approve of their mannerism.

When Jews go into exile – exile, you should know, doesn't mean America. Exile means Tel Aviv just the same. Tel Aviv is just the same as Paris or Chicago – no different. Don't make any mistake. Geography doesn't make any difference. The question is, at whose table are you eating? So in Tel Aviv, you're eating at the table of Zionists and they are just as bad as anyone else. This business of living among wicked people, whether wicked Jews or non-Jews, means that we begin to think along with them. We are in their lands, we are in their communities, so we are *semuchin al shulchan acherim*. And since we are at their table so we don't have our own minds and that's the great danger, that's the great cause of assimilation of our minds.

Impressed by America

Don't I remember when the families first came to America in the early 1900s, I was a little baby then, but I saw what was happening, what was taking place. Jews came from small towns in Europe where they didn't have automobiles. Some Jews never saw an automobile in *der heim*, and now he saw for the first time – he saw an automobile. It wasn't a real automobile – if you remember the old Fords, the Flivvers, they were very far from being an automobile, but they were so remarkable that the Jews were *overwhelmed*.

They came and saw electric lights. They never saw electric lights before. *Ooh wah!* Street lights! I was a little baby. I was born in America, but I was in the company of European Jews – Baltimore was almost all European Jews then. The streetlights in the stores were burning on and off, on and off. Ooooh, what's this? America, *ah gevaldige* place! America! They went crazy for America. Streets filled with stores! Besides everything else, you could buy everything here. Everything was available here. And most of all, you were a free man in this country – at least that's what they thought; they thought they were free.

All the things in America, all the benefits including freedom, so enslaved their minds that they didn't have any ability to resist. They couldn't think any more like Jews. The wealth of America so overwhelmed these people who came from the little towns in Europe, the backwards civilizations of Poland, Galicia, Lithuania, that they sold out. They came from agricultural countries – they didn't see anything there and so when they came here they were so overwhelmed that they immediately collapsed; all their principles collapsed. They forgot everything that they ever learned and they became assimilated immediately to the environment.

The Egyptian Resistance Movement

Now in Mitzrayim we have to know it didn't happen so easily; they didn't collapse. Even though they were subjected to bondage in Mitzrayim, our forefathers fought back. For a long time they resisted the influence of Egypt: *Lo shinu es leshonam*. They didn't change their language. *That's something!* I remember all the European Jews when they came here, they were speaking English as soon as they possibly could – it was a broken English with a *trop*, but the most important thing for them was that they were speaking *goyish*. And their children immediately spoke English and forgot about Yiddish entirely.

But for two hundred and ten years – two hundred and ten years is a long time – our forefathers in Egypt still spoke their language. *Lo shinu es leshonam*. They were fighting back. All the Jews spoke the distinctive language. That's a remarkable thing. They were slaves and the Egyptians didn't speak to them in Hebrew. They had to speak

Egyptian because if their master asked him questions, he had to answer in Egyptian. But among themselves, they spoke *lashon kodesh*.

And even though some of them had to learn Egyptian sciences – they had to do it because some of them were drafted by their masters to do work for them – to learn how to be goldsmiths, how to be builders. Every kind of artisanship, every kind of craftsmanship they learned in Egypt. But, they kept their own language.

Proud Jews

Shelo shinu es leshonam. At home when a mother saw a child saying something in Egyptian, she said, “No my child. We’re important. We’re the children of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov. We have to speak the language of our forefathers.” They all spoke *lashon kodesh*, all of them. What a big achievement that was! Two hundred and ten years in Mitzrayim and *lo shinu es leshonam*, that they didn’t change their language.

In America if you sit on a bus and you want to talk Yiddish to somebody, you talk quietly. You’re ashamed. They shouldn’t hear you speaking Yiddish. An Italian sits up there talking to his friend in Italian. He’s not ashamed. He talks aloud in Italian. A Puerto Rican, the same thing; but the Jewish people are ashamed to talk in Yiddish on the bus.

Chas veshalom, they should be proud of their language – they cringe when a man a big beard comes onto the bus; he’s wearing a kapoteh and speaking Yiddish. “Why can’t he be more American,” they’re thinking. But our forefathers were different – they were proud and they spoke *lashon kodesh*.

Fanny and Morris

Also, *shelo shinu es shemoseihem* – they didn’t change their names. That’s something too. Don’t you remember the generation in America in the olden days? In those days everybody was named Morris or Irving or Hyman. The women? Fanny, Gertie. You didn’t hear any Jewish names anymore. Even if they spoke in Yiddish: “Morris – *kum aher* Morris,” they used to say. Jewish names were immediately erased when they came to America. And that was in one week – less than a week – while in Mitzrayim 210 years elapsed and they still were named Shlumiel ben Tzurishadai and Gamliel ben

Pedatzur. Noble Jewish names. The most beautiful names you could ever find.

It's a fact that's testified by the Torah. Look in the names of the Jewish people in Egypt and you'll see every name was a name of *loshon kodesh*. A remarkable thing! And beautiful names – names that expressed a love of Hashem and pride of their people. It wasn't just acting as if they were proud. They were proud.

This little pastoral people, shepherds who had nothing to show that would equal the *gashmiyus*, the materialistic progress of the Egyptians, nevertheless they were not overawed. They didn't fall down and bow to the Egyptians culture. No – they loved their own. They remained loyal two hundred and ten years! That's a feat, an accomplishment without equal anywhere! Imagine a Jew who came here from Europe in 1776. Now it's 1986 and he's still speaking Yiddish. It's impossible to imagine such a thing! Two hundred and ten years enslaved in a very wealthy big country and still they didn't fall a prey to the environment!

Ridiculed in Egypt

So we see they were proud of their identity and they fought back. Don't think it was easy. It's so easy to give an Egyptian name when everybody around you is Egyptian. An Egyptian master will ridicule your name. "Yitzchak? Heh, heh, Yitzchak." It sounds so queer to the Egyptian ears, the name Yitzchak. If you call yourself something else; Mamrei maybe; all right, but Yitzchak? It's so outlandish.

No; they insisted on Yitzchak. When the Egyptian said to him, "What's your name?" so he said "Yitzchak." "Yitzchak, hahaha." he laughed at him. He ridiculed him. But no matter, he stuck to Yitzchak. He didn't change his name. That was a very great achievement of our forefathers.

Becoming a Target

Now, some add *shelo shinu es bigdeihem*, that they didn't change their garments either. There are proofs to that from *pesukim* that they didn't change their garments. That wasn't easy. What kind of garments could a slave wear? He doesn't make it to order. In those days there were no stores; you took hand-me downs from your master. But they weren't willing to wear the master's hand-me

downs. If they did, they cut them over into different shapes and made them look like Jewish garments.

Now, you have to understand that just because our forefathers who lived among the gentiles tried with all their efforts to resist the assimilation and they went even to such extremes as wearing garments that identified them as Bnei Yisrael, so they suffered because of that. Suppose a Yisrael had to go someplace at nighttime for an errand. He had to go out and pick up some wood to make a fire. So he went out in the streets and some gentile boys saw him. They could see from a distance he looked like a Yisrael. He wouldn't lick any honey from them – you already understand what would happen to him. He was in danger.

Now this went on for a very long time. There was a great deal of effort involved. It didn't come easy. If you live among a master nation that's powerful and wealthy and educated and you are a slave to them, it's the tendency of the slaves always to imitate their masters. It's human nature to try to accommodate yourself to your masters, to find favor in their eyes; but the Am Yisroel didn't do that.

Not Everybody Went Out

Now, don't think it was easy. Living in Mitzrayim was very dangerous for the Am Yisroel. Don't think it wasn't a struggle. It's hard not to be affected by the culture that surrounds you. Absolutely it was a struggle. They had to battle all the time against the influence of the Egyptians, and it was overwhelming. Many went lost because they fell prey to the outside influences. Not everybody went out.

There are some statements that declare that a very large number didn't go out. I don't want to say it. It seems terrible to even say it! I'll tell you the minimum statement. וְחֲמִשִּׁים עֶלְוֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם – “And the Bnei Yisroel went out as one fifth from Egypt” (Shemos 13:18). Only one fifth went out! It's a terrible thing. A terrible thing to hear! Four fifth of our people went lost among the culture and ideals of the Egyptians! And there are worse statements than that. I won't quote them because it's very hard for us to accept such words.

Those who were not redeemed were not as wicked as we think, but to a certain extent they made peace with the environment and maybe they were more lenient in the matter of imitating their masters. It could be that they spoke at home some words of Egyptian.

It could be that their appearance was somewhat like the Egyptians. Maybe they gave some Egyptian names, I can't tell you exactly. But there's no question that the good ones who insisted on maintaining identity as the Bnei Yisrael, the children of the *avos*, they're the ones who wanted to be intellectually free of Mitzrayim, they're the ones whom Hakadosh Baruch Hu chose and they went out to full freedom.

The Perfect Redemption

So once more. When Pharaoh came and said, "Go out from my people," it was certainly a redemption because they were no longer enslaved. They were given the official word now that they were free to go. But still, it wasn't a perfect redemption yet because they were still in Mitzrayim until the morning. And as long as you're still living in Mitzrayim – even though you're trying with all your might and main to resist the influence of Mitzrayim – you're still among them. It's not a perfect redemption.

Only in the morning, when they marched out of Mitzrayim *beyad ramah*, with an upraised hand, and they were thinking, "We're finished with Egypt!" That was the real *geulah*. They walked out from all the *goyim* and they were by themselves from now on, in the wilderness. Now they were completely redeemed – it was a *geulah m'alyisa*, a perfect redemption; they had full freedom.

Now, when I say 'full freedom,' you must realize what that means. Full freedom means they went out and they had no contact with any *goyim*. When they came to Eretz Yisrael, all the Bnei Yisrael lived only in Eretz Yisrael. It's a very important fact! There wasn't a Jew who lived outside of Eretz Yisrael. And even before Eretz Yisrael, in the *midbar* they were in total isolation. And that's the *geulah m'alyisa*, that's the perfect redemption – to be finished with the gentiles.

The Reason for Redemption

Now, when Hakadosh Baruch Hu looked down on our nation in Mitzrayim, what did He see? He saw a people that were striving to have freedom intellectually. Even though physically they were in bondage, but they sought that their mind should not become enslaved. They wanted to free their minds from the intellectual bondage to gentile ways and attitudes, and so Hakadosh Baruch Hu said, "Because these people are yearning for the *geulah*, for freedom to remain Bnei Yisrael, freedom to continue in the ways of their

forefathers who served Me, so if that's the case, I have a principle: *B'derech she'adam rotzeh laleches molichin oso*, in a way a man wants to go that's the way I lead him. And that's why I'm going to take them out of Mitzrayim."

You must know that's the reason they were redeemed from Mitzrayim. If they had been in Mitzrayim and had tried to adopt the ways of the Egyptians, then "*Ilu hayah sham lo hayah nigal*", they wouldn't have been redeemed.

It was so easy to yield and to look like a non-Jew, but they didn't. It was a *sakanah*, a very great hardship that they fought to remain firm, and yet this nation succeeded in maintaining their identity so successfully that Hakadosh Baruch Hu said, "*Haboh letaher mesayin lo*, those who come to purify themselves, they're going to be aided." That's why they were helped, and they were *zocheh* to the *geulah m'alyisa*, the real redemption.

Redemption Is An Opportunity

And now, when they came to Eretz Yisroel, it wasn't only a reward for their steadfastness – it was a glorious opportunity to have perfect freedom from all the nations of the world! In those days they didn't have any newspapers or TV or radio. There was no contact with the outside world at all!

The truth is that even commerce was limited. Josephus writes in Antiquities – that's his history of the Jewish people – that the Greeks accused us of being a recent people; the Jewish people are a new arrival on the stage of history. Why did they think that we're a recent people? Because in the old records of the Greeks, there's no mention of the Am Yisrael – nothing is mentioned of Jews, and so the Greeks took this as an opportunity to criticize us. They said that we're a newly developed people who just recently came out of nowhere.

So Josephus says that the Greeks didn't understand. In the ancient times, how did a nation advertise itself? By two ways – by battle and by commerce. Some nations engaged in wars of conquest in order to capture other lands and to plunder their properties, and that's how they became known in the world.

How did the Romans become famous? Not because of the Roman culture. The Romans became famous by conquering many

nations. They didn't spread any science. How could they? They didn't know it themselves. The Romans weren't a cultured people. Whatever they had, they took from the Greeks. But by means of conquest they became famous. On the other hand, the Phoenicians of Tyre became famous not by conquest but by their merchant ships. They sailed all the seas and did business. And therefore, everybody knew about Phoenicia – even Ancient Greece knew about Phoenicia.

A Secluded Existence

But the Am Yisrael who were nearby, not too far from Phoenicia, were not known. And that's because they didn't bother going outside of Eretz Yisroel. They didn't *want* to travel. They didn't want to go out from Eretz Yisroel for commerce and conquest because it was a principle not to mingle with the *umos ha'olam*.

A Jew couldn't live among gentiles anyhow. He had to eat *kosher*. He had to keep Shabbos. In those days every Jew kept everything; and therefore the Jewish people kept to themselves. Their sailing boats sailed just along their own shores. They didn't travel to foreign countries. In the days of Shlomo Hamelech, that's when they began to travel – and it caused a lot of trouble by the way. But before Shlomo Hamelech's time, the Bnei Yisrael did not have commerce with foreign countries. And conquests, surely not. If nobody molested them, they had no interest in harming anybody else. And that's how Josephus explains why we were unknown to the ancient Greeks.

And so, our forefathers lived a secluded isolated existence. That's the ideal existence for Jews! That's why Bilam when he saw that – when he looked at our people in the wilderness – he became excited and a spirit of Hashem came upon him (Bamidbar 23:9). *Hen am levadad yishkon* – Behold, it's a people that dwell alone! That's the greatness of our nation; that's our praise – we dwell alone.

The Frontier in Williamsburg

I once was reading an article – somebody showed me a clipping from The Daily News. In Williamsburg there had been some Puerto Rican fellow who attempted a robbery. So the smart Williamsburg Jews didn't call the police – they took care of him on their own and he was taken to the hospital. And so this newspaper writer didn't like the idea that *frum* Jews should be so successful in fighting against crime. The whole world is suffering from crime, and here in

Williamsburg they're taking care of crime on their own! He didn't like that so he wrote there that it smacks of frontier justice. Frontier justice! And a certain priest, a Puerto Rican priest, said, "No, we don't do things that way." Oh no, they don't do things that way."

And the writer there criticized the Jews in Williamsburg and he said that they live by themselves. They have no business with anybody else, he wrote. It was an accusation: "They don't mingle at all. They remain aloof from us." But he didn't know that his words were a great commendation of the Am Yisrael. It's a greatness. We're proud of such criticism! And so in Eretz Yisrael our forefathers we're proud to live in seclusion.

The Reason for Exile

The *gemara* (*Pesachim* 118b) says "Bizar *amim* – Do you know why He scattered us among the nations? *Keravos yechpatzun*, because they desired to be close to the *goyim*" (*Tehillim* 68:31). I'll explain that. When Jews were in Poland between World War I and World War II, they looked to Berlin. That was the place where you could really live, they imagined; and many went. They looked to Paris. Some went to South Africa. Wherever it was they could escape to, but not among Jews. And therefore Hakadosh Baruch Hu said, "If you don't appreciate that you're living in all-Jewish communities, in all-Jewish towns where you're able to a very big extent to avoid slavery of the mind to the gentiles then I'm going to scatter you. You'll lose that glorious opportunity."

And we have to know that what we lost in Europe was a very tremendous loss. The Jewish small town, or even the Jewish big town was such a unique arrangement. I was *zocheh* to see it. The Jewish small town was a Jewish town – the entire atmosphere, the air that was breathed there was Jewish. Of course, when I saw it already, the Jews were no longer desirous of remaining there. They were all trying to get out.

The Glorious Ghetto

I'll tell you about the small Jewish towns. I once took a hike for five days with another *yeshivah bachur*. And we were walking down the road – it was a dirt road for miles and miles. Finally, we saw a string, a wire across the road. An *eruv*. We're approaching a Jewish town. That's where the cobblestones began. Up until then was a dirt

road. The cobblestones began at the *eruv*. Inside the town all Jews, all Jews. All the stores were Jews.

Where were the gentiles? The gentiles were the vast majority but they all lived outside the town. It's a remarkable thing. It was *hashgachah min hashamayim*. All the *goyim* were farmers, and they lived outside the towns. The Jews did the business, and the *goyim* went during the weekdays and bought from the Jewish stores. All the Jewish stores were together in a little town. The Jewish streets, the *beis hamedrash*, *beis hakenesses*, the *kloiz*. And not far away was a Jewish cemetery. The *shechita shteibel*. The *mikveh*. All together, one Jewish town. In Poland and Lithuania the Jews spoke only Yiddish. They lived among themselves.

The trouble was they had lost their admiration for the Jewish self-contained culture and now they were looking outside the towns. They had their minds on far away places. They wanted to emigrate. Now, I couldn't blame them too much because there was poverty; there was a lack of opportunity in the small towns. But still, it was a form of existence that you couldn't find any place else. There you could live your whole life as a Jew and nothing but a Jew! But because *keravos yechpatzu*, because they desired to be among gentiles – they looked longingly at Berlin and they dreamed of being in Vienna. They thought of the glories of Paris or maybe of London, so Hakadosh Baruch Hu said; "If you're not appreciating this great gift of the Jewish town then you're going to lose it". *Bizar amim*, why do I have to scatter you in America and in England and in South Africa and Australia. Because *keravos yechpatzun*; it's what you are desiring. You want to be close to the gentiles.

Bringing Back the Ghetto

I hope it won't be lost forever. I hope the Jews will have the *seichel* to re-establish Jewish towns before they'll go to Eretz Yisrael *biyemos haMoshiach*. It was such a glorious existence. It was such a big privilege. You didn't have to worry about your children because your children in the Jewish towns saw nothing but *yahadus*, nothing but Judaism. In the streets there was nothing but *yiras shamayim*. There wasn't a Jew who didn't wear his head covered.

Not in my days. When I went to Europe, it was different already. Oh yes, it was different! But before in the olden days about fifty years

before World War 1, every Jew had a *kosher* home. They used to say, “If his name is Mendel, you could eat from his *fendel*.” Every Jew had a *kosher* home; every single Jew! Every Jew had a Jewish name. Nobody was named with a gentile name. There wasn’t a single Jew with a gentile name. In Hungary, yes. There they already were *nichshal* with gentile names; but in Poland and Lithuania and in old Russia, Jews had nothing but Jewish names. No Jews were named Ignas, and therefore it was an ideal existence.

Looking Forward to Redemption

Now, don’t think it was so easy to live among *goyim* there. The *goyim* weren’t such friendly *goyim*, and the Jews didn’t have full rights as citizens. But what they had was something that was so precious that it was worth keeping it despite all the difficulties. And many of them decided to remain because of that. They refused to emigrate.

But because *keravos yechpatzun*, because so many desired to be close to the *goyim* – among *goyim* that are polite to you, civilized *goyim*, where you have equal rights and you live a life of luxury comparatively, so *bizar amim*, that’s why He scattered them among the *umos haolam*. And that was the biggest loss that could be, the loss of the Jewish town.

And even among the *frumme*, those who stand strong against the tide, there is always some part of the mind that goes lost among the *goyim*. To some extent everyone is influenced by the gentiles among who they live. The truth is that’s why we want Mashiach to come; that’s the *geulah* that we look forward to most – we be taken out of the gentile lands and to be saved from being slaves to all of the gentile influences and attitudes that surround us on all sides.

Why Moshiach?

The Rambam in Hilchos Teshuva says that: “Why do we desire that Moshiach should come?” he asks. I’m talking now about those who desire. Jews who pray with *kavanah* are asking constantly: **וְהָשִׁב ה' אֶת צְמַח דָּוִד עִבְדְּךָ מִהָרָה תְּצַמִּיחַ, אֶת הָעֶבְדָּה לְרִבִּיר בֵּיתְךָ**. We ask, **אֶת הָעֶבְדָּה לְרִבִּיר בֵּיתְךָ** – we want Moshiach to appear and redeem us. Constantly that’s in the thoughts of all idealistic Jews. So the Rambam says: Why are we so desirous of the days of Moshiach?”

That's a good question to ask. I'm sure you all are desirous, so let's try to analyze, what's the reason for that desire? Well, you'll say, "It's a *mitzvah* to desire it." Very good – that's a good reason. But there has to be a reason for the *mitzvah* too. Why should we desire it?

Now, listen to what the Rambam says. I'm emphasizing this because some people will talk about the *Shechina*. They'll say, "K'vod *Shomayim*! The *Shechina* is in exile. It's not an honor for Hashem that we should be in exile. The honor of Hashem requires that we should all be together serving Him in the Beis Hamikdash as a united Jewish nation." Well, you can say your own ideas, but let's listen to what the Rambam says.

The Rambam's idea is as follows: We want Moshiach to come in order that we should be liberated from subjection to the nations. When you're among gentiles you are limited in your opportunities; we want to be freed from the *umos ha'olam* because to a great extent we're not able to live true Torah lives if we live among the gentiles.

You hear what Moshiach is for? We want Moshiach because we want our lives, our minds, to be free to serve Hakodosh Boruch Hu. Now, I'm not going to debate with the Rambam. I'm going to accept that – there's no alternative. That's what Moshiach is for.

Secular Education

I'll give you an example. Today it is a *gezeiras hamalchus* that you must give your child a secular education. Now, I understand that many Jews will balk when they hear the following – modern orthodox Jews think that's how it should be. Certainly everybody should have secular education, they say; and if we try to abolish it, they'd be up in arms. Don't you see how many parents are angry when their children don't go to college?

But according to the Jewish ideal, a child is expected to give his *entire* day to the study of Torah. Not just the mornings! Torah is a big career that needs your entire lifetime. In the olden days, the Jewish *cheder* was every day in the year. There was no summer vacation. They came early and remained late in the house of the *rebbe*. All day long, they were laboring in Torah – little children! In all the *batei midrashim*, people sat and learned. The synagogues were full. There were many young married men, *kollel* men who were supported by

their parents or parents-in-law and they sat and learnt all day long – everywhere. Today we have no picture of what the Jewish nation was like. But today we're forced to give up on some of the Torah learning for secular studies, and therefore, the Rambam says, we are waiting for Moshiach to come and set us free.

Federal Taxes

Another example, when Moshiach will come, no more federal taxes. Taxes take a quarter of your income. Out of the twelve months in the year, you're working three months for the government. So much of our time is spent supporting government programs. Suppose you could take those three months off and learn Torah all day long. Wouldn't that be a glorious thing? The entire Jewish nation would come for three months to the *beis medrash* – but of course, they wouldn't come; they'd go to the movies. They'd go to Florida today. They'd go to the country and go hiking and bowling. For most Jews today it's a blessing they have to work to pay taxes. It keeps them out of mischief because they're not ready for Moshiach.

But when Moshiach will come, he'll say, "Come home, my children, and let's come to the *beis hamedrash*." Now, many people will be dismayed when they hear that's what Moshiach is going to do. "That's not what we were waiting for." And that's because even if we were freed from the *shibud malchiyus*, we're still slaves in our minds to the gentile attitudes.

And so we come back to our subject now. Because even to be free of any *shibud* to the gentiles, even if there is no *beis avadim* at all, that's only the *geulah* that came at night. Pharaoh said, "You're free! No more slavery!" but that's not enough. Because there is still something more than that, much more than that. What is the *shibud malchiyus*, the subjection to the gentiles, that causes us the most trouble? It's the fact that there are gentiles around. We're surrounded! And every *goy* comes with a *goyishe kup*. A gentile always comes with gentile attitudes.

Why Did They Need Moshiach?

That's why even in the good old days, when Jews were still real Jews, when they lived Torah lives, they still needed Moshiach. You mean to say we couldn't live Torah lives in Russia? In old Russia two hundred years ago, where every Jewish town was in the hands of the

Jewish people, the *beis haknesses*, the *beis hamedrash*, the Jewish street was very supreme in every Jewish town. Jews spoke only Yiddish, their only language in Eastern Europe. In other places, Jews also spoke their own language – Ladino. And the Jews lived an intensely Jewish life. So what was lacking that they needed Moshiach to come and supply?

And the answer is that it was still considered a *galus* because on all sides we were surrounded by gentile influence. And even though we tried our best and we succeeded greatly in negating the influence of the environment, nevertheless it had a certain effect on our people. We're living in a sea of gentiles, and we're drowning in their influence! And to keep our Jewish heads above water, and not to go under, is a very difficult task. Not to become a *goy*! And almost all of us are drowning. It's not pleasant to say, but we are drowning.

The gentiles are our big problem. If you analyze every Jewish boy who is having problems, you'll see that they are gentile problems. Every Jewish family is suffering from gentile influence. We speak their language. We usually look like them. And in almost all cases, and this is the worst problem of all, we think like them. And once we think like them, we are thinking the opposite of the Torah. And that's the most important *geulah* that we look forward to; the opportunity to be free of even the most subtle influence of the *umos ha'olam*.

Returning Home

Of course, the Am Yisroel was always the little island of decency surrounded by a huge ocean of filth and depravity. Always! And our big test was always, and always will be the following: As the ocean waves rush up on the beach, as they roar and they splash, will they wet us as well? Or will we retain our purity despite the overwhelming numbers and power of those who stand against our ideals. That's our big test so that we should be worthy of the *geulah*. Are you going to be influenced by the majority? Are you going to drink in their culture and become intoxicated with it? Are you going to go to their schools and become transformed into one of them?

Or are you going to fight back and to withdraw from them; to remain aloof and isolated from them and become more and more reserved from the gentile influence and become more and more identified with the Jewish environment. Those are the people who have utilized the world successfully because that's the real *geulah*.

That's the real redemption – to redeem the *neshamah*, to redeem the mind from the gentile world.

And the Jew who understands that principle, he knows that one of his most important careers in life is to succeed in the great function of remaining loyal to the Jewish people, to the Jewish Torah and to Hakodosh Boruch Hu. And the loyal Jews, the Jews who desired the *geulah m'alyisa*, those are the ones who will be taken out of the *golus* when the time will come for the *geulah m'alyisa*, and the doors will open for the Am Yisroel to return home:. We keep the attitudes and ideals of the Am Yisroel forever, because no matter what, we remain loyal to Hashem. And that's going to be the clarion call of the *geulah* (Yeshaya 26:2): פְּתוּחוּ שְׁעָרִים – Open the gates wide open! And who will come in? וַיָּבֹא גוֹי צְדִיק שֹׁמֵר אֲמָנִים – The loyal nation will be welcomed back into the arms of Hakodosh Boruch Hu.

Have A Wonderful Yomtiv