

במחשבות

The Way of Emunah

Collected Thoughts
on the Weekly Parshah

From

**Rabbi Meir Isamar
Rosenbaum shlita**

Tzav - Pesach

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Parshas Tzav - Pesach

Parshas Tzav

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צו את אהרן ואת בניו לאמר זאת תורת העֹלָה וגו' (ו, ב)

Command Aharon and his sons, saying: This is the law of the Olah... (6:2)

Thoughts Have No Cover:

Rashi says: “The expression ‘*tzav*’, command, always denotes urging for the present and for future generations. Rebbe Shimon taught: The Torah especially needs to urge people when monetary loss (*chisaron kis*) is involved.”

The Chidushei Harim *zy”a*, explains that the words “*chisaron kis*” can mean “lacking a cover (*kisui*).” He writes that every limb of the body has a “cover”, meaning that a person can control it. For example, one can close his mouth and decide not to eat. One can also choose not to walk or talk. **The only part of the body that has no cover is the mind. When one is struck with a thought, he cannot escape it; therefore, one must**

be careful in this regard.

He thus explains Rashi to be saying that one must be very careful when it comes to “*chisaron kis*”, things that lack a cover, meaning one’s thoughts. This is hinted to in the Parshah of the Olah because a Korban Olah atones for improper thoughts.

Torah Learned With Enthusiasm:

Rav Shlomo of Karlin *zy”a* states that the *pasuk* is hinting: What kind of Torah ascends upwards? Torah that is learned with enthusiasm. If the Torah is “like a Korban Olah on the fire”, meaning **that one learns it with fiery passion**, it will ascend to Shomayim.

Through Anavah, One Connects to the Power of the Mizbeach:

Rav Chanoch Henoch of Alexander zy”a (Sefer Chashba L’Tova) writes that this *pasuk* is hinting to how a person can ascend spiritually and have his mitzvos rise up to Shomayim. It is saying that the “Torah Ha’Olah”, the way to rise above, is for a person to be “on the Mizbeach”.

How does one reach this level? The *pasuk* answers this question by saying that one should be “*kol halayla*”, meaning that if one feels that matters are dark like night in the sense that **he is humble and feels like he is on a low level, he will merit to be “on the Mizbeach”,** and to ascend to a lofty level.

Mesiras Nefesh Atones for Sins:

The Tzemach Tzadik of Vizhnitz zy”a explains this *pasuk* to be hinting to how one can be forgiven of his sins by bringing a korban.

The Ramban (Vayikroh 1:9) writes that when one brings a korban, he should think that because he sinned, he really should bring himself as a sacrifice in order to attain atonement. In Hashem’s mercy, He allows us to bring an animal sacrifice instead, and the korban atones for us as if we brought ourself as an offering. Since Hashem considers one who has a good thought to be akin to one who did the good action he wanted to do, when one desires to sacrifice himself with *mesiras nefesh* but brings a korban instead, Hashem considers it as if he actually sacrificed himself.

Accordingly, the *pasuk* is saying that “he is the Olah”, meaning that one should think of

himself as the Korban Olah and, if one does this, it is as if he put himself on the Mizbeach and was burned to ashes. When one does this, he merits doing “*terumos hadeshen*” (picking up the ashes). The word “*hadeshen*” has the same *gematriah* as “*satan*”. Thus, this is a hint that one can raise himself up above the *satan* and reaching a lofty level of *kedusha* by achieving atonement in this way.

Do Not Pursue Honor:

The Ben Ish Chai writes that the words “*Zos Toras Ha'Olah*”

hints that all things that people think are high-ranking and important, such as honor and wealth, are not worth pursuing. The *pasuk* is saying about such things “*hi ha'Olah*”, if one runs after them, they will always be above him and out of his reach. Therefore, there is no point in chasing them, as Chazal say: If one runs after honor, the honor runs away from him.

Rather, one should remember that “*hi ha'Olah*” – **Hashem is the One who provides for a person and grants honor and wealth to those whom He deems worthy.**

וְלִבְשׁ הַפֶּהָן מִדָּוָד בַּד וּמִכְנוּסֵי בַד יִלְבַּשׁ עַל בְּשָׂרוֹ וְגו' וְשָׂמוּ אֶצְלֵי הַמִּזְבֵּחַ
(ג, 1)

And the kohen shall don his linen tunic, and he shall don his linen trousers on his flesh... And place it opposite the Mizbeach. (6:3)

Connecting to Hashem by Avoiding Anger and Desire:

The Izhbitzer Rebbe zy”a

(Sefer Mei Hashiloach) writes that this *pasuk* hints to how even a simple man can connect to Hashem. He explains that the “*mido bad*” is the *kesones* that

atones for anger and murder. “*Michnesei bad*” is a reference to *taivoh*, as the *mishnasayim* atone for *gilui arayos*. Thus, the *pasuk* is saying that if one is free

of these two sins – anger and *taivoh* – he is worthy of being “placed opposite the Mizbeach”, meaning that he is able to connect to Hashem.

וּפָשַׁט אֶת בְּגָדָיו וְלָבַשׁ בְּגָדִים אֲחֵרִים וְגו' (ו, ד)

And he shall take off his clothing and he shall put on other clothing... (6:4)

Removing Sin and Immersing in Mitzvos:

The Bais Avrohom quotes the Kobriner Rebbe *zy”a* as saying that the words “and he shall take off his *beged*” are a hint that one should remove anything that is “*boged*” (rebellious) against his soul, meaning any influence that draws him after earthly desires. “And he shall put on other clothing” – he should don pure,

clean garments in their place.

In other words, when one desires to devote himself to Torah and *tefillah*, the Satan often stands in his way and reminds him of his past sins, saying that he is unworthy of connecting to Hashem. The way to overcome him is to remove one’s past sins and put on “new clothes” by renewing his efforts to return to Hashem.

עַל מִקְחַבֵּת בַּשֶּׁמֶן וְגו' תְּפִינֵי מִנְחַת פְּתִים תִּקְרִיב רִיחַ גִּיחַח לָהּ' (ו, יד)

It shall be made with oil on a pan...you shall offer a meal offering of broken pieces, as a pleasing fragrance to Hashem. (6:14)

The Korban of the Poor

breaking up.”

Man:

Rashi states: “Broken pieces: This teaches us that it requires

In Parshas Vayikroh it is also stated, “Break it up into pieces.”

Rav Aharon Bakst *zt"l*, Rov of Shavel, (Sefer Lev Aharon) explains that this teaches us that the Torah is very careful regarding the feelings of a poor person. For this reason, the Korban Minchah is broken up into many pieces and spread out around the pan so that the pan should appear full.

We also find that when a bird is brought as korban, it is burnt together with its feathers. Rashi (Vayikroh 1:17) says that the feathers are burnt even though this creates an unpleasant smell “so that the Mizbeach should appear full and adorned with the sacrifice of the poor man (who could afford only a bird).”

If the feathers would be removed, the small bird would completely burn up very quickly and the poor man would be sad and jealous of the rich man who brought a cow, which burns for a long time, as his *korban*. He

would see how it took a long time to cut up and offer the rich man's cow, while his little bird was gone in a few seconds. This would cause him a lot of pain. To avoid this, the Torah says that the feathers should be left on so that it should at least burn for a little longer and give the poor man a bit of pride and pleasure.

The Honor of the Sinner:

The concept that the Torah is very concerned about people's honor and does not want anyone to be shamed is also learned from the Korban Chatas. It is stated (6:18): “This is the Torah of the Chatas. In the place where you slaughter the Olah you shall slaughter the Chatas.” We may ask why it says to *shecht* the Chatas in the place where the Olah is shected, rather than simply saying to slaughter it on the northern side.

The Kli Yakar explains that a Korban Olah is brought for sinful thoughts, whereas a Chatas is brought for severe sins that, if done intentionally, would bear the punishment of *kareis*. The reason Hashem did not decree that each korban be slaughtered in a separate place – with the Olah in one place and the Chatas in another – is because that would make it obvious to everyone which korban a person was bringing, and someone bringing a Chatas would be embarrassed that everyone knew he had transgressed a serious *aveirah*. **Since Hashem is concerned about the shame of every person, He decreed that the Chatas should be brought in the same place as the Olah so that no one should know who did a severe sin.**

“Chesed Sheb’Chesed”:

We are meant to emulate Hashem’s *middos* and, therefore, we can learn from here a tremendous lesson in how we should do *chesed* for others. We see that Hashem cares so much that no man should be embarrassed that He decreed that a poor man’s korban should be burnt with its feathers still attached, even though this causes an unpleasant smell. So too, **when one does *chesed* with others he should do all he can to ensure that they are not embarrassed at all, even if this is unpleasant for him.**

It is said in the name of the Kobriner Rebbe *zy”a* that if a man owns a pair of torn shoes and he gives them to a poor person, this is a “*chesed*” because the poor man previously did not even have torn shoes. But if someone gives the poor man the torn shoes and also gives him a hammer and nails to repair them,

this is “*chesed sheb’chesed.*”

The Gabbai Tzedakah’s Reward:

The following story illustrates this point:

The Sanzer Rov *zy”a* once visited a certain city. As he walked in the street, he suddenly stopped by one of the houses and declared, “The scent of Gan Eden is emanating from this house!”

This house was the residence of R’ Pinchos, the cities Gabbai Tzedakah. The Rov asked his attendant to knock on the door, and R’ Pinchos was overjoyed to see his distinguished guest.

The Rov asked if he look around the house to find the source of the Heavenly smell, and R’ Pinchos gave his permission. The Rov walked the house, looking here and there,

until he reached a closet. He then proclaimed, “The scent of Gan Eden is coming from this closet!”

R’ Pinchos hesitated before he opened the door to the closet, but since he could not refuse the Rov’s request to open it, he reluctantly did so. The closet was full of old, worn-out clothing, and R’ Pinchos showed each one to the Rov until he came to a strange garment... the robe of a Catholic priest. The Rov then said, “This robe is the source of the scent...”

The Rov asked R’ Pinchos to explain why this strange garment was in his home and why it smelled so Divine, and R’ Pinchos began to tell the story. He related that he had been the local Gabbai Tzedakah for many years and he went from door to door collecting funds for the poor.

He said, “One day, I went

around town, collecting money as usual. When I got home, I found a man waiting by my door. As I approached, he began to cry and say, ‘R’ Pinchos, I am in a desperate situation. I am deeply in debt and my creditors are hounding me. If I don’t come up with a large amount of money today, I will be beyond help.’

“I told him that I understood his situation but there was nothing I could do for him. I had just finished going to every Jewish home in town and getting donations for the poor, and I had already given away all the money. I had no one whom I could ask for help at this time. However, the man continued to cry and moan, and I felt so bad for him that I couldn’t just leave him there.

“I thought to myself: What could it hurt for me to go around again and ask people for another donation? I should at least try to

help this man.

“I went back to the people I had just collected donations from and asked if they could give again. I told them about the man who was sitting by my house and crying and asked if they could give anything to help him. Even though they had already donated generously the first time I came to their door, many responded nicely to my appeal and I managed to raise a decent amount of money. I went home, where the man was still waiting, and I handed him what I had. He was very appreciative and he thanked me warmly.

“Just a few minutes later, I heard a knock on my door, A different man was standing there and he too began to cry about his difficult situation, saying that he had no money to put bread on his table. I told him that there really was nothing I could do for him. Although my heart went

out to him, there was no ways I could ask people to donate a third time on the same day. But the man wouldn't take no for an answer and he begged me to do something to help him and his family.

“Suddenly, I was struck with an idea. There is a tavern near my house that is a gathering place for emptyheaded, wild young Jewish men. They go there every day to drink, play cards, and waste their time. I decided to try my luck with them. I would go and ask them for a charitable donation and hope for the best. I knew that they probably would mock me and embarrass me, but I was willing to take the chance.

“I gathered up my courage and walked into the tavern. As soon as I walked in the door, the young men gathered there began to laugh. ‘It’s that old *shnorer*,’ they joked. ‘He probably wants

to beg us for some money.’

“Before I even opened my mouth, one of the youths, who is the son of a very wealthy man, said to me, ‘R’ Pinchos, I have an offer for you. A priest was once here and he left his robe behind. If you put on that robe and walk through the street, with us marching behind you, banging on pots and singing, I will give you however much money you need.’

“I told him that I need 300 rubles and he agreed to give me that much if I did as he said. At that moment, I thought to myself: What should I do? If I walk through the streets dressed like a priest, with all the wayward youths making a ruckus behind me, everyone will think that I lost my mind. How can I do such a thing?

“However, the more I thought about it, the more I realized that

this is the right thing to do. I decided that it was worth it to be shamed if it meant that I could help a poor Jew in need.

“When I agreed, the young man brought me the priest’s clothes and they dressed me up to look just like a priest. They all began to laugh uproariously as they got their pots and pans to bang on. They led me outside and made a loud tumult as they banged and sang. Everyone stared at the spectacle and wondered why I was acting so strangely. As I suspected, they thought I had gone crazy.

“After forcing me to walk all around town, we went back to the tavern and I was given the 300 rubles. They also told to keep the priest’s garments as a ‘gift’. As I held the clothing in my hands, I said to myself that since these garments had helped a desperate Jew, I would keep them as a remembrance of the

mitzvah.”

After hearing this story, the Samzer Rov began to cry. He said, “Yes, you did the right thing. You should use these clothing as your ‘*tachrichim*.’ You should be buried in them when you pass away. No damaging angel will be able to harm you if you are wearing them!”

And so it was. R’ Pinchos was buried wearing those clothing.

Many years later, the Polish government decided to pave the cemetery where R’ Pinchos was buried. The Jewish community was forced to dig up the *kevarim* and reinter those buried there in a different place. **When they opened R’ Pinchos’s grave, they were amazed to discover that his body was fully intact. It had not rotted at all.**

וַיִּשְׁחַט וַיִּקַּח מִדָּמָיו וְגו' (ח, כג)

And he slaughtered it, and Moshe took some of its blood. (8:23)

Annuling Taivos:

Sefer Bais Avrohom notes that the *trop* on the word “*Vayishachet*”, and he slaughtered, is a “*shalsheles*”.

Shalsheles is also the *trop* on the word “*Vayismameihah*”, and he delayed (Bereishis 9:15), and the word “*Vayima'en*”, and he refused (Bereishis 39:8).

He explains that these three words are connected. The

connection is that one must first take it slow. One should not rush into anything. Before acting, one should think about what he is doing and determine if it is the *yeitzer hara* that wants him to do what he is about to do. If he does realize that it is his *yeitzer hara* trying to cause him to stumble, then he should refuse to do it. And then, he should slaughter. If he was able to refuse to follow the *yeitzer hara*, he now has the strength to slaughter it.

זאת התורה לעולה למנחה ולחטאת ולאשם ולמלואים וגו' (ז, לז)

This is the law for the Olah, for the Minchah and for the Chatas and for the Asham and for the Miluim... (7:37)

Through the Power of Torah, a Korban is Unnecessary:

The Gemara (Menachos 101A) state that we learn from the words “zos toras ha'Olah” that one who learns Torah is

considered to be like one who brought an Olah, Minchah, Chatas and Asham. Rava asked: Why does it say ‘for an Olah, for a Minchah’, when it seemingly should say ‘an Olah and a Minchah’? This teaches us that anyone who is busy with Torah

will not need to bring an Olah, a Chatas, a Minchah or an Asham.”

The Maharsha explains that Rava is saying that not only is learning Torah considered like bringing a *korban*, but **it is also true that Torah protects a person from sin**. Therefore, one who learns Torah will never need to bring a *korban* to atone for a sin, as the Gemara says (Sotah 21A): “Torah, both at the time when one is learning and not at the time that he is learning, protects and saves a person.”

A Korban Connects to Hashem:

The Maharal (Tiferes Yisroel 70) explains the concept of *korbanos* by saying that a sin leads to the sinner becoming distanced from Hashem. The *korban* (which has the root word of “*kiruv*”, to draw close), brings the person back to once again be

close to Hashem by annulling the sin.

However, we need to know that being close to Hashem is not a simple thing. A person must constantly think to himself: How lucky we are to be His chosen people and to be able to be close to Hashem at all times. One should not be like the “*chasid shoteh*” who came to the Kotzker Rebbe *zy”a* and claimed that he had seen Hashem Yisborach in a dream! The Rebbe told him, “The Gemara says (Brachos 55B) that if one thinks about something all the time, that is what he sees in his dreams. You probably think about Hashem all day, which is why you saw Him in your dream.”

The *chasid* foolishly replied, “That can’t be. **I am busy learning and davening all day. I don’t have time to think about Hashem at all!**”

Two Ways to Learn Torah:

The Ruzhiner Rebbe zy”a writes that the words “*l’Olah l’Minchah ul’Chatas ul’Asham*” are hinting to two ways that one can learn Torah. “*L’Olah l’Minchah*” refers to Torah which is learned *l’shmah*, with pure and holy intentions. Such Torah rises Above like an Olah and is comparable to a Minchah in that it provides pleasure to Hashem. “*L’Chatas l’Asham*” refers to Torah that is learned *shelo l’shmah*, with intentions to receive honor or to disparage the Torah. Such Torah is sinful and will lead to a bad outcome.

Torah that Does Not Lead to Gaivoh:

Sefer Yesod Ha’avodah explains the *pasuk* of “Zos HaTorah...” to mean that when one learns Torah “as an Olah”, meaning that his intentions are *l’sheim Shomayim*, it will be “*L’Minchah*” – it will be beloved and desired by Hashem. “*L’Chatas ul’Asham*” – but when is Torah considered sinful and damaging? “*L’miluum*” – when it leads a person to become full (“*malei*”) of haughtiness. When Torah leads to *gaivoh*, it is not desired by Hashem.

וּמִפֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד לֹא תֵצֵאוּ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים עַד יוֹם מְלֵאת יָמֵי מְלֵאֵיכֶם וּגו'
(ת, לג)

And you shall not leave the entrance of the Ohel Moed for seven days, until the day of the completion of the days of Miluum... (8:33)

Anavah Perfects the Soul: (Sefer Maamar Mordechai)

My grandfather, Rav Mordchele of Nadvorna zy”a

understands this *pasuk* to be teaching us the greatness of the *middah* of *anavah*. It says that

one should not leave the “opening of the Ohel Moed”. This hints that **throughout one’s life, one should always feel that he is at the opening, meaning that he is just setting out on his journey and has yet to accomplish anything.** The “seven days” mentioned in the

pasuk are a hint to the 70 years of a person’s life, meaning that one should feel this way throughout his entire life. It concludes that one should stick to this path until the “Miluim”, meaning until one achieves the perfect *shleimus* that can be attained through *anavah*.

Pesach

Preparations for Pesach

Preparing on One’s Own:

A lot of work goes into preparing for Pesach, such as cleaning the entire house, shopping, cooking, etc. Yidden around the world willingly do this work on their own, without relying on others to do it for them.

The Kesav Sofer *zt”l* explains that this is the wicked son’s question. He asks: “What is this work **to you?**” Why do you do

all this work on your own? Why do you do such hard work like slaughtering and roasting the Korban Pesach? Why don’t you hire workers to do it for you?

We answer him by saying that we offer the Korban Pesach to Hashem for skipping over the Jewish houses in Mitzrayim. We tell him that Hashem also did the work Himself, so to speak, when he killed the Egyptian firstborns and skipped over the Jewish houses, even though this work could have been by a *malach*.

He did this as a sign of his love for us. Therefore, we emulate Him and do the work of preparing for Pesach on our own as a sign of our love for Him.

Preparing for Ruach Hakodesh:

On the night of the Seder, one can even rise to the level of *ruach hakodesh*. In fact, the Satmar Rov *zy"ra* would say almost every year in the name of Rav Yehoshua of Kroli *zy"ra* that one who doesn't have *ruach hakodesh* on the Seder night is not even a real person. **During the month of Nissan, when the needs of the community or of individuals would interfere with his *avodah*, he would say that a person must put forth much preparations for the Seder because one must reach a**

level of *ruach hakodesh* on that night.

Preparing for the Great Light:

The Shem M'Shmuel *zy"ra* explains the reason we wear white clothing on the night of Pesach by citing the verse (Koheles 9:8) that states: "Your clothing should be white at all times and oil shall not be lacking from upon your head." He writes that "white clothing" is symbolic of preparations one does on his own, while "oil" symbolizes Divine wisdom that is granted to a person. On the night of Pesach, Hashem sends down a great light to those worthy of it but **we can only merit this light if we properly prepare to receive it.** This preparation is symbolized by the white clothing we wear.

The Kotzker Rebbe *zy"ra* explains why preparations for a

mitzvah are necessary by saying that **if a person tries to connect to Hashem by doing a mitzvah without preparing in advance, the mitzvah does not make it to the “side of holiness”** but, rather, it is grabbed by the damaging forces. This is hinted to in the *pasuk* (Bereishis 32:14) that states: “And he took from what came into his hand as a present to Esav.” This is a hint that if someone grabs a mitzvah into his hands without preparation, it is “a present for Esav”, meaning that it is given over to evil forces and will have no positive effect.

Kimcha D’Pischa

Enough for After Pesach:

Kimcha D’Pischa must be given generously. The poor must be given enough to cover all their needs and for them to have enough to last even after yomtov.

It is related that Rav Yissochor Dov of Belz *zy”a* asked one of his attendants before Pesach if a certain pauper was already given money for his Pesach needs. The attendant answered in the affirmative. The Rebbe then asked how much the man had been given, and the attendant answered that he was given enough to purchase matzohs, wine and apples.

The Rebbe said, “That isn’t enough. **If you want him to really be able to enjoy yomtov, you must give him enough money so that he will be able to buy food for his family after Pesach.** If you don’t give him that much, he will be worried throughout yomtov about how he will feed his family afterwards.”

**V’ahavta
Komocho:**

L’Reacha

When one fulfills the mitzvah of Kimcha D'Pischa, he also fulfills the mitzvah of *V'Ahavta L'Reacha Komocha*. Sefer Divrei Chana (Chelek 2, page 125) relates that when the Kaloshitzer Rebbe zy"ta lived in the city of Kashau, there was a resident of the city who was known as "Red Berish". This man was very poor, and he was a very coarse and vulgar person.

On Chol Hamoed Pesach, as the Rebbe was entering the bais medrash to daven and was emotionally declaring, "Behold, I accept upon myself the mitzvah to love every Jew like myself", Red Berish ran over to him and audaciously said, "You claim to love every Jew? The Rebbe has all that he needs for yomtov in his house but my house is empty. My family has no matzoh, meat, eggs or even apples!"

The Rebbe remained silent and did not reply. Instead, he

immediately put on his *talis* and davened quickly, which was very unusual for him.

After davening, he ran home. A few minutes later, he was seen running through the streets with two large bags full of food. He ran for a long time until he came to Red Berish's house on the outskirts of town, and he handed over the food with a smile. Berish then said that he sees that the Rebbe really does love every Jew like himself.

Saved From Heavenly Judgment:

The power of this mitzvah can be seen from the following story (cited in Sefer Sichos Chaim, page 18):

The Ruzhiner Rebbe zy"ta once visited a certain city and was hosted in the palatial home of a local philanthropist. When it

became known that a *tzadik* was in town, many people hurried to the wealthy man's house. It was a rainy, muddy day, and the people tracked mud into the man's house. Within a short time, the floor was filthy, which caused the homeowner to become quite upset. When the Rebbe saw this, he told the rich man that he wanted to tell him a story. He said:

There one was a very poor man who lived in a small village. He had six daughters at home, and his elderly parents also lived with him. As Pesach approached, he didn't know what to do. He had no money for any expenses, and couldn't even afford to buy matzohs. He concluded that he would have to travel to the big city to try his hand at business and to see if he could make some profit.

He did just that and, to his joy, he succeeded in earning six gold

coins. He happily ran to buy flour, which he took to the baker to make matzohs for him. The baker told him that he first had to bake matzohs for the wealthy men, and he would then take care of him. With no other choice, the poor man stood on the side until the rich men's matzohs were done, and the baker then took his flour and baked his matzohs.

It was now late at night, and the poor man was afraid to walk home with his matzohs. The roads on the way to his village were full of potholes and puddles, and he was worried that he might fall into one. On the other hand, he knew that his family was waiting for him in the dark, and that they were depending on him to bring them some food and candles to light up their dark home. Since he felt so bad for them, he decided to walk home at night and to rely

on Hashem to protect him.

He got on his horse and wagon and began to ride home, but, as he feared, his horse fell into a pit full of mud and dirty water. After a long time and a lot of effort, he still was unable to extricate it, and he began to cry bitterly.

At that moment, a rich man was riding nearby with his attendant. When he heard the man's cries, he sent his servant to investigate, and the man came back to report that a Jewish man and his horse had fallen into a pit. The wealthy man immediately hurried to help. With the assistance of his servant, he succeeded in getting the horse out of the pit. When he saw that the man was weak and shivering from the cold, he quickly gave him some whiskey to revive him and warm him up. He then escorted him home, making sure he didn't run into any other obstacles on the way.

When they arrived at the man's ramshackle home, the rich man could tell that the family was extremely poor. He felt so sorry for them that he took 600 gold coins out of his wallet and gave it to him. He told him to buy whatever his family needed for yomtov and to use the rest of the money to build himself a new house. He then left and went to his own home.

A short time later, the wealthy man died. When his soul ascended to Shomayim, he was brought in front of the Heavenly Court and was asked if he always conducted his business honestly. Before he had a chance to answer, he was surrounded from all sides by thousands of prosecuting angels who screamed that they were created by his *aveiros* and dishonest actions. The Court immediately sentenced him to *gehenim*.

However, before the ruling

was sealed, one angel ran forward and yelled, “How can you send this man to gehenim? He saved 10 Jewish people – the poor man, his wife, his six daughters, and his two parents!”

The Heavenly Court said that this was a good defense, and they decided that his mitzvos should be weighed against his *aveiros*.

The man’s mitzvos were placed on one side of the scale and his *aveiros* were put on the other – and the *aveiros* outweighed the mitzvos. The defending angel then brought the poor man, his wife, six daughters and parents and placed them on the mitzvos side of the scale. However, the *aveiros* were still weighing more than the mitzvos. The angel then collected the dirt and mud that the poor man had been trapped in and brought that too, as well as the horse and wagon. Once all that

was placed on the scale, the mitzvos side weighed down the *aveiros* side, and the Court ruled that the man could enter Gan Eden.

The Rebbe then turned to his host and said, “You see? Even mud has the power to save a person from gehenim. Don’t be upset about some mud on your floor. It could be used to help you one day!”

This idea certainly applies to Kimcha D’Pischa. The *tzedakah* one gives for this cause will be an eternal source of merit that will weigh down the scale in one’s favor, grant him a portion in Olam Haba, and will also be a source of blessing in this world.

Compassion for Others:

Sefer Vayehi Ohr (page 254) relates that the Bais Avrohom of Slonim *zy”a* once entered the

room where they were selecting the wheat to be used for matzohs. He turned to his son and said, "On my table, I have candlesticks made of pure silver. During the Seder, I wear the beautiful, expensive *beketche* that belonged to the Tshotkover Rebbe zy" *a* and you wear your new *beketche*.

"But there is a yeshiva bochur who has no new clothing for Pesach. He wears his old, torn garments. His table is not adorned with any silver items. He doesn't even have more than the minimum amount of matzoh. When Pesach arrives, he lets out a sigh to Hashem... How do we look and how does he look?"

And the Rebbe then began to cry.

Mayim Shelanu

The Broken Barrel:

The *pasuk* in Bamidbor (8:3) states: "And Aharon did so; he lit the lamps toward the face of the Menorah." Rashi states: "'And Aharon did so.' This is a praise of Aharon for not changing anything."

Sefer Abir Haro'im (page 19) quotes Rav Yitzchok Isaac of Kaliv zy" *a*, as explaining Rashi's words with the following story:

Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev zy" *a* once spent Pesach in the city of Kaliv. On the eve of *erev* Pesach, he went to draw *Mayim Shelanu* together with Rav Yitzchok Isaac. When Rav Levi Yitzchok had finished filling up his pitcher, he held it up by both handles and began to dance with much joy and *d'veikus* as he sang the words: "*U'sh'avtem mayim b'sason m'maynei hayeshuah.*" He danced so enthusiastically that the pitcher broke and he was left holding only the handles, with

no pitcher and no water left.

Rav Yitzchok Isaac then said that he now understands Rashi's words. When Aharon went to light the Menorah, he certainly had many holy *kavanos* and reached great heights of sanctity. Having reached such a level of fiery enthusiasm for the mitzvah, one might be concerned that he would spill the oil and not get it in the right place. Therefore, the *pasuk* teaches us that he did the *avodah* exactly right and every drop made it into the Menorah. Although he was burning inside with a holy fire, this could not be seen outwardly. He did not "put on a whole show." Rather, he simply did as he was commanded, without any changes.

A Pillar of Fire:

Sefer Raza D'Uvdah (Shaar Ha'Osiyos, page 56) relates that the Shinover Rov *zy" a* once

traveled during the month of Nissan to visit Rav Hirsch of Rimanov *zy" a*. When he arrived in Rimanov, he went to the Rebbe's home but found that he wasn't there. He asked his children where he was and was told that he had gone to draw Mayim Shelanu for his matzohs. Just then, Rav Hirsch returned home, carrying with him two buckets of water. The Shinover Rov later said that at that moment, he saw emanating from Rav Hirsch's head a pillar of fire that reached the Heavens.

The Shoniver Rov added, "If this is how the Rebbe looked after he drew Mayim Shelanu during the month of Nissan, who can imagine how he looked when he drew Mayim Shelanu for the matzohs he baked on *erev* Pesach! And who can imagine how he looked when he actually was baking his *erev* Pesach matzohs? And who could ever

describe how he looked as he conducted his actual Seder and ate the first *kezayis* of matzoh!”

As he said this, the Shinover Rov began to pound his hand on the table. He became so emotional from recalling the holy impression Rav Hirsch left on him that he fainted.

Kiddush Leil Haseder

No Mundane Speech:

The Shlah Hakadosh writes the following about the *kedushah* of Pesach:

The holiness of this night with all the halachos and customs is extremely lofty. On this night, Hashem chose us from all other nations and sanctified us with His mitzvos. Therefore, it is appropriate for a person to be careful not to speak any mundane words on this night and one

should teach his family members about this. **Nothing should interrupt a person’s *d’veikus* with Hashem for a moment.** Rather, one should only be immersed in the mitzvos of the night and relating the story of the miracles to his family.

Feeling Holiness Even Without Removing Impurity:

Every individual can feel the holiness of this night. The Kosover Rebbe *zy”a* (Sefer Toras Chaim) explains the first two *simanim* of the Seder – Kadesh, Urchatz – by saying that on all other nights, one must first wash away his impurity before attempting to attain *kedusha*. On Pesach, however, we commemorate how Hashem lifted the nation up from the 49th level of impurity and brought them to a high level of sanctity. **So too, every year on Pesach,**

one must have *emunah* that even if he did not prepare himself fully by removing all traces of sin, he can become holy. Thus, we can do “Kadeish” and raise ourselves to a high level of *kedusha* even before we do “Urchatz” and remove the impurity.

Ahavah Mekalkeles Es Hashurah:

The Sefas Emes writes that the reason one can reach great spiritual heights on Pesach even if he has not fully removed his impurities is because Pesach represents “*ahavah*”. On Pesach, Hashem’s love for Klal Yisroel increases and “*ahavah* distorts the line”. Therefore, Hashem increases our level of *kedusha*, even if we do not deserve it.

This is hinted to in the *pasuk* (Bamidbor 9:11): “On matzohs

and *maror*, we eat it.” This can be understood to mean that even if a person is “like *maror*”, meaning that he still contains bitter elements of the *yeitzer hara*, he still can obtain the benefits of the Korban Pesach.

Like the Kohen Gadol:

The holiness we can reach on Pesach is similar to the *kedusha* of the Kohen Gadol when he enters the Kodesh Kodashim. The Maharal *zt”l* writes that the reason we wear a *kittel* at the Seder is **to show that on this night, every Jew can reach the level of the Kohen Gadol and every house is like the Kodesh Kodashim.**

Reaching Dveikus with Hashem:

This holiness connects a person to Hashem. Rav

Mordechai Chaim of Slonim *zy"ra* relates that Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchov *zy"ra* once became very emotional on the Seder night and screamed, **“Ribono Shel Olam! Either you come into me or I will come in You.”** In his tremendous passion, he began to bang on the table, knocking over all of the plates and food.

The Story of Yetzias Mitzrayim Removes Bad Thoughts:

The Chozeh of Lublin *zy"ra* said that **the mitzvah of relating the story of the exodus from Egypt has the power to remove all bad thoughts from a person's head and transform them into pure and holy thoughts.** He explains that when the Jews were in Egypt, they had thoughts of idol worship. (Chazal say in Shemos Rabbah

15:2 and 21:7 that some people actually served idols.) Hashem lifted them up from the 49th level of impurity and brought them up to an extreme level of holiness, thus removing those thoughts from their minds. When one relates this story to his children, he brings back this influence and allows their thoughts to become purified as well.

This explains the words of the Hagadah: “Anyone who speaks a lot about the exodus from Egypt is praiseworthy.” This can be understood to be referring to a person's neshama. **Since he speaks a lot about *yetzias Mitzrayim*, he purifies his soul and cleanses his thoughts.**

Removing Bad Thoughts Through Emunah:

The Rimanoover Rebbe *zy"ra* writes that that Pesach is the time of ultimate redemption, and contains so much holiness that

one can reach a level of fully understanding Hashem's essence. On this day, one can come to comprehend how Hashem's greatness fills the entire world, which will cause a person to be ashamed of having improper thoughts, as he knows that Hashem is aware of everything he thinks.

There was a moment during the night of the exodus when the Jewish people reached a level of perfect *emunah*, and this influence remains for all generations. Even today, **if a person is careful not to allow his thoughts to stray during the Seder night and he concentrates on the holiness and sanctity of the night, when that moment comes he can attain the same level of perfect *emunah*.** Only our improper thoughts prevent us from feeling this.

The Light of His Face:

It is known that tzadikim reached extremely lofty levels of kedushah on the night of the Sefer. It is said that the Chasam Sofer *zy"ta* ascended to a very high level of holiness on this night. He would scream so loud that his voice could be heard for several blocks around his house and no one could even look at his face since it shone so brightly with the light of *kedusha*, just like Moshe's face shone after receiving the Torah.

It is said that when his daughter-in-law, the wife of the Kesav Sofer *zy"ta*, first heard about this, she thought that it was a "*bubbe maisoh*". However, when she spent her first Seder in the presence of her father-in-law, she saw that it was 100% true and that no human being could look at the Chasam Sofer's face at this time.

Haggadah Shel Pesach

**Eliyahu Hanavi Authored
the Haggadah:**

Rav Aharon Menachem Mendel of Radzimin zy”a writes the following in the introduction to his commentary on the Haggadah, Tzemach Menachem:

“My father, Rav Shlomo Yehoshua of Radzimin zy”a, said that his grandfather, Rav Yaakov Aryeh of Radzimin zy”a, told him that he heard Rav Bunim of Peshischa zy”a say that he could tell from the way that the Haggadah is written – especially from the wording of the paragraph “Baruch Hamakom Boruch Hu” – that the same wording is used numerous times in Tana D’Bei Eliyahu. This is a proof that the Haggadah Shel Pesach was written by none other than Eliyahu Hanavi.”

**Knowing the Mah Nishtana
Through the Avodah of Eating:**

Sefer Siach Zekeinim relates that Rav Yissochor Dov of Belz zy”a once was sitting at the Seder and saw that the following words were printed in Yiddish in the Hagaddah before Mah Nishtana: “*Mir rikt avek dem shissel un mir fregt Mah Nishtana.*” (The *ke’arah* is removed and Mah Nishtana is recited.)

The Rebbe declared, “**Of course! Of course! If one is able to remove himself from his bowl of food** (if one can put aside his eating), **he will know how this night is different.**”

It Only Spilled Three Times:

Sefer Gan Yosef (page 142) relates the story of a traveler who spent Pesach as the guest of a miserly rich man. The host put

large cups in front of all his family members but he only gave the guest a very small cup.

During the Seder, the host asked his guest if he knew why Rav Yehuda abbreviated the *makkos* by giving them the *simanim* of “*detzach adash b’achav*”. The guest cleverly answered, “Rav Yehuda was very smart. He knew that hosts would give their guests very small cups and if they had to spill out a bit of wine for each of the 10 *makkos*, they would be left with almost nothing in their cups. Therefore, he abbreviated the *makkos* so that they would only need to spill out wine three times. However, you and your family have big cups, so you can keep all 10 *makkos*.”

The Heavenly Host Came to Hear the Kinnos:

When Rav Yitzchok of Radvil

zy”a was a young man, he lived in the city of Nadvorna. One year, when he was ready to start his Seder, he told his *shamash* to bring him water from the well for *netilas yadayim*. A long time passed, but the attendant failed to come back with the water. The Rebbe sent his Rebitzen to see what was taking so long, but she also failed to return. Finally, he went himself to see what was going on.

When he got outside, he saw a large crowd peering into the window of a home. They were looking at a Jewish man and listening to how he recited the Hagadah. He saw his *shamash* and wife amongst the crowd, and he too walked over to see what was so interesting. He saw that the man was reciting one page of the Hagadah and then one page from Megilas Eicha. He continued doing this, page by page, and the crowd was

watching this and laughing at how funny it was.

The real story was that this man had given his Hagadah to a bookbinder, whom he asked to bind it for him. He also brought his copy of Kinos and Megilas Eicha to the bookbinder at the same time. The binder made a mistake and mixed up the pages, binding every other page from the Hagadah together with every other page from the Kinos. This unlearned Jew didn't know what the words meant in any case, so he hadn't realized that anything was amiss.

The Rebbe later said that the entire *Pamalia Shel Maaloh* had come down to hear this Jew recite the Hagadah with *temimus*. That is why everyone was so captured by it and were unable to stop watching. There *neshamos* felt the *kedusha* and they were unable to walk away.

Leil Haseder

Imagining He Died and Returned to This world to Rectify Himself:

Rav Shmelke of Nikolsberg *zy"ra* (Sefer Divrei Shmuel) says that the reason we wear a *kittel* by the Seder is because it is the clothing worn by the dead. He explains that it is meant to bring a person to imagine that he has already passed away and is being shown all his sins and judged in the World of Truth. If a person thinks about this, he will certainly be inspired to repent and improve himself and to serve Hashem properly from now on.

At the Seder, the *kittel* brings a person to **imagine that he has already died and been shown all his sins, and then given a second chance and sent back to this world to rectify all that he did wrong.** This should cause

him to be joyous and happy and to thank Hashem for giving him this new opportunity to serve Him and reach higher levels of *ruchnius*.

More Than Enough Maror:

One year, there was not enough *maror* at the Seder table of the Ahavas Yisroel of Vizhnitz *zy"á* for all of the people. One of the *chasidim* called out to the *gabbai* to bring more *maror* but the Rebbe said, "The Jewish people do not need any more *maror*. We have had enough!"

Shemonah Esrei in the Middle of the Haggadah:

Sefer Admorei Belz (Chelek 3, page 206) relates that the *minhag* in Belz was that after the Rebbe concluded his Seder, he would go out to the streets to hear how the local Yidden were conducting

their Seders.

One year, Rav Shalom of Belz *zy"á* and his *gabbai*, R' Elimelech, heard a man make the *bracha* of "Ga'al Yisroel", and continuing with the *tefillah* of Shemonah Esrei. The *gabbai* laughed but the Rebbe said, "This man accomplished a lot with this *tefillah*. He has no children but he will now have a baby!"

Emunah is Greater Than Seeing:

Sefer Siach Zekeinim (Chelek 2, page 186) relates that one Pesach, when Rav Yissochor Dov of Belz *zy"á* reached "Shfoch Chomascha" he sent one of the children to open the door for Eliyahu Hanavi. When the child returned, the Rebbe asked, "Did you see Eliyahu?"

The child answered, "No."

The Rebbe's grandson, Rav Yochanon Twersky zt"l then asked, "Is it really true that one can see Eliyahu Hanavi?"

The Rebbe answered, "Yes. **He can be seen. But someone who believes without seeing is a lot loftier than one you sees.**"

He quoted the pasuk (Shemos 14:31) that says: "And Yisroel saw...and they believed", and said that even though they saw the miracles with their eyes, and they did not need to have *emunah*, they still had blind *emunah* in Hashem.

This idea also explains the *pasuk* (Bereishis 15:6) that says about Avrohom Avinu: "And he believed in Hashem and it was considered for him as an act of *tzedakah*." This can be understood to mean that Hashem lifted Avrohom up to the Heavens, and he saw everything, but he still had simple *emunah* in

Hashem, and this was considered an act of righteousness.

Washing the Face to be Able to See:

Haggadah Meor Tzadikim (Skver, page 383) relates the following story:

When Rav Itzikel of Skver *zy"ra* was a young boy of 4 or 5 years old, he met some of his friends on the first day of Pesach. One of them told him, "I saw Eliyahu Hanavi at my Seder. Did you see him at yours?"

The young Rav Itzikel was struck with a strong yearning to see Eliyahu Hanavi as well. He went to his father, the Magid of Chernobyl *zy"ra*, and sadly asked, "Why can't I see Eliyahu Hanavi like other boys can?"

His father told him, "You need to wash out your eyes."

The boy took his father's words literally, and he went to wash his eyes... but he didn't see Eliyahu Hanavi on the second night either.

He went back to his father with tears in his eyes and said that even though he washed his eyes, he still couldn't see Eliyahu Hanavi. The Magid told him, "Wash them for as long as is necessary until you can see him."

His intent was that **one needs to purify his eyes completely in order to see Eliyahu Hanavi.**

Years later, when Rav Itzikel would relate this story, he would say, "I washed and washed and washed and by now I believe that I can say that I did see him."

Matzoh

Keeping the Tooth to be able to Eat Matzoh:

The following story is related in Sefer Toldos Harav Hakadosh M'Reisha (page 98):

The son of a Rebbe once came to daven in the bais medrash of Rav Elazar of Reisha zy"va. The young man was holding the side of his face with his hand and the Rav Elazar could tell that he was in pain. He called him over and asked him what was wrong. The young man replied that he had a terrible toothache.

The Rebbe told him to open his mouth and he took a look at the tooth. He then placed his hand on the tooth and said, "It's nothing. You'll be okay."

Later that day, the tooth was hurting so much that the man forgot the Rebbe's statement that it would be fine. He went to see a dentist, who tied one end of a string on the tooth and the other to a door handle. He then extracted the tooth by slamming

the door shut.

After he returned home, he remembered that the Rebbe had told him that it would be okay and realized that he had disobeyed him. He was very afraid that when he went back to shul for Minchah, the Rebbe would ask him how his tooth was feeling, and he wouldn't know what to say. He first thought that he would just say that it felt better but he decided that he couldn't lie to the Rebbe. He realized that he had to say the truth and face the consequences.

As soon as he walked in the door of the bais medrash, the Rebbe called him over and asked how he was feeling. He told him the truth, that the pain was so great that he forgot what the Rebbe had said and he went to a dentist who extracted the tooth. The rebbe then clapped his hands and said, "Oh no! Who knows if after you pass away, whether

this tooth will call you to judgment. You could have used this tooth to fulfill the mitzvah of eating matzoh for many more years, but you took that away from it."

The Taste of the Matzoh:

Sefer M'Zekeinim Esbonen (page 318) relates that the holy *derech* of the Apter Rov zy"ta included eating a great amount of food. One year, he became very sick and the doctors forbade him from eating matzoh and maror due to his weakened state. His sons watched him at the Seder to make sure he didn't eat too much. They gave him only exactly a *kezayis* of matzoh and maror, and wouldn't allow him to have any more.

The Rebbe then told them, "All the food that I eat all year taste like wood to me. The only things that have a taste for me

are the matzoh and maror and the *kezayis* of challah I eat in the sukkah. And you want to take that away from me?”

Tikkunim Through Emunah Peshutah:

It was once revealed to the Maharal of Prague zy”a that there was a simple water carrier who made all the same *tikkunim* at the Seder that he did. The only difference was that the Maharal knew what he was doing and had all the holy *kavanos* in mind, while the water carrier didn’t know anything about these things. Rather, he performed the mitzvos with *emunah peshuta*.

We learn from this that ***emunah peshuta* can create the same *tikkunim* in Shomayim as one can create through having in mind all the holy *kavanos*.**

Segulos of Pesach

A Segulah for Miracles:

The Chozeh of Lublin zy”a would say that by relating the story of *yetzias Mitzrayim*, one can effect miracles and wonders. The Sefarim Hakedoshim say that speaking about miracles from past generations arouses their influence and causes miracles to happen today, and this applies most of all to the miracles of Pesach.

The Miracles are in the Letters:

The Magid of Zlotchov zy”a said that saying the words of the Torah about *yetzias Mitzrayim* brings back the power of those miracles, as everything lies within the words of the Torah.

Retaining the Power of the

Day for the Entire Year:

The Bais Aharon of Karlin zy”a explained the reason Pesach is called “*Zeman Cheiruseinu*” by stating that the word “*cheirus*” can mean “engraved” (as in Shemos 32:16: “*Cheirus al haluchos*” – engraved on the *luchos*.) He writes that Pesach is an auspicious time to engrave important lessons into our hearts so that they remain with us all year long.

Bringing Close the Geulah:

Chazal say (Rosh Hashanah 11A) that we were redeemed in Nissan and we will once again be redeemed in Nissan. Therefore, the night of the Seder is an auspicious time to evoke the *geulah*.

There is a famous story involving the three great lights

of *chasidus*: the Chozeh of Lublin zy”a, the Yid Hakadosh of Peshischa zy”a, and Rav Yitzchok Isaac of Kaliv zy”a. One year, they decided that on the night of the Seder, each of them would do all they could to bring the *geulah*. However, when the first night of Pesach arrived, the Chozeh said with his *ruach hakodesh*, “In Peshischa, Rebitzen Shaindel got angry. In Kaliv, the Seder in being conducted in Hungarian. I cannot do it alone.”

It was later discovered that Rebitzen Shaindel, the wife of the Yid Hakadosh, had gotten into an argument with her mother-in-law, the Yid Hakadosh’s mother, about which one of them would sit at the head of the table.

In Kaliv, the daughter of Rav Tzvi Hirsh of Ziditchoiv zy”a was a daughter-in-law of Rav Yitzchok Isaac. Her husband

wanted to be by his father for the Seder, but she wanted to be by her father. Her father told her to listen to her husband, so they went to Kaliv.

She noticed that the time for the Seder arrived but her father-in-law was taking a long time to start. He didn't commence until a wagon pulled up. On the wagon were three landowners and four princesses. The Rebbe spoke with them for a short time in Hungarian and only started the Seder after they left.

After yomtov, she returned to her father's house. She intended to complain about having to spend Pesach in Kaliv but as soon as she approached him, he said, "You merited seeing the three Avos and four Imahos, who came to your father-in-law to explain why the *golus* was not over yet so that he doesn't do anything extreme to hasten the redemption!"

The Chozeh saw all of this with his *ruach hakodesh* and realized that he was left alone in his mission, and he could not do it alone.

Geulah in the Merit of Emunah and Torah:

The verse states (Shemos 12:42): "It is a protected night to Hashem to take them out of the land of Egypt. This night is protected to Hashem for all of the children of Yisroel for their generations."

Rav Moshe of Kosov zy" a (Sefer Leket Ani) writes that this *pasuk* contains a hint that every Jew can personally go out of slavery and into freedom, both in *ruchnius* and in *gashmius*. **It says that this night is protected "for all generations", meaning that we too can experience miracles just like the Jews of that time.**

There is, however, one condition that must be met. We must have the same high level of *emunah* that the Jewish people had when they left Egypt. Although we are a lowly, degraded generation, we are still superior to the nation that left Mitzrayim in the sense that they were slaves who had no Torah, while we do have a Torah and we have witnessed the miracles of the passed. If we have *emunah* and *bitachon* like them, we certainly will be found worthy to be redeemed like they were.

Feeling Like a Free Man:

Rav Tzadok Hakohen of Lublin *zy"ta* explains why this *yomtov* is called "*Zeman Cheiruseinu*" by saying that on this day, a great light is created in the heart of every Jew. This light allows us to see that we are free men who are not beholden to any force in

this world. **Some people claim that they are so "addicted" to sin and earthly desires that they have lost their free will. This is a complete fallacy, as we can see from the story of the nation that left Mitzrayim. They had sunken to a very low spiritual level but Hashem still had mercy on them and raised them up from their depravity to holiness.**

The great light of that redemption is renewed every year on Pesach. It allows us to be truly free men and to connect to Hashem and serve Him.

Shevi'i Shel Pesach

Like a Thief:

Rav Yisroel Shimon Kostilnitz *zt"l* (quoted in *Sefer M'Zekeinim Esbonen*, page 279) related that he once was in the *bais medrash* of the *Bais Avrohom* of Slonim

zy" a on the seventh day of Pesach. The Rebbe davened for the *amud* very emotionally, and everyone was awed by the *kedusha*. The entire assemblage felt as if they had ascended above this world.

After davening, the Rebbe descended from the *amud* and walked towards the *kehillah* with a smile on his face. Rav Yisroel Shimon was standing next to Rav Moshe Kliers of Teveriah *zt"l*, who he heard say to himself, "He is just like a thief. He acts as if he didn't do anything and the *hisorerus* has nothing to do with him."

Everyone Can Rectify Themselves:

Sefer M'Zekeinim Esbonen (page 84) relates that one year on the seventh day of Pesach, the Bais Avrohom of Slonim zy" a related the following story

about his father, Rav Yose'le Hotiner zy" a, a close *talmid* of the Baal Shem Tov zy" a:

For a number of years after his marriage, Rav Yose'le's father was not blessed with children. He asked the Baal Shem Tov many times for a *bracha*, until he finally blessed him to have a son, with this son being Rav Yose'le. As the boy grew up, he rebelled against his father and against Yiddishkeit. Eventually, he left the path completely. He left home and went to work as an apprentice to a non-religious shoemaker. His father was brokenhearted and he went to speak to the Baal Shem Tov. He told the Besht that if he had known that this is what was to become of his son, he never would have asked for a *bracha* for children.

The father spoke like this to the Baal Shem Tov several times, crying about his plight and

saying that it would have been better if his son had never been born. One time, the Baal Shem Tov handed him a *kamaya* and said, “If your son touches this amulet, he will immediately be inspired to do *teshuva*.”

The father hurried to the shoemaker’s house and hid the amulet amongst his son’s possessions, hoping that he would end up touching it. And so it was, the boy touched the *kamaya* as he was rifling through his belongings and he was immediately struck with a sense of awe and fear. He began to cry, “What has become of me!”

He regretted all his previous sins and asked the Baal Shem Tov to help him do *teshuva*. He ultimately became a full *baal teshuva* and a lofty individual.

He began traveling from place to place, telling his story and urging everyone to do *teshuva*.

He would say, “Do you know why I am telling you my story? So that you can see how anyone can repent. I had already sunk to the lowest level of impurity but, through the power of *teshuva*, I managed to return to Hashem. None of you have sinned as badly as I did. Every one of you can certainly do *teshuva* and reach a much higher level than I have reached.

“However, you should not think that this is easy. You should know that I fasted so much in order to attain full *teshuva* that not one tooth remains in my mouth. I fasted so much that every one of my teeth fell out.”

He would then open his mouth and show the crowd that he was toothless.

As the Bais Avrohom related this story, he became very passionate and he said, “Do you know why I am telling you my

father's story? So that you should all learn how much a Jew can improve and perfect himself!"

Better to Be Here Than in a Bad Place:

The following story is related in Sefer Kadosh U'Baruch (page 153) about the Imrei Boruch of Vizhnitz *zy" a*, in the name of his son, the Ahavas Yisroel of Vizhnitz *zy" a*. The story depicts the great love the Imrei Boruch felt for every Jew:

One year, on the last day of Pesach, the Imrei Boruch was walking into his bais medrash for *tish* when he passed by a group of idle, emptyheaded young man standing in the entranceway. These youths spent their days in senseless chitchat and frivolous nonsense and the *chasidim* wanted to throw them out of the bais medrash so that

they wouldn't disturb the *tish*. The Imrei Boruch would not permit this. He said, "It is better that they disturb me here than for them to go to bad places."

The Avodah of the Shinover Rov:

Sefer B'Niflaim Maasecha (page 110) relates that the Nirbator Rov, Rav Naftali Teitelbaum *zt" l* would speak about the incredible level of *hislahavus* he saw when the Shinover Rov *zy" a* conducted his *tish* on the seventh day of Pesach. As he spoke, the Nirbator Rov became very emotional and he proclaimed, "I saw how the Rebbe clapped his hands together. He clapped like this. (He displayed how the Shinover Rov only clapped the tips of his fingers together because he didn't want to transgress the halacha that one should not clap

his entire hands together on Shabbos. See Shulchan Aruch, Orech Chaim, 339:3.) Blood was pouring from his hands but he continued to clap...”

For over an hour, the Nirbator Rov continued to describe the lofty avodah of the Shinover Rov.

The Tune Sang at Kriyas Yam Suf:

Haggadah Zera Kodesh (page 293) relates that Rav Moshe of Rodzolv *zy”a* would dance very enthusiastically on the eve of the seventh day of Pesach. One time, after he finished dancing, the Dayan of Rodozlov, Rav Elazar Rosen *zt”l*, got up and proclaimed, “I am ready to swear that this is the same tune that Moshe Rabenu and *bnei Yisroel* sang during the splitting of the Yam Suf.”

The Rebbe replied, “I don’t know if this is that tune or not but I can say with certainty that this tune is worthy of being sung at Kriyas Yam Suf.”

Riches from the Sea:

Sefer Siach Zekeinim (Chelek 6, page 227) relates that the Arugos Habosem *zy”a* had a student named Rav Boruch Hendler *zt”l* who was supported by his father-in-law for several years after his wedding.

After his years of support ended, he asked his Rebbe, the Arugos Habosem, what he should do for *parnassah*. The Rebbe advised him that his wife should sell wine and whiskey while he continued to learn. And that’s what he did.

One year, on the seventh day of Pesach, the Rebbe stopped suddenly in the middle of

dancing and looked for R' Boruch. When he saw him, he called him over and told him, "You will receive the *bizas hayam* (spoils from the sea)."

From then on, R' Boruch's wife's business was very successful in business and they became very wealthy.

The Rambam Writes About Those Who
Bring Joy to Widdows and Orphans

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