

במחשבות

# *The Way of Emunah*

Collected Thoughts  
on the Weekly Parshah

From

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**Toldos**

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**Parshas Toldos**



**Sweetening Judgments Through Learning Torah/Rivkah Understood Tricksters/A Seudas Mitzvah is Not a Worldly Pleasure/Reward for Chesed in This World/Accepting to Serve Hashem with Mesiras Nefesh/One Who Works with Emunah is Like One Who Learns Torah/Leaving the Tzadik With a Broken Spirit/Hashem Derives Pleasure from Torah Shelo L'Shma/He Was Granted Blessing Directly From Heaven/Life From His Sword/He Did Not Want to Mourn Twice/Stinginess in Blessing His Brothers/The Greatness of Generosity/One Who Pursues Tzedakah Will be Granted Wealth**

**5 Kislev – Yahrzeit of the Maharsha Zy" a**

**A Full Ship/Saving a Man in the Upper World/Providing the Hungry With Bread/Released From a Difficulty**

וְאֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדֹת יִצְחָק בֶּן אַבְרָהָם וְגו' (כה, יט)

And these are the generation of Yitzchok the son of Avrohom. (25:19)

## Sweetening Judgments Through Learning Torah:

Rashi states: “These are the generations of Yitzchok: Yaakov and Esav who are spoken about (*amurim*) in this Parshah.” The Meor Vashemesh explains by citing the Medrash (Bereishis Rabbah 65:20) that states that the nations of the world asked Avnimos Hagardi and Bilaam if they should wage war against Klal Yisroel. These two philosophers answered, “Go to their *batei knesses* and *batei medrash*. If you see children making noise with their mouths, you will be unable to defeat them, as is stated (Bereishis 27:22): ‘The voice is the voice of Yaakov.’ As long as Yaakov

has his voice, the hands of Esav will be unable to beat them.”

Yitzchok had a son named Esav who was a wicked man and wanted to destroy the Jewish people. Rashi is hinting about the way to overcome him. He says that Yaakov and Esav are “*amurim*” in the Parshah. The word “*amurim*” connotes making something sweet (as in Devarim 26:17) and also can mean something soft. Accordingly, Rashi is saying that when the children of Yaakov read “the Parshah” – meaning that they learn the Torah – they can make harsh judgments soft and sweet and no nation will be able to harm them.

וַיֶּאֱהָב יִצְחָק אֶת עֵשָׂו כִּי צִיד בְּפִיו וְגו' (כה, כח)

And Yitzchok loved Esav because he trapped with his mouth...

## Rivkah Understood Tricksters:

Rashi explains that Esav tricked his father with his words. He fooled Yitzchok into thinking he was a *tzadik* by asking him questions like how to take *maaser* on wheat and salt.

Sefer M'Zekeinim Esbonen asks why Esav's display of piousness made Yitzchok love him but did not work for Rivkah.

He answers that Yitzchok grew up in Avrohom Avinu's home, which was permeated with *temimus* and *emes*. He was not familiar with trickery and thought Esav was genuine. Rivkah, however, grew up in the home of Besuel and Lavan, who were liars and tricksters. She knew how to spot a phony and she was able to see that Esav was not genuinely righteous.

וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב מִכֶּרֶה כִּיּוֹם אֶת בְּכֹרְתְךָ וְגו' (כה, לא)

And Yaakov said: Sell me today your firstborn status... (25:31)

## A Seudas Mitzvah is Not a Worldly Pleasure

The Yalkut Shimoni (Remez 110) relates that when Yaakov and Esav were in their mother's womb, Yaakov told Esav, "There are two worlds before us. You take Olam Hazeh and I will take Olam Haba, as is stated: 'Sell me today your firstborn status.' On that very day, Esav denied

*techiyas hameisim*, as is stated: 'Behold, I am going to die.' At that time, Esav took the portion of Olam Hazeh and Yaakov took the portion of Olam Haba."

Sefer M'Zekeinim Esbonen quotes Rav Mordechai Chaim of Slonim zy" a as relating the following explanation of the Yalkut Shimoni in the name of the Yesod Ha'avodah of Slonim

zy”a:

After the deal was made between Yaakov and Esav to divide the two worlds, Esav saw that Yaakov would make festive *seudos* every Shabbos, where he would sing with extreme joy. After Shabbos ended, he also would make a festive Melava Malka. He realized that Yaakov was, in fact, enjoying this world. He was upset about this and complained that they agreed that he would get this world and Yaakov would only get *Olam Haba*. Yaakov responded to him, “Shabbos is ‘*may’ain Olam Haba*.’ It is comparable to *Olam Haba* and, therefore, is part of my portion.”

Esav once came to Yaakov’s house on a weekday and saw him sitting and enjoying a *seudah*. He asked him why he was deriving pleasure from this world on a weekday and Yaakov

said, “Today is Rosh Chodesh. It is not a regular weekday. Rather, it is a minor yomtov and is included in *Olam Haba*.”

Esav asked, “How often do you celebrate Rosh Chodesh?”

Yaakov answered, “Once every 30 days.”

Esav was somewhat comforted as he still thought that Yaakov would not derive pleasure from this world on most days of the year and only he would have the portion of *Olam Haze*h at most times.

On another weekday, Esav came to Yaakov’s home and he heard him singing with joy. He walked in and again saw him enjoying a large meal. He asked him, “What are doing? It isn’t Shabbos or Rosh Chodesh today!”

Yaakov answered, “Today, I complete Maseches Bava Kama.

I am making a *seudah* for the *siyum*.”

Esav got very angry and said, “*Olam Haze*h and its pleasures belong to me. Why are you stealing it from me?”

Yaakov answered, “If you think that a *seudah* for a *siyum* is part of *Olam Haze*h, you can make one too! Now that we have completed *Maseches Bava Kama*, we are starting to learn *Bava Metziah*. Come and learn with us, and when we finish the *masechta*, you can also make a *siyum* and enjoy it.”

Esav accepted this advice. But when he sat down with the *Gemara*, he immediately had no desire to learn. He got up and ran out of the *yeshiva*.

Esav then went to seek guidance from his father’s brother, *Yishmoel*. *Yishmoel* advised him to tell *Yaakov* as follows: We had an agreement

that I would get *Olam Haze*h and you would get *Olam Haba*. I see that I am not enjoying this world. Although I eat and drink as much as I want, I don’t feel real happiness because I know that I have no share in *Olam Haba*. Therefore, I live a life of pain and misery. I don’t have *Olam Haze*h or *Olam Haba*. Accordingly, the agreement that we reached is null and void.

Esav accepted his uncle’s advice and he brought this claim to *Yaakov*. When *Yaakov* heard what *Esav* had to say, he told him, “I promise you that you will have a portion in *Olam Haba* so that you should be able to enjoy *Olam Haze*h with no worry or fear.”

When *Esav* died and went to the Upper World, he demanded the portion in *Olam Haba* that *Yaakov* had promised him. He was told that *Yaakov* only promised him a portion in *Olam*

*Haba* so that he should be able to enjoy *Olam Haze*. His promise worked, as Esav did fully enjoy *Olam Haze* after hearing it. Therefore, he had

already received all that was coming to him and he had no rights to any portion in *Olam Habah*.

עָקַב אֲשֶׁר שָׁמַע אֲבָרָהָם בְּקוֹלִי וַיִּשְׁמַר מִשְׁמֵרֹתַי מִצְוֹתַי וְגו' (כו, ה)

Because Avrohom listened to My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments...”  
(26:5)

### Reward for Chesed in This World:

The Beer Mayim Chaim asks that the Gemara tells us that “there is no reward for mitzvos in this world” (Kiddushin 39B). If so, how could Hashem promise Avrohom that he would be rewarded by being given the land if he obeyed His commands?

He answers by noting the *pasuk* uses the word “*eikev*”, rather than simply saying that Avrohom will be rewarded “for listening” (“*al asher shama*”) to Hashem. This is because the word “*eikev*”, which literally means a consequence or

secondary aspect, can be used to mean something that is secondary to the reward for the mitzvah itself. In other words, the reward Avrohom received in this world was “the fruit” of his mitzvos, with the actual main reward reserve for *Olam Haba*. This is as the Mishnah says (Peah 1:1) that they are mitzvos which a person is rewarded with “fruits” in this world but the main reward – the “*keren*” - is received in the World to Come.

The Rambam explains that Mishnah by stating that every mitzvah listed there is a *mitzvah kein odom l'chaveiro*. Such mitzvos have two parts. 1. The



mitzvos were given by Hashem, who commanded us to emulate His ways. Just like He is kind and merciful, we also are commanded to act in that way, and we will be rewarded for obeying His command. 2. We will be rewarded for the good deed of helping others and providing benefits to them.

The "keren" of the mitzvah is to fulfill the command of Hashem, and the reward for that is reserved for Olam Haba. Other mitzvos, such as putting on *tefillin* or wearing *tzitzis*, which do not provide benefit to other people, also have such a "keren", and the reward for them is only received in Olam Haba. The reason for this is that there is no pleasure in this world that could ever come close to the reward Hashem designates for one who

fulfills His mitzvos. The proof of this is from the fact that Nevuchadnetzar was rewarded with ruling over the entire world merely for taking three steps in honor of Hashem (as is stated in Sanhedrin 96A). If so, what possible reward could be given to someone who walks hundreds of steps to go to shul or who exerts real efforts to do any mitzvah? Obviously, it is only possible to reward him in Olam Haba.

The "fruits" of a *mitzvah bein odom l'chaveiro* is the reward one receives for providing benefit to his friend. This reward for the "secondary aspect" of a mitzvah can be given in this world, and one receives all kinds of goodness in return for doing *chesed* with others.

וַיִּצְוּ אַבְיִמֶלֶךְ אֶת כָּל הָעָם לֵאמֹר הַנִּגַע בְּאִישׁ הַזֶּה וּגְו' (כו, יא)

And Avimelech commanded the entire nation saying: Anyone who touches this man... (26:11)

## Accepting to Serve Hashem with Mesiras Nefesh:

The word “*laymor*” (saying) seems to be unnecessary. Sefer Agra D’Kallah writes that it is used as a hint to the concept of the “*mesiras nefesh*” – willingness to give up one’s life for Hashem – which one must have in mind while reciting Kriyas Shema, and how when one says Shema, he must think that he is ready to accept any form of death to sanctify His name.

It is known that when one makes a *Kiddush Hashem*, he creates a “*yichud elyon*” – a unification of Hashem’s glory. So too, if one accepts to serve Him with *mesiras nefesh* when he recites Shema and speaks about the unification of His name, it is considered as if he made such a *Kiddush Hashem*, and he creates the same kind of

*yichud*. Therefore, even if one has committed a serious transgression that can only be atoned for with death, if he accepts to have *mesiras nefesh* while saying Kriyas Shema, it is considered as if he already sacrificed his life for Hashem, and he has created his atonement.

Accordingly, the name “Avimelech” in this *pasuk* can be seen as a hint to Hashem – our father and king. The words “the entire nation” can be understood as a reference to His nation, Klal Yisroel. “*Laymor*” can mean to say Kriyas Shema twice every day. “Anyone who touches this man” can be understood as using the words of Shema to connect with “the Man”, i.e. Hashem. “And His wife” can be a reference to His holy Shechinah. “He shall surely die” can mean one who says Kriyas Shema with *mesiras nefesh* and accepts to die for Hashem.

Thus, the *pasuk* is saying that one who says Kriyas Shema and accepts to sacrifice himself for

Hashem creates a unification of His name and His Shechinah, and brings about great things.

וַיְהִי לוֹ מִקְנֵה צֹאן וּמִקְנֵה בְקָר וּגְו' וַיִּקְנְאוּ אֹתוֹ פְּלִשְׁתִּים (כו, יד)

And he had flocks of sheep and flocks of cattle... and Plishtim envied him. (26:14)

## One Who Works with Emunah is Like One Who Learns Torah:

The Tiferes Shlomo sees in this verse a valuable lesson to all those who work for a living to support their families and, as a result, are unable to sit and learn all day and can only set aside times to study Torah in the morning and evening. The *pasuk* is telling us that if one runs his business or does his job honestly and with *emunah*, he is rewarded as if he spent his entire day learning Torah.

He explains by quoting the Gemara (Shabbos 31A) that says that when a person passes away and stands before the Heavenly

Court, he is asked if he conducted his business with *emunah*. This means that one is asked if he did business according to the ways of the Torah. He is asked if he made sure to avoid dishonesty, theft, and the like. If the answer is yes, then every moment that he spent working is considered as if he that time was spent learning Torah. This is because every second that such a person works, he has to keep the Torah's laws in mind to ensure that he is not transgressing any prohibition. Thus, he actually is thinking Torah thoughts as he works, and it is as if he is sitting and learning.

Accordingly, the *pasuk* is saying that although Avrohom had a lot of sheep and cattle, and

he had to work to care for them, he still had “*avodah rabbah*”, a lot of *avodas Hashem*, meaning that he did his work in the ways of the Torah and, therefore, was considered to have been learning

Torah all day. For this reason, “the Plishtim were jealous of him”, as they saw that he had both wealth and greatness in Torah.

**וַיִּשְׁבְּעוּ אִישׁ לְאָחִיו וַיִּשְׁלָחֵם יִצְחָק וַיֵּלְכוּ מֵאִתּוֹ בְּשָׁלוֹם (כו, לא)**

And they swore one to the other, and Yitzchok escorted them, and they went away from him in peace. (26:31)

### Leaving the Tzadik With a Broken Spirit:

Rav Bunim of Peshischa *zy”a* states that from this *pasuk*, we can see the difference between a Jew and a non-Jew.

When a Jew takes leave after visiting a *tzadik*, he walks out from the holy place with a broken heart. He feels terrible

that he has to leave the presence of someone he knows is on a much higher level than himself. However, when Avimelech and his household members took leave of Yitzchok they didn't feel bad at all. Rather, “they went away from him in peace.” They were not upset at all that they were leaving him.

**אוֹלֵי יָמַי אָבִי וְגו' וְהִבְאֵתִי עָלַי קָלְלָה וְלֹא בְרָכָה (כו, יב)**

Perhaps my father will touch me... and I will bring upon myself a curse and not a blessing. (27:12)

## Hashem Derives Pleasure from Torah Shelo L'Shma:

Sefer Zera Kodesh says that this verse is a hint that a person should study Torah even if it is *shelo l'shma*. The Gemara (Sanhedrin 105B) describes Torah and mitzvos as being “tasty” to Hashem. Accordingly, the *pasuk* that speaks about bringing “*matamim*” (tasty things) to “the Father” can be understood as saying that one can offer his Torah to Hashem “so that He will bless him”, meaning that one may learn Torah for ulterior motives and still be rewarded.

While some dishonesty is inherent in such learning – just like Yaakov tried to get the *brachos* through tricking his father – one still can derive the benefit of the *brachos* that Hashem provides even for Torah *shelo l'shma*.

The *pasuk* uses the word “*yimsheni*” (touch me) as a hint to the Gemara (Eruvin 13B) that says: “It was concluded that it would have been better for a person not to be born; however, now that one has been born, he should inspect his ways, and some say that he should feel (*yemashmesh*) his ways. The Chozeh of Lublin zy”*a* explains the word “*yemashmesh*” to mean that one should feel out his actions to see if they are truly pure and were done with the best of intentions. Thus, the *pasuk* can be read as saying that Yitzchok told Rivkah that he was worried that his Torah and mitzvos were *shelo l'shma* because they weren’t done with the best intentions and, therefore, he would receive a curse instead of a blessing.

She replied that she would be willing to take this curse, meaning that even Torah *shelo*

*l'shma* is worthy of a Divine *bracha*.

In this vein, the Shinover Rov *zy"y* would say that if one learns

Torah in our times with intentions of being recognized as a “*Sheiner Yid*” – a scholarly, honorable person – it is still considered *Torah l'shma*.

וַיִּתֵּן לְךָ הָאֱלֹקִים מַטְלַת הַשָּׁמַיִם וּמִשְׁמַנֵּי הָאָרֶץ וּגו' (כו, כח)

And may Hashem give you of the dew of the Heavens and the fatness of the earth.  
(27:28)

## He Was Granted Blessing Directly From Heaven:

The Degel Machaneh Efraim quotes the Zohar Hakadosh (Chelek 1, 143B) that asks: How was the *bracha* Yaakov received better than the *bracha* that Esav received? Yaakov was told that Hashem would give him from the dew of the Heavens, while Esav was told he would receive ‘the fatness of the land as his dwelling place’. How is one blessing better than the other?

The Degel Machaneh Efraim answers that the *pasuk* says that his blessing would be given to him by “Elokim”, whereas by

Esav it merely says that he will receive his blessing but it does not say that it will be given to him by Hashem. He explains that Esav was told that he would have good land, but if the land is affected by a bad *mazal* or astrological sign, or if the country where the land is located is struck with a drought or hunger, his land would not fare better than everyone else’s. Yaakov, on the other hand, was told that his blessing would be provided directly by Hashem, meaning that in times of need he could turn to Hashem in prayer and He would provide for him, even if a *mazal* or other force

would otherwise have negatively affected his land.

This concept is seen from stories in the Gemara (see Taanis 24-25) that describe how great men were able to make rain fall during times of drought through their prayers. This is also seen from the story of Eliyahu Hanavi (1 Malachim 18:45) who made it rain through his *tefillos*.

Therefore, if one Jew lives in an area that is also populated by non-Jews, they too will benefit from his *tefillos*. If he prays and makes it rain, they will also benefit from the rainfall, even if their *mazal* dictates that they shouldn't. This is the *bracha* that Yaakov received that Hashem would give him good land and dew from the Heavens.

וְעַל סֶרְבֵּךָ תִּחְיֶה וְאַתָּה אֶחֱיֶה תַעֲבֹד וְגו' (כז, מ)

And you shall live by your sword. (27:40)

### Life From His Sword:

Rav Pinchos of Koretz zy"l explains this *pasuk* to mean that Esav's entire life is dependent on his sword. He can only live and derive enjoyment in life through stabbing, harming and hurting others. A Jew, however, has no enjoyment from hurting others. On the contrary, his pleasure in life comes from helping others.

that Rav Pinchos would get very upset at people who derived enjoyment from hurting others, even if they only enjoyed saying mean jokes about other people. He would say that getting pleasure from someone else's pain or discomfort is the character trait of Esav. Only non-Jews enjoy the pain of others but a Jew should not get any pleasure from such things.

Sefer Imrei Pinchos relates

וַיִּשְׂטֹם עֵשָׂו אֶת יַעֲקֹב עַל הַבְּרָכָה וְגו' וַיֹּאמֶר עֵשָׂו בְּלִבּוֹ יִקְרְבוּ יְמֵי אָבִל  
 אָבִי וְאַתְרָגָה אֶת יַעֲקֹב אָחִי (כז, מא)

And Esav hated Yaakov because of the blessing... and Esav said in his heart, "The days of mourning for my father will draw near. I will then kill my brother Yaakov."

(27:41)

## He Did Not Want to Mourn Twice:

The Shach al Hatorah writes that Esav didn't want to kill Yaakov now because he would have to sit *shiva* for him, and when his father, Yitzchok, would later die, he would have to sit *shiva* again. Therefore, he preferred to wait until Yitzchok died and he had to sit *shiva* anyway, and to kill Yaakov then, so that he wouldn't have to sit *shiva* twice.

## Stinginess in Blessing His Brothers:

The Ye'aros Devash (Chelek 1, Drush 5) explains the difference between an *aveirah* *bein odom l'makom* and an

*aveirah bein odom l'makom* by saying that when one commits a sin against Hashem, it is easy to feel regret and do *teshuva*, but when one does an *aveirah* against his fellow man, it is much harder.

As proof to this, he notes that if someone comes to a Rov and says that he found *treif* food or *chametz* on Pesach in his house, and the Rov tells him that he must discard of it immediately, he will obey the ruling, even if it is a large monetary loss. He will even thank the Rov for saving him from a transgression. However, if a person takes his friend to a *din Torah* and the Dayanim rule that he must pay \$100, he will not take kindly to the ruling and he will hate the judges for making him pay. A



person doesn't get as upset about money being thrown away as he does about money being given to his friend, as one will become jealous of his friend and he will begrudge him the money.

Baalei Mussar write that this was Esav's mindset. He didn't really care about the *brachos* that he lost, and he would have been satisfied with the blessing he received to "live by the sword." The only reason he was upset was because Yaakov took the *brachos*, and he was jealous of him.

It is related that two merchants once came to Rav Chaim Soloveitchik *zt"l*, the Rov of Brisk, for a *din Torah*. After they both laid out their claims, Rav Chaim ruled in favor of one of them, and the other merchant became very upset and screamed that the ruling was wrong.

Rav Chaim remained firm and

ordered the man to follow his ruling. After the man left, Rav Chaim asked those in the room, "Why is it that when a Rov rules that a cow that is worth thousands of dollars is *treif*, the ruling is accepted without question but when a Rov rules against someone in a *din Torah*, even if it is only over a small amount of money, the ruling is not accepted and the losing party cries and complains?"

No one offered an answer, so Rav Chaim said, "I will explain it to you. The *middah* of jealousy clouds a person's mind. A person is prepared to lose thousands of dollars as long as no one else gets that money. If someone else takes his money, however, he can't take it!"

He used this idea to explain the pasuk (Bereishis 4:6) that says that Hashem asked Kayin, "Why are you upset?" What was the question? Kayin was upset

because Hashem did not accept his *korban*. What was Hashem asking?

The answer is that Hashem was asking Kayin if he really was upset that his offering was rejected, or if he was upset because Hevel's was accepted!

### The Greatness of Generosity:

The Mishnah (Avos 2:12) relates that Rav Eliezer said that the best *middah* is to have an "*ayin tova*". Rabenu Yona explains this to mean the trait of generosity. The reason it is such a good *middah* is because a generous person who has a "good eye" and sees the good in others will be worthy of acquiring all other good *middos*.

### One Who Pursues Tzedakah Will be Granted Wealth:

The Gemara (Bava Basra 9B) says: "One who pursues *tzedakah* and *chesed* will find life, *tzedakah* and honor (Mishlei 21:21)." What does it mean when it says that one who pursues *tzedakah* will find *tzedakah*? This teaches us that if a person looks for ways to give *tzedakah*, Hashem will provide him with money in order to be able to give *tzedakah*."

The Maharsha explains that the Gemara is speaking about a person who does not have money to give, but he runs after others and convinces them to give *tzedakah*. **The reward for such a person is that Hashem gives him money so that he can give *tzedakah* himself.**

## 5 Kislev – Yahrzeit of the Maharsha Zy" a

### A Full Ship:

Sefer Maasoh Ish (Chelek 3, page 88) relates that there was a family from Hungary who managed to escape to Eretz Yisroel during World War 2 on a small ship. Their relatives in Eretz Yisroel had been informed that they were coming, and they eagerly awaited their arrival. The scheduled time for the ship's arrival came and went, and it did not appear. The relatives were very worried and they went to ask the Chazon Ish *zt"l* what to do. He told them, "In the Hungarian yeshivos they learn a lot of Maharsha. Therefore, the ship is full of Maharsha and it definitely will be safe."

A short time later, the ship arrived safely.

### Saving a Man in the

### Upper World:

During the Maharsha's lifetime, a sinful man passed away. When the *taharah* was being performed on his body, one of the members of the Chevrah Kadisha shamed the man by pinching his nose. That night, the dead man came to that person in a dream and told him that he had complaints against him for embarrassing him. The Chevrah Kadisha member replied, "You are a *rasha* and the disgrace I caused you was to provide at least a small *kaparah* for your sins!"

The dead man was not appeased and said that he was viewed differently in the world of Truth. In Olam Haba, he said, he was treated like a *talmid chochom* because he had once saved a Torah scholar from drowning and had subsequently

supported the man financially.

Therefore, the dead man demanded that the Chevrah Kadisha member appear with him at a *din Torah* before the Heavenly Court, which meant that the man would have to die. The man ran to the Maharsha and told him about the dream and the Maharsha told him, “Tonight, you will sleep in my house.”

At midnight, the man began to scream in his sleep, as he was having another dream. The Maharsha stood at his side and spoke to the dead man. He asked, “How are things going for you?”

The dead man said, “When I went to the Upper World, I was greeted by damaging angels who were created by my sins but they could not touch me because an announcement had gone out saying that I had the status of a *talmid chochom* because of the

man I had saved.”

The Maharsha told him, “You should know that Hashem is not a ‘*vatran*’. He does not simply forgive all sins. You did many sins in this world but the merit of saving a *talmid chochom*’s life is protecting you from punishment in Gehenim. But if you harm this member of the Chevrah Kadisha, you will lose your protection and you will receive your rightful punishment.”

After the Maharsha finished speaking, the dead man disappeared and did not bother the Chevrah Kadisha member again.

### **Providing the Hungry With Bread:**

Sefer Toldos Maharsha relates that a local baker once came to the Maharsha’s *bais medrash* in order to daven with the *tzibur*.

The Maharsha saw that the baker looked upset, so he called him over and asked why he appeared so sad.

The baker said, “Rebbi, I prepared many loaves of bread this week to sell on market day but I was only able to sell a small amount of what I baked. Now, I am left with a lot of bread and no buyers.”

The Maharsha couldn’t stand seeing the man so sad, so he told him, “Bring all of the bread to my house.”

When the loaves of bread were brought to his house, he paid for it all and distributed the bread to the poor.

### **Released From a Difficulty:**

The same sefer relates that the Maharsha learned Torah day and night and since he loved Torah

so much, he did not want to doze off for a moment and miss out on a second of learning. To this end, he grew his hair long and he would tie it to a hook on the wall. If he fell asleep and his head drooped, he would be jerked awake by his hair. In this way, he stayed up all night learning.

The only night that he did not learn was on the night of “Nittel”. On this night, he would make a reckoning of all of his finances so that he would know how much to give to *maaser*.

One year, there was a sinful person who lived in the city of Ostroha who disliked the Maharsha. This man went to the authorities and made up a libel against the Maharsha, falsely claiming that he had cursed the Christian religion. As proof, he related that the Maharsha would not learn Torah on the night of Nittel because he believed that

this night was impure.

The Maharsha, who was unaware of any of this, sat down that Nittel night and started to make his financial calculations. Suddenly, while he was writing, a sefer fell off his bookshelf and landed on the floor. The Maharsha quickly picked it up, kissed it and put it back in its place. However, another sefer then fell from the shelf and landed on the ground.

The Maharsha again bent down to pick it up, but the same thing then happened a third time.

The Maharsha realized that this was not a coincidence. He opened the sefer and looked into it, as if he were studying it, and, at that exact moment, the door was forced open and a group of policemen rushed in, with the informer at their lead.

When they saw the Maharsha learning from a sefer, they turned around and left, and the informers plan went to naught.

May the memory of the tzadik be a source of blessing for Klal Yisroel.





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