

בעזחשי"ת

The Way of Emunah

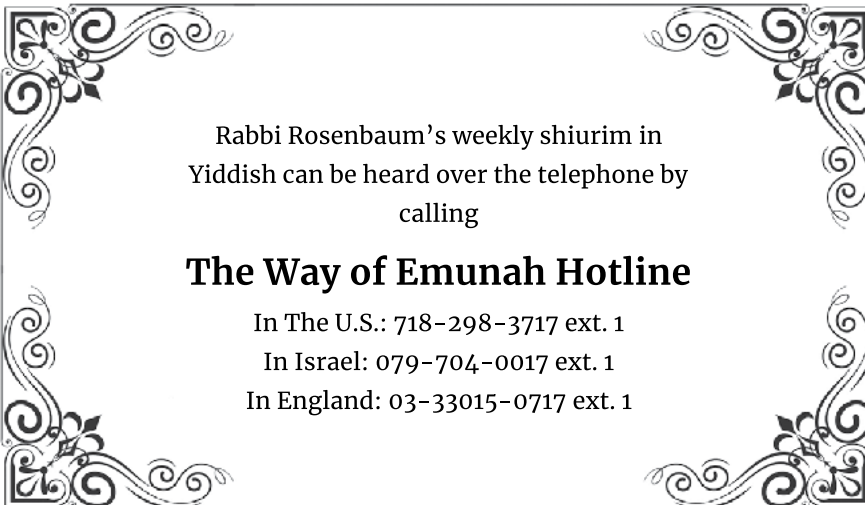
Collected Thoughts
on the Weekly Parshah

From

**Rabbi Meir Isamar
Rosenbaum shlita**

Bamidbor - Shavuos

יחזיק יקר:
מצאת איתו בבורח"ד?
אתה יטול לקחת איתו בורח"ד



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Parshas Bamidbor - Shavuos



Parshas Bamidbor

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וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה בַּמִּדְבָּר סִינַי בְּאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד בְּאֶחָד לַחֹדֶשׁ הַשֵּׁנִי בַּשָּׁנָה
הַשֵּׁנִית לְצֵאתָם וְגו' מִצְרַיִם לֵאמֹר (א, א)

And Hashem spoke to Moshe in the Sinai desert in the Ohel Moed on the first of the second month in the second year from leaving the land of Egypt saying. (1:1)

The Way of Avodas Hashem:

Rav Yaakov of Maglanitzazy" (Sefer Emes L'Yaakov) explains the word "*bamidbor*" to be a reference to "*dibur*" (speech). Accordingly, the *pasuk* is saying that one must use his speech for all areas of *avodas Hashem*, not merely his thoughts. The word "*sinai*" indicates that the proof to this is from Har Sinai, about which it is said that Hashem "spoke" (Shemos 20:1). We see that Hashem gave us the Aseres Hadibros with speech to teach us that speech is necessary for *avodas Hashem*.

The *pasuk* continues to tell us how one should start serving Hashem. The word "*ohel*" can mean an "*ohel arai*" (temporary

structure). Thus, the *pasuk* is saying that if one's *avodas Hashem* starts in a temporary manner, meaning that it is not very strong or consistent, it will lead to serving Him in a vibrant, continual way. It will become a "*moed*", meaning it will be a permanent structure. The important thing is that one should start with "*echad*" – the first time – and then continue to "*l'chodesh*" – a "*hischadshus*", renewal, of *avodas Hashem*. One can then move on to "*hasheini*", serving Hashem in a second, continuous manner. It will then be "*b'shana*", repeated again and again, leading to "*hasheinis*", additional renewals and continuations, through which one rises from level to level.

The *pasuk* goes on to say that one should not be discouraged if the *yeitzer hara* tries to convince him that he is unworthy of attempting to begin to serve Hashem. The words “from leaving the land of Mitzrayim” indicate that **even if one is on**

the 49th level of impurity, like Klal Yisroel was when it left Egypt, he can still rise up to serve Hashem on a high level. All of this can be achieved through “*laymor*”, the power of serving Hashem through speech.

שָׂאוּ אֶת רֹאשׁ כָּל עַדְת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְמִשְׁפְּחֹתָם לְבֵית אֲבֹתָם וְגו' (א, ב)

Lift up the heads of the entire assemblage of the children of Yisroel to their families to the house of their fathers. (1:2)

No Sadness:

Rav Hirsh of Rimanov zy”a writes that everyone goes through times when they feel lowly and downtrodden and think they are very far from any form of *kedusha*. At such times, one may feel that he is unworthy of serving Hashem and that He does not desire his Torah and *tefillah* since he has done so many sinful things. This can lead a person to fall to severe depression. To counter this mindset, the Torah says to lift up

the heads of the assemblage of Klal Yisroel, meaning that **everyone should have their heads held high and they should not be sad.** Even if one knows that he has done bad things in the past, **he should accept to do good in the future and recognize that his sins will be forgiven and he will be given a chance** for a new start.

Rav Bunim of Peshischa zy”a would encourage those who felt depressed by saying that the final letters of the words “*v’hayisa ach sameach*”

(Devarim 16:15) spell the word “Chatach”, which is a holy name that represents an abundance of *parnassah*. This indicates that **through simcha, one can receive an abundance of livelihood,** and depression pushes away this abundance.

Rav Bunim further stated that we see that many unlearned, unrefined people succeed very much in business. The reason for this is that since they are unthinking, simple people, nothing really disturbs them, and they are always happy. **Their happiness allows them to access the Divine abundance of *parnassah*, even if they are unworthy.**

Furthermore, he says, we see that there are more wealthy men who are simple people than there are wealthy men who are *tzadikim* and *talmidei chochomim*. He explains this phenomenon by citing the words

of the Chovos Halevavos (Shaar Habitachon), who writes that one may not “make deals” with Hashem. One may not tell Him: If You give me a lot of money, I will do a lot of mitzvos with the money.

***Talmidei chochomim* often say to Hashem: If you give me money, I will open a yeshiva or a Kollel. They speak as if they will “do Hashem a favor” if he just gives them some money. Hashem responds: I can take care of Myself. I can open yeshivas and kollelim on My own. I don’t need your help.**

Simple men, on the other hand, don’t make deals like this with Hashem. They just say: I need money to buy a house or to pay my bills. **Since their *tefillos* are genuine and true, Hashem fulfills their will.**

וּבְנִסַּע הַמִּשְׁכָּן יוֹרִידוּ אֹתוֹ הַלְוִיִּם וּבְהֶנֶת הַמִּשְׁכָּן יִקְיֵמוּ אֹתוֹ הַלְוִיִּם וְגו' (א, נא)

And when the Mishkan traveled, the Leviim took it down. And when the Mishkan rested, the Leviim erected it. (1:51)

Difficulties With Avodas Hashem on the Roads:

The Kobriner Rebbe zy"l explains that travel often leads one's mind to become unsettled, which can lead to an inability to serve Hashem properly. Therefore, staying in one place is more conducive to serving Hashem in a settled, composed manner. This is hinted to in the *pasuk* that says that when the Mishkan traveled, the Leviim "took it down", hinting that traveling leads to a lowering of *ruchnius*, whereas when it rested, they "put it up", hinting that staying in one place creates an increase in *ruchnius*.

The Ropshitzer Rebbe zy"l says that this is hinted to in Tehillim. The Mizmar that begins "*ashrei yoshvei veisecha*" (Tehillim 84), concludes with: "*tehilas Hashem yidaber pi*" (my mouth will speak praises of Hashem), which indicates that remaining in one's home leads to a high level of *avodas Hashem*. On the other hand, the Mizmar that begins "*ashrei temimei derech*" (praiseworthy are those on the perfect road, *ibid*:119) concludes with the words "I went astray like a lost lamb", indicating that traveling leads to spiritual difficulties.

כָּל הַפְּקָדִים לְמַחֲנֵה רְאוּבֵן וְגו' וְשָׁנִים יִסְעוּ (ב, טז)

The total sum of the count of Reuven's camp...they shall be the second to travel. (2:16)

The Years Fly By:

When the Satmar Rov zy”a was in Yerushalaim, he was asked to come to Talmud Torah Chayei Olam to test the boys on their learning. During the exam, the Rov asked one boy to explain this *pasuk*. As he was reading it, he made a mistake. Instead of saying, “*V’shnayim yisa’u*. And they traveled second”, he said,

“*Veshanim yisa’u*. And the years travel.”

Everyone laughed at the mistake but the Rov nodded his head and said, “It was worth it for me to come here to hear this translation of the *pasuk*. This is an important *mussar* lesson. **A person has to know that the years really do fly by.**”

כָּל פְּקוּדֵי הַלְוִיִּם וּגו' מִבֶּן חֹדֶשׁ וְמַעֲלָה שְׁנִיִּם וְעֶשְׂרִים אָלֶּף (ב, לט)

The total sum of the count of the Leviim... from the age of one month and up, **22,000. (2:39)**

The Aliyah That Created Great Wealth:

There once was a *chasid* named R' Fishel Meir Salka who made his living as a wagon driver. He would transport people in his elegant wagon on short and long trips, and he made a good living doing this job.

to Ziditchoiv for Shavuot, where they would spend the *yomtov* with their Rebbe, Rav Isaac'l of Ziditchoiv zy”a. They set off on the journey before the Shabbos prior to Shavuot, which was Parshas Bamidbar, and R' Fishel Meir also spent that Shabbos in Ziditchoiv.

A group of *chasidim* once hired R' Fishel Meir to take them

Rav Isaac'l himself served as the *baal koreh*, and, therefore,

R' Fishel Meir greatly desired to have an *aliyah*. Before Shabbos, he gave the Gabbai and nice sum of money and asked him to give him an *aliyah*, telling him that it didn't need to be an especially prestigious *aliyah*, and even a "*hosafa*" would be okay.

The Gabbai did call R' Fishel Meir up for a *hosafa*. The *aliyah* ended with the words of this *pasuk* "22,000", and he read the word with a motion that "**the Parshah will end here.**" This

puzzled all those who were present.

Upon returning home, R' Fishel Meir got involved in business. By the next Shavuos, he had amassed a fortune of 22,000 gold coins. Everyone could see that this was a result of the *bracha* the *tzadik* gave him during Kriyas Hatorah. R' Fishel Meir became a close *chasid* of the Rebbe, and he would travel to him every Shavuos.

בַּיּוֹם עֲשֵׂתִי עֶשֶׂר יוֹם וּגו' פַּגְעִיאל בֶּן עֲכָרָן (ז, עב)

On the 12th day... Pagiel son of Achran. (7:72)

Oppressing With His Prayers:

The Rebbe of Volednick zy"va (Sefer Sheeris Yisroel) writes that the name "Pagiel" can mean "to ask of Hashem." (The word "*pegiah*" connotes *tefillah*, as in Yirmiyahu 7:16.) However, the words "*ben achran*" indicates

being an "*ocher Yisroel*" (oppressor of Yisroel). Thus, the *pasuk* is saying that someone can pray to Hashem and still be oppressing his fellow Jews. An example of this is seen in the Gemara (Brachos 63A) that states that even a thief may daven to Hashem that he should succeed in stealing from people.

In this vein, it is related that there once was a famous thief, he would pray every day, “Ribono Shel Olam, I ask that if it is decreed that Jews should have their money stolen, I should be the *shliach* to do it...”

Praying Until Receiving an Answer:

We may add that Rav Dovid of Lelov *zy”a* says that “*vayifgah*” is a *lashon* of ‘*paygen*’ (Yiddish for ‘disturbing’ or ‘pleading’.) Thus, the *pasuk* that says (Bereishis 28:11): “*Vayifgah b’makom*”, means that **we must disturb Hashem and plead to Him**, and not let up until He answers us. Accordingly, the name “Pagiell” also indicates that one must disturb Hashem with his prayers.

The Prayers of an Am

Ha’aretz are Beloved by Hashem:

It is related that before the greatness of the Baal Shem Tov *zy”a* became known to the world, he would travel to small villages to encourage the simple Jews who lived there and draw them close to their Father in Heaven. One day, he came to a small roadside inn that was owned by a Jew. The children greeted him warmly and invited him in, offering him food and drink. When he asked them where their father was, they said that he had gone to shul to daven, so the Besht waited for him.

After waiting for a few hours, the father finally came home very late at night. He greeted his guest and apologized for coming home so late. He explained that he was an unlearned man and he read the words of davening very slowly. Additionally, he didn’t know which *tefillos* he was

supposed to say at which times, so he read the entire Siddur, from beginning to end, for each *tefillah* of the day.

The Besht said that he could help him. He showed him how to use a Siddur, and then he wrote notes on small pieces of paper. In Yiddish, he wrote: morning prayers, afternoon prayers, night prayers, prayers for after a meal, prayers for Shabbos, prayers for Rosh Chodesh, etc., and he put each note in the proper place in the Siddur. The innkeeper was overjoyed that he could now daven properly, and he profusely thanked the Besht.

A few hours later, the Besht left the inn. A short time afterwards, the Siddur fell to the ground, and all the notes fell out. The innkeeper began to cry as he didn't know if anyone would ever come to his inn again who could put the notes back in their

proper places. He grabbed the Siddur and the notes and began in the direction that the Besht went. After running for a few miles, he saw the Besht in the distance. He saw him approaching a deep river, and he wondered how he would cross it. He wanted to scream at him that it was dangerous to try to cross the raging waters but, to his amazement, he saw him place his handkerchief in the water and walk on it as if it were a sturdy bridge.

A short while later, the innkeeper reached the river and he copied what he had seen the Besht do. He put his handkerchief in the water and walked on it to the other side. When he reached the Besht, he tearfully told him that the notes had fallen out of the Siddur and he asked them to put them back in the right places.

The Besht asked him how he had crossed the river and he

answered, "I did the same thing you did!"

When he heard this, Besht said, "It seems to me that Hashem likes your *tefillos* just the way they are. The best thing to do would be to continue davening as you did until now."

A similar story is related about a city that concluded the recitation of Megilas Esther on Purim but they had no Siddur that contained the piyyut of Asher Heini, which is customarily recited after the Megillah, and no one knew it by heart. Suddenly, one unlearned man said that he knew Asher Heini by heart, and he proceeded to recite it out loud, with everyone repeating after him. This created a great commotion, as everyone thought this man must be a *tzadik nistar* who was only pretending to be an *am ha'arets*. However, he explained that the reason he knew Asher

Heini by heart was because he didn't know which *tefillos* to say at which time, so he said the entire Siddur every day.

The Bird Came to Heal:

The power of *tefillah* goes beyond nature, as is seen from the following story:

In a city near the home of Rav Akiva Eiger zy"ta, there lived a Jew who became very sick with a serious illness. His family had him seen by the best doctors but they all said that there was no cure and his days were numbered. From day to day, his health deteriorated, and his family grew more and more despondent.

One day, news circulated in town that the king was going to be visiting the city. Whenever the king traveled, his entourage included the royal physician, and the family decided that they

would try to get this expert doctor to examine the sick man and see if he could suggest a cure. And so it was. They managed to see the doctor and ask him to come to the sick man. However, after his examination, he too said that there was nothing he could do for the man.

Rav Akiva Eiger was also in that town at the time and he heard about the man's plight. He asked to meet with the doctor and he told him, "May I ask you a question? If the king would have this same disease, would you also say that there was nothing you could do for him?"

The doctor was very shaken up by the question and he said, "I'll tell you the truth. There is one cure for this disease. In the middle of the desert, in the area where dangerous, wild animals roam free, there lives a certain bird. If you can catch this bird and cook it, and give the soup to

the sick man to drink, he will be healed.

"However, it would be almost impossible to catch this bird. The king has many soldiers whom he could send to ward off the wild beasts, identify the rare bird and catch it. For him, it might be possible. But it would be highly improbably for a regular person to get this done. That's why I said that there is nothing I could do for this man."

Rav Akiva Eiger thought to himself: Why is this man worse than the king? If a cure exists for his ailment, why wouldn't Hashem send it to this Jewish man?

He went into his room and began to daven to Hashem, beseeching Him to send this Jew the cure he needs. As he stood there immersed in prayer, someone came to tell him that a strange bird had just landed on

the street, the likes of which no one had ever seen before. He asked for the bird to be brought to him and for it be slaughtered, cooked into a soup and fed to the sick man. He also asked for the feathers of the bird to be saved.

As soon as the man drank the soup, his condition started to improve. He got a little better every day until he was completely healthy.

Several months later, the king's doctor was again in the city and he decided to go see if the sick man was still alive. He went to his house and was

amazed to see him walking around, hale and healthy. The man told him the entire story about the bird but the doctor could not believe it. The man then showed him the feathers he had saved, and the doctor confirmed that they did come from that bird.

The doctor was speechless with amazement. Finally, he said, "Now I see the power of Jewish prayers. Even for the king, it is extremely difficult to get ahold of this bird but Rabbi Eiger got it through the power of his prayers!"

Shavuos

Naaseh V'Nishmah With "Echad":

We recite in the piyyut: "*U'bau kulam b'bris Yachad naaseh v'nishmah amru k'echad.*" (And they all came with one bond.

They said *Naaseh V'Nishmah* as one.) Rav Hirsh of Rimanov zy"l explains this to be referring to the word "*echad*" in Kriyas Shema. The piyyut is saying that Klal Yisroel said *Naaseh V'Nishmah* with fiery

enthusiasm, just like we say “*Shema Yisroel Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad*” with the same amount of excitement.

The Bas Kol Rings Out Every Year:

One year on Shavuos, Rav Shloimke of Zhvil zy”a told his *shamash*, Rav Eliyahu Roth zt”l, that a *bas kol* (Heavenly voice) rings out every year before Shavuos and asks Klal Yisroel: “Are you ready to receive the Torah?” This is as the *pasuk* says (Shemos 19:5): “If you will surely hear My voice and observe My covenant and be to Me as a chosen nation.”

He then told him, “The *bas kol* just rang out. Therefore, we should shout together; ‘*Naaseh V’Nishmah!*’”

Everyone Can Return:

We see from this story that we have a chance every year to accept the Torah anew and say that “we will do and we will hear.” One may not think that he is too sinful to connect to Hashem, as He allows us to return to Him if we only commit to do so.

When we received the Torah, Hashem said that He would lift us up on the wings of eagles (Shemos 19:4). The Yismach Yisroel asks why we will be lifted up specifically by an eagle. He answers in the name of Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev zy”a that an eagle sheds its old feathers from time to time and grows new ones (see Rashi on Tehillim 103:5). Hashem said that He would carry us on an eagle to hint that we should never despair or feel like there is no hope because of our many *aveiros*. Even if we sin, and we feel like “our feathers have fallen

off”, we should not despair because we can do teshuva and begin anew. Just like an eagle grows new feathers, we can renew ourselves through teshuva and start over once again.

Everyone Has a Connection to the Torah:

Every Jew is connected to the Torah. This is symbolized by the fact that there are 600,000 letters in the Torah, which corresponds to the 600,000 souls in Klal Yisroel. Every individual has his or her personal letter in the Torah, and, therefore, everyone has an innate connection to it.

The Vizhnitzer Rebbe of Monsey zy”a related that his grandfather, the Ahavas Yisroel of Vizhnitz zy”a, once said on Shavuos that the Sanzer Rov stayed up all night on both nights of *yomtov* and he wanted to do the same thing. He asked his

Rebbitzen *a”h* if he could do this, and she said, “What *shaychus* do you have to Sanz?”

He answered, “**Sanz is Torah and every Yid has a *shaychus* to Torah!**”

The Year and Its Blessings Begin on Shavuos:

The Gemara says (Megillah 31B): “We read the *klalos* in Toras Kohanim (Parshas Bechukosai) before Atzeres ((Shavuos), and those in Mishnah Torah (Parshas Ki Savo) before Rosh Hoshanah so that the year and its curses should end and a new year and its blessing should begin.” The Gemara asks that it is understandable how this applies to Rosh Hashanah, but what does this have to do with Shavuos? It answers that Shavuos is also a “New Year”, as

the fruits of the tree are judged on Shavuos.

We see from this Gemara that Shavuos is called “Rosh Hashanah”. The Meor Vashemesh (Parshas Bechukosai) explains that just like the period before Rosh Hashanah is a time for *teshuva*, as the judgment is approaching and we need Hashem to forgive our sins and decree upon us a good year, so too the days of Sefirah that precede Shavuos are a time to repent and return to Hashem. If we do this, Hashem will forgive our sins on Shavuos and grant us a New Year of blessing.

Going to the Nations to Benefit Klal Yisroel:

Chazal say (Avodah Zara 2B) that Hashem went to every nation (and asked if they wanted the Torah), and they did not

accept it – until He came to Yisroel and they accepted it. Sefer Emes L’Yaakov quotes the Chozeh of Lublin *zy”a* as asking why Hashem did this. Didn’t He know that the nations wouldn’t want the Torah?

He answers that Shavuos is a time when we receive good influences for the entire year, just like on Rosh Hashanah. However, the Heavenly prosecutors try to obstruct us from receiving these *hashpa’os*. To silence them, Hashem clearly showed that the nations refused to accept the Torah, yet they still are provided for in this world. Accordingly, it is a *kal v’chomer* that the Jewish people, who willingly accepted the Torah, should receive these influences of goodness and blessing.

Helping a Tavernkeeper on Shavuos:

The Gemara (Pesachim 68B) says: “Everyone agrees that on Shavuos you also need ‘*lachem*’ (part of the day to be dedicated for your own enjoyment).” Rav Meir Yechiel of Ostrovitz zy”a explains that the simple explanation of the Gemara is that on Shavuos one needs to enjoy himself by eating a *seudah* and deriving pleasure from the food and drink. However, we can also say that the Gemara is teaching us that Shavuos is an auspicious time to find success in *parnassah*. It is saying that on Shavuos, Hashem provides us with “*lachem*”, success for ourselves. This is because we receive the Torah on this day, and if someone doesn’t have livelihood (“*kemach*”), he cannot have Torah (Avos 3:17).

Sefer Siach Zekeinim (Chelek 2, page 229) relates that the Tiferes Shlomo of Radomsk zy”a once spent Shavuos in Sanz with the Divrei Chaim zy”a.

During the *tish*, the Rov’s son, the Gorlitzer Rov zy”a said, “Tatte, it is now the auspicious time to change the mazal of Feivel the tavernkeeper.”

This man, R’ Feivel, was very poor, and needed a lot of help. The Sanzer Rov said, “The Radomsker Rebbe is here with us. He holds the keys to *parnassah*.”

When R’ Feivel heard this, he asked the Radomsker Rebbe for a *bracha*. The Rebbe gave his *bracha* and from then on, R’ Feivel had sufficient livelihood.

Tikkun Through Stories of Tzadikim:

The Galanta Rov zy”a related that during the *tish* of Rav Yissochor Dov of Belz zy”a on Shavuos, the Rebbe spent a lot of time telling stories about the Besht, in honor of his Yahrzeit.

Present at the *tish* were a number of Yidden from Oberland, who whispered to each other, “Shouldn’t we be saying Tikkun Leil Shavuos now?”

The Belzer Rov realized what they were saying. He stood up and said, “The biggest tikkun in the world is to tell stories about *tzadikim!*”

Healed by Akdamus:

Sefer Ohel Shlomo (page 36) relates that a relative of the Tiferes Shlomo *zy”a* had a child who was mute. This relative was once visiting the Rebbe before Shavuos and a Machzor was sitting on the table. The Rebbe opened it and told the child, “Say the words: ‘*Akdamus Milin V’Sharos Shusa!*’”

The boy immediately began to say the words. From then on, he was able to speak.

Uplifting the Generation Through Akdamus:

Rav Yissochor Dov of Belz *zy”a* said, “A Yid must be *moser nefesh* to come to Belz to hear the words of Akdamus on Shavuos: ‘*Zakain kad shimasun shevach da shirsa kevi’im ken tihavan b’hanhu chavrusah.*’ (If we merit to hear this shira, we will also merit to dwell with *chaburos* of these *tzadikim.*)”

He added that when these words of Akdamus are recited, he uplifts everyone in his generation to a lofty level.

Continuing from Shavuos to Va’eschonon:

There is a common *minhag* to bring trees and shrubbery into the bais medrash for Shavuos. The custom of my ancestor, Rav Mordchele of Nadvorna *zy”a*, was so keep these plants there

until after Shabbos Nachamu, Parshas Va'eschanon, when the *Aseres Hadibros* are read in the Torah. People testified that an open miracle occurred in that the

plants remained fresh and crisp until they were taken down, weeks after being cut from the tree.

Yahrzeit of the Besht Hakadosh Zy"a

Believing Everything Said About Him:

The Tiferes Shmuel zy"a once asked the Divrei Chaim zy"a if all the famous stories said about the Baal Shem Tov zy"a are true. The Sanzer Rov replied, **"I don't know. But I do know that the Besht Hakadosh was capable of much greater wonders than are said of him and that he even could bring the dead back to life."**

Rav Shalom Mordechai of Berzhan zy"a writes in a letter: "I heard from the mouth of Rav Chanoch Henich of Alesk *zt"l* that he heard from the mouth of his father-in-law, the Sar Shalom

of Belz zy"a that he heard the Chozeh of Lublin zy"a say, 'If someone would tell me that he saw that the Besht made a ladder that he used to ascend to Shomayim while still alive, in his body and while wearing his clothes, I would believe it because **everything that is said about the Besht Hakadosh is believable.**'"

Sustaining the World:

Sefer Divrei Shaul (Klalei Ohraysa, page 32) writes in the name of Rav Yechezkel of Kuzhmir zy"a that the Besht said that through his *bitachon*, he could feed and sustain the

entire world. He added, “The only problem is that I don’t have a big enough pot.”

A Poor Man’s Closeness to Hashem:

Sefer Rav Yaivi (Tehillim 13) quotes the Besht as saying that a poor person has a tremendous *zechus*. Since he needs money every day, he needs to speak to Hashem every day. A rich man, on the other hand, has enough money to live on for a while, so he doesn’t speak to Hashem as often. Thus, the poor man has the *zechus* of having a closer relationship with Hashem.

However, if the rich man is a big *tzadik*, he will be smart enough to realize that even though he has money put away, he still needs Hashem to provide him with life and health every day. He will know that without Him, his money will be of no

use. Therefore, he also will daven to Hashem and ask him to allow him to remain alive and healthy so that he can benefit from his wealth.

Asking for Parnassah:

The Bais Aharon of Karlin *zy”a* says that one need not be ashamed to ask Hashem for help with *parnassah*. While the Tikkunei Zohar (22A) does say that one should not daven for *parnassah* on Yom Kippur, the Besht says that this was only in earlier generations when people were stronger and wealthier. In our times, however, we may always ask Hashem for *parnassah*.

His Neshama’s Descent to This World:

Sefer Maamar Mordechai relates that for 500 years,

tzadikim stormed the Heavens, begging for the *neshama* of the Besht to descend to this world. However, it did not want to go until it finally was forced to. The story is as follows:

There once was a big commotion in Shomayim. The *neshamos* of many *tzadikim* firmly claimed that it was time for the *geulah*. Others disagreed and argued that it was not yet the right time as many *neshamos* still needed a *tikkun* but those in favor of immediately bringing the redemption retorted that all of Klal Yisroel should not have to suffer because of these souls.

They ultimately agreed that since there was a great *neshama* amongst them, they would consult with it and ask it who was correct. They went to the *neshama* of the Baal Shem Tov with this question, and it replied that the answer is found in an explicit *pasuk* (2 Shmuel 14:14):

“He devises means that he that is banished be not cast from Him.” (Meaning that the souls in need of *tikkun* may not be abandoned.)

They asked him, “Klal Yisroel is suffering for so long because of these souls. How much longer must they suffer?”

Therefore, they asked this holy *neshama* to descend to the world to provide the *tikkun* for those souls. This led to the birth of the Baal Shem Tov.

When the Besht once was beseeching Hashem to bring the *geulah*, he received a response from Heaven: “Aren’t you the one who delayed the redemption until every soul has its *tikkun*? What do you want now?”

Through the Power of Emunah:

Rav Dovid Leikis *zy”a*, a *talmid* of the Besht, was the

father-in-law of Rav Mordechai of Chernobyl zy"ra (Rav Mordechai married his daughter after the *petirah* of his first wife). Rav Dovid once sent a message to his son-in-law that he would be coming to his city on a certain date. On the designated day, Rav Mordechai went out in a wagon to greet his father-in-law. A number of *chasidim* also went out to see the meeting of the two *tzadikim*.

The *chasidim* walked alongside the wagon for a while until Rav Dovid noticed them and asked, "Who are you?"

They answered, "We are *chasidim* of Rav Mottele of Chernobyl."

Rav Dovid asked them, "Do you have *emunah* in your Rebbe?"

They remained silent as they weren't bold enough to claim they had genuine *emunah*. Rav

Dovid then said, "Let me tell you what real *emunah* is. One Shabbos, we were eating Shalosh Seudos with the Baal Shem Tov and the *seudah* went on until very late at night. We then *bentched*, davened Maariv and made Havdalah, and immediately sat down for Melave Malka. Right after Melave Malka, the Besht told me, 'Dovid, pay for the *mehd* (alcoholic beverage made from honey).' We were all very poor and I had no money but since the Rebbe told me to pay, I had no doubt that I could do it. I reached into my pocket and took out one gold coin, and handed it over for the *mehd*. That was how powerful our *emunah* was."

Rectifying a Neshama in a Chicken:

One Thursday, in a town quite a distance from where the Besht

resided, a man sent his attendant to the local *shochet* with a chicken. The *shochet* slaughtered the chicken and thought it looked *treif* but he did not want to rule of his own, so he sent the attendant to ask the Rov. The Rov too *paskened* that the chicken was *treif*.

What they didn't know was that this chicken had within it a *gilgal* of a *neshama*, which was waiting for a Jew to eat it *l'kavod Shabbos* as its *tikkun*. In truth, the chicken was kosher and the Rov had erred in his ruling. The *neshama* went to the Besht and told him that because of the *shochet* and the Rov's mistake, it did not get its *tikkun*. It asked the Besht to travel to the city and let the Rov know he had been wrong.

On Friday, the Besht traveled to that village and davened Shacharis there. He then went to the home of the man who had

sent the chicken to the *shochet* and asked if he could eat in his home. The man said that he could but informed him that he only had dairy food. The Besht told him that on erev Shabbos, his *minhag* was not to eat *milchig*, and he only would eat meat. The man said that he had no meat because the *shochet* told him that the chicken he sent to be slaughtered was *treif*.

The Besht asked to see the chicken. He examined it and said, "It is kosher."

The man asked who he was but the Besht did not want to reveal his identity. The man told him, "I don't know you. I cannot rely on you to tell me that the chicken is kosher. If you want, I can send for the Rov to speak with you."

The Besht agreed to this and when the Rov arrived, he began to discuss the matter with him.

The Rov brought proofs from Rishonim and Acharonim that the chicken was *treif* and the Besht brought proofs that it was kosher. The Rov then said, "If we had a third party to create a majority opinion, we would follow the majority, but since it is just you against me, how should we decide whose opinion to follow?"

The Besht said, "We will get a sign from Heaven to determine who is correct."

The Besht asked for a plate to be brought to him. He covered it with a cloth and sat down a distance from the plate, while the Rov sat down near it. After 15 minutes, the Besht asked for the cloth to be removed and they saw written on the plate the words, "The chicken is kosher according to the ruling of the Heavenly Court!"

The Rov said, "Only the Baal

Shem Tov would be able to do something like this."

The Besht then admitted who he was. The chicken was immediately cooked and eaten that morning. The Rov then asked the Besht to be his guest for Shabbos but the Besht said that he couldn't stay there since he hadn't brought his Shabbos clothes. When he got back home, the *gilgal* came to him and thanked him for providing his *tikkun*.

His Great Holiness:

The Ruzhiner Rebbe *zy"ra* related that when his grandfather, the Magid of Mezheritz *zy"ra*, was learning under the Besht, he davened with the Besht's *minyán*, but because he was frail and weak, he would daven in a side room, while the rest of the *chasidim* davened in the main *bais medrash*. On one occasion

when it is customary to put on *kittel* before Tefillas Mussaf (either on Pesach for Tefilas Tal or Shemini Atzeres for Tefillas Gashem), the Besht entered the side room to get his *kittel*. The Magid wanted to help his Rebbe, so he went to fetch the *kittel* and, as soon as he touched it, he began to tremble with fear of the Besht's *kedusha*. He had to grab onto the table to avoid falling but he was trembling so much that the entire table started to shake.

The Ruzhiner Rebbe said, **“My grandfather was no shoemaker and the Besht was not a G-d.** Still and all, just touching the Besht's *kittel* caused him to tremble. But us simple people stand on Hashem's earth, which is His clothing, and we don't shake at all!”

Libel:

During the period when the Besht lived in the city of Talusk, the local gentiles decided to make a blood libel. On the first night of Pesach, they killed a non-Jewish child and threw the body into the basement of the Besht's house.

When the Besht got home from shul, he entered his house and told the Rebbitzen, “I sense the smell of a body in this house.”

They searched until they found the body in the basement. The Besht then ordered for the body to be dressed in fine clothes and to sit it down by the table as if it were alive. The Besht then sat down and waited. Suddenly, a group of non-Jews burst in, accompanied by policemen. They searched the basement and the rest of the house but they Found nothing. They didn't

Saved From a Blood

think to look by the table. Finally, they gave up and left.

The Besht then asked for the body to be thrown into the woods, and he then began his Seder.

Rescuing a Suffering Innkeeper:

During the time when the Besht lived in Talusk, there was a local innkeeper who was very poor and had a very hard time paying his rent to the local landowner. The landowner employed a Cossack policeman who would often cause much pain to the innkeeper when he came to demand the rent. This Cossack was a constant source of anguish for the innkeeper.

One month, he didn't have a penny for rent and he feared that the Cossack would harm him, and possibly even kill him. He

ran to the Besht and tearfully told him about his plight. The Besht said, "Go home. Don't be afraid. Hashem will help you today. Even if you don't have the money, the Cossack will not be able to hurt you."

That day was market day in town. The innkeeper managed to make a business deal, and he made a big profit. Suddenly, he saw the Cossack running towards him with a very angry look on his face. Since he had yet to pay the rent, he wanted to punish him. When the Cossack got close to the innkeeper, he froze. He was unable to move at all!

The Cossack begged the innkeeper to help him. The man ran back to the Besht and told him what happened and said that he was worried that the landowner would be mad at him and would evict him from the inn. The Besht told him, "Tell the Cossack that he must commit

to never harm another Jew. If he does this, he will be fine.”

As soon as the Cossack made this commitment, he was able to move again. The innkeeper then counted the money he had earned and saw that it was the exact amount he needed to pay his rent.

Three Promises Fulfilled:

Before he lived in Talusk, the Besht resided in the nearby village of Kasilowitz. In those years, during the winter months, he would immerse in a small river. When the river was covered in ice, he would break the ice and immerse in the freezing water.

A non-Jew who lived next to the river felt bad for the young rabbi. He witnessed how he would come out of the river covered in ice. Once, he saw that

his bare feet stuck to the frozen ground and he had to push so hard to move them that he began to bleed. From then on, the gentile would put fresh straw down right next to the river so that the Besht wouldn't have to step on the frozen ground.

One day, the Besht asked the non-Jew, “Tell me whatever you want and it will be given to you. Do you want wealth, a long life, to be appointed as a judge?”

The gentile replied, “I want all three things.”

The Besht promised him that he would merit all three and the non-Jew said, “How can you make me rich? I have no money!”

The Besht told him, “Take water from this river and sell it to anyone in need of a cure. You will make a lot of money from doing this.”

The man then asked how long

he would live and the Besht said. “You will live until long after I die. You will remain alive until the day you see someone who looks like me.”

A short time later, the non-Jew’s wife and son got sick. He gave them water from the river to drink, and they got better. The story got out and many people came to him, paying large sums for his miraculous remedy, and he became very wealthy. He also was appointed to be a judge.

Many years later, the Ruzhinzer Rebbe said that he wanted to see this non-Jew. The man was brought to him and he said, “I know that I will die soon as this man looks just like the Baal Shem Tov.”

Pained From Hearing Bad Things:

The Besht would say that when

one hears bad things about a Jew’s behavior, even if he doesn’t know him, he must feel pain because one of two things must be true – either the Jew you heard about is not acting properly or, if what you heard is not true, the one who told you is telling lies and he is acting improperly.

What Was Said About His Friend Was Decreed on Him:

The Besht also said that if someone proclaims a decree about his friend, that decree will be fulfilled on him. If one says that his friend is a good person who did a good thing and deserves reward, he will be rewarded if he also does that good thing. If one says that his friend is a bad person who did a bad thing and deserves something bad to happen to him, that bad thing will happen to the

one who said it if he does the same bad thing.

So too, if one sees something bad happen to his friend and he says that he must have done something wrong to deserve it, he is opening himself up to Divine scrutiny, and if anything is bad in his past, he will be punished.

Loving Every Jew:

The Rebbe of Lechovitch zy”a writes in his Igeres Hakodesh in the name of the Besht that **one must love and honor even the simplest Jew as much as one honors the biggest *talmid chochom* in the world**, simply because he is a Jew and is a son of the same Father who loves and honors us all.

Saying “Barich Shmei” With Emunah Peshutah:

The Baal Hatanya zy”a said in the name of the Besht that **when the Aron Hakodesh is opened and a Yid says “Barich Shmei...” with *emunah peshutah* and from the depths of his heart, Hashem will fulfill whatever he requests, either completely or at least partially.**

The Pnei Yehoshua’s Connection to the Besht:

Sefer Sipurim Noraim relates the following about his father, the Pnei Yehoshua *zt”l*:

The Pnei Yehoshua lived at the same time as the Besht but, although he heard about him, he had never met him. The Magid of Mezheritz zy”a, who had yet to become close to the Besht, would travel to Karlsbad every year because he suffered from foot problems and this town was known for its healing spas. On the way, he would visit the Pnei

Yehoshua in Lemberg. Whenever the Besht came up in conversation, the Magid would speak disparagingly about him.

One day, the Pnei Yehoshua was learning with his students in his yeshiva when the Besht arrived in town. He sent his attendant to tell the Pnei Yehoshua that there was a man sitting outside his bais medrash in a wagon who wanted to speak to him about an important, private matter. The Pnei Yehoshua told the attendant, “I can’t be *mevateil* the Torah of the *rabbim*. I can’t go out right now. Tell him to come inside and wait until we finish learning.”

The Besht sent back a message that the matter was so important that he even needed to be *mevateil Torah b’rabbim* for it. The Pnei Yehoshua went outside and greeted the Besht, and asked what was so important. The Besht told him, “Your *shochet* is

feeding *treif* meat to the entire city and has been doing so for over 20 years. When you finish learning with your students, send for the *shochet* and he will admit.”

The Besht then left immediately, before the Pnei Yehoshua could even ask who he was. The Pnei Yehoshua was greatly perturbed by this message. Right after the shiur ended, he called for the *shochet*, who admitted to everything. The Pnei Yehoshua now realized that the man he had spoken to was the Besht.

A few months later, the Besht returned and again asked for the Pnei Yehoshua to come outside. The Pnei Yehoshua went out immediately and the Besht told him, “The next time R’ Duber (the Magid of Mezheritz) comes to you, tell him in my name that his feet will never be healed unless he comes to see me.”

He again left quickly, before the Pnei Yehoshua could ask his name, and he now knew for sure that this was the Besht.

A few months later, the Magid came to visit the Pnei Yehoshua, as he did every year on his way to Karlsbad, and the Pnei Yehoshua gave him the message, advising him to go see the Besht. The Magid made the trip and became a student of the Besht, learning the secrets of the Torah from him.

The Besht told him, “You must go back to Karlsbad one more time.”

A year later, he made the trip to Karlsbad, stopping on the way to see the Pnei Yehoshua. He extolled the greatness of the Besht to him, saying that he was like one of the Tannaim. The Pnei Yehoshua asked him, “What happened to all the questions you had on him?”

The Magid answered, “Until now, I thought he was a man, and it is possible to ask questions about a man. Now I know that he is more similar to an angel than a man, and it is impossible to comprehend his essence. Therefore, I have no right to ask any questions about him.”

Reaching Greatness Through Immersion in the Mikvah:

Rav Meshulim Feivish of Zabritsch zy”a (Sefer Yosher Divrei Emes, Ois 42) writes that the Besht would say that **he merited all his *madreigos* because he always made sure to immerse in a mikvah every day. This is because a mikvah purifies the body and soul.**

Going to the Mikvah is Like a Taanis:

Rav Moshe of Zhvil zy”a said in the name of his father, the Magid of Zlotchov zy”a, that he heard the Besht say: **“I succeeded in getting Hashem to agree that when a person immerses in the mikvah in the morning, it is considered by Him to be like fasting for an entire day.”**

Fulfilling “El Afar Tashuv”:

The Baal Hatanya zy”a said that the Besht could have ascended to Shomayim while still alive, like Eliyahu Hanavi did, but he chose not to do so because he wanted to fulfill the *pasuk* (Bereishis 3:19) of “*v’el afar tashuv*” (you shall return to the dirt).

The Niggun of “Rachamim Rabim”:

The Rashab of Lubavitch zy”a related that he had a tradition that the *niggun* of the Rav Michel of Zlotchov zy”a was referred to by the Besht as “Niggun Hisorerus Rachamim Rabim.” He said that his grandfather, the Baal Hatanya zy”a, heard from the Magid of Mezheritz zy”a, who was present at the time of the *petirah* of the Besht, that the Besht asked for this niggun to be sung at that time. When they finished singing, the Besht said, **“I give my guarantee that if anyone sings this song anywhere and at any time with a *hisorerus* of *teshuva*, I will join them in Shomayim and arouse *rachamim rabim*.”**

Everyone Can Hear Hashem:

Sefer Keser Torah (Parshas Yisro) writes: “I heard in the name of the Besht that if Yidden

sanctify themselves to learn Torah and do mitzvos, they can always hear Hashem speaking, just like at Har Sinai.

The Mishnah in Avos (6:2) states that a Heavenly voice rings out every day from Har Chorev and announces, “Woe to the creations because of the disgrace of the Torah.” Sefer Toldos Yaakov Yosef (Parshas Vayikroh) quotes the Besht as asking what the point of this *bas kol* is if no one can hear it?

He answers that this *bas kol* does, in fact, affect people. When one is struck with thoughts of *teshuva*, it is because he “hears” this Heavenly voice. A wise man recognizes that these thoughts come from his *neschama* hearing the *bas kol*, and he strains his ears to hear what Hashem wants from him. A fool, however, fails to realize this, and he goes to the bar to drink away these depressing thoughts, rather than

acting on them.

In this vein, the Kamarna Rov zy”a (Sefer Heichal Bracha, Parshas Va’eschonon) writes that when the Besht learned Torah with his students, and they would engage in fiery discussions, they would be surrounded by a Divine fire and the Heavenly angels would gather around them. At this time, thunderous Divine voices could be heard declaring, “*Anochi Hashem Elokecha!*”

May his memory be a blessing for all of Klal Yisroel.

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

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Joy to These Unfortunate
Souls Is Comparable to
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