

Torah Wellsprings

Collected thoughts
from
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Vayikra





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Moshe Rabbeinu went through hard times, but he knew that it didn't happen by chance. And through these episodes, Moshe

attained the highest levels of emunah.²

The Chasan Sofer zt'l
(grandson of the Chasam Sofer

if an accident happens to Binyamin, it is Hashem calling to him. Therefore, he said, וקראו אסון בדרך. But when Yehudah was speaking with the viceroy of Mitzrayim, and Yehudah didn't know that it was Yosef, so he figured that the viceroy wouldn't understand that everything is Hashem's calling. Therefore, Yehudah said, קראו אסון, "lest an accident happen" and he didn't mention that it is Hashem's calling.

When Nadav v'Avihu were *niftar*, Aharaon said (Vayikra 6) ותקראנה אותי כאלה, "If something like this happened to me." Once again, it seems it should state תקרנה. But as it is written, תקראנה, the translation is calling." The answer is, whatever happens, it is Hashem's calling.

The Noam Megadim (Bo) tells a *mashal* of a king who summoned someone to his palace. It was this person's very first time in the king's palace, and he was stunned by the majestic beauty that was seen everywhere in the palace. The king began speaking to him, but it was obvious that this man's mind was still on the beauty he beheld: the chandelier, the paintings on the wall, etc.

The king hit him on the head with his stick.

The man understood that the king isn't punishing him. On the contrary, the king wants to speak to him, and this was to get his attention.

So, too, when we go through hardships in life, it is often to help us recognize Hashem. Don't look at it like a punishment, rather as Hashem's strong desire to get our attention so we can communicate with Him.

2. It states (Tehillim 89:16) אשרי העם יודעי תרועה. The Noam Megadim explains that תרועה is from the word רע, bad. The Jewish nation are

zt'l) says that Moshe Rabbeinu suffered many hardships in his lifetime. When he was three months old, he was cast into the Nile River. Then he was brought up distant from his family, in the home of the wicked Pharaoh. After killing the Egyptian man, he had to flee to Midyan. Even after Moshe became the leader of Bnei Yisrael, there were times when Moshe feared for his life. As he said (*Shemos* 17:4), עוֹר, מַעַט וּמַסְקִינִי, "A little bit more and they will stone me." But all of this was for his benefit because these made Moshe the greatest *navi* and *tzaddik*. He was in heaven with Hashem three times, forty days each time! He received the Torah from Hashem! He attained *madreigos* that no other human being ever achieved. The hardships he endured

undoubtedly played a pivotal role in bringing him to this level.

Each one of us also goes through challenging moments in his life, but they are all from Hashem, for our good. The Mabit (*Beis Elokim, Shaar HaTefillah* 16) writes, "In our generation, in *galus*, a person must know that whatever happens to him, even when he stubs his finger...it is all from Hashem. Hashem's *hashgachah* over us in *galus* is greater than when we lived on our land. Only, now Hashem's *hashgachah* is concealed, to the extent that sinners and rebels can think that some events don't come from Hashem. However, the wise person understands that whatever happens to us in *galus*, for the general community, and the individual, is all by Hashem's *hashgachah*."

יודע תרועה; they know how to interpret the רע, the bad things that happen to them. They know that it doesn't happen by chance, rather it's Hashem's call to them, for their benefit.

The Rosh (*Orchos Chaim* 69) writes, רצה כאשר ירצה יוצרך, "Want what your Creator wants." Because whatever happens to you is destined by Hashem's, and therefore, they are indeed the best for you.

A husband came to Rebbe Hirsh of Riminov *zt'l*, and said, "My wife is in labor; she's a מקשה לילד. The doctors say that if she doesn't give birth soon, her life is in danger."

Rebbe Hirsh Riminover was deep in thought for a few moments, and then he said, "Give me twenty gold coins, and your wife will give birth."

The man replied, "I'm poor. How can I get twenty gold coins?"

The Rebbe replied, "You can sell your wife's jewelry, and you can sell the furniture in your home. That will get you close. For the rest, you can borrow money, or you can collect

money from the Yidden of this city."

The man left the Rebbe's room, brokenhearted.

The Divrei Chaim of Tzanz *zt'l* (who was present at this incident) quickly caught up with the poor man and said, "I will daven for your wife, and everything will be well. And you don't have to pay me anything."

Indeed, the Divrei Chaim davened, and the wife gave birth to a son.

But a week later, the mother died.

The Divrei Chaim lamented, "Why did I get involved in Rebbe Hirsh Riminover's matters? I saw (through ruach hakodesh) that the husband doesn't need to pay so much money to merit salvation. But Rebbe Hirsh saw further. He saw that it was decreed that this woman die and that with a pidyon of twenty gold coins, her life would be saved. Because עני חשוב כמת, a poor person is considered

as if he is dead, and the poverty and great expense would be in exchange for her death."

This story teaches us that even when something seems bad, it is really for the good.

Let's not be short-sighted and look only at the present moment. Keep in mind the bigger picture and believe that everything we go through is from Hashem, for our good.

A Holocaust survivor with many questions on the way Hashem runs the world came to the Chazon Ish *zt'l*. The Chazon Ish took a Gemara and asked the older man to explain a Tosfos. The man studied the Tosfos, offered an explanation, but the Chazon Ish showed him that his answer was incorrect.

The Chazon Ish told him, "If you aren't even able to understand a Tosfos, how do you expect to

understand Hashem's ways?"

Another time, the Chazon Ish compared our limited vision to a young child who knows how to learn Mishnayos but still can't learn Gemara. Similarly, people can be wise, know many things, but that doesn't mean that they are smart enough to understand Hashem's ways.

We can't understand Hashem's ways, but we can believe in Hashem and believe that everything is for the good.

Pesach Cleaning

Every aspect of Yiddishkeit should be performed with joy, Pesach cleaning, too.

Reb Nota Zehnworth *zt'l* once said in beis medresh, "When there's an *עת צרה*, klal Yisrael responds by making a *יום תפילה*, a day of fasting and davening. I

think we should do the same, now."

No one knew what he meant. They asked, "What *tzarah* are you referring to? Is there a problem?"

With a smile, he explained that Pesach is approaching, and we have to clean... and people become anxious and worried. They feel as if it is an עת צרה. So, we should make a יום תפילה, a day of fasting and *teshuvah*."

Once, in Yerushalayim, many *yungerleit* were learning in the Tepliker Rav's beis medresh, a few days before Pesach. The Tepliker Rav *zt'l* stood near the *bimah* and called out, "There are widows in our neighborhood who need help with the Pesach cleaning, koshering their homes, and purchasing the groceries for Pesach. Who volunteers to help them?"

Everyone wanted to help. They lined up in front of the rav, and he gave

each of them a slip of paper with the address of where they should go.

They read the addresses and realized that each person received the address of *his own home*.

The Rav explained that their wives don't need to suffer just because they are married. They need help, and their husbands should participate in the Pesach preparations.

And when the husbands help, they will experience greater holiness at the Seder. One year, Rebbe Aharon Roth *zt'l* wanted to prepare for Pesach with learning alone. He didn't want to involve himself in other kinds of preparations for Pesach (such as cleaning). In retrospect, he said, "I never had such a poor Seder (in a spiritual sense)." He didn't have the uplifting feelings he generally had. This is because he lacked the preparations that help us experience the light of the holiday.

Therefore, we shouldn't be upset about the work involved in cleaning our homes for Pesach. We should consider it a privilege.³

3. There was a *yungerman* who told his rav, "I was thinking about how women clean for Pesach, and I concluded that they don't clean well enough. They clean the floors by pouring water over the floors, and then they mop it up. But what about all the crevices!?! Chametz can get caught there and pouring water won't take it out. I told my wife to clean the floor with a toothpick, to get out all the chametz in the crevices, but she isn't interested in taking on this *chumrah*. She said that if the rav agrees that it is important to clean the floors with a toothpick, then she will do so."

The rav replied, "You are correct. It is a very important *chumrah*. In fact, it is so important, I think you should do it yourself. You shouldn't rely on your wife or anyone else to clean the floors. You should clean the floors yourself."

The lesson: Husbands shouldn't make things difficult for their wives. And if they feel something should be done, and their spouse doesn't want to, they can do it themselves...

There is an old translation, in Yiddish, for each of the 15 *simanim* of the Seder, which is customarily recited at the Seder.

People who attended the Chebiner Rav's Seder tell that the Chebiner Rav would translate the *simanim* קדש ורחץ כרפס etc. into Yiddish, as customary, but when he said שולחן ערוך, he didn't say the Yiddish translation, which is, מען גרייט צו די טיש מצה מיט פיש און אלע גוטע זאכן, "We prepare the table with matzah, fish, and all good foods."

One year, after the Seder, someone asked him why he didn't say the traditional Yiddish phrase. He replied, "When I said קדש, the Yiddish translation tells me that I should make kiddush. When I said ורחץ the Yiddish phrase tells me to wash my hands. But when I said שולחן ערוך, I was telling the women to set the table and to serve good foods. When you are speaking to others, it isn't proper to

שׁוֹת מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם (71) writes, "Be *machmir* with chametz on Pesach, and whoever is cautious, will live long."

The Kav HaYashar (90) writes, "I received a kabbalah that every activity one does in honor of Pesach, and becomes tired from the toil, this kills many *mazikim*, which are called נִגְעֵי בְּנֵי אָדָם."

Many *machzorim* write the abbreviation, קשר"ק to represent תְּקִיעָה, שְׁבָרִים, תְּרוּעָה, תְּקִיעָה. And the *machzor* states the following prayer: "May the *malachim* that come out from the קשר"ק go up before Hashem to be *meilitz*, and to say good about the Jewish nation."

The Berdichever Rav once saw women cleaning

repeat it. I said it once, peacefully, and in brief, שְׁלוּחַן עָרִיךְ, and that's all."

The Chebiner Rav's second Rebbetzin was a granddaughter of the Chasam Sofer *zt'l*. To honor her, the Chebiner Rav would tell her a *dvar Torah* from the Chasam Sofer every day, or he would tell her a story about the Chasam Sofer.

The Chasam Sofer used to eat kneidlach at the Seder. One year, Reb Shmuel Binyamin Schiffer from Vienna was at the Seder of the Chebiner Rav *zt'l*, and he asked the Rav why he doesn't eat kneidlach at the Seder. His question implied, "You speak about the Chasam Sofer every day, to honor your wife, and you try to follow the Chasam Sofer's ways. So why don't you honor her with eating kneidlach at the Seder, as the Chasam Sofer would do?"

The Chebiner Rav replied, "You are correct that we should follow in the ways of tzaddikim. Therefore, we must learn their *divrei Torah* and emulate their holy ways. But we don't have to begin with the kneidlach."

In other words, there are more important matters we can emulate from the Chasam Sofer. We don't have to rush to eat kneidlach.

for Pesach, and he said, "May the malachim that come forth from the קראצין קערין שאיערין רייבין קערין (rubbing, scraping and cleaning for Pesach), *roshei teivos* קשר"ק go up to heaven and say good about the Jewish nation." Because cleaning for Pesach creates holy *malachim*, similar to the *malachim* created by the blowing of the shofar.

Once, in the beis medresh of the Beis Aharon,

there were chassidim who wanted to buy new tables in honor of Pesach. The Beis Aharon replied, "What would the Bardichover Rav say?" The Bardichover Rav would say that cleaning the tables create *malachim* that go up to heaven and are *meilitz yosher*, speak good things, about Bnei Yisrael, and this annuls all *kitrugim* Above.⁴

The Beis Avraham *zt'l* also praised the greatness

4. Rosh Hashanah, we blow the תקיעות המיושב ותקיעת המעומד. This means we blow shofar before the *mussaf Shemonah Esrei* and then again during the *mussaf* tefillah. The Gemara (*Rosh Hashanah* 16.) says that we blow these two times, in order to confuse the Satan.

Tosfos quotes a Yerushalmi, which explains how blowing the shofar confuses the Satan:

"When the Satan hears the first blast of the shofar, he is afraid, and he isn't afraid (בהל ולא בהל). When he hears the shofar the next time, the Satan says, 'This is certainly the great shofar of Moshiach. I will be destroyed.' He becomes confused, and he isn't able to speak *kitrug* (slander) on the Jewish people."

As we wrote above, the Bardichover Rav *zt'l* says cleaning for Pesach creates similar *malachim* as are created by blowing the shofar. Therefore, we can say that when women clean their homes for Pesach, the Satan becomes afraid, but he isn't totally afraid (בהל ולא בהל). But then a child comes into the house carrying chametz in his hands, and nevertheless, the parents don't become angry. This

of cleaning for Pesach. He compared it to the service of the *kohen gadol* on Yom Kippur. He proves this from the word זָאת. It states זָאת in reference to Pesach, (*Shemos* 13:5) וְעָבַדְתָּ אֶת הָעֲבוּדָה הַזֹּאת בְּחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה, "You shall do this work in this month." And it states זָאת in reference to Yom Kippur, (*Vayikra* 16:3), בְּיָוֵם אֶת יְמֵי אֲהֲרֹן אֵל הַקֹּדֶשׁ. This teaches us that cleaning the home for Pesach is compared to the *kohen gadol's avodah* on Yom Kippur.

Once, Rebbe Shlomo of Bobov *zt'l* visited Baron Rothchild's home, and the Baron accorded the Rebbe with great honor. The Baron showed the Rebbe his Pesach house, where he lived, and where he cooked food for the eight days of Pesach. He explained that this is how he knows he is undoubtedly chametz-free.

The Rebbe remained silent.

The Baron said, "Doesn't this *chumrah* find favor in the eyes of the Rebbe?"

Rebbe Shlomo Bobover replied, "My grandfather, the Divrei Chaim of Tzanz *zt'l*, was poor, but money never prevented him from doing what he felt was necessary. If he thought it was better to have a Pesach house or a Pesach kitchen, he would have one. Obviously, he didn't consider this *chumrah* necessary."

Perhaps this is because Hashem enjoys when we toil to get our homes kosher l'Pesach.

Cleaning for Pesach, and being cautious about chametz, causes a degree of discomfort. Often, the house is topsy-turvy, and

is like the second time we blow shofar, and the Satan becomes very afraid. Due to his fear, he isn't able to speak *kitrug* against the Jewish people.

we don't have a regular place to eat. Some eat on the porch, the yard, in a corner, and so on. The Pela Yoetz (גלויות) writes that during these times, one should have in mind that he is enduring *galus*, exile. Even this minor displacement can be considered a *micro-galus*.

And *galus* atones on his sins.

As the Pela Yoetz writes, "Also, *erev Pesach*, when the houses are cleaned out for *bedikas chametz*, and the *baal habayis* has to sit between the oven and the stove, he should accept this with love, and he should intend that this should atone like *galus*."¹⁵

5. The Pela Yoetz writes, "If a person must travel, either to learn Torah or for *parnassah*, as this is the way of merchants, it is good for the person to pray to Hashem that this should be counted like he went to *galus*."

"He should accept Hashem's decree with love, for this hardship will atone his *aveiros*. As Chazal (*Sanhedrin* 37:) say, גלות מכפרת עון, exile atones for sin!... If one isn't destined to travel anyplace, some move from one house to another, as this is also like a *galus*, and he should have the same intention (that the *galus* should be his atonement). Chazal (*Psikta d'Rav Kahanah* ch.29) say that on Succos, when one moves from the house to dwell in the *succah*, this is like a *galus* that atones for sins. Similarly, when he goes to the beis kneses or beis medresh, and this is hard for him on a hot day or on a cold day, and when one spends the entire day in beis medresh, and he doesn't have as much *yishuv hadaas* (serenity) as when he has at home, he should accept these discomforts with joy, and he should intend that this should atone for his sins.

"Also, *erev Pesach*, when the houses are cleaned out for *bedikas chametz*, and the *baal habayis* has to sit between the oven and the stove, he should accept this with love, and he should intend that this should atone like *galus*."

Avoiding Anger

Cleaning for Pesach can sometimes cause arguments and anger. We should judge those who become angry זכות זכות, because the root of their anger comes from a good place: They are very concerned that there shouldn't be chametz in their homes during Pesach, and this anxiety can result in anger.

Nevertheless, anger is destructive – always. It is never good to become angry, not even when it is for a mitzvah.

The Bardichover Rav zt'l said, "People can attain *ruach hakodesh* from cleaning for Pesach, but anger ruins it."⁶

The Gemara (Shabbos 105:) says, המקרע בגדיו בחמתו והמשבר כליו בחמתו והמפור מעותיו בחמתו "יהא בעיניך כעובר ע"ז", "If a person rips his clothes in a fit of anger, or if he breaks utensils when he is angry, or if he throws away his money when he's angry, look at him like a person who worships *avodah zarah*."

The Torah juxtaposes *avodah zarah* with being

Because there's no difference between a big *galus* or a small *galus*; they all add up, as long as one intends that it should be *galus* and for his atonement and accepts it with love."

6. The *rasha* in the *Haggadah* says, מזה העבודה הזאת לכם, "Why are you doing this work?"

Why is the *rasha* so upset with the Seder? If he was upset with Tisha b'Av or Yom Kippur, we would understand. But at the Seder, we sit with family and there is good food. Why doesn't he want to be there?

Perhaps the *rasha* is referring to the anxiousness and anger he saw on the days leading up to Pesach. He asks, מזה העבודה הזאת לכם, "Why do you need it?" He doesn't want to have anything to do with it.

cautious with the laws of Pesach. As it states (*Shemos* 34:17), אלקי מסכה לא תעשה לך את חג המצות תשמור "Don't make images of *avodah zarah*. Keep the *yom tov* of Pesach." Rebbe Asher of Stolin zt'l says that the Torah is warning that when you prepare for Pesach, don't worship *avodah zarah*, which means, don't become angry.

Most bad attributes have their good side, too. For example, *atzlus* (laziness) is a negative trait. But *atzlus* has a good side, also. For example, when one is tempted to do an *aveirah*, it is good to be lazy and push it off for later (because perhaps he can push it off forever).

Similarly, all attributes have a positive side, which can be used for Hashem's service. The exceptions are *gaavah* and anger, which one should never use, even in Hashem's service. The *pasuk* says (this week's *parashah*, 2:11), כי כל שאור וכל דבש, לא תקמירו ממנו אשה לה

sourdough and all honey you should not sacrifice for Hashem..."

Reb Chaim Chayka Amdura zt'l explains that sourdough represents *gaavah*, arrogance, because when one has arrogance, his chest fills up with air, similar to sourdough that is filled with air.

When the Torah writes דבש, Reb Chaim Chayka Amdura says that it hints to bees' honey. Bees have a toxin in their stinger called עכס, the letters of כעס, anger.

Thus, the *pasuk* is hinting that שאור ודבש, arrogance and anger, לא תקמירו ממנו... לה, should never be used in Hashem's service. As opposed to all other negative traits, which have their occasional good side, these two traits should never be used.

The sefarim explain that both *gaavah* and anger fill the person's heart with air. The uniqueness of matzah is that it has no air inside it

- unlike chametz, which grew and blew up with air. So, when we clean the home from chametz, we should avoid anger because chametz represents anger. It is specifically anger that we are trying to clean and eradicate from our homes and hearts.

When You Become Angry, You Lose

I heard *avodah zarah* and anger are similar because they both don't accomplish anything.

As Chazal (*Kiddushin* 41:) say, רגון לא עלתה בידו אלא רגנותו, "When someone is angry, all that he accomplished is his anger." It doesn't accomplish anything else.

In fact, when you become angry, you end up losing.

The Chareidim (פסי"י) writes, "Someone who lost a פרה (a type of coin), does it make sense for him to become so upset about it

that he will break a vessel worth a thousand פרהים?"

But this is what happens when people are angry. They destroy more with their anger than the issue that ignited their anger.

A good example is when someone is angry with a family member (spouse, child, in-law, etc.). Often, the matter is not very serious. But if he doesn't control his anger, he might say something that will cause far more significant damage. So, the anger didn't accomplish anything positive, and instead, it caused a lot of harm. He punished himself.

The following story demonstrates that one loses his mitzvos when he becomes angry. It was told by the rav of Yerushalayim, Reb Moshe Aryeh Freund zt'l. He heard it from his father-in-law:

Reb Moshe Aryeh's father-in-law was visiting a cemetery in Lemberg with

a friend, and they came across a *matzeivah* that read, "Here lies *ploni ben ploni, tzaddik nistar* (hidden tzaddik)." They went to the *chevrah Kadisha* and asked them to explain the meaning of this inscription. Why is the person buried there called "*tzaddik nistar*"?

For a price, the *chevrah Kadisha* agreed to look it up in their ledgers. They found the following story:

The rav of Lemberg was a great tzaddik. Once, *erev Shabbos*, the Lemberger Rav was going to the *mikvah*, when a poor person (known in the city) came over to the Rav and hit him lightly with a broom. The poor man said, "You fasted a couple of days this week, and so did I."

A few minutes later, the poor man hit the rav on the back again and said, "You fasted all week (תענית הפסקה), and I did the same. The difference between us is that tonight, *Shabbos*, you have a good meal waiting

for you, *challah*, fish, meat. All I have in my house is some dry bread, salt, and water. But you shall know that if you go home tonight and find out that a cat ate your fish, and you become angry, you will lose all the reward you gained from fasting this week."

That night, by the *seudah*, when it was time to eat the fish, his *rebbeztin* told him that a cat ate his fish. The rav remembered what he heard from the poor man. If he becomes angry, he will lose the merit of the fasts. This helped him overcome his anger.

The Lemberger Rav realized that the man who warned him that he shouldn't become angry was a *tzaddik nistar*, for he knew that a cat would eat his fish. The rav of Lemberg said to his servant, "There's a *tzaddik nistar*, a concealed tzaddik, in our neighborhood. I want you to go to him and invite him

to our home for the *Shabbos seudah*."

The messenger arrived at the *tzaddik nistar*'s home and invited him to come to the Lemberger Rav's house.

The *tzaddik* replied, "The Lemberger Rav should have come to me himself. But now that the rav sent you to me, I will have to leave the world because a concealed *tzaddik* has to remain concealed."

The messenger returned to the Lemberger Rav and repeated what the *tzaddik nistar* said. The Lemberger Rav immediately left his home and went to the *tzaddik nistar*. But by the time he got there, the *tzaddik nistar* was *niftar*.

Because of this episode, he was buried in a

prestigious place in the cemetery, and on his *matzeivah* was inscribed that he was a *tzaddik nistar*.

This story reminds us that one doesn't gain anything from getting angry. He just loses. And sometimes, he loses his mitzvos, too. As in this story, had the Lemberger Rav gotten angry, he would have lost the reward for his fasts.⁷

A person, by getting angry, also loses his clear mind, which one needs to find solutions to troubles that come up.

Reb Shmuel Shmelke *zt'l*, was the rav of Salish, Hungary. One year, at his Seder, when they opened the door for שפוך המותך, a goy was standing in the doorway, ready to knock on their door. The family

7. Segulas Yisrael writes in the name of Reb Chaim Vital: "When there's a plague, keep away from all types of anger, worries, and distress. On the contrary, always be happy, in all kinds of ways."

recognized him. He was the goy to whom Reb Shmuel Shmelke sold the chametz. The goy said, "I have to back out of the deal. My family convinced me that this business deal, of buying the chametz of the entire Jewish community of Salish, is too much for me to take on. The Yidden will certainly gain a lot of money, and I will fall into debt. I must speak to the rav immediately to cancel this agreement."

The family was very worried about this development. Because if the goy backed out of the deal, does that mean everyone in Salish will have chametz in their possession? They rushed to Reb Shmuel Shmelke to tell him the problem that just befell them.

The rav of Salish didn't panic. He didn't lose his serenity. Cordially, he invited the goy to the table, and he offered him a hard

drink. The rav listened to the goy attentively as the goy expressed his desire to back out of the deal.

The Salisher Rav replied, "Your family is right. You should back down from this deal. However, now it's late at night, and it will be impossible to tell all the merchants of Salish that the deal was canceled. And then come the seven days of the holiday. It will be hard to gather the merchants to tell them the change of plans. Come back in eight days, and we will annul the contract. In the meanwhile, go home and calm your family. Tell them that we accept your request, and we will annul the contract in a week's time."

The goy left, satisfied with this compromise.

The lesson is that when one becomes angry, he loses his *yishuv hadaas*, and can't find solutions. But with equanimity, one will

know what to do in every situation.⁸

Counsels to Overcome Anger

Chazal (*Avos* 2:10) say, אל תהי נוה לבעוס. This means, "Don't be quick to get angry."

This is one of the primary counsels for overcoming anger. If it is essential to become angry, you can generally push it off for a later time, and nothing will happen. Therefore, don't act on impulse. Sleep it over for a night. By that time, you will generally recognize

that it was good you didn't become angry right away.

The Yismach Moshe (על ד"ה קה נ"ט: הש"ם ברכות כ"ט) explains that sometimes anger is a mitzvah (such as to rebuke *resha'im*). Generally, anger is an *aveirah*. Either way, the Mishnah urges us, אל תהי נוה לבעוס, don't be quick to become angry.

If the anger is an *aveirah*, you certainly should push it off for later. And if the anger is a mitzvah, then you should also push it off for later, because a mitzvah needs הכנה, preparation. Therefore, whether the anger is a mitzvah or an

8. One year, at the Seder of Rebbe Yochanan of Tolna (Yerushalayim) *zt'l*, a young grandson found beer in the closet that was sold for the goy, and he brought the beer into the dining room. Everyone was shocked: chametz in their home on Pesach?! Only Rebbe Yochanan didn't lose his tranquility. He expressed to the grandson his happiness that he can keep the Chazal that says that when you find chametz in your home on *yom tov*, you should cover it over with a utensil, and that's what they did.

Because when one remains calm, he can find solutions to the problems that arise.

aveirah, you should push it off for later.⁹

Another counsel to overcome anger is to be *mevater* and to find ways to steer away from *machlokes* and disputes. This is also implied in the Mishnah (ibid.) אַל תְּהִי נוֹה לְכַעֵם, "It shouldn't be easy for you to become angry." Most things that happen to you shouldn't rouse your anger.

I heard the following from Reb Shlomo Zalman Aurbach's grandson:

A *rosh yeshiva* said to Reb Shlomo Zalman, "I'm envious of you because you live your life like you are living in Gan Eden. But look at my life; it is like Gehinom."

This *rosh yeshiva* had several enemies and felt like he was living in Gehinom.

When the *rosh yeshiva* left Reb Shlomo Zalman's home, Reb Shlomo Zalman said to his family, "He thinks he lives in Gehinom, and that I live in Gan Eden. But the truth is, he creates the Gehinom for himself. When I was young, I trained myself that if someone wants to push me, I push myself back even further, until he isn't able to push me."

The point is that people suffer when they don't know how to be *mevater*, how to let things pass, and how to avoid dispute. But if one is wise, he can live in this world like it is Gan Eden.

9. Many *sefarim* write that it is always an *aveirah* to become angry. Even when you are angry for good reasons, such as: you are rebuking *resha'im*, or to educate your children and students; in all these situations, you might be permitted to *show* anger, to *pretend* that you are angry, but you may never actually feel anger in your heart.

It has a lot to do with perspective.

To explain, we tell a *mashal*:

A couple was interested in buying a particular home, but the wife was very concerned that perhaps the neighbors aren't friendly. She asked the seller many times about the neighbors, and the seller reassured her that they were excellent neighbors, helpful, and friendly.

But on the day they moved in, the wife saw one of the neighbors staring at her, frowning. She immediately called up the seller: "You tricked me. You told me the neighbors are friendly, but a neighbor is standing near the house, and she is frowning at me. It is obvious that she is upset that we are moving in."

The seller told her, "Smile to them, and I'm sure they will smile back."

She passed by again, and this time she kept a smile on her face. The image smiled back. She realized that it was a full-length mirror. When she smiled, it smiled back. When she frowned, it frowned at her.

The *nimshal* is that life is seen and experienced as one interprets it. Two people can see the same situation, one considers it a reason to be angry, and the other finds the good in the situation.

It states, (*Shemos* 15:23), ולא יכלו לשתות מים ממרה כי מרים הם, "They weren't able to drink water from Marah, כי מרים הם, because the waters were bitter." The *Nesivos Sholom* explains that the *pasuk* כי מרים is referring to the people. The people were bitter, and therefore everything they drank and everything they experienced had a bitter taste.

See the world in a positive light, and you

won't be angry all the time.¹⁰

10. A great tzaddik, generations ago, was once walking down the street, singing joyously. People asked him why he was so happy. He replied, "It states (*Esther* 1:22), להיות כל איש שורר בביתו, 'every man shall rule in his home.' Purim, some people read this *pasuk* a second time, and the second time they read שורר with a *shin* (which means to sing). In my house, my wife rules. She's in charge. In fact, she just kicked me out of the house. So, I can't read it, להיות כל איש שורר בביתו with a *sin*, because I'm not the ruler. At least I follow the other interpretation, שורר, to sing."

The idea is to acquire a happy attitude. No matter what a person is going through *r'l*, accept it with joy and song, because it is, after all, for the best.

Reb Yisrael Salanter *zt'l* said that when a person shows a sad face in public, he is like a בור ברשות הרבים, a pit in public, because it damages people, causing them to feel sad and down.

Once upon a time, there was a person who came into the beis medresh, very sad. People asked him why he is so sad.

He replied, "I have to move one of the walls in my house. And do you know how hard it is to move a wall?! My mother always told us to drink a lot of milk because milk makes bones strong. So, this morning, I drank five cups of milk. I felt very strong, and I tried to push the wall, but it didn't budge..."

The next day he came to the beis medresh, very happy. People asked him, "What happened today? Did you manage to move the wall?"

"No. Today I drank vodka, and I don't even see the wall anymore."

The lesson is that it is all related to how you look at things. You can see a problem like a wall that doesn't budge, and you can take matters lightly. It is largely a matter of perspective.

Chametz Represents the *Yetzer Hara*

The halachos of chametz are very stringent. For example, on Pesach, if a small drop of chametz falls into a large hot pot, everything becomes forbidden. It doesn't help that the drop of chametz is *batel* in 1/60.

Another stringency is that one may not even own chametz. This is a stringency that we don't have by most other halachos.

Why is chametz so severe?

The Radvaz (*chelek 3 siman 977, teshuvah shniyah*) answers that chametz represents the *yetzer hara*.¹¹ We, therefore, want to get rid of it entirely.

He writes, "Chazal teach that chametz on Pesach represents the *yetzer*

hara. One must banish the *yetzer hara* from himself; search for it in all corners of his thoughts. Even the smallest drop must be eradicated."

Since chametz represents the *yetzer hara*, we can learn how to cleanse ourselves from the *yetzer hara* from the halachos of cleaning the home from chametz.

We will offer a few examples, and we begin with the custom to put out ten pieces of chametz before bedikas *chametz* (see *Shulchan Aruch* 432:2). If he is the only person in the house and doesn't have anyone to put out the bread pieces, he should nevertheless put out the ten pieces for himself and then search for them. It isn't a real search because he knows where the

11. As the Gemara (*Brachos* 17) says, "Master of the world; You know we want to do Your will. Who prevents us? שאור שבעיסה ושעבוד מלכות, "the *chametz* in the dough and government taxes." Rashi explains that שאור שבעיסה means the *yetzer hara*.

chametz is. But this is what he should do, under the circumstances.¹²

Now, let us discuss how it is regarding the yetzer hara (which is the chametz that is within us). The night of bedikas chametz is an ideal time to examine one's

deeds and see where the yetzer hara lurks within us. Even if we know where the yetzer hara lies, nevertheless, we should rethink what the yetzer hara does to us, so we can work on ridding ourselves from the yetzer hara.

12. In Warsaw, there was a watchmaker who was a *tzaddik nistar*, one of the concealed tzaddikim of the generation. The Cheibiner Rav *zt'l* broke his watch on purpose, just to have an excuse to go to the tzaddik's store and receive a *brachah* from him. The hidden tzaddik grasped the Cheibiner Rav's intention and said, "What do you want from me? I'm a simple person."

The Cheibiner Rav said, "At least tell me a *dvar Torah*," and this is what the *tzaddik nistar*, the watchmaker, said:

The *tzaddik nistar* asked about the custom to look for the ten pieces of chametz, even when we know where they are. He asked, "If he put out the bread pieces himself, he knows where the chametz lies. Is this called *searching* for chametz? How can this be called *bedikas chametz*?"

But there is a proof that even when one knows where the chametz lies, looking for it is still considered searching. The proof is when Yosef's soldiers were searching for Yosef's *gaviyah* (goblet). The soldiers knew where the *gaviyah* was, as Rashi (*Bereishis* 44:12) writes, "They began the search from the oldest son [as it states *וַיִּחְפֹּשׂ בְּגִדוֹ*] so it wouldn't be noticeable that they knew where the *gaviyah* is." They checked all the bags, from the eldest son to the youngest, and they found it in the bag of the youngest brother, Binyamin, although they knew all along that Yosef's *gaviyah* was there. Nevertheless, the Torah calls this *וַיִּחְפֹּשׂ*, which proves that you can search for something even when you know where it is.

In most people's homes, the wife or the children put out the chametz, and the father/husband searches for them. The Pnei Menachem *zt'l* said that this hints at another lesson in cleansing ourselves from the *yetzer hara*:

Sometimes a person says, "What can I do? Hashem put this *yetzer hara* in me! It isn't my fault."

But we reply, "Pieces of bread were placed in your home so you can find them. Similarly, it's true, the *yetzer hara* was given to you, but it's your job to find the *yetzer hara* and to take it out."

Our fight with the *yetzer hara* is alluded to in the word *מִצָּה*, which means to fight, as it states (*Yeshayah* 41:12), *אֲנֹשֵׁי מִצֹּרֶךְ*, "those who battle with you," because we must put up a battle against the *yetzer hara*.

The Beis Aharon writes, "*מִצָּה* and *הַמִּין* are almost identical. The difference is only a small line.¹³ This small line signifies the bad that's in him [his *yetzer hara*]. One must get rid of the bad that's in his heart, throw it deep into the sea, and come close to the good that's inside him..."

Before *bedikas chametz* we say the *brachah*, *עַל בִּיעוּר הַמִּין*, but we don't say a *brachah* when we burn the chametz. Why?

It could be because we can try to clean our homes from chametz, but success isn't entirely up to us. For success, one needs Hashem's help.

Therefore, we make a *brachah* for searching for the chametz because that is the part that everyone can do. However, we don't make a *brachah* for destroying the chametz

13. If you connect the leg of the *ה'* of *מִצָּה* to its roof, it becomes the letters of *הַמִּין*.

because that isn't in our hands.

Regarding the *yetzer hara*, this hints that our obligation is to *search* for the *yetzer hara* and to try to get rid of it. However, the *ביעור*, complete destruction of the *yetzer hara*, isn't in our hands. For that, we need Hashem to destroy the *yetzer hara*.

Another hint is the Chazal (*Pesachim* 8.), בודק ער, "Search for the chametz as far as your arm can reach." Do the best you can, and Hashem will complete the rest.¹⁴

Tefillah

We clean our homes from chametz, we buy food

with good *hechsherim*, and some people don't buy any processed foods. In addition to all this, we should daven to Hashem that we merit celebrating the seven/eight days of Pesach without having any chametz in our homes and our food, *chalilah* because we will not succeed to be chametz-free without *tefillah*.

The Brisker Rav *zt'l* baked his matzos with many *hiddurim* and with extreme caution from chametz. Every year, after baking the matzos, he would go to the Karliner beis medresh. One year, he met Reb Yehoshua Heshel Haltovsky *z'l*, an old and respected Karliner chassid.

14. It states (*Shemos* 13:7), ולא יראה לך חמוץ ולא יראה לך שאור, "Don't see chametz, and don't see sourdough..." We can say that this is warning people not to go around with a sour face. Their face should beam with happiness.

Chazal (on this *pasuk*) say, שלך אי אתה רואה אבל של אחרים אתה רואה. This can be translated, you shouldn't see your own sourness, but you should see the sourness of others, and see what you can do to help them.

Reb Yehoshua Heshel told the Brisker Rav a story:

There was a tzaddik who made matzos every year with many *hiddurim*. One year, this tzaddik was walking home, lovingly holding the *mehudar matzos* he just baked, when he met up with a simple Yid who had also just finished baking matzos. This simple Yid told him that he had recited the entire *Tehillim* early in that morning, davening that his matzos should be kosher. When the tzaddik heard that this person prayed for kosher matzos, he wanted to have those matzos, and they exchanged matzos with each other. The simple man received the tzaddik's carefully made matzos, while the tzaddik preferred the matzos made with many *tefillos*.

The Brisker Rav asked, "What does this story tell you?"

Reb Haltavsky replied, "Obviously, this story

teaches us the greatness of *tefillah*. The tzaddik preferred the matzos of the simple Yid because they were made with many *tefillos*. The tzaddik's *mehudar matzos* couldn't compare to matzos that were created with *tefillos*."

The Brisker Rav replied, "I learn something else from this story. This simple Yid davened for kosher *mehudar matzos*, and therefore Hashem answered his *tefillos* and gave him the matzos of the tzaddik, which were made with great caution. Because the more *mehudar matzos* were the tzaddik's matzos."

According to either interpretation, this story teaches us that together with our caution from chametz, we should daven for *siyata dishmaya*.

The Klausenberger Rebbe *zt'l* told a story of a tzaddik who found a wheat kernel in his soup on Pesach. He was told in a dream that he had cleaned

his home properly, but forgot to daven that he shouldn't have any chametz on Pesach. Therefore, he was punished. A bird flew into his house and dropped a piece of wheat into the soup.

The Baal Shem Tov *zt'l* sent his student, Reb Dovid of Mikolov *zt'l*, to Serbia, to produce kosher l'Pesach wine. The student traveled to Tilensht, Serbia, and he was meticulous that the wine should come out perfectly kosher l'Pesach for the Baal Shem Tov. Generally, Reb Dovid wanted to be with the Baal Shem Tov for Elul and Tishrei, but this year, he spent these months in Serbia because that's when the grapes are pressed and fermented into wine. He stood guard, with *mesirus nefesh*, throughout the entire process until he was confident that everything was made perfectly kosher l'Pesach.

On the trip back, Rebbe Dovid continued to be

cautious with the special Pesach wine for his Rebbe, the Baal Shem Tov. Rebbe Dovid considered this toil a privilege because he was preparing wine for the holy Baal Shem Tov.

He arrived back in Mezhibuz and parked his horses and wagon in front of the Baal Shem Tov's home. He went inside to tell the Baa Shem Tov that he succeeded in his mission. Just then, a policeman passed by and suspected that there was whisky in the barrel. At that time, there was a tax on whisky and not on wine. As Reb Dovid spoke with the Baal Shem Tov, the policeman opened the barrel's lid to check whether there was whiskey inside. The police tasted it and recognized that it was wine. There was no tax, but at that point, the wine became *יין נזיר* forbidden wine.

Reb Dovid came outside just as the non-Jewish policeman was tasting the wine, and his face fell. All

his efforts were for nothing.
And it all happened at the
last moment.

Rebbe Dovid returned
to the Baal Shem Tov and
told him what happened.

The Baal Shem Tov told
him that this happened
because he didn't daven
for success in his mission.

May we all merit a *Chag
Kosher v'Sameach*.