importance, and is one of the foundations upon which the house of Israel stands.

I recall an appropriate explanation of Exodus 32:7 by Rabbi Mordechai Chaim of Slonim (**Taam Zekenim** 166): G-d said to Moses, "Go, descend, for your people have acted corruptly." Upon this the Rabbis comment, "Descend from your high position." R. Mordechai Chaim explained that when Moses was informed that the Jews had sinned, he wanted to stay in heaven and learn Torah from the Al-mighty. Why should he return to earth, to a group of idolators? Therefore, G-d commanded him "Descend from your high position! Now is no time to engage in study of the Torah, "for your people have acted corruptly," and it is incumbent upon you to descend and see what can be done to atone for their sins...

"This is the mission of Jewish leaders, not to become aloof of the people when they have sinned, not to abandon them, but to be concerned with their plight and to seek ways and means of bringing them back to the proper observance of the mitzvos, to save them from severe punishments."

So has my dear friend, Rabbi Gross, descended to the streets of the city to see how calves are slaughtered and to seek ways and means of fortifying the wall of kashrus and restoring it to its former status. May the L-rd grant him strength and power to further his work in strengthening the observance of the Torah!

Let us, therefore, praise this author, for, when he saw that the situation was not as it should be, he raises a hue and cry, and did not remain silent. Although the members of his own family opposed him, "he did not recognize his own brothers." Although he lost his means of a livelihood, "he did not know his children." Why? "For they observed Your word." His zeal was only for the sake of heaven, out of love for the Al-mighty, which far surpassed his love for his

family and friends. This was the zeal of the Levites, only for G-d alone. The criterion was, as explained above, that if he is zealous even against the members of his own family, that is proof that his zeal is for G-d alone.

In this respect, our author is one of the few in this generation to risk life and limb, to spend astronomical sums, and to persist despite strong opposition. He protests improper practices although prominent rabbis stand aside. See Rashi at the beginning of the portion of Pinchas, where he says that eventually the honor will come. Anything done for the sake of Heaven will continue to exist, i.e. it will produce permanent results, results upon which the world stands. The criterion of whether a conflict is meant for the sake of Heaven is whether the results are permanent and leave an impression. Then, we know that it was meant for fear of Heaven, and anyone who has fear of Heaven will merit that his words will be accepted. (Although enemies surround him on all sides, and he is alone against the whole world, like our father Abraham, he is not intimidated by this, for he is, in fact, not alone; the One of the world is with him, and eventually, his words will be heard. Eventually, all their hatred and jealously will end, and his words will bear fruit).

Since I know this author well, I can tell you that his works have done wonders to arouse the public concerning matters of Kashrus, and, thanks to him, the Vaad Hakashrus was established. On this pattern, many such organizations have been stated in various sections, to control the kashrus of their neighborhoods, and many congregations have adopted independent schechitos of fowl and cattle, to keep a close watch over it. Others have founded a rabbinic court for matters of kashrus, something which has been sadly neglected in the past (for it has been revealed that our brethren have, for many decades, been fed pastries and confections containing forbidden

ingredients. I have already overstepped my boundaries, and I have no more room to elaborate on his accomplishments).

Let us hope that, with G-d's help, his words will continue to make an impression on the public.

I cannot resist presenting a few exerpts from my address before the Vaad Hakashrus at the meeting of Pesach 5739:

It is worth telling in the context of **shochtim** (quoted in **Sefer Zohar Daath,** in the name of Rabbi Akiva Joseph Shlesinger o.b.m.) what the aforementioned, the son-in-law of Rabbi Hillel Lichtenstein of Kalamai o.b.m. told in his work **Shimroh Mishpat**...of a wondrous man who came to R. Hillel Lichtenstein and stayed with him for Passover in the year 5620. He brought with him a book titled **Sefer Haaviv** (whose initials in Hebrew, form the words, our brethren, the children of Israel in the Diaspora) in which various matters were discussed. I copied a little from that book, matters relevant to our generation. he writes as follows:

Rabbi Nathan Adler wanted to disqualify the **shochtim** in Frankfurt and to humble the seal of the evil forces which rests on invalid **shochtim,** as is intimated by the words, "By your sword you shall live." Had he accomplished this, the Messiah would have come. But Satan caused the butchers to oppose him, and they harassed him until he was forced to leave the city...

It is worthwhile studying this story because there are several others which convey the same idea. Let me tell you another story, one that I heard in the name of the previous Belzer Rav o.b.m. When he was in the ghetto, a Jew came to him, crying, "Rabbi, are you aware of what is happening here? Jewish blood is being shed like water! Why do you do nothing about it? Why don't you pray?"

The Rabbi replied, "What do you mean that I am doing nothing?"

The former answered, "When the Israelites were fighting with Amalek, the Torah tell us that when Moses would raise his hand, the Israelites would win, and when he would rest his hand, the Amalekites would win. It states further that Moses' hands grew heavy, so they took a stone, upon which he sat, and Aaron and Hur supported his hands so that they would not fall."

Thereupon, the Rabbi replied, "Unfortunately, I have no supporters."

When we draw a parallel with the words of the sainted Rabbi Chaim Halberstam, author of **Divrei Chaim**, that because of incompetent **shochtim** many Jewish communities left Judaism, he surely meant such communities as Frankfurt and other cities in Germany. Frankfurt, during the time of Rabbi Nathan Adler, was an important Jewish community, from which Rabbi Adler, the Chatham Sofer, Rabbi Zalman Emdin, and other greats originated.

Some fifty odd years later, when Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch wished to establish an orthodox community, he could barely find ten Sabbath observers. The **Divrei Chaim** attributes this to the incompetent **shochtim**.

The **Sefer Ha-aviv** by the divinely inspired members of the ten tribes states explicitly that the **shochtim** of Frankfurt were not qualified, and that Rabbi Adler wanted to disqualify them to remove the seal of the evil forces, but the butchers drove him out. Thereby, the incompetent **shochtim** remained in Frankfurt, thus giving power to the sword of the evil forces, through which all the Jews living there were fed non-kosher meat and their hearts clogged up. Through this, Satan was able to entice them to commit other transgressions until they left the faith completely.

What followed this? King Solomon sates in Ecclesiastes (3:9): "The place of the judgment, there is the wickedness," meaning that where the evil decree was executed, there was wickedness to warrant it. Now, gentlemen, let us study this; the bitter decree of the Second World War started from Germany, and there was wickedness. From Germany, Haskalah originated, the movement that led to the apostasy of millions of Jews. How is it possible that such renegades were so influential? Only because Satan first took care of the **shochtim,** thereby feeding the populace non-kosher meat. Then, everything went very smoothly and easily for him. By not sharpening the slaughtering knife properly, Satan's sword was sharpened and as is known, Satan is the heavenly prince of Amalek, and through this, the wicked Geman, who was Amalek, was able to slaughter millions of Jews—rachmonoh litzlon. This is the end of the quotation from the Belzer Rav, who spoke with divine inspiration.

In fact, it is an explicit Mishnah at the end of **kiddushin** (82a): "The best butcher is a partner of Amalek." Rashi explains that many animals of dubious kashrus pass through his hands, and he sells to the public to avoid a loss. He is, therefore, called the partner of Amalek, whose aim is to annihilate the Jewish people, just like Haman and Hitler, may their names be obliterated. The incompetent **shochtim** are partners in this plan of annihilation.

We see that the spiritual and physical existence of Israel depends upon kashrus. This concept is also found in Rashi at the end of Kedoshim, where he states that if we will be separated from the gentile nations and not eat unclean creatures, we belong to G-D; otherwise, we belong to Nebuchadnezzar and his colleagues. That means that if we are not careful to differentiate between kosher and trefah, we are threatened with extinction at the hands of such tyrants as Nebuchadnezzar and his like. Heaven forbid.

Let me conclude with a story about the Chofetz Chaim o.b.m. In a town not far from Radun, the mikveh became disqualified, but no one cared to rectify it. The Chofetz Chaim went immediately to that town and summoned the entire population to an assembly. Upon hearing that the Chofetz Chaim was in town and that he was going to address the entire populace in the synagogue, everyone closed his store and ran to hear him. The Chofetz Chaim said, "Gentlemen, when I ascend to the upper world, I will be asked, 'What is your name?' I will reply, 'Yisrael Meir.' Then I will be asked, 'Did you know that in a neighboring town there is a disqualified mikveh?' I wil answer, 'Yes.' They will ask me, 'Did you do anything about it?' I will reply, 'Yes, I spoke to them, but they did not obey me.' Therefore, I ask you for a written letter stating that I warned you."

Gentlemen, we appeal to you to support this important matter of kashrus which is, unfortunately, sadly neglected. If you do not respond to our appeal, we will have saved ourselves, because we warned you, and you do not obey. If you obey and help, you will be blessed with the blessing of, "Blessed be he who raises up the words of this Torah."

I, therefore, say to this author, "Be strong and of good courage, gird your sword on your waist, you hero, who shows heroism in the fight for Torah, by writing books, which are your pride and glory. May the L-rd bless you and strengthen you in all your endeavors, so that you shall continue with your holy work and merit two tables in this world and in the next, and derive pleasure from the splendor of the Shechinah at the banquet of the **tzaddikim.**

Signing in honor of the Torah,
(Rabbi) Shlomo Yehudah Schweitzer

Incidentally, I will not hesitate to note that in my possession is a wonderful pamphlet, entitled "A Memorandum." **This contains the story of the Satmarer Rav's rescue** from the hands of the Nazis. It was edited by **Rabi Menahem Schlesinger** o.b.m., author of **Torah Lishmah**, and **Toras Hageulah.**

I found there an inquiry from the author to the well-known saint and sage, Rabbi Jonathan Steif o.b.m. and his reply to him, and his words actually spout fire, to enlighten the eyes of our people who went through the trials and tribulations of the holocaust, how to prevent recurrence, G-d forbid, of such a catastrophe, or anything near it. As is known, Rabbi Steif was the main halachah authority after the holocaust, as many **tzaddikim** attested for him, and it is important for every observant Jew to pay attention to his words and to see to carry out the instructions, so that he and his fellow Jews will be saved from any calamity that can possibly come about, G-d forbid. The more one works on rectifying those matters that require rectification, the more he will be accredited with saving K'lal Yisrael, a merit that will stand him in good stead throughout all generations.

B.H. Tishri 5, 5706, Zurich
Harav Hagaon...R. Jonathan Steif shlita (o.b.m.)
You asked concerning the safety of the communities in the Diaspora

Since our Temple was destroyed, and we have been exiled from our land, we endeavored to reestablish communities and holy yeshivos in the Diaspora, and indeed, we succeeded in building communities for a limited time in Babylon, in Spain, in North Africa, in Yemen, and in many other countries. However, after a period of time,

decrees of destruction were promulgated on our brethren, but not on the nation as a whole Once there was a decree on one country and once on another, once in the east and once in the west, once in the north and once in the south. If the eastern communities were destroyed, new communities were built in the west; when the western communities were destroyed, they were rebuilt in the north or the south, But, after a time, even these new communities were mercilessly destroyed, and the survivors attempted to rebuild their communities elsewhere. This happened time and time again. We may say that, not only those communities in the Diaspora were destroyed, but even those built in the Holy land. Common sense would dictate that the rabbis and leaders of the congregations should learn a lesson from this bitter past, and since they saw that many times the old communities were cruelly destroyed, it would be proper to study the matter immediately upon the founding of new communities, and to formulate plans so that they be not destroyed as were their predecessors. Our ancestors, however, neglected to take this logical step. We are now standing at the end of a horrible holocaust, the likes of which have never befallen our people. In this generation, thousands of communities and yeshivos have been destroyed. Few survivors remain, and these few survivors are undertaking to find new communities in a new land. Doubtlessly, it is time we learned from past experience, for there is not reason to build new communities and yeshivos, only that they too should be destroyed, G-d forbid. As you know, I took a vow upon myself to clarify this matter when you and your family were in dire straits, and now I ask for instruction what to do, so that the communities we will rebuild will last until the advent of the Messiah, speedily and in our days. Amen.

Respectfully,

(Rabbi) Menahem Schlesinger

The following was his response:

Tishri 11, 5706, Jeotenberg

Greetings to my dear friend...Rabbi Menahem Schlesinger in Zurich.

I received your remarkable letter at a holy hour, and your words impressed me deeply. I will repeat what I told you personally, that we have no power but **to arouse the hearts with ethical teachings by mouth wherever possible, and to arouse the rabbis and the rabbinic judges, each rabbi in his place, to deliver discourses before his congregation from holy books such as Mesilath Yesharim, Menorath Hamaor, Chovoth Halevavos, Pele Yoetz, and the like. Similarly, one should expound from time to time on the words of the living G-d, words emanating from the heart, which will penetrate the heart. And, whoever can behave in the manner of the prophet Samuel, should go from place to place and teach his brethren the way to go and the proper deeds,** to do all according to the traditional manner that we have inherited from our forebears, all of whom were well-versed in Talmud, the disciples of Moses our teacher. Also, we must endeavor **to publish works whose contents are the study of ethical topics, Torah together with fear of G-d,** and to establish schools where the children will learn Torah in the traditional manner, Talmud Torahs and yeshivos, to disemminate Torah and pure fear of G-d, according to the manner transmitted to us by our forefathers. It must be kept in mind that the words of the wise are heard only if they are spoken in a mild manner. Only on rare occasions should a rabbi speak harshly to his congregation, but in general, he must address them with words that draw the hearts and inspire them, just as the books mentioned above, and sometimes also with the book, **Kav Hayashar,**

which frightens the readers, and also with the book, **Shevet Musar**, to which Rabi Hillel Lichtenstein o.b.m. attributed his fear of heaven. Moreoever, the enlightened rabbis must be aroused to establish mikvaos in their congregations and **to stay far away from prohibited foods,. for the holy gaon, the author of Neta Sorek, o.b.m. said that the beginning of rectification is with foods, so as not to clog the heart, G-d forbid,** and so that they should behave with sanctity and purity, and then G-d will fulfill, "And I will sprinkle upon them pure water, and you shall become pure, and I will do so that you will go in My statues," and He will fulfill the verse. "And the earth shall be filled with knowledge of the L-rd, as the waters cover the ocean bed." Amen.

Respectfully,
(Rabbi) Jonathan Shteif

Introduction to Shechitah, Nikkur, and Laws of Kashrus

Whoever is accustomed to reading the works of the poskin, knows how much they were upset about the situation in the fields of shechitah and bedikah, and how much they complained about the profligacy of their generation and its pitfalls, until it is obvious that, with all their extreme caution and watchfulness, they were extremely afraid of inadvertently sinning in the field of shechitah. For this reason, every generation enacted safeguards. Nevertheless, they continually warned the people to appoint mashgichim to supervise closely and to bear the responsibility for the public's observance through thorough investigations, and then, perhaps they would be safe from pitfalls.

Whoever is accustomed to reading the responsa and other books of the outstanding poskim, whose ruling we fellow, is familiar with the fact that virtually every volume of responsa writes about some problem or scandal in the field of shechitah in the author's time.

In these books we find that there were many quarrels between the shochtim and the members of the communities, also between the shochtim and the rabbis. In some instances these quarrels caused rifts between friends, and many times new communities were formed as a result of these quarrels. Also, rabbis often left their positions when his friends neglected to support them in their conflict with the shochet, or the rabbis were compelled to proclaim the meat non-kosher. Also, many times, the congregants refused to pay the rabbi or the shochet his salary and his family went hungry.

It occurred also that great rabbis differed when a conflict broke out between the congregation and the shochet, or between the rabbi and the shochet, and great confusion ensued. See below. Many times, a chillul Hashem came about when some of the litigants took their case before the dignitaries of the city, who decided whether the meat was kosher or not, thereby causing a chillul Hashem. Woe to such a disgrace! And much more, in instances when the shochet was a cantor as well, and had many friends supporting him. In some cases, the shochet-cantor refused to obey the rabbi, viz. if he felt that he had the majority on his side.

From these occurrences we see how far the forces of evil go to influence particularly those engaged in this profession and to blind everyone's eyes, so that on the surface everything appears to be going according to Hoyle, while in fact, the person with a keen vision discerns many scandals behind the scenes.

Further reserach reveals that even in Talmudic times, we were not immune to such scandals. For example, we find in Yerushalmi Terumos (8:3): Once there was a butcher in Sepphorris who caused the people to eat carcasses and **trefos**. Once he drank wine on Friday and fell off the roof and died. Dogs came and licked his blood. The people consulted Rabbi Chanina for the proper procedure to follow. He replied, "The Torah writes: 'And meat torn in a field you shall not eat; you shall cast it to the dogs.' This rascal was robbing the dogs and feeding the treifos to Jews. Therefore, do not chase the dogs away; they are eating their due."

See Glosses on Rosh, Hullin ch. 7:16, where the decision is staed (according to the above quotation) that if one sells treifos as kosher meat and dies before repenting, no one may participate in his burial, and even if the dogs are licking his blood and eating his flesh, they may not be driven away..

See further the last chapter of Kiddushin, on the Mishnah: "The most upright butcher is a partner of Amalek." Rashi explains that many cases of questionable kashrus come to his hand, and in trying to save money, declares them kosher, and sell them as such. We can see to what extent the Rabbis evaluate the pitfalls resulting from the butchers, that they did not hesitate to use the sharpest epithet when referring to them. The expression, "partner of Amalek," is, by far, the sharpest epithet used in the Talmud. One's hair can stand on end when one thinks about how far this matter extends. For a question of doubtful kashrus the Rabbis called him such a name, and not only a usual butcher, but "the most upright butcher " so that no one can be confident in himself and say that since he appointed a reliable butcher, no pitfalls can result from him, and it is accepted that a Torah scholar does not allow any pitfall to result from his doings, especially if the butcher is really learned, since the Rabbis say that a Torah scholar will commit a minor infraction in order to prevent an ignorant person from committing a major infraction.

Let it be made clear that people's thoughts and reasoning do not coincide with the thoughts and reasoning of the Rabbis o.b.m., who enjoyed the presence of the Shechinah in their studyhall, and everything recorded in the Mishnah or in the Gemara is hallowed with all kinds of sanctity. No one ever found fault with them except apostates and sectarians, who left the Jewish fold. See how the Geonim and the Rishonim toiled to reconcile the presence of a single word and built piles and piles of halachos upon it. Now, when they called the butcher "a partner of Amalek," the Shechinah was actually speaking from their throats, and they were agents of the All-merciful, and if we are human beings, they were veritable angels and seraphim, and all their words are like fiery coals. Let no man be tempted to say that the Rabbis meant only the butcher but

not the shochet, because if you look at Rosh on Chullin p. 18, and in Maggid Mishneh, Laws of Shechitah 1:26, you will see that the usual butcher in Talmudic times was also a shochet and an inspector.

After this introduction, it should be plain that not everything a person imagines is true, and even if he feels that he has all sorts of conclusive proofs that **this butcher** is perfectly reliable, and no one need investigate his practices, all these proofs are null and void against the testimony of our Rabbis o.b.m., who stated unequivocally that **the most upright of the butchers is the partner of Amalek.** Moreoever, any sensible person knows that our generation is surely not better than previous ones, and the most upright butcher of this generation is immeasurably inferior to the average butcher of those times, surely to the most upright.

Therefore, woever wishes to follow the paths of our holy Torah and its pleasant rulings and ways, must abandon his own ideas in view of the ideas of the Rabbis of the Talmud, **and must literally quake before bringing any meat into his house. See what the holy Shaloh writes, he saw religious men who did not eat any meat except from animals they themselves had slaughtered. He was very puzzled concerning the origin of the practice of eating meat from any shochet without first knowing clearly that the meat is kosher.**

Also, concerning the punishment of one who feeds people forbidden foods, we find that the Rabbis were unusually harsh with unprecedented stringencies. We find in Chullin 93b that if an amount of fat the size of barleycorn is found on a piece of meat sold by a butcher, that butcher is disqualified. If it is the size of an olive, he is subjected to lashes.

These rulings speak for themselves. Concentrate a little on the sanctity of these words. It is apparent from the expression, as indeed it appears in the works of the poskim, that the Talmud refers to a butcher who inadvertently neglected to remove a piece of fat, and the penalties mentioned are because of the carelessness of the menakker, who neglected to do his work faithfully. It is also apparent that there are many excuses for a menakker, e.g. "The Torah was not given to the ministering angels"; "Mistakes who will understand?" "The Torah exonerated the unpreventable," and the like. Even though these excuses are sometimes acceptable, in the field of kashrus of foods the Rabbis adopted the greatest stringencies. Since the power of temptation is much greater in this field, it was necessary to strengthen the power of sancity and to support those engaged in doing their work with greater effort and exactitude than the average, in order to weaken the forces of evil that encompass the butchers.

For this reason, they disqualified any excuse or benefit of the doubt that can be given to a butcher, and they neither spared nor pitied the butcher nor his family, who are dependent upon him for sustenance, and punished him by disqualifying him from practicing. And for what? For a minute particle of fat, no larger than a barleycorn, that is barely visible. And why? Because in the case of feeding Jews forbidden foods no considerations take preference, and we neither spare nor show clemency to any person..

See what the Rabbi said about the quarrel Korach, that they were punished to show how bad quarrels are, and in our case, even young children are punished. **It is, therefore, obvious that feeding Jews forbidden foods is listed among the gravest of sins.**

If you look deeper, you will find that the Rabbis penalized the menakker even though nobody stumbled because of his deeds, and nobody ate yet from the chelev he left on the meat. He merely left it there in a place and in a situation in which it was possible for people to eat forbidden foods, even though it is not yet clear that someone would eat of the meat. For instance, the meat may spoil before being eaten; the buyer may notice it before eating it and throw it away, and perhaps it will be cooked in a manner that there are sixty times as much permissible food as the chelev.

None of these doubts will avail the butcher to vindicate him in his judgment in the case of a possibility of a pitfall for the public, if the public was placed in a position that there was danger of their falling into a sin, and in such cases, we show no clemency in judgment. Even though in laws of jurisprudence concerning damages inflicted on property or person, the perpetrator would be vindicated since he was only indirectly responsible for the damage, in this case, Jewish souls stand higher than everything, and they are measured with a different yardstick; their measure is more sensitive than the measure of person and property.

Moreover, despite the stringency of the Sages in regard to a danger of the public falling into a sin, the Rishonim added even more stringencies, as we will illustrate with the following examples:

In Rosh, Chullin 7:16 at the end in the gloss concerning a butcher after whom a barleycorn of chelev was found: It seems to me that it should be announced in the synagogue on Monday, Thursday and the following Monday, "Such and such a butcher was disqualified from his profession

because a barleycorn of chelev was found after him." He must refrain from practicing his profession for a full month. After a month, he must come to the scholar of his city or the neighboring city, and say, "I did such and such a thing, and I sinned. I regret my first deeds." The judge shall sentence him according to his discretion. Then they should announce in the synagogue, "The butcher who was disqualified because of the fat that was found after him, has regretted this evil deed and has accepted what the scholars have ordered him." Before this announcement is heard in the synagogue, no one may rely on him and no one may buy meat from him.

When they found an amount the size of an olive, the rishonim added many stringent rulings on the butcher. This is the Rosh (ibid.):

And if an olive-sized piece was found, they would lash him in public, in the synagogue, and after the lashes, he himself would announce, I, so and so, received lashes because an olive-sized piece of chelev was found in the meat I sold."

This alone was not enough, but they were even more stringent regarding a willful offender, as is delineated in the Talmud (San. 25b), concerning a butcher who sold a treifah animal and performed certain acts indicative of his repentance. Nevertheless, Rava refused to reinstate him because of the possibility that he was merely fe'ɜning repentance. The final conclusion is that he has no way of being reinstated unless he goes to a place where he is unkown, dresses in black, enwraps himself in black, and returns a lost article of considerable value, or reimburses someone for a treifah which costs a considerable amount.

Rambam cites this law in numerous places (hilchos edus, ch. 12: hilchos shechitah, ch. 10; hilchos maachalos asuros, 8:9; hilchos Talmud Torah 6:14).

The requirement to wear black clothing and to enwrap oneself in black is cited by the three main poskim, Rif, Rosh, and Rambam. This requirement is found nowhere in the Talmud except in the chapter entitled "**Haroeh**," that if someone finds that his temptations is overpowering him, he should **donn** black and enwrap himself in black and go...This problem has already been discussed by SeMa in Choshen Mishpot 34:34, who concludes that the Rabbis were more stringent with a butcher because he caused the public to sin. He must, therefore, bring himself to humility, for black induces humility.

We find, too, in Yoreh Deah 119:1, that if one is suspected of eating non-kosher food, we may not rely upon him. This includes not only one who has been seen definitely eating non-kosher foods, but even if there is a suspicion or a doubt that he infracted the law, he is no longer trust worthy in these matters. This is explained in Beis Shlomo by Maharash Hason, Yoreh Deah 17; Responsa Chikrei Lev, vol. 1, Yoreh Deah 167 from Rashba, Rashbash, Rivash, Maharashdam; also Aruch Hashulchan par. 20). This stringency is found nowhere else.

Studying the Shulcan Aruch itself reveals innumerable stringent rulings in these matters as well as in doubts of these matters, such as we find nowhere else. In fact, when the reader opens his eyes, he finds in the works of the tzaddikim the harm this sin inflicts upon the one who stumbles upon it, until he stops wondering why the rabbis were so strict in this field, for according to the damage and the harm, it is fit to strengthen the fences and safeguards and by strengthening the safeguards, the harm will be avoided.

I will not dwell at length on quotations from the words of the tzaddikim concerning the tremendous harm caused by eating non-kosher foods, since they are found in the book itself under the heading, "The severity of the punishment for one who is neglectful, and the reward for the one who is conscientious in his observance of the laws of non-kosher foods and their doubtful cases," and there you will find it. Likewise, what I wrote above, that we find in the works of the poskim that in every generation there are many unending pitfallls in the matter of shechitah and bedikah, I will not dwell upon here, because it is delineated in the section entitled "The majority of those engaged in shechitah." Nevertheless, I cannot resist calling attention to a statement found in the book entitled "Shiru Mishpat" (vol. 2, pp. 70ff.) that Rabbi Akiva Joseph Shlesinger o.b.m. testified in the name of a great man from the ten tribes who sojourned with his father-in-law, Rabbi Hillel Kalamayer, during Passover, and he revealed many mysteries, one of which was why Rabbi Nathan Adler o.b.m. suffered so much in the city of Frankfurt, until he was compelled to flee. This was because he attempted to humble the power of the evil forces which lay upon the shochtim, and to bring near the redemption with the coming of the Messiah. The brazen 'dogs', the agents of the evil forces, became too strong for him, until he was compelled to flee, together with his disciple, Chasam Sofer o.b.m.

We see that even saints as great as these could not easily bring a great Jewish community to righteous behavior, that the shochtim and the butchers should prepare properly kosher meat. If so, what can we, who are in a much lower level, answer to this question? We are really orphans, strong arm men and liars have the upper hand, and no one investigates. We are left desolate of even the merit of the living saints, that they should protect us from the pitfall. See Tiferes Israel, San. ch. 8, on the Mishnah, "Death to the

righteous is bad for them and bad for the world," that the good the righteous bestow upon the world is not only their good deeds, but also their merit and the power of their sancity that protects the generation.

We find a similar statement in the book entitled, "Zos Zikkaron," by the holy rabbi of Lublic o.b.m., that if a righteous man sits in his room and serves the Creator whole heartedly, the power of his sanctity penetrates and spreads throughout the entire world, and from him the world draws its sanctity. In our times, because of our many sins, we have become devoid of such tzaddikim, and we have none to rely on except our Father in Heaven that He fulfill what He promised us, "For My sake, for My sake, I will do."

In order to illustrate how far the power of the evil forces extends when the issue is the slaughtering of animals for meat or other matters concerning food, for then they exert themselves with all their might, and it is very difficult to extricate oneself from them even for those of high caliber, for example, let me state what the renowned saint and sage, Rabbi Chaim Halberstam of Sanz, stated in his responsa (Divrei Chaim, vol. 1, ch. 6: "**I saw with my own eyes many G-d-fearing scholars, who visited tzaddikim, and after they learned shechitah, they changed so immensely that, had I not seen it, I would not have believed it.**"

Words of Torah are poor in one place and rich in another. This is explained by Rabbi Moshe Sofer o.b.m., author of Responsa Chasam Sofer, that he heard the explanation of the matter from a sage, and he recorded this in Responsa Chasam Sofer, Orach Chaim ch. 205, that the evil inclination, known as the old and foolish king, sits on a throne of three legs, cantors, **shochtim,** and scribes. We find the same in Toledos Yaakov Yosef, parshas Naso, s.v. Veha'olah.

The intention of the 'old and foolish king' is well-known, for forbidden foods **clog the heart and the brain and introduce heretic thoughts into the heart**, as Rambam states in his well-known letter, quoted in "Degel Machaneh Ephraim," parshas Ekev, in his name, an Pri Chadash and Birkei Yosef, ch. 1, and in Chasam Sofer, parshas Shemini, that more heresy comes from eating forbidden foods.

The secret of the matters and the primary aim, is however, driving Jews away from the Torah, and as it is stated in Responsa Divrei Chaim, vol. 1 Yoreh Deah, ch. 7, that through negligent shochtim, whole countries left the Jewish faith, and their memory has completely become obliterated.

See also "Tiyul Bapardes," vol. 1 in the section discussing shechitah, that the Zionist Organization came about through people who were fed **by negligent shochtim who fed religious Jews their meat, as well as through people who ate meat of unclean animals.**

In conclusion, I cite a wonderful statement from the book, "Keren Yisrael," at the end of parshas Shemini, which is very helpful in the matter we are discussing.

S.V. Al Teshaketzu: The difficulties of language are many in this section, concerning contamination and abomination through forbidden foods. They are found in the commentaries on the Torah. I will, therefore, not dwell on them. But, there are still matters to mention on this topic, viz. what the Rabbis stated in Baba Metzia, (also quoted by Rashi ad loca.) that if the Holy One, blessed be He, had brought the Jews out of Egypt only so that they should not contaminate themselves like the other nations, it would have been enough.

This is difficult to understand, are then really forbidden foods the entire Torah? Second of all, we find in Yoreh Deah, ch. 81, also in Ohr Hachaim at the end of Shemini,

that if one who eats forbidden foods even unintentionally, his soul becomes contaminated. The question is why? Third of all, we find in many places in the Talmud and Midrash that the Holy One, Blessed be he, does not bring pitfalls through the righteous. Tosfos explains that this is true only regarding forbidden foods and does not concern any other prohibitions. The question is why this is so. It is known what the Rabbis expound on the verse, "And you shall be holy men to Me," quoted by Rashi on that verse, that if you abstain from forbidden foods, you are Mine, but if not, you be long to Nebuchadnessar and his like. In addition to these questions, there are other difficulties, etc.

To reconcile all this, let us think deeply into the order of the creation, and, may it be His will that we say nothing against His will, and may G-d forgive us. It is explained in the Midrashim on the verse, "Bereishis," that the whole world was created for the sake of Israel, who are called 'reshis," and Israel was created for the observance of the Torah and mitzvos. Accordingly, it should be possible for every Jew to fulfill mitzvos every second of the day. Otherwise, he is detracting from the Creation, since the world was created for Israel, and Israel for the mitzvos, if Israel is idle from the mitzvos one hour, that hour is wasted, yet that is totally impossible. Many pens were broken in trying to reconcile this difficulty.

As far as our matter is concerned, let us recall the fact known by the kabalists, that by eating, one performs a great service of elevating the sparks of holiness, for that was one of the main purposes of the Creation, as is explained in all holy volumes and the power of elevating them is through the seeds that are sown in the ground and which grow. Thus, the first part of elevation from a mineral to a vegetable is completed (for four types of creatures were created, one higher than the other: mineral,

vegetable, animal, and man), for the earth, which is mineral, elevates the plants, and then, when an ox eats grass and the donkey in its owner's manger, then the plants are elevated to an animal, and when the animals are slaughtered, and people eat them, they are elevated from animal to man (in addition to mysteries, which for lack of space need remain unexplained).

There is, however, a vast distinction between the methods of elevation from mineral to vegetable and so, from vegetable to animal, which is always accomplished in one order, but in a person's consumption, there are various types. Righteous men and men of high caliber, who are destitute of any physical desire of this world, and who know how to unify G-d, elevate the food they consume in the highest possible manner. The average person intends with his eating to have strength to serve his Creator, although he also feels physical sweetness, it is like someone who experiences physical pleasure while performing a mitzvah, which, according to Rashba and other commentators, does no harm.

Now, the last group, whose hearts are too clogged even to embrace this intention, are, however, strict enough to insist that the food is strictly kosher, and they would sooner hunger than put any non-kosher food into their mouths and He who calls the generations from the beginning, and Who examines people's hearts, knowing all hidden things, chose this mitzvah of eating so that it would be possible for every Jew, without exception (as long as he so desires) to fulfill it at all times in such manner that no second will be missing from his life that he should be deprived of this great mitzvah.

This can be explained as follows: When a person eats, in so doing, he undoubtedly fulfills the mitzvah off caution from forbidden foods, and hence strives only to eat kosher foods and upon finishing eating, (as long as the food is not

yet digested,) he is still engaged in this mitzvah and the mitzvah is credited to the one who completes it. As long as the food is in his stomach, it is still possible to vomit it out, and when the digestion is completed, then his food and drink become part of his flesh and blood, and only by this eating can a person live, as we recite the blessing many times every day, "and He deals wondrously," that the Holy One, Blessed be He, unites a person's soul, which is spiritual, with his eating, which is physical, for this is a wonder, and it is far beyond a person's comprehension to understand the Creator's intention, why He did so. But, according to our premise, even **we** can understand one reason for G-d's doing so, in order that we should be completely sustained from a mitzvah, not from anything else.

And when a person fasts more than is possible, his spirit leaves his body and his body returns to the earth. Consequently, his entire sustenance is through his fulfilling the mitzvah of eating kosher food. Accordingly, if one fills himself with forbidden food, he cannot be counted among the seed of Israel for whom the world was created, for the world was created only for Israelites who fulfill His commandments, and there is no commandment to which a person is bound and attached every minute of his life except food, as above explained. And if he eats forbidden food, much time is missing, when he is idle from the mitzvos of the Holy One, Blessed be he, and therefore, the Creation of that time was not because of him, but it is impossible to nullify the will of the Holy One, Blessed be He, Who intended that the Creation be for Israel. If so, perforce, through his eating, he loses the name, Israel.

It is obvious that according to this, G-d guards the souls of His pious ones, that they stumble not on forbidden foods even inadvertently, for if the Creation of the world is not for them, it will perforce be destroyed, since the tzaddikim are

the foundation of the world. It is also readily understood that only if Jews are careful not to eat forbidden foods, are they counted as the legion of the Supreme King of kings, and if not, they blong to Nebuchadnezzar and his like. Lest it present a difficulty, that if the world does not exist because of them how do these Jews live, since they are not careful with their food? On this question, they reply that they are no worse than Nebuchadnezzar and his like, who were created as well.

Now we can understand what the Rabbis said that on account of forbidden foods alone, the Jews would have been worthy of being redeemed from Egypt, for it is known what Ramban, followed by Chinnuch and many other early authorities, that the Exodus was performed to strengthen the belief in the Creation, for the Creation was not proven with a concrete proof, but only with faith, and through the miracles and wonders that the Holy One, Blessed be he, performed to Pharaoh and to all his people, that He overrode the rulings of the stars and changed the order of the Creation through changing nature many hundreds of times (as is related in the haggadah of Pesach, that the Egyptians were smitten with many hundreds of plagues both in Egypt and at the Red Sea) until it was proven conclusively that the kingdom is G-d's and that He rules over both the Heavenly and the earthly hosts according to His will, and He posses the power to alter nature according to His will.

All this was necessary only if the Jews keep His commandments, for which purpose the world was created. Otherwise, why was the Exodus necessary to prove that the Creation was true? If they do not keep the mitzvos, the entire creation will be nullified, and therefore, when G-d commanded Moses with his first commandment, he told him, "When you take the people out off Egypt, you shall serve G-d on this mountain," for they are interdependent,

for all the miracles performed in Egypt were necessary only because of this.

Therefore, the Midrash states that if the Holy One, Blessed be He, had taken the Jews out of Egypt only to keep them from eating forbidden foods, it would have been sufficient, since the mitzvah of abstaining from forbidden foods is a daily mitzvah that never leaves the soul of the Jew. Therefore, the world, which was created because of Israel who keeps the commandments, has something upon which to support itself, for every second of the Creation, it supports itself on eating kosher food, but if this mitzvah were not given, only a mitzvah from which it is possible to interrupt for a day or an hour, or even a second, the Creation would not have anything upon which it is possible to interrupt for a day or an hour, or even a second, the Creation would not have anything upon which to support itself and to remain in existence, and the miracles of Egypt would be completely in vain.

In a simpler manner, we can explain that the mitzvah of abstaining from eating forbidden foods merited such an important position exalted over other mitzvos to such an extent that no harsh decrees nor severe penalties were decreed upon the body and the soul of the one who infracts them, both to him nor his posterity (Pub. note: Read further for greater explanation) as were decreed on one who eats forbidden food. The answer is that the aim of this world is to achieve the next world, since this world is like a vestibule before the World to Come, according to the parable of the Rabbis and according to the mitzvos and good deeds a person performs in this world, he merits a share in the World to Come.

Therefore, as long as a person's body is fed with unequivocally kosher food, all the mitzvos he performs are performed through the help of the strength he received from that food and it is reckoned for good and for a

blessing, and he is blessed with success because of it. Not so if he is fed with forbidden food and with the strength he derived therefrom he performs mitzvos and good deeds, all of which are worthless, since a band of wickedness is not counted as a band at all and the Holy One Blessed be he, abhors robbery in a burnt-offering and a mitzvah which comes through an **averah** is hateful to him and is accounted as naught.

We can now understand why one is not accounted a Jew if he eats forbidden foods, for just as a Jew who neglects to fulfill all the mitzvos of the Torah is not counted as a Jew, so is one who eats forbidden foods and fulfills all the mitzvos with the strength he derives from eating forbidden foods, since this is regarded as though he had not fulfilled the mitzvos at all.

For this reason, tzaddikim are prevented from stumbling on the prohibition of eating forbidden foods even inadvertently. Even though the act of eating was performed inadvertently, all the mitzvos he performed with the strength derived from that food are null and void, and not accounted as anything, and that is a grave pitfall. Therefore, the Watcher of Israell guards them from all such sins. It is also explanatory why the harm is so great even if the sin was performed inadvertently. For this very reason, the Holy One, Blessed be He, said that if they beware of forbidden foods, we are His, for, otherwise, it is impossible to perform any deed through which G-d will be praised, for all his deeds are counted as naught, but if he is careful and bewares with all his power not to stumble even inadvertently or even inevitably upon a forbidden food, then he becomes secure in his ways.

Because of this reason, it is explained by the poskim that the preparation for a mitzvah is greater than the mitzvah itself. This statement is difficult to understand. One proof is from the mitzvah of eating on the day before Yom Kippur,

counted as fasting two days, even though it is only a preparation for Yom Kippur so that people should be able to fast on Yom Kippur.

But, according to our method, it is very logical, for the preparation we are discussing is the preparation to be able to fulfill a mitzvah, and this itself is counted as a mitzvah, and not, G-d forbid, the opposite, to sort and purify every flaw and imperfection by sifting it with thirteen sieves, that the mitzvah should not be performed through an aveirah, that it should be performed with intention, and many other things that invalidate the mitzvah. For this reason, it is counted more than the mitzvah itself, for this resembles what the Rabbis say, that one who causes others to perform a mitzvah is greater than one who does a mitzvah itself.

It has previously been written here explaining this matter more fully, that the preparation is of greater importance than the mitzvah itself; because in the preparation there are two elements: one is the preparation that is counted as a mitzvah by itself, such as the obligation of intention before performing the mitzvah, which is in itself a mitzvah except that there is a dispute between the authorities whether it is Biblical or Rabbinical (as is explained in Shaarei Torah, Responsa Machaneh Chaim). Therefore, when one intends to fulfill the mitzvah as is required, he has fulfilled two mitzvos, the mitzvah to intend and also through that which the mitzvah becomes valid, and that is really an instance of a mitzvah bringing on another mitzvah.

Now, regard into this matter well. If the preparation for a single mitzvah is regarded as double the mitzvah, one who is careful to abstain from eating forbidden foods, which enables him to fulfill the entire Torah in all its details,

branches, and ramifications, will surely receive a reward corresponding to all the mitzvos he will fulfill all his life.

Now, let us calculate how much a person who eats forbidden foods is prevented from fulfilling the entire Torah and is punished twofold, both for neglecting to fulfill the mitzvos and also for lack of caution in the matter of forbidden food. How foolish **are those people who are very careful to fulfill every mitzvah, easy or difficult, in the best possible manner, yet they forget the main thing, that if they do not exercise extreme caution as to what comes into their mouths, all their toil is in vain, G-d forbid!**

Were they wise, the would discern the result of the matter from its inception, and each one would think, if I spend so many days and hours for matzos , a beautiful esrog, a beautiful tallis and the like, how much more do I need to spend to repair my house, that nothinng enter it except edibles that are one hundred percent kosher with all details and beautifications, for this is the peg and corner upon which everything depends upon! It was not in vain that the primeval serpent went to all lengths to cause G-d's own creature to stumble upon sins of eating forbidden fruit, for if the foundation is weak, the entire building will collapse.

Conversely, one must put his mind to the great reward one receives by striving harder and harder, over his ability, to be careful to enact safeguards upon safeguards and to flee ninety-nine gates of permissibility in order to avoid falling into one gate of prohibition, G-d forbid! For on this, all his Torah, his mitzvos, and all his deeds for the rest of his life, depend upon, and for this reason he will be rewarded for keeping far away from forbidden foods, commensurate with all his Torah etc. as above. In conclusion, we find that his reward for this becomes twofold all the rest of his reward altogether, for one reason, because care and

caution from stumbling over forbidden foods is in itself a great mitzvah, and secondly, because this mitzvah preserves all his other mitzvos, for, had he eaten forbidden foods, all his mitzvos would be rejected and cast upon the thorns, so to speak. The third reason is that through eating, he is given the physical strength to fulfill the mitzvos, which is not so if he eats forbidden foods, for then the mitzvah is not countd as a mitzvah.

Through this reasoning, you will understand a wonderful interpretation of the final Mishnah of Tractate of Makkos: Rabbi Hananiah the son of Akashia says: The Holy One, Blessed be He, wished to cause Israel to be righteous. He, therefore, gave them much Torah and many mitzvos, etc. Rashi explains that he interdicted for them reptiles and carrion, which a person's soul eschews. On the surface, Rashi's explanation does not make sense, for, even if a Jewish soul eschews reptiles, it does not eschew carrion except because the Torah interdicted it. If there were no mitzvah of shechitah, all meat would be the same, and people would eat the flesh of animals that died of themselves just as they would eat the flesh of slaughtered animals. Take an example from fish and locusts, which everyone eats dead, since there is not mitzvah of shechitah attached to them. It is true that living creatures are disgusting, as the Talmud tells us in the Tractate Shabbath, that we may not give a child a live locust to play with, lest he eat it and infract the negative commandment of "You shall not contaminate yourselves."

But, in fact, we may explain Rashi's commentary in another way, as follows: There is another unusual law concerning forbidden foods, viz. that if someone purchases meat, which is later discovered to be non-kosher, even if the buyer ate it up, his money must be refunded (Choshen Mishpat 234:4). The reason is that, even though when he ate it, he derived benefit therefrom, since he was unaware

that it was non-kosher, when he discovered that it was non-kosher, that benefit is considered as naught (Sema ad loc., quoted by Shach Yoreh Deah 119:27). It is very difficult to understand, because what difference does it make that it disgusts him now? When he ate it, he enjoyed it.

According to our discussion, however, it is understandable, because even though he derived benefit from the eating, it did him more harm than good, since all his good deeds turned to naught. Moreover, the commentators explain (see below) that for the preparation of a commandment, one is rewarded in this world as well as in the next. Consequently, if he would have eaten kosher meat, he would surely have been rewarded in this world as a preparation for the commandment, as explained above he was, therefore, harmed in this respect, as well.

Accordingly, we may explain Rashi's commentary on the Mishnah in this manner, that the Torah did not have to make a special mitzvah of refraining from eating prohibited foods. The Torah could have merely written that the mitzvos performed through eating certain foods are unacceptable, and the Jew would automatically abstain from these foods. The Torah, however, gave a special mitzvah for each forbidden food so that the Jew would receive reward for their observance, in addition to the reward he receives from the other mitzvos he performs through the strength he obtains from eating kosher foods.

With this, we can understand a quotation from the holy Zohar, vol. 3, 42, that whoever eats forbidden foods is tantamount to one who worships pagan gods, because, since he eats forbidden foods, none of his mitzvos are accepted on high, and they all go to the forces of evil. Therefore, all his service appears to be directed to those forces, G-d forbid!

Now we can understand a quotation from Degel Machaneh Ephraim, parshas Ekev, from Rambam, that

through eating forbidden foods, heretic thoughts enter a person's heart and mind, for through his eating, his mitzvos and his divine service are not accepted on high, and they enter the realm of the evil forces, as it is known that there is no in-between; either the mitzvos go to the side of sanctity or to the side of contamination, G-d forbid! So it is stated explicity in Zohar ad locum, that it leaves the realm of sanctity and enters the realm of contamination. Since he is in their realm and serves them, he is already trapped in their snare and the forces of contamination, heresy, and apostasy overpower him.

Through this, we can understand the ruling of "Tevuas Shor," that a shochet must be a G-d fearing man for a long time, otherwise the shochet continuously descends and deteriorates, thereby deteriorating others who eat of his shechitah (Publisher's note: This quotation from Tevuas Shor is also cited in "Tiyul Bapardes," section dealing with shechitah). His words demand an explanation, because, perforce he is talking of the case that the shechitah of this shochet is kosher, otherwise why does he have to state that the reason those who eat of his shechitah deteriorate because of his lack of fear of G-d? They surely deteriorate because they eat from non-kosher shechitah. He, therefore, perforce means that even though the shechitah is still kosher, but since the shochet is lax, he brings about spiritual deterioration to those who eat of his shechitah. This definitely requires a reason.

According to our aforementioned discussion, however, everything can be understood, for if the shochet is not really a G-d fearing man, he is not as careful as he should be with his food, and in such a manner, he will soon deteriorate since his mitzvos do not enter the realm of sanctity as above outlined, that they go from the realm of sanctity to the realm of contamination, and in that manner, even what he slaughtered properly it is accounted as though he did

not slaughter it, since his strength is not sustained from sanctity, and his mitzvos are null and void, hence eating of his shechitah is tantamount to eating carrior.

Now we will be able to comprehend a quotation from Avos d'Rabbi Nathan, that they come to serious sins, G-d forbid! For the Rabbis stated: The wicked are in the power of their heart. That means that they have no control over themselves, but they are like slaves to their lusts and desires. Surely, one who eats forbidden foods, who, according to the holy Zohar, enters the realm of the side of contamination, is surely caused to sin by committing the most serious infractions of the law, G-d forbid! (Publisher's noted, Concerning the matter of attraction to serious sins, see "Divrei Yoel" Shemini p. 250, s.v. ve'od).

We can also understand the statement in "Yesod Veshoresh Ha'avodah" (Shaar Habechoros ch. 4, s.v. Hagidah li), that the stringency of their punishment is more severe than any other sins in the world, since this sin is tantamount to all the mitzvos and sins in the Torah, for through eating forbidden foods, none of his deeds are credited to him.

Now we can reconcile the words of the Midrash in a wonderful manner (Koheles Rabbah 1:28), that in the Hereafter, the Holy One, Blessed be He, will promulgate an announcement and say, "Whoever did not eat pork during his life shall come and receive his reward." Then, He promulgates a second announcement and says, "Whoever did not eat carrion, treifos, reptiles, or rodents, shall come and receive his reward." Ths passage is very surprising, for what about the other mitzvos in the Torah and their reward? Are there only two mitzvos that of abstention from pork and that of abstention from carrion, treifos, etc? (I noticed that Chasam Sofer o.b.m. in his work, "Toras Moshe," parshas Kedoshim, went to all ends to reconcile this. — The Publisher).

According to the premise set down before, all these difficulties can be readily reconciled, for the truth of the matter is that the reward for the performance of all mitzvos depends on the observance of the prohibition of forbidden foods. Therefore, G-d announces that whoever abstained should come forward and receive his reward. This does not mean the reward for these two mitzvos, but for the observance of all mitzvos.

How bright and luminous are the words of the holy Zohar (vol. 3, 42), that all sufferings that a person experiences in this world are due to not being careful with forbidden foods. Now, is this sin more serious than all other sins, that one should be punished for it in this world? The explanation is very clear, however, according to our introduction, and let us introduce another principle. We find in the Talmud, in Tractate Sotah (21a) that the Torah and mitzvos protect and save us. The Rabbis distinguish between Torah and mitzvos, in that Torah, both when one is engaged in its study, as when he is not engaged in its study, protects and saves, i.e. it protects from afflictions and saves from the evil inclination that he not cause him to stumble into sin. Mitzvos, however, accomplish this only when one is engaged in their performance. When he is not engaged in their performance, however, they protect from afflictions, but they do not save one from the evil inclination.

Now, if the performance of a commandment was accomplished by eating forbidden foods, they are not accredited to him and he is left without shelter and protection from afflictions, the afflictions find a place to alight upon him. This is the intention of Ohr Hachaim, parshas Shemini, where he writes that through this, horrible afflictions come upon a person.

There are a number of passages in well-known Chassidic works that follow the same line of thought, e.g. "Agra d-Pirka (126), that through this sin, children go astray. Also,

"Maor vashemesh," Shemini, s.v. Al teshakketzu, that even if one is lenient in a case in which he should have ruled stringently, his soul is contaminated, and he cannot attain the understanding of the Torah, for the Talmud states that one who is accustomed to lighting many candles merits children who are Torah scholars, as it is said: For a mitzvah is a candle, and the Torah is light. Conversely, whoever is not conscientious in his observance of any commandment, nor of the mitzvah of candle (or of any mitzvah,) he will not merit children who are Torah scholars, and surely if his son himself is not conscientious. Now, since through eating forbidden foods, it is impossible to perform any mitzvah that counts as a mitzvah, everything is self-explanatory.

We can understand now the Zoharic passage that the main judgment of a person on Rosh Hashanah, is concerning eating matzos on Passover (cited also in Responsa Avnei Nezer 392, Pub.), that eating matzos is the first and most important of all matters of eating concerning which the Torah was strict with the mitzos of **bal yeraeh** and) **bal yimatzay,** that no leaven be seen or found in the possession of any Israelite, something not found in regard to any other commandment. Likewise, a person is judged for other forbidden foods, since everything depends on a person's food, whether his mitzvos are counted or not.

For this reason, the level of caution from forbidden foods is greater than that of mitzvos equal to the entire Torah, such as tzitzis and others, but forbidden foods are the foundation and the root of everything, and everything depends upon them, for if one does not observe these laws as he should, what use are his other mitzvos?

This mitzvah is counted among the mitzvos for which a person is rewarded in this world, as we find in "Keshav Sofer" (Bechukosai) that for the toil of preparing for a mitzvah, one is rewarded in this world as well as in the next, and that the mitzvah of forbidden foods is included in this

group, as is explained above. Moreoever, we find in the Midrash that Jews are not sustained in this world except in the merit of faith (see Yismach Mosheh, Mattos. Pub.) Since Rambam writes that forbidden foods cause heresy and apostasy, the opposite, the reward, which is greater than the punishment, results in the one who conscientiously observes the mitzvah of forbidden foods being rewarded with faith, for which the reward is given in this world as well as in the next.

I found another remarkable statement in Sefer Keren Yisrael, p. Emor, s.v. "Bezos yavo":...Accordingly, we can readily understand what our Sages said, that on Yom Kippur the Accuser has no right to accuse, for we find only one day in the year that eating is prohibited by the Torah. That is Yom Kippur, and that is the great power to quiet the power of the Accuser, who derives all his strength to accuse the children of the living G-d, from the food that enters their intestines, and as long as the people fast, he has no power to accuse. You can thereby understand the reason of the one who holds that on Yom Kippur, the day itself atones without repentance. On the surface, this is very surprising, since evryone knows that there is no atonement without repentance, but now it is understandable, since, even the one who does not repent properly, still fasts, and that alone is a great merit to exonerate a person in the Divine Judgment.

We find further on the verse, "And you shall slaughter as I have commanded you," that a shochet who has no fear of G-d, as is required, becomes a brother and a colleague of Satan, for their deeds are very much alike, and for that reason numerical value of "Satan" equals "lo shochet." I.e. to him is the shochet, for the shochet likens himself to Satan. In what manner? In the manner the Rabbis delineate in Baba Basra, (ch. 1) the tactics of Satan. He goes down and entices, goes up and accuses, comes down and takes

the soul. So does the negligent shochet. First he entices the people to eat from his non-kosher shechitah. Then he accuses; after he is trapped in his sin, he accuses; he assembles his relatives, his friends, and his acquaintances to instigate a quarrel with his opponents, and then he takes a soul. After he has been able to quiet his opponents and perform his work of trickery undisturbed, he takes the soul of the congregation and lowers them into the grave, G-d forbid!

I discovered in Sefer Chelkas Chaim, letter shin, section dealing with shechitah, that the word **challif**, the name given for the slaughterer's knife, is called so because it is liable to change (chalof) the shochet and also those who eat of his shechitah so that they change their faith — G-d forbid — as is explained in **Tevuas Shor** and in Responsa Divrei Chaim, vol. 1, ch. 7 — and also that he switches Elijah the prophet's lodging with the angel of death, as is explained in Imrei Tzaddikim, Divrei Geonim, p. 5, that when the shochet is righteous, then the shechitah is proper and Elijah the prophet is in town. If the shochet feeds the public with non-kosher meat, however, he brings the Angel of death to town. Moreoever, he changes the person's soul from being believer in G-d and in His Torah to apostasy, as is explained in Degel Machaneh Ephraim, p. Ekev, quoting Rambam. Moreoever, he switches a 'tes' for a 'dalles', making the verse read, "For the shochet blinds the eyes of the wise," instead of 'shochad', bribe.

In the introduction to the Sefer Pinas Yikras, p. 7, that if the shochet does not perform shechitah properly, he weakens and destroys the three pillars upon which the world exists: Torah, sacrifices, and works of kindness. He destroys the pillar of Torah by making G-d's Torah false through treating its tenets lightly, and also by causing conflict between the Torah scholars. He weakens the pillar of sacrifices in the following manner: The Rabbis tell us that

when the Temple was in existence, a person's sacrifice would expiate his sins. Now a person's table expiates his sins. Accordingly, if a person's table is full of non-kosher meat, the pillar of sacrifices is also destroyed. Works of kindness — For hospitality is the main element of kindness, and as our Rabbi o.b.m. stated in Taanis concerning Abba Hilkiah, that his wife gave bread to the poor, and they could immediately benefit from it, and if someone serves his guest non-kosher meat, his loss is greater than his reward. Moreover, this usually causes strife, vain hatred, slander, and other serious sins, the opposite of kindness. In Responsa Mar'eh Yeshezkel ha'acharon (by the saint and sage, Mahariach, chief rabbi of Galina, o.b.m.), ch. 43, we find: **We have seen that all the harsh decrees that come upon the world are because of this sin.**

And if you wish to know, my friend, how far the failure in the field of shechitah extends, let me cite what the Ohr Hachaim writes concerning this matter. The author of Ohr Hachaim was known for his ingenuity, his righteousness, and his abstention from worldly pleasures. Who has an idea of his greatness? Baal Shem Tov o.b.m. attests that he was the portion of the spirit of emanation of King David, matters of which we have no concept. In his work, "Pri Toar," ch. 18, he writes: I have personally witnessed that a person who treats any mitzvah lightly does not make an effort to examine the slaughtering knife thoroughly, as G-d commanded us. Think about the stringency of the matter, that whoever treats even one mitzvah lightly, cannot examine the knife properly..

An astounding idea is found in Maggid Mishneh, hil. shechitah 1:26, in the name of Raabad, that the Rabbis required a shochet to show his knife to a sage before using it to slaughter, a requirement not found

in regard to any other mitzvah, such as Tefillin or Tzitzis. The main idea of his words is that examining a knife requires strong concentration at the time of the examination, to the exclusion of all else. Otherwise, he cannot detect a nick, and who is equal to the sage in this respect?

See the main part of the sefer, the section entitled, "Caution for Shochtim" letter 105, remarkable quotations from various works, to put in great effort to be stringent in our time, with fences an safeguards as far as possible, and even more.

☆ ☆ ☆

Sefer Nefesh Yeshayah
Chapter I
1

The Creator warned us many times to beware of eating any types of forbidden foods. Many of thee interdicts were written in Leviticus and repeated in Deuteronomy, such as the interdict against eating unclean animals and fowl, the interdict against eating blood and fat, as well as the prohibition of mingling meat with milk. All in all, the Torah devoted many complete sections and chapters to the prohibitions of various foods.

This interdict differs from all other interdicts in the Torah, in that, here the Torah tells us how these foods damage our soul if we, G-d forbid, transgress these commandments and eat them. For instance, if one eats blood or fat, he is liable to the penalty of kares. His soul becomes cut off from the Tree of Life. Hence we learn how stringent these prohibitions are, that one is punished so severely for eating such a small amount, the size of an olive, from which he derives very little pleasure. Yet, the damage to his soul is astronomical, since it becomes cut off from its roots, and as well as that of his children...Heaven forbid!

Even those prohibitions for which there is only a negative commandment, without a penalty of kares, are also very severe in that the soul becomes contaminated, as the Torah states in Leviticus 11:41. Every time the Torah mentions these prohibitions, it

repeats, "It is unclean to you," "which I separated for you to make it unclean." "And you shall be holy because I am holy." There are many such verses in the Torah.

2

It is, therefore, apparent that all these foods were prohibited because they contaminate the soul of those who eat them, and whoever abstains from eating them is able to sanctify his soul and cleave to the holiness of the Almighty Himself **and to be counted-in as His child...this is very important**. Although we must never reach the end — we cannot even learn a small part of G-d's secret — but we must abstain from all prohibited things as though a lion were lying on them, nevertheless, whenever the Torah tells us explicitly the reason for a commandment, that is the main reason for it, outside of the hidden reasons revealed to great **tzaddikim** to whom G-d's secrets and mysteries are revealed. See **Bach**, beginning of Laws of Sukkah (**Tur Orach Chaim,** ch. 625) also in laws of Tzitzis and Tefillin, where the Torah revealed the reason for these precepts.

Similarly, as regards the laws of forbidden foods, concerning which the Torah tells us that whoever eats them contaminates his soul, this is the revealed reason for these precepts, and it should suffice for all intelligent people to abstain from eating them, for who is so **foolish** as to **defile** and **contaminate** his soul and estrange himself from the holiness of the Al-mighty for the **pleasure** of a **fleeting moment**.

Although the aforementioned is well-known to all, one has but to open a Chumash to see this, we, nevertheless, will discuss it, as we mention in our introduction that the purpose of this book is not to inform people of new things, to invent new stringencies, for it is enough to observe what the Torah stated, and what we have learned from the Sages and the halachic authorities.

Sometimes the mere knowledge of the prohibition in the Bible does not suffice as a weapon against the Evil Inclination, which lurks and plots against a person to bring him to ruin for no one sins unless a spirit of stupidity enters his being. At that moment, when the **yetzer hara**, the Evil Inclination, burns within him, he forgets the prohibition completely. He believes that it is completely permissible. His temptation presents him with many false reasons and proofs that it is permissible, as the Gemara expresses itself, it presents him with one hundred fifty reasons to permit the eating of a creeping thing. Through all these enticements, the person is led to believe his **yetzer** (evil inclination) and to entertain — thinking this is not what the Torah prohibited. This is something else; it has a different name; it is in a different place; the circumstances are different, etc. The similarity of all these arguments is that they help to mislead the person and cause him to sin, thereby contaminating his soul and preventing him from cleaving to his Creator.

3

In addition, to knowing the prohibitions of the Torah, we must beward of infracting any of them. The obligation to beware is repeated many times in the Torah. This awareness consists of keeping these mitzvos in our mind constantly, not allowing them to be forgotten, as the Mishnah (Avos 3:8) states, Whosoever forgets one thing from his studies is reckoned as guilty and therefore places his soul in jeopardy, for that Mishnah itself would have protected him, but now that he forgot it, it cannot do so. Tosefos Yom Tov qualified the Mishnah as referring to the case that one forgot his learning becaue of laziness. He quotes Midrash Sh'muel, who states that even if he forgets something from his learning because he is occupied with earning a livelihod, he is nevetheless guilty for his soul. Perhaps this is included in the awareness which we are

obligated to keep for all G-d's precepts and which we accepted on Mount Sinai, for if one assumes responsibility to watch something and displays negligence in so doing, he becomes guilty for any damages incurred.

I, therefore, undertook to compose an anthology of Rabbinic dicta, scattered throughout the two Talmuds, the Zohar, and the Midrashim, concerning the severity of the interdict of forbidden foods and the grave damage they inflict upon the soul of one who eats them. I searched throughout the works of the **rishonim,** the early authorities, and the **acharonim**, the later authorities. I present herein their words verbatim. May their holy words penetrate the hearts of the readers and inspire them to beware of anything related to these interdicts. It will, at least, help prevent him from forgetting them, for when he reviews this material, the warning of the holy Torah will become engraved in his memory, and if the Torah does not slip his mind, he is assured that he will not sin. In order to facilitate matters, we have divided the material into chapters according to its contents.

I beseech the L-rd, to cast my lot with those who lead the public to righteousness, and perhaps I, too, will benefit by it. I appeall to everyone to read this book and review it again and again, for I have added nothing original; it consists only of the works of the saints of yesteryear. May their words permeate the hearts of us all.

Chapter II

1

It is well-known that the body is the vehicle of the soul, through which the latter performs its functions, and all acts of the soul are performed through the powers of the body, and according to its purity the quality of its composition, it understands the way of the soul which dwells within it. For this reason, G-d forbade us to eat various types of foods,

for He knows that all these foods impair the quality of the body's composition and clog the hearts. This is explained at length in **Sefer hachinuch**, whose authorship is attributed To Rabbenu Aaron HaLevi o.b.m. (mitzvah 73) in the section dealing with the negative precept of trefah:

Of the roots of this precept is the following: Since the body is the vehicle of the soul, with which the latter performs its function, without which it can do nothing...for the body is in its hands like a tong in the hands of a blacksmith, with which he does his work,

2

The Chinnuch writes further (mitzvah 154) in the section dealing with the prohibition against eating unclean animals:

See Chavel.

3

We find the same reason in Midrash Rabbenu Bechaye in parshas Shemini:

> What can it be likened to? A doctor who went to visit two patients, one of whom was critically ill. He said to them, "Give him anything he wants to eat." He went to the second one and said to them, "Give him this particular food but don't give him this certain food." Sometime later, the one for whom he had permitted all foods, died, whereas the one for whom he had permitted only certain foods and forbidden certain foods, recovered. They asked him, "how come?" He replied, "The one in whom I recognized signs of life, I permitted some foods and forbade some foods, and for the one in whom I recognized sings of death, I permitted everything." So did the Holy One, blessed be He, permit all kinds of rodents and reptiles for the seven nations, because they are destined for Gehinnom, but for the Jews, who are alive, He said to them, "This you may eat and this you many not eat."

> For this very reason, He chose the working, "This is the **chayah**..." since this is an expression of **chaim**, life, for Jews cleave to life, as it is said: (Deut. 4:4) "But you who cleave to the Lord Your G-d, are all alive today."

A similar statement is found in **Vayikra Rabbah** 13:2, after which the Midrah concludes: This is what is written: (Proverbs 30) "Every saying of G-d is pure." Rav said: The commandments were given to Israel only to purify mankind.

- 4 -

The **Akedah** (gate 70) explains that the intention is concerning the life and health of the soul, for one who is destined to live in the World to Come, should have a different nature from one who is not so destined. These animals were not prohibited because they are unhealthy for the body, as some people think. G-d forbid! If that were the case, the Divinely given Torah would have no more value than a small medical handbook. Moreover, we see that those who do not observe the dietary laws are just as healthy as those who do. The correct interpretation is that they were interdicted because they impair one's spiritual health, for they are despicable and abominable, and they hurt the soul possessed by their intelligence. They create a cloggage therein, a poor composition and a perversion of desire, from which a spirit that contaminates the thoughts and deeds, (and drives out the pure and holy spirit), is created.

This is the intention of the Talmudic maxim (**Yoma 39a**):...for it clogs a person's heart, as it is said: "And you will become contaminated through them." Do not read, 'contaminated,' but 'clogged,' for clogging and contamination are derived from the same source. Therefore, forbidden foods are called 'unclean,' because

the reason for their prohibition is that they form an unclean spirit, and evil spirit, a spirit of immorality, which seizes those who eat them, and one who wishes to protect his soul must keep his distance from them as he would from poison. That is what the Rabbis mean when they say that the precepts were given solely to purify mankind. Purification means that a person will live a life of caution and abstinence, accepting the yoke of the heavenly kingdom, and limiting himself in many things his heart desires. This is the life a person must choose, as the Rabbis said: If he will live, he should die, and if he will die, he should live.

Stories

A frightful incident concerning a shochet who promulgated a decision to prohibit eating an animal in whose stomach was found a blister, and thereby saved all the Jews from a devastating plague that took hold of the city, may G-d save us!

Sefer Mazkeres Moshe relates: I've heard from an elderly **shochet** in Leghorn that before the cholera epidemic reached that city, he saw for the first time a very putrid blister in the stomach of an animal but did not give it any thought, being it was not in a place that would render it trefah. Later, however, when the plague burst out, more such blisters began to appear. He thought that perhaps the plague was caused by eating the meat of such animals. He, therefore, declared all such animals trefah. G-d helped him and since then, no Jew in the city died of the plague. He immediately went and informed the physicians, who likewise gave out an order to examine all animals. Thereupon, the plague ceased and never returned. It is therefore, good that **shochtim** should know this, and it shall be counted as a good deed.

Chapter III
1

Here we explain that if one eats forbidden foods, they bring contamination into his heart and soul, and becomes part and parcel of them. G-d's sanctity leaves and goes far away from him so that it is as though he worshipped pagan deities, G-d forbid!

Since all parts of the body are nourished by the food a person eats, if he eats forbidden foods, his whole body becomes contaminated and abonimable, G-d forbid, as the holy **Or Hachaim** writes in **parshas** Shemini (11:43) on the verse: You shall not contaminate your souls, etc.:

Perhaps Scripture comes to reveal to us that **if one eats reptiles his soul itself becomes a reptile.** Therefore, Scripture words the precept in this manner, i.e. you shall not contaminate yourselves, meaning that you shall not make yourself a contamination. How? With any creeping thing that creeps on the earth. When you eat them, etc. And he states: And you shall not make yourselves unclean. Perhaps the intention is that Jews must be careful not to put non-kosher food into their mouths even unwittingly, for the abomination will do its work in the person's soul even unwittingly, but the difference is that if he eats it intentionally, his soul becomes contaminated, whereas unintentionally, his soul becomes unclean and clogged, as the Torah states: And you shall not become unclean...and you will become unclean. A person must, therefore, be very careful not to eat anything that may contain this contamination, especially, in our times, when even the air and all these lands are contaminated, and everything that grows in the ground has particles of this contamination, that one must be ever on guard and watch his soul.

2

The holy **Zohar (Shemini 41b)** states: Come and see. Everyone who eats of those forbidden foods, cleaves to the forces of evil and thereby contaminates himself and his soul, resulting, an unclean spirit to rest upon him, displaying, thereby **he has no part in the Most High G-d**...and if he departs from this world in that condition, all those that adhere to the forces of uncleanness cling to him, contaminate, and judge him as a person who despised his Master, despised in this world and despised in the World to Come...Woe is to them! Woe is to their souls **for they will not cling to the bundle of eternal life, for they have become contaminated**...All of a person's toil is for his mouth. All judgment, all one suffers and all vengeance wrought upon him, is all on account of his mouth, because he did not watch it and thereby, contaminated himself.

A person should quake when he reads the words of the Zohar concerning the immeasurable damage a person wreaks upon his soul by eating forvidden foods. For in doing so, he grasps and clings to the evil forces resulting in unclean spirits to cleave unto him, thereby demonstrating he has no part in the G-d of Israel, G-d forbid! Therefore, one must be particularly suspect from eating foods of dubious kashrus, surely not definitely non-kosher foods.

In this matter, the Zohar continues (42a): **Rabbi Yitzchak said: Whoever becomes contaminated through these foods is like one practicing idolatry, which is an abomination to the L-rd, as the Torah writes:** You shall not eat any abomination. Whosoever practices idolatry departs from the side of life, departs from the Holy domain, and enters the evil one; as does also one who contaminates himself with these foods depart from the side of life, depart from the Holy domain, and enter an evil

one, and not only that, but he becomes contaminated both in this world and in the World to Come.

In **Reishis Chochmah, Shaar Hakedushah** (ch:15) we learn:

Upon the unclean foods against which the Torah warns us, an outside unclean spirit rests. Therefore, whoever eats them contaminates his soul and **demonstrates thereby that he cares not to have part of sanctity of G-d of Israel, for the unclean thing becomes part and parcel of the person himself, together with the soul being clothed within.** Consequently, he contaminates his body and contaminates the soul that is clothed within it. That is the intention of the Zohar with the words, 'his soul and himself.' Therefore, one shoud be strict in matters of food, making sure there is no possible chance of any forbidden foods..

3

Be thou advised...that through forbidden foods the image of G-d departs from the person, and he becomes vulnerable to many incidents, as the **Zohar (Vayeshev 19a)** states: When a person does not follow the ways of the Torah, his holy image becomes changed, and so wild animals and fowl of the heaven can rule over him since his holy image is changed...Come and see, Ezekiel watched his mouth from forbidden foods, as it is written (Ezekiel 4): Nor has loathsome flesh entered my mouth. For this reason he was called, 'son of man.' What is written concerning **Daniel? (Dan 1)** And Daniel put his heart to avoid becoming contaminated with the king's food and with drinking his wine." He merited and remained existing in the image of man...

Similarly, we find in the holy **Zohar (Mishpatim 125b)**: Whoever eats meat with milk, will fear the evil serpents, for the image of the person is far removed and can injure

him...We learned that Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were saved from those tests only because they did

Stories Sin and Its Punishment

An awesome and wonderful story told by the chosid, Reb Yisroel of Kalisch.

Grand Rabbi Chaim of Kossov was the treasurer of the charities of the Holy Land. He had many collectors, who would make the rounds of the cities and villages to collect money. Amng the collectors was chosid named Reb Shraga of Seniatin, who would travel from place to place to empty out the canisters of Rabbi Meir Baal Haness. Once, Reb Shraga went on his travels; he came to the city of Serit, where he lodged. He arose early, prayed at dawn as was his wont, and then commenced to go from house to house to perform his assigned task faithfully. After he completed his work at noontime, he decided to leave the city and to arrive at the neighboring village toward evening. There he would make his collections and stay for the night. In the morning he would resume his travels. So he did. But, just as soon as he left the city, the coachman went off the road and began to stray. Night approached. It became darker and darker, and they had no idea where they were. They were traveling for six hours without a stop, and still the coachman had no idea where to go. They were very frightened.

As they were travelling, they raised their eyes and saw a candle in a window some distance away. They went toward the light of the candle until they came to a large house, the likes of which they had never seen. The coachman looked around and remarked, "There is really a house in this spot, yet I know nothing about it. I have been travelling around here all my life, and I am familiar with all the roads and

not contaminate themselves with food...and Daniel, when they cast him into the lions' den, was perfectd with the image of his Master...and because of this the lions feared

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paths, all the houses and the inns in this section, but I have never before seen this house." They alighted from the wagon and entered the house. They met the servants of the house who were dressed in German garments, contrary to the custom of the locale. As soon as they set foot in the house, one of the servants asked them, "Do you want to stay here?" They both replied, "Yes," because it was very windy and rainy outside, and it was impossible to continue on their journey.

When the servant heard their reply, he showed them a room on the side and told them to go in. They went into the room where they saw a hot stove, and a table with a lit candle on it. Amidst trepidation, they sat down at the table to rest from the fatigue of their trip. While they were sitting there, the door suddenly opened, and two noblewomen, accompanied by a Jew wearing a **spodik**, entered the room and sat down at the table. They called, "Servant, bring us three glasses of wine." The servant went out and brought the wine. The two noblewomen drank, and the Jew sat beside them but did not join them. They asked him, "Why aren't you drinking?"

He replied, "We may not drink gentile wine."

They retorted, "Why did you drink it then?" The Jew remained silent. When the noblewomen saw that he had no answer, they slapped him in the face on both cheeks. Then they rose, and all three of them left the room. When they left, Reb Shraga and the coachman quaked with fear. They did not know what to do, whether to leave the room or to remain. After pondering the matter for a few moments, Reb

and did not hurt him...Who caused this? Because they did not contaminate themselves with food. It is explained there, that one who eats forbidden foods — his face becomes like that of a beast and the human image departs from him.

Shraga said to the coachman, "Let's not move from here, but let's sit together and hold each other's hands until the fury passes over." A half hour later, the noblewomen returned with the Jew, sat down by the table, and ordered the servant to bring wine as they had done before. The servant placed three glasses of wine before them on the table. They poured the wine down their throats, but the Jew did not touch his. When they asked him why he had drunk then, he did not reply. Again, they slapped him in the face and went out with him. Reb Shraga sat in his place and held the coachman's hands. He saw everything, but he was too frightened to talk. He wanted to recite, "Shma Yisrael," but no sound would come out of his mouth. When the trio entered the room for the third time and stated that he hit the Jew because he did not want to drink with them, the Jew turned to Reb Shraga and said, "Reb Shraga! Why don't you say anything? Don't you know who I am? I am...They do this to me every day.. I beg you to mention me to the Grand Rabbi, Reb Chaim of Kossov." When they left for the third time, the rooster's crow was heard, and everything disappeared; there was no house, no stove, and no candle. They were standing in the field. At dawn, they praised and thanked the L-rd , Who had stood at their right hand and saved them from the demons.

On that same day, Reb Shraga returned from his travels and went to Kossov. Upon entering the city, he went

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Rabbi Obadiah Seforno writes in his commentary on the Torah (Lev. 11:43): "and you will become contaminated by them." He comments: Do not become contaminated with

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immediately to the tzaddik, Reb Chaim, and related to him the entire incident that befell him on the road that night, mentioning the name of the deceased, an honest and pious Jew. The rabbi listened to his tale and then replied, "True, that Jew was a pious man, but once in his youth he stumbled on the sin of drinking gentile wine. This is the story. This Jew was an innocent person, keeping G-d's commandments stringently in all details. He earned a livelihood from brokerage. He would frequent the houses of the nobles and bring merchants to buy their grain and forests. For this trouble, he was paid handsomely. Once they owed him a sizable sum for brokerage, and he came to their house to collect his money, because he needed it urgently to marry off his daughter. The nobles steadfastly refused to pay him until he would drink a glass of wine with them. The Jew, thinking that they meant to tease him, as they were accustomed to doing, refused to comply with their wishes. When he saw, however, that they were serious, and that they would indeed not pay him unless he drank with them, his temptation told him that drinking gentile wine was but a minor infraction of the law. He obeyed his temptation and drank a glass of wine with them. Even then, he did not do so with evil intentions, but for the sake of making his daughter's wedding. Nevertheless, the Heavenly Tribunal passed this sentence upon him, as you saw at midnight when you were on the road. But, to make you feel better, let me tell you that this was the last day of

them in a manner that you will be unclean and clogged through them. This occurs through eating them, for indeed since I am your G-d, I desire that you be holy and that you prepare yourselves for holiness...in order that you be holy and eternal...and all this you will achieve when you sanctify yourselves and beware of prohibitions...This is the intention and the reason for the prohibitions of foods.

Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra writes as follows (Lev. 20:24): The meaning of 'to become unclean' is that you should know that it is unclean in thought and in speech...

Rashbam writes (Lev. 11) All cattle, beasts, fowl and fish, as well as types of locusts and reptiles that the Holy One, Blessed be He, to Israel, are despicable, inferior, and heat the body. Therefore, they are called 'unclean.' Even in the Talmud we find, "Gentiles, who eat rodents and reptiles — their body becomes heated up."

Think about their holy words and weigh them with the scale of your intelligence. Is the momentary pleasure afforded the throat the palate worth losing so much benefit? The wise King Solomon says, "One sinner will destroy much good." If you muzzle your mouth to be careful and beware of all foods of dubious kashrus, you will merit all the good that is hidden away for the righteous and you will be sanctified with His holiness, and there are some who acquire their world in a short time.

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his tribulations, and he has already rectified his sin. From that night on, his soul is bound in the bundle of life."

After finishing his narrative, the **tzaddik** signed and said, "From all this we learn a lesson, how much a person must watch himself not to stumble on anything the holy Torah prescribed, even if we have good intentions for the sake of Heaven, and may G-d save us from all harm. Amen, so may it be His will. **(Sefer Even Shethiah p. 53)**

Chapter IV

1

Here we explain that forbidden foods dull a person's intellect, clog his heart and soul, thereby causing him to entertain evil thoughts, leading him to apostasy and disbelief, and eventually he will stumble upon serious transgressions.

We read in the holy book entitled **Likutei Omarim,** known popularly by the name, **Tanya** (chs. 6 and 7):

2

We learn in the holy Zohar at the end of parshas Shemini, that an unclean spirit rests on forbidden foods. Consequently, whoever eats them contaminates his soul and body, resulting in the unclean spirit to rest up on him. Moreover, he demonstrates that he has no part in G-d of Israel and the sanctity of Israel. He brings upon himself confusion of the mind. Additionally, it is known from Tosafos (Shabbos 12b, Chulin 5b) that eating forbidden foods is worse than infracting other prohibitions. This is what King Solomon refers in (Ecclesiastes 6:7): **All of a person's toil is for his mouth.** The Zohar explains this to mean that all the toil and punishments a person suffers after his death, in Gehinnom, are because he contaminated his soul during his lifetime by eating forbidden foods, such as dead animals not slaughtered properly, and trefos. **Also the soul will not be fulfilled.** Its punishment will never be completed. It is also written in Proverbs (21:23): **Whoever watches his mouth and his tongue, watches his soul from troubles.** Do not read, "From troubles (mitzaros)," but "From **tzaraas." (ibid, Tazria; Tanchuma, Metzora). Now, if you ask, don't we see many people who stumble upon this sin and are not punished with zaraas, the Sefer Reishis Chochmah (Shaar**

Hakedushah ch. 13) answers that the zaraas is established in the soul, and when the soul ascends to heaven every night, all the holy creatures stay away from it and announce that it is unclean, as the Torah states: And he shall call, "Unclean, unclean!" This is true even after its departure from this world, if he did not repent. (Shaar Bath Rabbim).

3

In the holy tome, M'lo Haomer (Shemini) we read that if one eats unclean species or forbidden foods, not only does he not raise up the "sparks" but he contaminates himself with them since they are from the "evil side," and his soul descends to the "husks." Therefore, Scripture states: **It is unclean to you.** Not only are they not capable of rising, but also he will contaminate himself with them.

Also, in Tefillah LeMoshe (ch. 68): Whoever eats forbidden foods is bound to the uncleanness, and he cannot ascend to the holiness. It is impossible for him to separate himself from the loathsomeness of the uncleanness except through fasts and penitence or through **chibut hakaver** known other wise as beating in the grave. Who needs it.

Also, in **Or Tzaddikim,** ch. 19: Be thou advised..whoever was not exact in his observance of dietary laws in this world and was not careful to differentiate between that prohibited and that permitted, even if it was not prohibited by the Torah but by the Rabbis, his punishment is, that after his death, the angel in charge of the beating of the grave comes and hits him on his stomach with his bar of iron and fire, until his stomach splits and the ordure spills out. Or they then turn him over his face to strike him.. They say to him, "Swallow what you gave out!' May G-d guard and save us from this harsh judgment or the like! And especially is this true of the sin of mingling meat

and milk, which is a serious offense, and the Zohar states: Whoever eats that food which is joined together at one time or at one meal, for forty days a roasted kid in its skin appears...and if he begets a son in these forty days, they lend him a soul from the 'evil side,' that do not need...See Zohar Mishpatim p. 125.

It is stated in Midrash Tanchuma, parshas Shemini on the verse: **This is the animal that you may eat,** this is what Scripture says: **To do Your will, my G-d, I desired, and Your Torah is in my innards** (Ps. 40) You are fortunate, O Israel, for with every limb of your body He gave a precept...And in Sefer Rav Tuv, the quotation from Tanchuma is explained, as follows: This can be understood according to the well-known principle, stated both in Zohar and in Rabbinic works that forbidden foods clog the heart because they are from the 'evil side,' and whoever eats of them, — his heart is delivered into the hands of this 'evil side,' G-d forbid. It is also known what the holy books write on the verse: **From every imprisonment guard your heart.** This means that you must guard your heart from the imprisonment of the husks and the 'evil side.' And then you will merit to achieve the issue of life, as Scripture states: (Proverbs 4:23) **For from Him are the issue of life.** This means spiritual life, to cleave to the living G-d. Therefore, by guarding oneself from prohibited foods, one's heart will automatically desire to cleave to the Almighty and do His will. This is the connection the Medrash makes between the two verses: The verse of the Torah prohibiting certain animals and the verse of Psalms, which states that **'to do Your will, my G-d, I desired, only because Your Torah is in my innards.'** I desired to do Your will because only food permitted by the Torah has entered my innards, and I stay away from all prohibited foods. This is the implication of the prayer: Blessed be our G-d Who created us for His honor...and everlasting life He planted in our midst, i.e. in

our innards, to warn them against prohibited foods. We, therefore, continue: He shall open our hearts (release it from imprisonment) with His Torah, through His warning not to eat unclean animals. Then, when the heart is open, He will put into our hearts His love and His fear, to do His will and to serve Him wholeheartedly. Therefore, Jewish customs are actually based on Torah, for the week when Shemini, containing the precepts concernig unclean species of animals, is read, it is customary to make challos in the shape of a key, to demonstrate that the contents of a key, to demonstrate that the contents of these sections serve as a key to open the heart to serve the Al-mighty and to do His will in keeping with all the precepts.

4

Further on this topic, we find in Sefer Tzeror Hamor on the same section: This is the animal...He commanded now about forbidden foods and laws of ritual contamination by contact and carrying, to denote that since the Al-mighty caused His Shechinah to rest among them — and He is pure and His servants are pure — it is fitting for them (Israel) to be pure and clean in their food, their contact, and what they carry, for it is improper for the Shechinah to rest on unclean people, and all these prohibited foods and unclean animals clog the heart and darken the pure souls, and confuse the mind, as the Rabbi says: And you will become clogged with them, and as he commanded the priests not to drink wine because it confuses the mind, as Scripture states: (Proverbs 31:4f.) **It is not for kings to drink wine...lest he drink and forget the lawgiver,** which is the Torah. So He commanded Israel not to eat forbidden foods and unclean things that clog the heart, for He gave them manna, the food of the angels for that reason. This was a fine food, to purity their intellect, and it is not

fitting to eat foods that contravene this intention. The holy Zohar writes on this verse: All of a person's toil is for his mouth, that all the punishments that a person suffers in the world of the souls are because of eating and drinking prohibited food and drink, which contaminate the body and the soul, and also because of eating animals that died without being slaughtered according to ritual, also for using indecent language. This is the meaning of: All of a person's toil in this world is because of his mouth, and also the soul will not be filled. It will not receive its full punishment for this, for even with all the punishments and the tortures that befall it there, it will not be filled, the punishment it deserves will not be complete.

5

The **Talmud (Yoma 39a)** states: Sin clogs a person's heart, as it is said: "And you shall not become contaminated through them, and you will become contaminated through them." Do not read ונטמאתם **and you will become contaminated, but** ונטמתם **, and you will become clogged.** It appears that the difficulty was in the repetition as well as the defective spelling. They, therefore, deduced that the Torah means that you will become clogged up, i.e. the intellect will be dulled, for G-d, Who created man knows that these foods produce an unclean spirit which occupies the body and soul of the person who eats them. This spirit brings about undesirable thoughts, which draw a person away from perfecting his soul. This is the intention of the wording, "You shall not contaminate your souls...(Olas Tamid).

The Rabbis taught in Bereishis Rabbah, ch. 10: There is no blade of grass in this lower world that has no angel in charge of it in the upper world, that commands it to grow. Likewise, every creature has a heavenly appointee over it to draw its life nto it, if clean, its heavenly appointee is clean, and if unclean, its heavenly appointee is unclean.

Therefore, let none say, "What power does a tiny ant have, to bring contamination into the body of the one who eats it, for even if he were to eat many of them, how could they hurt him? Don't the gentiles eat plenty of reptiles, rodents, and insects and yet remain healthy?" The truth of the matter is that this is not so, because when a person puts an unclean creature into his body, may it be as tiny as an ant, he, thereby, brings into his body the power of the contamination from this creature to attract the power of the heavenly appointee, who has the power of contamination. Hence, this is the meaning of the verse: You shall not become contaminated through them, because you will become clogged up, for they bring about a clogging of the soul from the source that bestows life upon them, and the poison of the contamination injures the soul and weakens its power, thus preventing it from doing holy work. If one takes precautions against all sorts of forbidden foods and guards himself with sanctity and purity, however, his soul can strengthen itself in matters of Divine sevice, as King David says: "To do Your will, my G-d, I desired," because "Your Torah is in my innards." Every craftsman must have tools in order to do his job. In our case, the body serves as a tool for the soul, just as the tongs in the hands of the smith; if it is good and strong, the resulting vessel is satisfactory, and if it is inferior, the resulting vessel is inferior. See **Messillas Yesharim,** ch. 11; **Divrei Sechel** p. 9.

Therefore, how much are the rabbis obliged to exhort their congregants to examine foods that require examination for ants, for if one eats an ant, he transgresses five negative commmandments (Makkos 16b). Because of our many sins, nowadays many people regard this as extra piety and foolishness (Shaar Beis Rabbim).

If an ox gores a person to death, the Torah prohibits us from eating its flesh. This is not because there is danger

involved, but because he has a bad nature, which may flourish in the person who eats his flesh, just as one may not eat the flesh of unclean species, which the Torah calls an abomination. "They are an abomination, and they shall be an abomination to you." The Torah repeats itself to emphasize that even though we see others eating them and they are healthy and strong, to you they are an abomination. Even though they do no harm immediately, eventually they will be an abomination to you (Shaar Beis Rabbim, Shemini).

6

The Torah (Exodus 22:30) states: "And you shall be holy men to Me, and flesh torn in the field you shall not eat; you shall cast it to the dogs." The following verse (23:1) reads: "You shall not bear false tales; you shall not place your hand with a wicked man to be a false witness." It is possible to explain the relationship of these various matters in the following manner: As stated above, eating forbidden foods clogs one's heart and soul, and we learn in holy books that it takes one away from his cleaving to the Al-mighty, and imbues him with thoughts of apostasy and disbelief, G-d forbid! (See below, 7.) Moreover, the unclean husk rests on these forbidden foods, as stated above (1). Through eating these foods, one brings into his body and soul this husk, which will eventually impair his perfect faith in the unity of the Creator. Therefore, Scripture states: "And you shall be holy men to me." You shall behave with sanctity.. "And flesh torn in the field you shall not eat." You shall beware of forbidden foods. Then, "you shall not bear false tales." When you recite, "Hear, O Israel," you will not recite it with falseness or skepticism. "You shall not place your hand with a wicked man." that is the husk that rests on forbidden foods. "To be a false witness." In the first verse of the Sh'ma, there is a large **ayin** and a large dalled, which form the word עֵד a **witness**. This denotes that we are witnesses

attesting to G-d's Unity. Now the husk that rests on forbidden foods robs away one's faith in monotheism. By granting a person pleasure from the food, it robs his faith in return. The word xnj in the verse is related to ixnj in the Talmud, meaning a robber who takes by force but pays for what he takes. Similarly, the husk affords pleasure to the one who eats the forbidden foods, who, in turn, feeds the husk by denying his faith in monotheism, thereby strengthening the husk. This is the intention of the verse we are expounding upon. Consequently, one must repent of his negligence heretofore, and take upon himself to take precautions in the future. Then, G-d will help him, as the Rabbis teach us, Whoever wishes to become pure — they help him (Likkutei Maharil).

7

The following quotation appears in Sefer **Tzofnas Pa'neach,** by the author of Toledos, in parshas Yithro (s.v. It appears that I heard from my teacher). It is brought also in **Sefer Degel Machaney Ephraim,** parshas Ekev, as follows: I heard from my teacher that in Rambam's responsa is found that the people of a certain country...

Encyclopedia of Kashrus — Introduction. After the story quoted there, it follows —

They wanted to convert but that nation refused to accept them because they denied the Resurrection of the dead, whereas the gentiles believe in the principle of reincarnation and resurrection, as the philosopher writes...A few of them escaped to Rambam and repented.

8

Eating and drinking, if the foods are kosher, and one eats them with proper intention, these foods contain powers of G-d's speech, for He commanded and the word came into existence. For instance, the statement, "May the earth bring forth..." When one eats them with sanctity, he

derives strength from the foods and he is endowed with the power to speak words of Torah and prayer without extraneous thoughts, but if these foods are not kosher, the power of the evil inclination is strengthened and he finds it impossible to pray properly without extraneous thoughts...(Or Haganuz, parashas Toledos)

Or Hachaim (Parshas Shemini) writes: "And you shall not contaminate yourselves with them..." Perhaps Scripture intends to say that we may not put them into our mouth even inadvertently. The difference in the damage done, however, is that if he eats it intentionally, his soul becomes an abomination, but if he eats it unintentionally, his soul becomes clogged up and contaminated.. This is what Scripture means: And you shall not become contaminated through them.

Further on, he writes: "And you shall hallow yourselves and be holy.." If you hallow yourselves here on earth not to allow any unclean thing to enter your bodies, G-d too will guard you.

9

Do not contaminate your souls with any creeping thing...and you shall not make your souls unclean. It appears that even if one eats these species unwittingly, he contaminates his soul. Scripture, therefore, emphasizes that one must be extremely cautious not to contaminate his soul. Tzaddikim who are particularly careful to watch their utmost, are guarded from Heaven in cases that it is impossible for them to watch themselves to beware of stumbling upon a prohibited act. One must pray for this, as the Yerushalmi states: Before you pray that the words of Torah enter your mouth, pray that forbidden foods should not enter your mouth.

Scripture states: And you shall not become contaminated through them and you will become

contaminated through them. This can be explained according to tana d'vrei Eliyahu: If one makes himself righteous and speaks truth, he is given an angel who treats him like the tzaddikim...If, however, one makes himself wicked...and denies falsely, he is given an angel who treats him like the liars...Therefore, Scripture states: And you shall not contaminate yourselves, for then you will become contaminated even against your will. The angel will bring you into defilement. If the opposite is true, viz. that you sanctify yourselves, then you will be holy. The Creator will aid you to sanctify yourselves and you will be guarded from Heaven from any pitfalls of inadvertent sin, as the Rabbis say, that the Holy One, Blessed be He, does not bring any pitfall to the tzaddikim. Tosafos explain this to mean only in the case of eating forbidden foods (Devar Avraham).

Stories

How great is the power of the Tzaddikim! (Concerning the saintly rabbi, the author of Divrei Chaim o.b.m.)

When Rabbi Chaim Halberstam of Sanz was in the baths of Baden, one Shabbos morning, two rascals came to his table to witness his behavior and stood at his table, directly facing him. When the rabbi distributed "shiraim" from his "kugel," he included these two men along with the rest of those present. One of them took the "kugel" in his mouth and ate it, evoking scorn and derision from his friend. "Are you too becoming a "chosid?" he taunted him.

Upon their return to their hotel room, they were served their meal, and surpsingly, the one who had eaten the "shiraim" was unable to put even a particle of food into his

"**Lev. 11:45**) For I am the Lord Who has brought you up from the land of Egypt..." The Talmud (Baba Mezia 61b) asks: Why is the Exodus mentioned in the context of reptiles? It is possible to understand this in the following manner: The Rabbis teach us that in every generation one must look upon himself as though he had departed from Egypt, meaning that this depended on one second. Similary, everything depends on one second, for in one second one can turn over completely from bad to good, or G-d forbid, the opposite, as is known concerning Johanan the High Priest, who had served eighty years in the office of High Priesthood and later became a Sadducee. Ari zal says that he stumbled on forbidden foods. Therefore, the Torah warns about forbidden foods and especially about reptiles, for, with a tiny reptile or insect, one can descend into the

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mouth. Days passed, and he was still unable to eat. They consulted physicians, but were unable to discover a cure. His wife went with him to Sanz and complained to the Grand Rabbi that he had given him food that made him sick. The rabbi insisted that the man was not ill. To prove his point, he ordered a plate of soup for him. Then he ordered a portion of meat and dessert. The man literally gobbled everything up and even licked the plates, he was so hungry after not having eaten for so many days. The rabbis said to them, "Since he ate my "shiraim," his intestines became hallowed, and no longer tolerate non-kosher foods. Therefore, "kasher" your utensils and take a Jewish cook, and then he will be able to eat without any difficulty." So it was, and this man later became a "baal teshuvah." May his merit protect us and all Israel. Amen.

(Sichos Yekarim, from Sefer Divrei Issachar Dov)

depths of Gehinnom. Therefore, G-d says: I am the L-rd, Who brought you up from the land of Egypt, from the lowest level to a high level of sanctity, for they could not wait even one minute, and everything depends on that one minute (Arugath Habosem).

In the holy Sefer Reishis Chochmah (Shaar Hakedushah, ch. 16), we learn: Our Rabbis o.b.m. said: The Holy One, blessed be he, is more zealous to punish promiscuity more than for any other sin. The reason for this is that one uproots himself, his limbs, and his soul from everything holy and becomes completely enwrapped in his evil inclination, not like other sins. The sin of eating non-kosher foods, however, resembles promiscuity in that it is a general sin, which contaminates the soul because the contamination becomes part and parcel of his body.

The Grand Rabbi of Ger, the author of Chidushei HaRim, had a wondrous sense to detect whether any food had any minute danger of forbidden foods, even if it was halachichally kosher. Once there was a question about chicken that was cooked in his home. The cook went to ask the rabbi in charge of these questions, who gave out his decision that the chicken was kosher. The rebbetzin was not at home at the time, only the recently hired cook, who was unfamiliar with the rabbi's custom to abstain from eating anything concerning which there was a question. When the rabbi told her his decision that the chicken was kosher, she did not see any reason to mention the incident to the members of the household. When the waiter served the rabbi his portion, he looked at it, stared a little, and told them to remove it from the table. He refused to taste it. The servant went to the rebbetzin to ask what had happened.

11

"You shall not defile your souls...and you shall not contaminate yourselves through them and become contaminate through them for I am the L-rd your G-d; and you shall hallow yourselves and be holy, for I am holy, and you shall not contaminate your souls...for I am the L-rd, Who brought you up from the land of Egypt to be to you for a G-d, and you shall be holy because I am holy." There are obviously many repetitions in these verses, what is the connection between reptiles and the Exodus, as the Rabbis

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Both of them went to the cook, who told them the story. many such incidents occurred. Once the tzaddik said, "Obviously, you think that this is a talent that belongs to a **rebbe**. It is not so, for any Jew, if he wishes, can feel whether his heart lets him eat this thing or not. The Torah states: And between the animal that is eaten and between the animal that is not eaten. I.e. between the animal that allows itself to be eaten and between the animal that does not allow itself to be eaten.

On another occasion he said, "You should know that there is no high spiritual level involved, and anyone can easily achieve this sensation. The tzaddik Reb Bunem of Phischa o.b.m. taught us, (and this has been tested and very easy to come by). Before one opens his mouth to put in any food or drink, he must accept upon himself resolutely and wholeheartedly that if there is, G-d forbid, any forbidden thing in the food or the drink, that he should rather choke while swallowing it. Then, if there is any forbidden particle in it, he is informed from Heaven by experiencing an aversion to this food, thereby preventing him from swallowing it.

asked. It is possible to explain the matter as follows: Since unclean things are abominable an contaminate the soul the body is nurtured by the food one eats, for which reason the Holy One, Blessed be he, does not bring any pitfall to the tzaddikim in this field as is explained by **Tosafos** (Chulin 5b and elsewehere).

The saintly Rabbi Zev Wolf of Zitomir, author of "Or Hameir," o.b.m. once disqualified a shochet from slaughtering in this community. Since he discovered a flaw in his slaughtering, he announced that he had misbehaved and this his shechitah was not kosher. The shochet, a man with a large family, accepted the rabbi's decision and became destitute. After being unemployed for a few weeks, his house became empty; no more money was left in his wallet, and there was no more barley in the jug. When the situation became unbearable and his children were crying for bread, and as he had none to give them, he sat down and thought of plans to earn a livelihood. He thought: Indeed the rabbi disqualified me from slaughtering in his community, and I have accepted his proclamation which I keep in public and in secret, but he did not say that I may not slaughter outside his territory. Consequently, I am permitted to go to distant places over which he has no jurisdiction. Therefore, I'll go to distant villages, outside the rabbi's territory and slaughter small animals and fowl in order to earn some money to feed my children." And so he did.

The very next day, he rose early, recited his prayers, took his case of knives and put it into his tallis bag, took his walking stick and set out on his way. He walked day and night until he came to a village outside of the jurisdiction of

Just as G-d guards the feet of His pious ones that they do not become contaminated even inadvertently, and corresponding to this, whoever contaminates himself

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the rabbi of Zitomir. He entered a tavern, managed by a Jew, prayed there, and asked the mistress of the house whether she had any livestock to be slaughtered. She replied that the communal shochet had passed through early that morning, he had already slaughtered the calf and the fowl. He sighed heavily, said, "Good-by," and continued on his way. He was confident that he would come to another village where the Holy One, Blessed be He, would afford him a livelihood. As he was walking, he came to a forest. He sat down in the shade of the trees to rest because he was very tired from the heat and from his long walk. When he sat down, he feel asleep. When he awoke, the saw the sun setting in the west. He washed his hands and quickly prepared himself for his minchah prayers. After minchah, he decided to go through the forest and to lodge in the neighboring village. Innocently, he entered the forest, without fear. Suddenly, he heard a voice from among the thickets of the forests shout, "Stop!" He became very frightened. When he stopped, robbers came out of the forest, seized him, bound his hands, and brought him into the interior of the forest. There, they wanted to kill him. He realized his danger, and decided to tell them that he was their colleague, so that they would treat him as a friend. Since they did not believe him, he asked them to untie his hands for a moment so that he could show them his weapons. They agreed to untie his hands but to tie his feet instead, to prevent him from escaping or fighting with them. When they untied his hands, he took out his knives. He told them, "I, too, am a murderer. These are my

intentionally, will find many instances of non-kosher food, which he will eat inadvertently, so that he will become even more contaminated, therefore, Scripture states: You shall not defile your souls and you shall not contaminate

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weapons." They looked at the sharp glistening knives, and they were favorably impressed, since they had never before seen such knives. They took him and his knives to their hideout, and, after several conversations and tests, they accepted him as a member of the band.

At first, he stayed among them as a stranger; it appeared to him as though everyone was looking at him. He could not accustom himself to their life style. He was very careful with his words and deeds, and he tried to stay away from robbing and killing, but, as time passed, when he realized that he could not escape, he gradually became accustomed to their life style. He mingled with them and learned their ways. After several years, he actually became one of them. Eventually, he reached the top. He succeeded in all his ways until they appointed him as the head of the band. Then he chose a plot of ground in the middle of the forest, far from the king's highway, far from people and cities, and there he built a large house. Around the house was a spacious court enclosed by a high wall, and in the middle of the court was a large, deep, cellar, whose entrance and exit were unknown to anyone. All day he sat in seclusion, either in the house or the cave. At night he would go out to the crossroads and rob the passersby. Through him, the entire section became overrun my marauders, and all roads were regarded as dangerous. Whoever went out on business was not sure whether he would return home. Terror seized all travelers. People were afraid to travel at night, and they would stay away from the forest. When the government

yourselves through them, i.e. intentionally, for, if you do, you will become contaminated through them, even unintentionally. Therefore, he goes on: For I am the Lord your G-d. If you watch yourselves not to eat non-kosher foods intentionally, I will guard you from stumbling upon

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officials became aware that crime was increasing, they sent police and soldiers to that place to guard the roads, to hunt the robbers, to seize them, and to rid the country of crime. But, alas and alack! All their efforts were fruitless; the soldiers hunted, the police watched, but robbery and murder escalated. For years the government agents conducted a fruitless search, until an incident occurred and the robberies stopped.

This was the incident the rabbi of Zitomir when to Mezritch, to see his rebbe, the saintly Maggid, on the festival of Shavuos, the time of the giving of our Torah. On the evening proceding the festival,he came to a crossroads, of which one of the roads led to Mezritch. An armed man approached him, seized him and led him into the forest. He led him through the trees for hours, until, before dawn they came to a large house surrounded by a high wall. He took him through the wall and down the steps into the cellar. When they were inside, he demanded his money. When the rabbi replied that he had only a few gold coins, he drew a sword from its sheath and threatened to kill him. The rabbi saw that he was in dire straits, and that if he would yell, no one would save him. He lifted his eyes toward Heaven and gave over his fate to Heaven. Then he turned to the murderer and said, "I am in your hands; you can do to me whatever you want. I have but one request; permit me to wash my hands, to recite the blessings for the Torah, to recite Shma, and to confess before you kill me." The bandit

the unintentionally. This will come about only if you hallow yourselves, then you will be holy even from eating non-kosher foods unintentionally.

He states further that you should not wonder that, if forbidden foods remove a person from sanctity, how did

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said nothing but went out and brought a jug of water, which he stood up before the rabbi. The rabbi washed his hands, and started reciting. "My G-d, the soul You placed within me is pure..." He recited it with deep emotion, accompanied by sighs and gestures, which filled the emptiness of the cellar. The bandit heard the voice and the sighs and saw the gestures. Fright fell upon him, and hot and cold sensation ran through his body. A few minutes passed, and he fell on the ground in a deep faint. The rabbi immediately interrupted his prayer, hastened to take the jug of water that the bandit had brought for him to wash his hands, walked over to him, and sprinkled some water on his face; he pressed his temples and pressed his limbs, and he did not leave the spot until he regained consciousness. The bandit sat up, weak and pale, breathing heavily, and trying to speak. The rabbi stood near him treated him, not resuming his prayer until the bandit recovered.

When the latter felt better and began breathing easier, the rabbi finished his prayer and turned to the bandit to see whether he needed any more assistance. Then the latter revealed that he was the shochet whom the rabbi had disqualified many years before. He told him what had happened to him from the time he had left Zitomir until the day, how circumstances forced him to become a bandit and a murderer, and all that time he had completely forgotten the rabbi. When he seized him that night, he did not know

our forefathers, who did not abstain from eating all sorts of creatures in Egypt, merit to experience the revelation of the Shechinah face to face? On that Scripture answers that one who is closer to his master must be more careful to beware of dirt and filth. Similary, any fine, delicate garment, the

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who he was, but thought him to be a Jewish merchant travelling on business. Only when he heard his prayer and saw his gestures at daybreak, did he recognize him, and fear seized him, causing him to fall on the ground in a faint. When he spoke, he fell to his feet, crying and begging the rabbi to prescribe for him a way to repent, and that he pray for him that he should not fall into Gehinnom. The rabbi consoled him and said, "Fear not and be not discouraged! There is repentance in the world, and the power of repentance is so great that as soon as someone thinks about it sincerely, it ascends immediately to the Throne of Glory and rends the unfavorable verdict decreed upon him." But when the shochet began to confess how many people he murdered, the rabbi began to doubt whether he would be able to repent for all these crimes. He looked at him and saw him lying at his feet, broken and discouranged, sighing and lamenting, showing deep remorse for his sins. He took pity on him and ordered him to rise and follow all his instructions. First, he was to leave the den of theives, the mother of all his sins and the hideaway for all perpetrators of abominations. Then he should go with him to the Maggid of Mezritch. There they would seek a method of repentance, to rectify what he had spoiled, for nothing stands in the way of repentant sinners. Immediately, he agreed to leave the house despite the vast treasures he had amassed there. They came up from the

lighter it is, the more it becomes spoiled by any soil. Consequently, when Jews were in Egypt, they were not exalted to any level of spirituality. Therefore, unclean foods did not harm them, but now that you have been redeemed from Egypt and have reached a high level of spirituality, and unclean food will contaminate your soil. Therefore, G-d

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cellar, went directly to the rabbi's coach, and proceeded to Mezritch.

They travelled all day and arrived in the town shortly before evening. They came to the Maggid's synagogue just at the beginning of the minchah service. The synagogue was packed; the local people gathered and entered, in addition to the multitude of guests who came from other cities for the sole purpose of spending the holiday with the saintly maggid. They too, the rabbi and the shochet, pushed their way into the crowded synagogue and joined the worshippers, who were already engrossed in their prayers. The shochet stood near the door with his face toward the wall and his mind confused; he regretted his evil deeds, his heart was full of remorse and pain, but could not speak. He heard the voice of the worshippers ascending, as his soul longed for the prayer that hovered before his eyes, but he could not speak. When he stood mute, without opening his mouth, the spring of his tears opened and his heart spilled like water. Meanwhile, the worshippers finished their prayers, but he was still standing with his face to the wall, with tears streaming incessantly from his eyes. As the congregation dispersed, the rabbi approached and greeted him with the customary holiday greeting, took hold of his hand, and brought him to the set table, where he offered him a place among the guests at the table of the saintly Maggid of Mezritch. During the meal, the Maggid

states: "Who has brought you up from the land of Egypt." I brought you up to a higher level than you were in when you were in the land of Egypt. Therefore, just as the prince exhorts his servants to beware of any stain on their garments, so shall you be holy for I am holy, and the servant of a prince is like a prince (Melo Haomer).

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preached, and it seemed to him that every statement was directed at him. Indeed, his flesh became goose pimples. After the meal, he remained in the synagogue, where he stayed awake all night, reciting the prescribed selections from all parts of the Torah, known as "Tikkun Leil Shavuos." His heart was virtually rent asunder when he read the mitzvos realizing that there was no serious crime that he had not committted.

Before daybreak, he went to the mikvah, and then recited the morning prayers broken-heartedly. With fear and dread, he stood before the open Ark, as the Sifrei Torah were taken out to be read. During the reading he listered attentively. When they stated to read the Ten Commandments, he quaked. Weeping, he uttered, "L-rd of the Universe! What shall I say and what shall I speak? My sins are too great to forgive and they have no atonement." Upon reciting these words, he emitted a loud and bitter cry and fell down like a stone. Upon hearing the cry and the fall, the reading was interrupted and the worshippers broke out into an uproar. They asked one another regarding the noise, and everyone ran over to see what had caused it. Meanwhile, the shochet was brought into the vestibule, where the worshippers attempted to revive him, when the saw that they were unable, they summoned a physician. He immediately dismissed everyone and remained there with

12

You shall not defile your souls...and you shall not become contaminated through them and you will be contaminated through them (Lev. 11:43)." The Rabbis teach us (Yoma 39a): Do not read, ונטמאתם , and you will be contaminated, but ונטמתם , and you will become clogged up. That means that whoever eats reptiles and rodents, nevelos and treifos — his heart and soul become clogged up until he does not feel or realize anything.

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the rabbi of Zitomir. With great effort, they managed to review the shochet. Then they carried him over to one of the rooms, where he lay for the remainder of the festival. His rabbi stood over him to help and give him support. He was concerned for him very much, seeing him lying in bed, sighing.

On the night following the festival, the rabbi approached the Mezritcher Maggid with a "kwittel," upon which was written,"...son of...for a complete recovery." The Maggid eyed the "kwittel" and asked, "Who is the patient and what happed to him?" He thought a moment and said, "This is the man who fainted during the Torah reading on the first day of the Festival." Again the Maggid asked, "What happened to him?" The rabbi told him the whole story and begged him to receive him cordially and to have mercy on him, for his heart is full of remorse. The Maggid sighed and said, "Has he become so estranged from G-d and so deeply sunk in his sins? But there is no person for whom repentance is impossible; the gates of repentance are always open. G-d is merciful and gracious. He extends His hand to transgressors and His right hand is outstretched to

This is an analogous to a spice merchant who once entered a tannery. He could not stay there a moment because of the stench of the hides, since he was not accustomed to this smell. Sometime later, his spice business failed and he was forced to become a tanner. At first, he could not tolerate the smell of the hides. When he became accustomed to his trade, however, he stayed all day and night in his establishment without noticing the stench, and it seemed to him as though he had been a tanner all his ife.

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receive the repentant, even if their sins are overflowing. It is a favorable omen that he wept during the reading of the Ten Commandments, on the day they were given, and he wept until his soul was crushed. May G-d have pity on him and send him a complete recovery, both spiritual and physical. Now you stay here with him and do not leave this place until he is completely well." The rabbi stayed with the patient, tried to cure him and to supply his needs. When he recovered and regained his strength, he requested of his benefactor to bring him before the Maggid. The rabbi did, indeed bring him into the inner sanctum. When he entered, he found the Maggid sitting on his chair; he greeted him, and he returned the greeting. the Maggid received him cordially and asked him what he wished of him. He told him the entire story, omitting no detail, and requested him to prescribe a method of repentance. The Maggid replied with words of encouragement, and promised to grant his request. After he prescribed a method of repentance, which the erstwhile bandit promised to fulfill with all its stringencies, the rabbi returned to Zitomir while the shochet remained in Mezritch. He remained in the

So it is in our case. If one eats forbidden foods until he becomes accustomed to them, his heart becomes clogged and he does not notice the stench of the carcasses. Therefore, the Torah exhorts us not to become contaminated with carcasses or treifos even once, because then we will become accustomed to them and find it difficult to abstain from them, much like the tanner who becomes accustomed to the stench of the ideas (Chofetz Chaim).

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synagogue, studying and praying. Secretly, he fulfilled the Maggid's prescription of repentance with all his heart and with all his soul. All his life, he suffered from pains, which he accepted with love and humility, in order to cleanse him of his sins, which had overwhelmed him day and night, he would search his deeds and beg forgiveness from his Maker. Despite all his afflictions he was always afraid that he had not fulfilled his obligations, and that perhaps he was one of those whom G-d does not help to repent. All his thoughts were concentrated on repentance until he took sick and became bedridden. He died as a completely repentant sinner. After his death, the rabbi of Zitomir, the author of "Or Hameir," eulogized him and then told his entire history in public. (Zechutha d'Avraham)

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Chapter V

Anthologized from Sayings of Talmud, Midrash and from books of later tzaddikim concerning the stringency of the matter of forbidden foods, how they harm those who stumble upon them, G-d forbid, the great reward in store for those who observe these laws conscientiously, and the punishment and torments that will come upon those who transgress them.

1

Here we elaborate upon the great reward for the one who strictly observes the laws of forbidden foods.

We learn in Midrah **Vayikra Rabbah (13:3):** Said R. Berechiah the son of R. Isaac: The Holy One, blessed be He, is destined to make a banquet for His righteous servants in the hereafter, and whoever did not eat carcasses in the world will merit to enjoy it in the World to Come. This is what the Torah means: "And fat of a carcass or fat of a torn animal may be used for any work, but eating, you shall not eat it. Because you will eat it in the hereafter. Therefore, Moses warns Israel and said to them, This is the animal that you may eat.

The following is found in **Koheles Rabbah (1:28)**: The Rabbis said: In the hereafter the Holy One, blessed be He, will publicize an announcement, and announce that anyone who never ate pork should come and receive his reward, and many of the nations of the world who never ate pork should come and receive his reward, and many of the nations of the world who never ate pork will indeed come to receive their reward. At that time the Holy One, blessed be He, says: Shall they have profit in the two worlds? Is it not enough for them that they have eaten their world, but they wish also to eat the world of My children? At that time, the

Holy One, Blessed be He, gives out another announcement, announcing and saying: Whoever did not eat carcasses and trefos, reptiles and rodents...

In **Yalkut Shimoni (Shemini 536)** the aforementioned is quoted, and concluded: At that time, they will receive their verdict, as it is said: "(**Isaiah 66**) Those who eat the flesh of the pig and the reptile and the mouse, together shall they end, says the L-rd."

In **Midrash Chazis (Shir hashirim Rabbah)** on the verse: His palate is sweets, said Rabbi Chiyya: It is customary in the world that if a person labors with a householder, since he dirties himself in the mire, he pays him his salary. The Holy One, blessed be He, however, is not like that, but He exhorts Israel and said to them, Do not defile yourselves with any evil thing, and I will give you a good reward. This is what Scripture says: You shall not defile your souls...I am the L-rd , faithful to pay a good reward in the World to come.

In **Midrash Tanchuma (Shemini 8, Midrash Shocher Tov 10:12)**: G-d's way is perfect; the saying of G-d is purified. Now what does G-d care whether we slaughter an animal and eat it, or whether we stab an animal and eat it. Are you helping Him or hurting him? Or what does He care whether we eat clean animals or we eat carcasses? Solomon said: If you have gained wisdom, you have gained wisdom only for yourself, etc. (**Prov. 9**). Hence, the commandments were given only to purify mankind and Israel, as it is said: Everyone of G-d's sayings is pure. Why? So that it be a shield to you, as it is said: "It is a shield for all those who take shelter in Him." Therefore, he says: This is the animal that you may eat, etc.

In the holy book entitled Toras Moshe, parshas Kedoshim, he explains the famous rabbinic dictum found in the Midrash, that in the hereafter the Holy

One, blessed be He, will take a sefer Torah in His arm and say, "Whoever fulfilled what is written in this, shall come and receive his reward. Immediately, all nations of the world will come. Then the Holy One, blessed be He, will say, "Whoever did not eat carcasses and trefos shall receive his reward." This Midrash is indeed puzzling.

It may be explained in the following manner: Most precepts, especially those dealing with one's relations with his fellowman, are capable of being understood with commonsense. For observing these commandments, one does not receive any reward unless he observes them for G-d's sake, i.e. because He commanded that we keep them. Moreover, it is stated that most disbelief is the result of eating carcasses and trefos. Now, since other nation of the world eat these foods, it is obvious that they fulfill their commandment only because their intellect requires them to do so, and for such observance they receive no reward. The Midrashic quotation is, therefore, very clear, for this is G-d's reply to the nations of the world.

2

Moreover, through care to avoid forbidden foods, one draws upon himself a heavenly sanctity, as it is written: (Lev. 20:24) "And you shall not contaminate your souls...and you shall be holy unto Me, for I, the L-rd, am holy." In parshath R'eh we read: "You shall not eat any carcass, etc. for you are a holy nation to the L-rd your G-d, and the L-rd chose you, etc." Our Rabbis stated (Yoma 39): The Rabbis taught: "And you shall hallow yourselves and be holy." If a person hallows himself a little, they hallow him very much; if he hallows himself below, they hallow him from above; in this world, they hallow him in the World to come.

Whenever a forbidden foods comes to one's hand and he abstains from committing the sin, he is counted in Heaven as though he had fulfilled a positive mitzvah of the Torah in actual deed, as the Rabbis said: If a person sat still and did not commit a sin, he is rewarded like one who actually performed a mitzvah.

Also, for overpower the evil inclination when he sees a prohibited thing and is hungry for it, desiring it very much, yet overpowers his temptation because of G-d's will, he is called a hero, for this is true heroism, as the Mishnah says in Avos: Who is a hero? He who conquers his temptation, and the light of the Holy One, Blessed be He, is destined to be a crown on his head in the hereafter. The Sages enumerate five such people, and the one who conquers his temptation is one of them, as the rabbis stated: (**Megillah 15**): The Holy One, blessed be He, is destined to be a crown on the head of every righteous man...**for the rest of His people,** for one who makes himself like leftovers, and for one who sits in judgment, this is one who judges a case honestly, **and for herosim,** this is the one who overpowers his evil temptation. **Those who bring back the battle,** who give and take in the war of Torah, **to the gate**, these are the Torah scholars who rise early and stay late in the synagogues and the studyhalls.

Moreover, he merits for this to see the banquet of he righteous which the Holy One, blessed be he, will make for them in Paradise in the hereafter, as is stated in the Midrash (Vayikra Rabbah 10): The Holy One, blessed be He is destined to make a banquet for His righteous servants in the hereafter, and whoever did not eat carcasses in this world, will merit to see it, etc. Also, for watching out for forbidden foods, one merits everlasting life, as the Zohar discusses at length in parshas Shemini. Here you see the magnitude of the reward a person receives for this.

Therefore, one must be very careful not to become defiled with forbidden foods, and for this, G-d will be with him and exalt his horn in this world in the World to come.

3

We have heretorfore delineated the magnitude of the prohibition of forbidden foods. Therefore, everyone must concentrate on this matter, how much he must beware of prohibited foods, G-d forbid! And even if he chances to be among bad friends who are accustomed to ignoring this interdict, and they mock and taunt him and call him a fool and an idiot for his abstinence, let him not take heed of their derision, but let him know that for suffering embarrassment for G-d's commandments, his reward will be so much greater in the World to Come. We find a similar statement in Yerushalmi Peah, in the last chapter concerning charity collectors, Rabbi Eleazar was an officer of the community. Once he came home. He asked them, "What happened here?" They told him, "A company came here, ate and drank and prayed for you.." He remarked, "For this there is no good reward." On another occasion, he said to them, "What happened here?" They replied, "Another company came here; they ate and drank and derided you." He remarked, "For this there is indeed a good reward."

In this same manner, **one is rewarded for the performance of every mitzvah, viz. that the reward is commensurate with the pain involved in its performance,** as we find in the Torah in the matter of sacrifices "And a soul that sacrifices a meal-offering," upon which our Sages comment: Who is likely to bring a meal-offering? A poor man. I regard it as though he sacrificed his soul. All this is because the Holy One, blessed be He, regards the performance of the precept according to the manner it was performed, if it was performed out of plenty or out of poverty and need, or other types of derision, and

in proportion to the intensity of the pain inflicted at the time of the performance, the reward will be greater when it is paid, as the Psalmist states: Those who sow with tears, shall reap in joy (**Nidchei Israel Chofetz Chaim**). Here we explain the frightful punishments that come upon a person on the day of judgment, that hundreds of destructive angels, dressed in black, will pursue him to lead him to gehinnom, the place of darkness. Woe is to him and woe is to his soul! May the Lord guard and save us!

Scripture states: "Your evil will chastise you," etc. The Rabbis expound this to mean that whoever commits one sin, that sin envelops and leads him on Judgment Day. That means that from every sin a destructive angel is created, which wreaks vengeance upon the person who committed the sin, i.e. after his death. At the end of the first chapter of Reishis Chochmah (Shaar Hayirah, ch. 13): Said Rabbi Joshua ben Levi: Once I was walking on the way, when Elijah the prophet, may he be remembered for good, met me. He said to me, "Would you like me to station you at the gate of Gehinnom?" He replied, "Yes, show me." And he showed me people hanging by their nose and people hanging by their legs and he showed me people hanging by their eyes, and he showed me people being fed their own flesh, and people being fed coals of juniper bushes, and people sitting alive with worms eating them. He said to me, "These are the ones concerning whom Scripture says, "For their worm shall not die, etc. Said Rabbi Johanan: Every angel is appointed to mete pit retribution for one sin. This one comes and judges him and this one comes and judges him, and he goes away. And so the second and the third and so all of them until they complete all the sins of which he is guilty, etc. At that time, his soul is delivered into Gehinnom the cruel angels and they divide it among themselves, etc.

This should make our hair stand on end, especially one who repeatedly infracted the prohibition of forbidden foods, and sometimes transgressed many precepts with one act of eating. The result is that over a period of time, through his eating, many camps of destructive angels are created. They wait for his arrival so that they can mete out justice due him, and then he will regret his sins, that for a a little pleasure he has to suffer such severe tortures and torments, but, alas, there is no repentance in the grave. Therefore, let everyone ponder this matter while there is still time, and as long as his soul is within him, let him regret his deeds and repent his past, what he did not observe during his lifetime, and let him sincerely resolve to beware of all possibilities of forbidden foods. then he will benefit in this world and the next.

5

The saintly Chofetz Chaim o.b.m. writes: It is written in Haazinu (Deut. 32:32-35): "For their vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gemorrah; Their grapes are grapes of gall, Their clusters are bitter; Their wine is the venom of serpents, And the cruel poison of asps. Is not this laid up in store with Me, Sealed up in My treasuries? Vengeance is Mine, and recompense, Against the time when their foot shall slip, etc."

This may be explained in accordance with what we have learned in various works to explain the words of the prophet: Who is a G-d like You, who bears iniquity etc. That means that when a person sins, a destructive angel is immediatley created to injure the perpetrator, and were the Holy One, blessed be He, to permit him, he would immediately go down and mete out punishment upon this person, for he would demand food from the one who created him. The Holy One, blessed be He, however, is merciful, and with his loving-kindness, He bears the iniquity, hides and seals it in his treasuries so to speak,

and feeds it there, for everything needs sustenance, and He waits for the person until day of his death, perhaps he will repent (and this is what the prophet means: Who is a G-d like You Who bears iniquity, unlike a peson of flesh and blood, not only does He not punish the rebel, but He even sustains the "creditor" so that he does not hurt him but eventualy, if he does not repent — and since man is destined to die — the Holy One, blessed be He will open His treasuries, (for He will not sustain them indefinitely), and immediately, the destructive angels created from the sins, emerge, and each one punishes him on the limb or organ with which he sinned.

I believe that all this is alluded to in the Torah in our verse, as follows:

For their vine is of the vine of Sodom — This is beautiful poetry, viz. that just as a person, when he performs a mitzvah plants for it a beautiful sapling in the Tree of Life in Paradise (symbolic of spiritual pleasure) in order to enjoy himself later upon his arrival there, so, exactly is it when he commits a sin; a bitter tree is planted in Gehinnom, the vine of whose fruits is poisonous like the poison of serpents and asps, and upon his arrival there, he is coerced to drink and suck out their lees, and all this is symbolic of a bitter and fast punishment which one receives from his destructive angels, And now we will explain the verses.

For their vine is of the vine of Sodom and of the fields of Gemorrah — For when a person thinks of committing a sin, he immediately plants a vine for himself in Sodom, i.e. the place of sulphur and salt (symbolic of Gehinnom), i.e. a pllace has started for him, a place prepared for retribution. Then, upon actually committing the sin, the bitter clusters on the vine become ripe, and when he completes the sin, the clusters are squeezed out, the bitter wine, bitter as the poison of serpents is made. This is what Scripture refers to

with the words: Their clusters are bitter; Their wine is the venom of serpents, and the cruel poison of asps. All this alludes to the creation of the destructive angels that were completed after his completion of the sin, and they are prepared to attack immediately and destroy him with all their might. Should a person ask, "If so, where are they? We see people committing sins daily. Yet no devils and no destructive angels attack them."

This question Scripture answers by stating,

Is not this laid up in store with Me, sealed up in My treasuries? — I hide and seal them in My treasuries, and I do not permit them to go out to destroy, for perhaps the person will repent (The repetition, "laid up in store with Me, sealed up in My treasuries," can be explained as follows: There are two kinds of destructive angels, one worse than the other, for one kind can be hidden by hiding him someplace where he will not see the person and therefore not hurt him. The second type is cruel and must be sealed and locked in a special treasury designated for him. Therefore, Scripture differentiates between 'venom of serpents' and 'cruel poison of asps,' corresponding to these two types of destructive angels, and therefore, Scripture concludes "Is not this laid up in store with Me, sealed in My treasuries," referring to each type respectively). Perhaps you will ask further, that if this is so, we can satisfy all our desires, and the destructive angels will not attack us. Therefore, Scripture continues *"Vengeance is Mine and recompense, Against the time when their foot shall slip,"* viz. the time a person's feet slip, i.e. the time of the departure of the soul, immediately the lock of the treasuries is opened, and they are ready to wreak vengeance upon him. Perhaps you will ask, "When will this transpire? Probably after one hundred years." Therefore, Scripture concludes? *"For the day of their calamity is at hand, And the thing that are to come upon them shall make haste."* —

For , indeed no one knowns when his day will come, for many times, through one's numerous sins, the day of his death comes early, as we read in Ecclesiastes: "Be not overly wicked lest you die before your time. "For this reason, the Torah says, *"And the things that are to come upon them shall make haste."* I.e. the evil destined to come upon them after many yearss, He will hasten before its time because of the person's evil deeds.

6

In summation, let us say that from every sin, a destructive force is created, which will eventually punish the perpetrator, as Scripture states: "Your evil will chastise you.." The evil itself will chastise the person. Similarly, the Rabbis say: Whoever commits one sin in this world, it envelops him and leads him to the day of judgment. They specify "one sin," to teach us that even if he has but one sin that he committed during his lifetime and did not repent of it, it adheres to him and does not separate from him until it leads him to the day of judgment; surely if he has many sins, they surely surround him and lead him to the Heavenly Tribunal.

Returning to our topic, let us say that the person who has accustomed himself to eating forbidden foods, has transgressed many hundreds of negative precepts ordained by the Torah, and from each sin a destructive angel is created, one who waits until his foot slips, and then the sinner will receive his punishment through him and many hundreds of destructive angles dressed in black and enwrapped in black will run after him and envelop him to lead him to Gehinnom, the place of darkness and bitterness, and there they will judge him. Now who can imagine the severity of the tortures and the torments that he will suffer for even one negative mitzvah? Surely we have

no concept of the tortures mitzvahs and infractions punishable by kares that he committed during his lifetime through eating forbidden foods. Then he will regret his sins and wonder where his brains were. How did I hate the exhortation which people would exhort me saying, "Remember your Creator. You will have to come to Him at the end of your days, how will you pick up your face to Him?" Furthermore, I often retorted brazenly, mocked and berated the, saying that they wre fools and I was the wise one. Now, where is your wisdom and your intelligence? You dug a deep pit for yourself. He will then confess his sins, as the Rabbis say in **Eruvin 22.** It says further that he will justify the verdict pronounced upon him, but this will not avail him, because then there is no repentance. As everyone knows, repentance is acceptable only during one's lifetime, not after death.

7

How much a person must beware of forbidden foods! Not only is this a serious sin, it also contaminates the soul. Furthermore, the Torah states:: "**Lev. 20:24**) "And you shall separate between the clean animal and the unclean and between the clean fowl an the unclean, etc." Rashi (from Toras Kohanim) comment that the Torah refers to an animal or a fowl that was not slaughtered according to the halachah, and on this the verse concludes, "And you shall not contaminate your souls etc and you shall be holy to Me for I, the L-rd, am holy etc."

We learn in Midrash Shocher Tov that whoever confirms himself as a sinner will never be forgiven (even when G-d is merciful with the world, he will not be forgiven, for he has disregarded G-d's will completely and has become confirmed to transgress this precept), and also his body is fattened from forbidden foodstuffs, and in the course of time, his body will be full of reptiles and rodents, carcasses and trefos, and what can result at the end from an unclean

body? Even if he has great merits from other mitzvos and good deeds, and they will defend him so that he should rise at the time of the resurrection together with the rest of the Jewish dead (after all the tortures and torments that the soul will experience in Gehinnom), it is impossible to imagine the anguish the soul will experience at that time through this, for everyone knows that when a person suffers an internal ailment, e.g. if the blood someplace in his veins turns to a liquid, the surgeon must perform an operation and draw out the liquid from there, and then it can heal, otherwise, the blood is apt to deteriorate even more, until he finally dies. Similarly, if this occurs in two or three places, he must endure more pains, since they have to operate in two or three places to draw out the liquid, but if, G-d forbid, the liquid spreads throughout his hands and his feet and in his body in many places, he will surely die, for they cannot cut up his whole body. And if they do, can he endure so many pains?

Now, let us think of our matter, the person who filled is body during his lifetime with carcasses and trefos, and he will eventually die, even if we say that he will merit resurrection (after receiving the recompense for his iniquities in Gehinnom), will he not require, at least, another frightful operation? The bad part imbedded in every organ will have to be removed, even that found in the finest membranes in his body (for, when a person eats, the nutrients of the food spread throughout every organ from head to toe, even the membranes of the eye, and the like) and only the part made of earth will remain, since that was created with kashrus. Then he will be able to rise at the time of the resurrection together with the Jewish people but how many tortures must he suffer until all the parts of evil imbedded in all parts of the body from head to toe are destroyed, and he will moan at the end (Nidchei Israel ch. 28).

The followig is found in the Sefer Shaloh Hakadosh in the Gate of Letters (letter kuf): The Torah warned us about forbidden and permissible foods, as it is said: "And you shall hallow yourselves and you shall be holy, and you shall not contaminate yourselves etc."

The Zohar explains that the unclean foods against which the Torah warned us are possessed by an unclean spirit; therefore, whoever eats of these foods contaminates his soul and demonstrates that he has no share either in holiness in G-d of Israel, for the unclean thing becomes part and parcel of the person himself, and the soul is attired by the body, hence he contaminates his soul, and the unclean spirit rests upon him.

I found this more explicit in the name of ARI zal, in his explanation of the verse: "For man does not live by bread alone, but man lives on everything that issues forth from the mouth of G-d." The philosophers delved into the matter to ascertain the cause of the soul's adherence to the body through eating. Does the soul eat? They were unable to solve this problem. The Rabbi o.b.m., however, said that there is no being that does not possess a holy part, as the Rabbis say: There isno blade of grass on earth that does not have an angel above that strikes it and says to it, "Grow." The intention is the power bestowed upon from above, that strikes it, hence every food in the world is combined of body and soul; the revealed food is the body and the sanctity of the heavenly power that strikes it, saying, "Grow," is its soul, and when a person eats it, then through the eating, his body and soul are joined, because the soul derives benefit from the soul of the food and the body from the body. This is what the Torah means: "For man does not live by bread alone," i.e. not on the revealed body of the bread does man live — for what benefit does the soul derive therefrom — but on everythig that issues forth from G-d's mouth, for bread has the Divine power bestowed upon it.

Through this, man lives. This is a marvelous interpretation, of this verse. The opposite is true concerning forbidden foods, that an unclean spirit rests upon them as mentioned above, and those who eat them bring upon themselves the unclean husk, may G-d guard us..

STORIES

I saw in the book titled, "Beis Yosef Hachadash" that the renowned saint and sage, Rabbi Mordecai Bennet o.bm. woul send questions of law to the Chasam Sofer o.b.m. When they asked him why this was necessary, since he was perfectly capable of deciding these questions himself, he replied that he did not send the questions to him because of his extraordinary erudition, but because of his extreme piety, he could be confident that no sin would come about through him, and whatever he would decide would surely be the truth, without the shadow of a doubt. Indeed, we find in a responsum by Rabbi Akiva Eiger o.b.m. concerning a decision of permissibility which was discussed by the geonim, and when they sent he question to the Chasam Sofer he replied, that as far as the question is involved, it is permissible, but he concluded with something he was not asked, and that was to examine the witnesses to determine whether they were relatives, and R. Akiva Eiger remarked that surely his son-in-law, the Chasam Sofer, knew to mention this because of his Divine inspiration. We find in Shiltei Giborim on the Mordecai at the beginning of the second chapter of Shabbos on the verse: "For You light my candle and the L-rd illuminates my darkness." When a person studies the Torah for its own sake, the Holy One, blessed be he, lights up his darkness, that he does not come to any sin and does not give out any decision contrary to halachah. Therefore, Scripture says: And you shall mediate

Rayshis Chochman writes: Therefore, it is proper for every person to be stringent with himself as regards food, to make sure that there should be no relation to anything prohibited in it, for Ezekiel the prophet praised himself, that he never ate from an animal upon which a wise man had given out a decision even if it was kosher, since at one time there was a doubt about its kashrus. The Chovos Halevavos writes that the early pietists would avoid seventy gates of permissibility to avoid touching the one gate of prohibition. End of quotation from Rayshis Chochman Shaloh).

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in it day and night. The rod for mediate is והגית related to נגה **splendor. When the Holy One, blessed be He, sees that one's heart is devoted to Him, even if he is not capable of penetrating to the depth of the halachah, He brings light to his words so that he does not promulgate any incorrect decision. In Sefer Eretz Hachaim by Rabbi Chaim Chenowitz o.b.m. (Berachos 28) we find a marvelous story on this matter, which he himself witnessed. He writes: I wish to mention a remarkable thing that I witnessed of the great gaon, the rabbi of Zlotchov, R. Issachar Baer o.b.m., author of Mevasser Tzedek and Bath Einei. A young boy once came to him with a piece of he intestines of a chicken in his hand. The fat between the intestines was slightly hard, but it appeared to me that there was no question of the kashrus of the chicken. The rabbi took the quesitonable intestines in his hand and started to search for various reasons to declare it trefeah. I considered each theory he mentioned and thought that there was really no reason to think that the chicken should be trefah.**

An hour later, when we were alone in the house, I asked him, "Rebbe, why do you want to declare this chicken trefah? It is such a simple question."

He replied, "I must tell you the truth; my mouth refuses to say the word 'kosher' regarding this chicken, and my heart is inclined to say that it is trefah."

I said to him, "If so, the chicken is probably trefah because of another reason, but not because of the question that was asked." I asked the boy, "Do you have the chicken?"

He replied, "It is in the next house." I told him to bring it. When he brought it, I saw on one side of the chicken a wound mentioned explicitly in the Shulchan Aruch as trefah. I was indeed astounded by the phenomenon, for I saw that the Holy One, blessed be He, does not bring any pitfall through tzaddikim.

He said to me, "Now I see why a person should recite the prayer of Rabbi Nechunya ben Hakaneh, 'that I should not say on something unclean that it is clean.' This obviously does not mean that he should not err in his halachic decision, for that is included in what he said already, 'that no pitfall should occur through me,' but even if a question comes before me and the reason for its prohibition is not apparent, but if I say that it is permissible and someone eats it, the pitfall will have come about because of me, for this reason I pray that my mouth should not say on something unclean that it is clean; even if I do not see the thing as unclean, I will not say that it is clean.

The moral of the story is that when choosing a rabbi, not to choose the one greater in widsom, but the one greater in fear of G-d, who nullifies his will because of the will of our Father in Heaven.

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My grandfather o.b.m. once went to Redamsk for the wedding of one of his grandsons, and when they placed the soup and the meat on the table, he did not care to touch it nor did he want to eat it. The people present begged him to eat, but he insisted that he would not eat meat. On the next day, they found a question on the remaining portion of the chicken. They asked the rabbi of the city, and he declared it trefah. Then they understood that no sin is destined to a tzaddik and that G-d watches the feet of His pious ones. [See Sefer Kerem Hatzvi by my dear friend, Rabbi Zvi Farber of London. He writes in parshas Mishpatim on the verse: "And you shall be holy men to Me, and flesh of an animal torn in the field you shall not eat." Rabbi Chaim Sofer, the author of Machaneh Chaim, said that in this verse is the promise that if you are holy men, the L-rd will guard you from pitfalls, so that you will not come to eat trefah, as the Talmud states in Chulin (5b): Now that the Holy One, blessed be He, does not bring any pitfall through the animals belonging to tzaddikim, through tzaddikim themselves He surely does not. Tosphos writes that this applies only to sons involving eating, since it is a disgrace for a tzaddik to put forbidden food into his mouth. This is the intention of the verse: "You shall be holy men to Me; then you will be assured that you will not eat flesh of an animal torn in the field. I heard this same principle in a story concerning a rascal who had wine that had been made unkosher by a gentile. He poured it into a bottle, sealed it properly, and sent it for "shalach monos" to the rabbi of Eishishok, the renowned author of Amudei Esh. The rebbetzin forgot it and placed it under the bed. The next day she told this to her husband that this certain person had sent wine for "shalach monos" and that she had inadvertently put it under the bed, and that the rascal had come to ask whether the wine was good. The rabbi told him that he had given it to a gentile and had not drunk any of it.

Then the rascal admitted what he had done and that he saw that G-d watched the tzaddikim from sin. Rabbi Mordecai of Pinsk was sent a package of sugar for Passover, with a hechsher. He read the hechsher and announced that the sugar was genuine chometz. On the following day, he received a letter from the factory that by mistake they had affixed the hechsher on chometzdig sugar. There are many such stories.]

In Sefer Tiferes Mordecai, on glosses of Mordecai, note 47, it is stated that we find in Sefer Chasidim (ch. 468) that there is a talent possessed by some people, that they can see a piece of meat and discern what the shochet did the night before slaughtering. See also Sefer Divrei David (p.31) in the name of the Rabbi of Chortkov, an explanation of the verse (Job 19:26) "From my flesh I see G-d." He explained that a person must see that he has such flesh that through it he should be able to see G-d. See also sefer Mekor Chaim, where he writes in the name of the saintly rabbi Chaim Halberstam of Sanz: The Talmud (Chullin 91a) states the following: Rabbi Jose bar Chanina said: What is the meaning of the verse (Gen 43:16): "And slaughter a slaughtering and prepare?" Open up the incision in the neck, **and prepare,** that means to remove the hip sinew. This follows the view that children of Noah were not allowed to eat the hip sinew. Tos. questioned this very strongly, that perhaps it was not prohibited for them, but they nevertheless kept this commandment, just as they keep the precept of shechitah, since he says that they should open the incision to show them that the animal was slaughtered properly (also why did it suffice to show them that the incision was big enough, yet he had to remove the hip sinew in their presence). He answered that it is apparently difficult to understand what the use of opening the incision was. It was always possible that the shechitah had become disqualified by a pause in the process or by

applying too much pressure, things not visible after the slaughtering, but, on the other hand, it is difficult to understand why Joseph had to show them that the meat was kosher, that the animal had been slaughtered properly and that the hip sinew had been removed. Since the fathers of the tribes of Israel were endowed with Divine inspiration, they could surely perceive the spirit of holiness hovering over the meat, and with a glance they could tell that the animal had been slaughetered according to the halachah. However, the truth of the matter is that concerning laws of the Torah one may not rely on Divine inspiration, for the Torah is not in Heaven, but on the earth (see Birkei Yosef, Orach Chaim 32:12; Chatham Sofer, Orach Chaim 208). This applies only to things prohibited by law. Concerning things voluntarily observed because of piety, however, one may indeed rely on this Divine inspiration. Consequently, the precept of slaughtering which was given on Mount Sinai did not apply to them, since they were not yet commanded to keep the precepts of the Torah. They kept the precepts out of piety, however, since they perceived the commandments through Divine inspiration (Midrash Shocher Tov 16, Avoth d'Rabbi Nathan ch. 33) For such commandments, they were permitted to rely on their Divine inspiration. It was, therefore, sufficient to open the incision on the neck to show them that it was slaughtered Concerning the removal of the hip sinew, however, there is an entirely different story; since they were indeed prohibited from eating it, they were not permitted to rely on their Divine inspiration, and it was necessary to remove it in their presence so that they could see it. In this way the question posed by Tosafos is answered. See also Sefer P'er Vechaod, p. 16, that the Noda Beehudah and the Baal Shem Tov were once sitting together, when a question came up about a chicken. The Noda Beehudah examined it and declared it kosher, The Baal Shem Tov occurred, by

saying, "I, too, see that it is kosher." Thereupon, the Noda Beehudah asked, "I had the right to declare it kosher because I examined it, but how do you know that it is kosher? You did not examine it."

Baal Shem Tov replied, "I saw a spirit of purity hovering over it; thus I knew that it was kosher."

The Noda Beehudah retorted, "Now I understand the Talmudic pasasge (Shabbos 138b) that in the future, a woman will take a loaf of bread of terumah and go around through all the synagogues and the studyhalls to ascertain whether it is ritually clean or unclean, whether a dead rodent fell into the interior of an earthenware stove. The difficult is obvious, why will she have to take it to the studyhall? Cannot she ask the question without bringing the loaf of bread? The answer is that the Rabbis stated there that the Torah is destined to be forgotten among the Jews. Therefore, a woman will have to bring the loaf of bread to the studyhall to see whether a spirit of purity hovers over it, in order to determine whether it is ritually clean or unclean. See aforementioned Mekor Chaim, note 354 in the name of the Grand Rabbi of Strettin, who was able to determine the deeds of the shochet by looking at the meat (Ohel Shlomo of Redamsk, note 5).

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An awesome story about the Gaon, Rabbi Akiva Eiger o.b.m.

In the booklet Beth Avos, we read: From R. Akiva Eiger's youth, he never ate white bread on weekdays, neither did he eat the flesh of animals, but only poultry, and very little of it. This little bit he ate only after being persuaded by the members of his household. Once a plate of chicken soup was placed before him on the table for lunch.

He did not eat it. When the servant removed it from the table, he told the rebbetzin that the rabbi had not eaten the chicken soup. She entered his room and attempted to persuade him to taste it, but he steadyfastly refused. She waited two hours and then went in again to beg him to eat it. Finally, he told her that he had dreamt that night that food would be put before him that day and that he should not eat it. She went out and called the cook, ordering her to bring out the remains of the chicken she had cooked that day to see whether there was anything irregular about it. She looked, but could not find any remains of the chicken. She asked her, "Where are the intestines?"

She replied, "I threw them on the roof behind the house." She told her to take a ladder and climb up to the roof and to bring them down. She did so and found an irregularity, which she sent to her husband. The latter found it to be treifah. Then she knew that it was G-d's will to watch this holy man from stumbling on any forbidden food.

Chapter VI
The Matter of Shechitah and Shochtim
1

We find in the holy work, Shaloh: I will list several matters that need special attention, that you should be stringent in matters most of the populace treats lightly, and "you shall" not follow the majority to do evil"...First of all, the examination of the knife used for slaughtering. Rabbenu Yonah writes in Shaarei Teshuvah, quoted by Beth Yosef (Tur Yoreh Deah, end of ch. 18): And it will be pleasant for those who admonish, who warn the people that they should be conscientious in their observance of the laws of shechitah in every detail, and that they should choose a G-d fearing shochet, for many Jews depend on him for their observance of the precepts of shechitah and bedikah, etc, and many of the experts are are from possessing fear of sin, and whoever does not fear, will not understand to be particular in the examination of the slaughtering knife etc, in addition to the fact that a person devoid of fear will not be careful with examining the trachea and the gullet after the shechitah, in addition to other necessities and details (Rabbenu Yonah).

I myself, since I became an adult, have been very upset about this matter, that people eat whatever meat is brought before them, etc. and sometimes they accept shochtim from anyone they choose, even though he does not excel in piety nor in expertise, and even in a large city, everyone who fears G-d should talk to the chief rabbi, to investigate how good the local shochet's knife is, even if he is a G-d fearing man, because, in additon to piety, shechitah requires tremendous expertise. I once saw a truly pious Jew, who would not eat meat unless he himself had slaughtered the animal. Once he came to a large city known for its piety and sanctity. The scholars of the city begged

him to partake of their meat, slaughtered by the expert shochet, "What do you think about this knife?"

The shochet replied, "It is kosher."

He said to the shochet, "Examine it again." He examined it again and again said it was kosher.. Then the guest showed the knife to the scholars and said, "Look, here is a knick." And as he said, indeed it was the scholars were astonished. See how far the matter extends, for a person must excel in fear of G-d and in the undertanding of the examination of the knife. It was not for naught that the Rabbis of the talmud examined the knife by themselves, not to believe any shochet even if he was a G-d-fearing man, for the examination of the knife requires deliberation and fear of heaven (Shaloh).

Think how far this matter extends, and how much a person must be careful of what he puts into his mouth, and especially in our times, since we have gone down thousands of steps backward since the time of Shaloh. May the Lord guard us and save us from any pitfall or inadvertent sin, but everyone must watch himself as far as he can, and then, whoever comes to purify himself is assisted by heaven.

3

In the holy work Beer Maim Chaim, in parshas Chaye Sarah, we find the following: In our times, if someone approaches us with a slaughtering knife in his hand and claims to be an expert shochet, we believe him with a minimum of evidence to that effect; we ask him very little and do not test him thoroughly, but we assume that all who practice shechitah are experts. Likewise, if someone brings wine, milk, fish, or the like, foods in which there is a risk of an infraction of the halachah, or if one is served foods that require examination for insects etc., he assumes that the

one who serves him an observant Jew and that he is not suspected of feeding his fellow Jew anything non-kosher. However, he does not follow this policy, if someones comes to him to borrow money or any article. He does not believe him without first conducting a thorough investigation. He asks of his identity and his honesty. If he does agree to lend him, he calls witnesses and draws up a note, and he lives in fear and dread until the term of the loan expires and the money is returned to him, fearing that perhaps he will fail to pay. This is because that is the most important thing to him and for this he toils in this world, and therefore he guards it very closely lest he lose it. Mitzvos, however, are of secondary importance to him, and if he does not fulfill them in the best possible manner, so what? This is not the most important thing. See further how he dwells on this at length and complains about the condition of his generation. What can we answer after him?

A similar story is told of the rabbi of Berditchev o.b.m. Once he came to a butcher who did not recognize him. The butcher asked him whether he was a shochet. He told him that he had an animal to be slaughtered and that the shochet lived two parasangs from the village. Since he needed the meat urgently, he could not wait for the shochet to come. The rabbi replied that he was indeed a shochet. The butcher asked the rabbi to slaughter the animal for him and he would pay him double for his trouble. The rabbi agreed to slaughter the animal on one condition, if the butcher would lend him twenty rubles, which he needed urgently. He promised to return within a few days and pay the debt. He told him that he was going through the towns to collect charity and that he would surely return with the money.. "Thank G-d, I am an honest man and I will not cheat you." Upon hearing that, the butcher replied, "You will have to excuse me but I don't know you. How can you

ask me for such a big thing as a loan of twenty rubles when I don't even know you?"

Then the rabbi retorted, "Listen to what you yourself are saying. You will not lend me twenty rubles because you don't know me, but to slaughter an animal for you, you are willing to rely upon me, and if somebody who was looking to gain the few dollars for slaughtering, would slaughter the animal and examine it, you would, G-d forbid, feed carcasses and trefos to Jews, which is a graver sin than not returning twenty rubles (for the money may be returned any time and the loss can be regained). Then the rabbi persuaded him to repent of his rash deeds and to promise never to do this again. He told him that he was really not a shochet, but wanted only to persuade him to change his ways.

4

It happened that a butcher was feeding the public carcasses and trefos. Once he drank wine on a Friday and went up to the roof, fell down, and died, and the dogs were lapping up his blood. People came and asked R. Chanina whether they were allowed to pick him up from among the dogs. He replied, "The Torah says, And meat torn from an animal in the field you shall not eat; you shall cast it to the dogs." This person deprived the dogs of their due and fed it to Jews. He concluded, "Leave them alone; they are eating what rightfully belongs to them" ("**Yerushalmi terumoth 8:3; Vayikra rabbah 5:6**).

In accordance with this quotation from Yerushalmi, the glosses on Rosh in Chullin (8:16) rule that if someone sells trefos and represents them for kosher meat, and he dies before having repented, we may not take care of his burial, and even if dogs devour his flesh and lick his blood, we may not drive them away.

In Responsa Divrei Chaim, yoreh Deah 7, concerning a shochet who spoiled an animal, we read: Therefore, surely this abominable creature must be disqualified, and if you have pity on his life and the life of his family, give them some support, since you are an affluent society, but why should you cover up for this abominable creature, to allow him to feed trefos? Why don't you pity your precious soul that it should not become defiled with his loathsome broth. It is well-known that there is no sin like the sin of eating forbidden foods, that clog the heart of the Jew, and because of our many sins, countless communities have virtually left the fold. Therefore, my friends, beware of pitying this abominable creature, and do not show any compassion for this one who feeds treifos, for I feel that you were not informed about the entire matter as it is..*See the entire responsum.*

5

We read in Nidchei Yisroel by the saint and sage, Rabbi Isarel Meir Hakohen, author of Chofetz Chaim:

Everything we discussed at length concerning the avoidance of eating neveilos and trefos, one must know that the neveilah, carcass, mentioned in the Torah is not only an animal that dies by itself, but also if it is slaughtered with a knicked knife or any other thing that disqualifies the shechitah (as is explained in Yoreh Deah, ch. 23, the five things that disqualify the shechitah), it is a real neveilah according to the Torah. Similarly, trefah mentioned in the Torah does not mean only an animal that is torn in the field by a wolf or the like, but any animal or fowl that has an ailment from which it will eventually die, is included in the law of trefah, and even if it was slaughtered properly, it is prohibited by the Torah. Therefore, we may not eat of the shechitah of a shochet who is not familiar with the laws of shechitah as is delineated in Yoreh Deah (23:1), and even if

he nows the halachos of shechitah and slaughtered with a knife that was examined properly, but this shochet eats carcasses and does not care about shechitah or if he is an apostate who profanes the Shabbos in public, his shechitah is invalid according to the Torah..

Likewise, if he takes things light, that he ridicules the mitzvos and mocks the words of the Sages, we may not eat of his slaughtering. And if they invited him to eat at someone's house, and he knows that his host buys meat from this inferior shochet, he must avoid eating meat there. Concerning such matters, King Solomon said, "And you shall put a knife in your throat if you have an appetite." Now, because of our many sins, I hear that it is very common in distant countries that there are shochtim who are not well-versed in the laws of shechitah or shochtim disqualified because of other reasons, from whose shechitah we may not eat. Therefore, every community that has G-d-fearing men among them, must see to watch they they do not accept shochtim unless they are G-d-fearing and pious, and have certificates from qualified rabbis, and also it is a mitzvah for whomever has the ability, to appoint mashgichim in the slaughter-house where they sell meat, so that everything is conducted in the proper manner, for this matter is very neglected due to our many sins. It is advisable for every observant Jew to learn the laws of shechitah in the Yoreh Deah or in the Chochmas Adam to know how to conduct himself in these matters.

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Menuchas Shalom
Chapter XIX

1
The Image of a G-d-fearing Shochet

Rabbi Shlomo Kluger o.b.m. teaches us how a shochet, from whose shechtiah we eat, must appear.

The shochet must refrain from walking in the street as much as possible, and he should not converse with people but sit and learn all the time (except during the hours of shechitah).

2
The Pain of Reincarnation - For one who feeds trefos

In Sefer Hagilgulim by ARI zal (Frankfurt ed. p. 39a) it is stated that whoever gives treifos to Jews to eat is reincarnated in the leaves of trees, and when the wind blows and knocks the leaves, he experiences excruciating pain, and the end of his punishment is when the leaf falls to the ground, which is as painful as death. This can be repeated one hundred times or more, according to how long he fed trefos to Jews (See Nefesh Yeshayah p. 213, Zivchu Zivchei Zedek).

3
Neither shochet nor merchant - Nevetheless, he feeds carcasses and trefos

In Sefer Daas Torah (1:12) the author quotes Rabbenu Yonah in Shaarei Teshuvah, that if the rabbi who grants the hechsher does not pay adequate attention to the shochet, he is counted as feeding trefos to Israel (See Responsa Chasam Sofer, Yoreh Deah 13; Zivchu Zivchei Zedek).

4
Eating Neveilos and Trefos - More Serious than Profaning the Shabbos

The saintly Chofetz Chaim writes in his book, Machaneh Israel, that a Jewish soldier once asked him what he should choose. He was given the choice to be in a division under a fine commander, who allows the soldiers to slaughter and eat kosher meat, but there he would have to work on the Sabbath, or to be in another division where he would not be able to eat kosher food, but he would not be coerced to work on the Sabbath. He asked what he should do. the Chofezt Chaim told him to go to the division where he would be forced to work on the Shabbos and added the following reason: Even though Shabbos is a capital offense, when he comes home, he would be able to observe many Shabbossim. If he eats neveilos and trefos, however, "the damage to his soul will remain permanently."

5
Most Apostasy - And Departure from Judaism

Divrei Chaim in his response (Yoreh Deah, vol. 1, ch. 7) writes that because of shochtim who took mitzvos (Jewish communities in Germany left the Jewish fold.

In **Degel Machaneh Ephraim** (parshath Ekev) we find a letter that Rambam sent to people who had doubts about the resurrection of the dead, that such doubts result from eating non-kosher foods, e.g. neveilos and trefos and the like. We deduce from there how far a person can stray by eating forbidden foods, that he can even entertain doubts about the thirteen fundamentals.

Tevuos Shor writes that a shochet must be a G-d-fearing man from long before, and that his piety must be visible on his face. Otherwise, he becomes corrupted more and

more, and consequently, corrupts those who eat from his shechitah; they become full of contamination and become apostates.
(Tiyul Bapardes section dealing with shechitah, Rabb of Shamlau).

6
Pious Shochtim Who Do Good Deeds Become Spoiled from the Profession of Shechitah

Divrei Chaim writes in his responsa (Yoreh Deah vol. 1:7) that he saw many G-d-fearing and learned Jews who became corrupt because of the profession of shechitah.

7
The Evil Inclination Joins the Scribes

Chasam Sofer writes in his responsa (Orach Chaim 205) that the Evil Inclination sits on a throne with three legs: 1) Cantors who lead the prayers of the Jews outside...2) Shochtim who feed the Jews neveilos and trefos, 3) Scribes who write invalid tefillin and mezuzos. This is enough for him; he needs no more.

8
The Old and Foolish King - Dealer in Wholesale

In Sefer Toledos Yaakov Yosef, parshas Naso, he writes in the name of a wise man, that now the Evil Inclination has become smart; he no longer has to catch each individual in his net. **He must merely catch one individual upon whom many people depend,** and thereby stumble. He puts up a shochet in the city from the 'evil side,' who feeds the community trefos.

9
The Cause of Increasing Daily Catastrophes

We read in Sefer Imrei Tzaddikim, Divrei Geonim p. 5:

Where the shochet is honest, the shechitah is good and Elijah the prophet is in town. But, if the shochet feeds the people neveilos and trefos, he causes the Angel of Death to come to town.

From the aforementioned books we see that all catastrophes that befall us today are caused by shochtim who feed neveilos (see also Shabbos 33b, Or Hachaim Shmini 11:43, Warnings of Mahartza, Mikdash Melech, Zivchei Shelamim, Darchei Teshuvah 60:5).

10
G-d's War against Amalek

I am sure that the reason there are shechitah gezeros in our times that we did not keep our eyes on the schochtim as we should. (Tiyu bapardes, concerning shechitah, by **Shamlauer Rav**)

11
The Secret of the Baal Shem Tov's Descent to this World

I heard, in the name of Baal Shem Tov, that he came to this world to rectify it and that the world was tottering because of the deterioration of the three pillars upon which the world stands, namely Torah, worship, and kind deeds. The pillar of Torah was spoiled by the preachers who travel from city to city and preach false sermons to blind the eyes of the congregation. They invent astounding midrashim and then reconcile them and they themselves are irreligious and connivers. The pillar of worship was weakened by the cantors known for their irreverence and irresponsibility, for in our times the prayer takes the place of the daily

sacrifices, in whose place the Rabbis instituted the daily prayers. The pillar of kind deeds was weakened by the shochtim who take mitzvos lightly. The Talmud tell us (Taanis 23b) that when Abba Chilkiah prayed for rain, a cloud ascended from the corner where his wife was standing, because a woman is usually in the house and she gives bread to the poor, from which they benefit immediately. Also in Kethubos 67b, where rashi states that the women give bread and meat (not money) to the poor, and by giving the poor non-kosher meat supplied them by the irreligious shochtim, they do not perform a kind deed, but, on the contrary, cause the poor to sin. All three pillars were wobbling until Baal Shem Tov came and was a shochet in his youth, and afterwards, when he revealed himself, he led the prayers and became a cantor, and inspired the heart of the congregation with his awe inspiring prayers, and he would recite true Torah sayings to rectify all three pillars and to set the world up again on a firm basis. This is what I heard. (Divrei Torah, vol. 3, ch. 6)

12
Why Did the Son of Jesse Come Neither Yesterday Nor Today?

In Sefer Shimru Mishpat by the author of Lev Ha-ivri: Rabbi Nathan Adler o.b.m. wanted to disqualify the shochet of Frankfurt on the Main and to cast down the seal of the Devil that lies on invalid shochtim. Had he accomplished this, the Messiah would have come. But Satan put up unscrupulous butchers who pursued him until they forced him to flee Frankfurt, and his disciple, the Chasam Sofer ran after him several parasangs.

Nefesh Yeshayah - Stories From Chapter VI
A Shochet - A Coachman

A story told by the grandson of the preacher, Rav Yeivi o.b.m.

In a certain village there was a shochet, endowed with all the admirable traits required of a shochet. He even had "kabbalah," certification, from the great Maggid of Mezritch o.b.m. On one occasion, the shochet decided to travel to another city. He hired a coach and started out on his journey. On the way, he took sick and died before reaching his destination. What did the coachman do? He searched through the shochet's effects and found his slaughtering knives accompanied by "kabbalah." Then they brought the body to the city; he was interred in the Jewish cemetery, and no one asked any questions.

Now this coachman was not an ignoramus like most coachman, for he had learned Torah in his youth, and he still had a trace of his early training. Circumstances, however, forced him to adopt this occupation to earn his livelihood. When he found the "kabbalah" issued by the Maggid of Mezritch, he thought to himself, "I'll go someplace where they don't know me; I'll show them this extra special 'kabbalah,' and I'll become a shochet." And so he did. he went to a small town, far from his birthplace, and represented himself as a shochet, who had "kabbalah" from the Maggid of Mezritch. Since the town needed a shochet, they readily accepted him. When he entered the slaughter-house, he was accepted cordially by his colleagues. After several days, however, they noticed that his shechitah did not seem right. They began to scrutinize his work and noticed that indeed he was not trained to slaughter, and that every animal he slaughtered was unkosher. They became frightened and called it to his

attention. He repulsed them declaring they certainly could trust the Mezritcher Maggid, who attested to his expertise as a shochet. Several days later, when they saw that he continued to slaughter contrary to halachah, they again admonished him to change his ways. This time, he retorted brazenly that he did not need them and their Torah, and, in order to support his contention that "greater and better Jews" attested to his ability, he took out his "kabbalah" an read it aloud. Then he showed them the Mezritcher Maggid's signature. When they saw the "kabbalah," they kept quiet, but when they saw his actions, they became frightened, and when they would call it to his attention, he would continually answer them brazenly. They tried to test him in the laws of shechitah and the examination of the lungs, but he outsmarted them and always managed to change the subject, so that they would not be able to discover his ignorance.

The situation continued for days and weeks, until they were thoroughly convinced that he was feeding the community carcasses and trefos. Then they aroused the city about him and announced publicly that he was not slaughtering properly; that he did not know anything about shechitah, either in theory or in practice, that he was disqualified and his shechitah invalid. Despite the fact that he has the 'kabbalah' from the great Maggid of Mezritch, (and there is nothing more authoritative than that), his deeds prove that he is totally ignorant in matters of shechitah. How did he receive the "kabbalah?" He probably found it in the street after its owner had lost it; he did not return it but kept it for his own use. Thus claimed the veteran shochtim, and the quarrel intensified more and more, until the community was split into two parties: Half disqualifying him and half supporting him, with no one to decide the matter. They finally decided to refer the case to the tzaddik Reb Yaakov Yosef, Maggid, preacher of the

community of Ostraha, the author of the holy book, "Rav Yeivi." They would present their claims to him, and he would examine the shochet. His decision would be accepted as final. Since this community was near Osraha and was subordinate to it, both sides agreed and set a date to go to the saintly preacher, Rav Yeivi.

On the appointed day, they went to Ostraha, came to the Maggid, and presented their arguments. The rabbi listened attentively to their claims, and when they finished talking, he asked the new shochet to show him his "kabbalah," so that he could ascertain whether it was indeed written by the Mezritcher Maggid, for the recognized the latter's handwriting. Immediately, the shochet eagerly took out the "kabbalah" and laid it on the table. When he was convinced that the 'kabbalah' was not forged, he took it and brought it near to his eyes. He read it again and again, once, twice, thrice. Each time he read it, he emphasized **the name of the shochet to whom the "kabbalah" was granted**, and when he reached the signature of the great Maggid, he kissed it reverenty. After reading the document the third time, and emphasizing aloud **the name of the shochet who received** the "kabbalah," he again kissed the signature. Immediately, he stood up, held the "kabbalah" in his hands, and shouted, "What is your name?" The shochet became confused, remained silent, not knowing what to answer. Then the Maggid shouted, "Rascal! Open your mouth and tell us before the entire congregation how this holy "kabbalah" came into your possession." When the coachman heard the Maggid's words, a great terror fell upon him, and he kneeled to the ground, his whole body quaking and trembling. Amidst confusion and quaking, he stammeringly told the truth, the entire story, how the holy "kabbalah" came to him, and that it was not rightfully his. He told the entire story from beginning to end, while the entire congregation stood in astonishment.

Afterward, the shochtim and the heads of the congregation returned to their city, and the shochet, the coachman, remained in Ostraha, where he sat in the study hall of the Maggid Rabbi Yaakov. He prescribed from him a very stringent method of repentance, which he kept throughout all the days of his life, to atone for all his sins. From that day on, he stayed in Ostraha, never leaving, and he ate at the Maggid's table. People call him "the shochet — the coachman." When the time arrived for Reb Yeivi to leave this world, his sons continued to support him. He stayed in their study hall, and kept the ways of repentance until his soul left him clean and pure, without any stains. May their merit and the merit of all the holy and pure protect us and all Israel, so that we do not stumble or be ashamed in the World to Come. Amen, may it be his will, Amen and Amen.
(Emunas Tzaddikim)

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Stories about Shochtim

In the village of Zhurvitz, near Premesla, Galicia, there was a shochet named Reb Yitzchok Isaac, a great man, a devout servant of G-d since his youth. He kept his deeds secret and was always inconspicuous, so that no one knew of his righteous acts. Once, the renowned tzaddik, Reb Aharon Hagadol of Karlin o.bm. passed through that village. It was Friday afternoon, and there was no time to reach any city. He, therefore, lodged at the little house of the shochet. When he arrived, the master of the house was not there, only his wife. The tzaddik ordered his gabbai to ask her where her husband was. She replied that he was away at the time, but would return in time for candle lighting. The saintly rabbi looked all around the house; he saw meat lying on the table and perceived that the sanctity

of the Sabbath rested upon it. He asked the mistress of the house whether he and his attendant could stay over, and she replied, "Yes." Toward evening, at the time of candle lighting, the man returned from his journey and entered the house. When he saw the tzaddik, he decided to hide all his devoutness from him. The tzaddik of Karlin inaugurated the Sabbath with great enthusiasm during his prayer as was his custom. The shochet, however, prayed like a typical villager. The tzaddik perceived that there was a special sanctity in the house; he searched every corner and scrutinized the master of the house, but was able to detect nothing. After the services, the tzaddik recited the Kiddush with flaming enthusiasm, while the master of the house recited it hurriedly like the villagers, in order to hide his righteous act. During the meal, the tzaddik perceived a great sanctity when he tasted each dish. When he looked at his host, however, he saw nothing unusual. This astonished him very much. So it was throughout the Shabbos. After the Shabbos, the tzaddik wished to pay for his meals and to proceed on his way, but the shochet and his wife were nowhere to be found. They had disappeared immediately after Havdalah. He waited for them until midnight, but since they did not return, the tzaddik and his attendant left without saying, "Good-bye."

It is further told that this shochet was once approached by a young man who requested that he teach him the craft of shechitah.. "I don't want to teach you the craft of shechitah," replied the village shochet. "Why not?" queried the young man. "I really want to engage in this holy work with all my soul and all my might." Without replying, the shochet grasped his hand and led him outside. He gestured to the young man and said, "Look up there!" The young man looked up and saw a man standing on the roof with a knife in his hand. He was cutting his jugular vein, and the blood was running down. After all his blood had run out, the

man stretched out full length and fell to the earth. After a few moments, he was again standing on the roof and slaughtering himself again. So the procedure repeated itself. "Do you see what is before you?" he asked the young man, and continued to talk to him, "You should know that that man was a shochet during his lifetime, and after his death, this is his punishment, because he took upon himself a holy profession for which he was unfit. The young man, whose teeth were chattering, listened attentively. He understood what the shochet meant and went away.

In this manner, the shochet of Zhurvitz lived his life, the life of a hidden tzaddik, and this was a riddle to all his acquaintances and friends.

Several days after Reb Aharon of Karlin stayed over in the shochet's house, the latter sent his wife to the city to inform the Chevra Kaddisha that her husband was close to death, and that they should send the attendants of the society to stand by his bed at the time of the departure of his soul, also to perform all the necessary rites to prepare him for burial and to bring him to the city for that purpose. The woman immediately complied with her husband's wishes, and then returned home. The attendants came to the village, entered the shochet's abode, but did not find him home. They asked his wife, "Where is your husband? Didn't you say that he was moribund, just before death?"

She replied, "My husband went away, but will probably return shortly. He sent me to tell you that his end has come." The attendants began to mock her and deride her. "You said that your husband sent you to bring the attendants, that he was dying. Now we see that he is alive and well. Why did you bother us for nothing?" While they were talking, her husband came, holding a little straw with both hands, and his face was red as a flame. The attendants were very frightened. He said to them, "Gentlemen! Listen to what I have to say! My end is imminent. All my life I lived

as a hidden tzaddik, and I hid my behavior from the public. Now that my end has come, I want you to notify in the city immediately after my death, that I have passed away, and that people should come with paper and ink to copy my manuscripts that are in this box, and later to print them. This copying should be done before me. Therefore, they should do this work **while I am lying on the ground, before I am dressed in shrouds."**

After these words, he said no more, but placed the little straw he had in his hands, on the ground. First, he spread it out evenly, then laid his body upon it. He stretched out his hands and feet, his face burning like flames, and his lips moving. In this manner, the tzaddik departed this world, with sanctity and purity. Immediately, the attendants of the Chevra Kaddisha notified the inhabitants of the city that the shochet had died. Of his final will, which he had ordered prior to his death, they notified the officers of the Chevra. Immediately, all the people of the city, men, women, and children, journeyed out to the village, among them about one hundred scholars, equipped with paper and ink. The scholars sat and copied the manuscripts in the presence of the deceased, while he was still lying on the ground, the holy manuscripts found in the box before them. When they started copying the manuscripts, a change came over the face of the deceased, and the box in which the manuscripts had been lying, closed by itself, before they finished copying all of them. Then, they prepared his body for burial, dressed him in shrouds, and performed all the last honors fit for him lThen they eulogized him according to halachah.

After the shochet's passing, the tzaddik, Reb Aharon Karliner was passing through Premesla, when the people of the city informed him of the passing of the righteous shochet and of the orders he had given before his death. The rabbi was very upset that he had not merited to become acquainted with him well and to derive pleasure

from his holiness, even though he was in close proximity with him for one Sabbath, and he cried very bitterly about this. He resolved to go to the village to talk to the wife of the shochet, and to be within the walls of the house of that tzaddik at least after his death. He traveled to Zhurvitz, came to the tzaddik's house, and spoke to his wife. He wished to know his secret of life. She refused, to reveal anything, however, saying that her husband had not given her permission to reveal his holy behavior. "One thing I may reveal to you," she said, and she led him to the window, where two small candelabra were standing, with two small pieces of candle in them. She showed them to him and said, "When I married my saintly husband, he had these two small candelabra, with these two pieces of candle in them, and they continued to burn all his life. Now that he has passed away, and the candle of his soul has been extinguished..."

(In Licht fun Torah, part 23)

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CHAPTER 15

The Duty to Admonish and Protest - Quotations from Talmud, Zohar, and Midrash

1) Anyone capable of admonishing reproaching or rebuking members of his household and does not do so: is punished and considered culpable for the sins of the members of his household; against the people of his city, is punished for the sins of the people of his city, against the entire world, is punished for the sins of the of the entire world *(Shabbos 54b)*

2) Since Phinechas should have protested against *Hophni*, Scripture considers it as though he had sinned *(Shabbos 55b)*

3) One who has the ability to admonish and protest and does not, the sin is ascribed to him *(Yerushalmi Shabbos ch. 5)*.

4) Because of four things, the property of householders is usurped by the government, (one of which is) because they have the ability to protest and do not do so *(Sukkah 29b)*

5) Silence is a symbol of acquiessance: Since the Rabbis were present and did not protest, this indicates that they agreed. *(Gittin 56a)*

6) *Abner* was punished (by being killed) because he should have protested against Saul, and did not do so. *(Sanhedrin 20a)*

7) *Joshua* the high priest wore soiled garments because his sons married women unfit for the priesthood, and he did not protest against them *(Sanhedrin 93a)*

8) Concerning *Zedekiah* it is written (II Kings 24:19): *And he did what was evil in the eyes of the L-rd,*. The evil is attributed to him because he was able to protest and did not *(Sanhedrin 103a)*

9) If a person learned, taught, observed, (negative commandments), and performed (positive commandments), but did *not* protest, he is deemed cursed. On the other hand, if a person did not learn, did not perform (positive commandments), did not observe (negative commandments), did not teach others, and did not have the ability to protest, yet he protested, he is deemed blessed. *(Vayikra Rabbah 25)*

10) The Holy One, Blessed be He, said (to the Divine Attribute of Justice): "These are completely righteous men, and these are completely wicked ones." He replied: "It is fully revealed to me that they had the ability to protest, but did not do so." He responded: "It is fully known to Me that if they had protested, they would not have heeded them." He retorted: "If it is fully known to You, is it fully known to them?" They, therefore, should have protested and allowed themselves to be humiliated for the sanctity of Your Name, and to suffer beatings from the Jews. *(Tanhuma Tazria 9)*

11) *"Take all the leaders of the people and hang them. (Num. 25:4)" The sins were attributed to the leaders of the people because they did not protest against the people. (Tanhuma Balak 19)*

12) Who was responsible for the deaths of all those killed in the civil war against Benjamin because of the killing of the concubine in Gibeah of Benjamin?) *Phinechas*!, Because he had the power to protest and did not protest. We learn from this that anyone who has the power to protest and does neither protest, or attempt to bring the Jews to improve their ways, all blood that is shed among the Jews, is shed because of him. *(Yalkut Judges 68)*

13) The great *Sanhedrin* should have tied iron ropes around their waists and lifted their cloths above their knees and gone throughout all the cities of Israel, one day to Lachish, one day to Eglon, one day to Hebron, one day to Jerusalem, to teach them proper manners. (ibid)

14) Jerusalem was destroyed only because they did not admonish one another. *(Shabbos 119)*

15) If a Rabbinical scholar is loved by the people of his city, it is not because he is superior, but because he does not admonish them concerning matters of Heaven. *(Kethuboth 105b)*

16) When the footsteps of the *Messiah* will be heard, there will be no admonition. *(Sotah 49a)*

17) Because of what did *Jeroboam* merit the kingdom? Because he castigated Solomon. *(Sanhedrin 101b)*

18) One should love admonition, for as long as there is admonition in the world, goodness and blessing come to the world, and evil departs from the world. *(Tamid 28a)*

19) Everyone who admonishes his friend for the sake of Heaven, merits the portion of the Holy One, Blessed be He; moreover, a mantle of grace is drawn over him. *(Tamid 28)*

20) Anyone who knows how to admonish and admonishes the public, brings content to his Creator. *(Tana d've Eliyahu Rabba 3)*

21) One who knows that his fellow man is wicked, yet he flatters him, or if he knows that his colleague is full of sins, yet he says to him, "You are righteous," deserves that all the curses in the Torah come upon him. However, one who admonishes his colleague that he repent, takes the blessings of the one who is admonished. If he accepts the admonition and repents then, he too, receives blessings. *(Yalkut Devarim 793)*

22) Is there any man who hates his son? However, if he does not admonish him concerning Torah, wisdom, and proper

manners, he will eventually hate him. If he admonishes him, however, he will eventually love him. *(Yalkut Proverbs 950)*

23) The Divine Attribute of Justice rose and said before G-d: Even on the righteous among them, You shall write on their foreheads a *Tav* of blood, *Tav* standing for *Tamuth*, you shall die. The Holy One, Blessed be He, replied and said: "Why?" She answered, "Because they did not reproach your children with words of admonition, and they did not instruct them not to sin." The Holy One, replied, "It is revealed before me that if they had admonished them, they would not have listened". The Attribute of Justice replied, "Even though they would not have accepted, nevertheless, the righteous should have rebuked them". The Holy One acceded and proceeded to treat the righteous of that generation in Jerusalem as wrongdoers. Six angels of destruction were dispensed to Jerusalem and they devastated it *(The Letters of R' Akiva).*

24) Whoever is able to admonish and does not do so is stricken with *tzaraas*. *(Zohar Part III part 45b)*

25) The righteous man is conscientious to go to the wrongdoers to help them turn away from their sins. He informs them of the heavenly judgment and the punishment of *Gehinom*. He does not allow himself to rest day or night until he has rebuked them and brought them to full repentance. *(Zohar Pg. 20b)*

26) All Jews are responsible for each other. *(Shevuos 39a)*

27) Even the perfectly righteous are held responsible for the sins of their generation ... for not rebuking the wicked. *(Midrash Tanchuma Mishpatim)*

28) Some sins are so great that those who commit them are not afforded Divine assistance to repent. Included among them is one who was able to rebuke others, be it a group or individuals, and did not do so but left them in their backsliding. (Rambam Hilchos Tshuva 4:1)

29) It is a Jew's duty to protest against sinners. Anyone who has the ability to protest, and does not do so, is held responsible for that sin. *(Remah Yore Deah 334:48)*

30) Evil decrees fall only upon those who could have protested and did not. *(Yalkut Ruth on the verse, "And Elimelech died...")*

31) Anyone who says that Solomon actually sinned is in error. The sages ask: But it is written, "and Solomon sinned .."? They answer: Because he should have reprimanded his wives and did not, scripture considers it as if he actually sinned. *Rabbi Yehuda* says in the name of *Shmuel* that Solomon would have preferred to be a lackey to a foreign rater rather than have it be written in Scriptures that he sinned. *Rashi* explains the Gemorah to mean that he would rather have suffered indenture to chop wood and draw water for idol worship. This teaches us how severe the rebuke is for one that could have protested and did not. *(Shabbos 56b)*

32) The reason that the people in the civil war against *Gibeah* died was: *Hashem* said to them, "For My honor you did not protest, but for the honor of mortals you do protest!". *(Sanhedrin 103b)*

33) The verse "*and I shall destroy from amongst you the righteous and the wicked,*" refers to the righteous who are imperfect. Since they were able to protest and did not, they are considered imperfect. *(Avoda Zara 4a)*

34) Aaron did not protest when Moses hit the rock at *Mei Meriva* for he considered himself as Moses' disciple. However, one need not give honor to a teacher when there is a profanation of the Divine Name. Because he did not protest, he was punished in the same way as Moses. *(Midrash Tanchuma, Chukas)*

35) From the incident of *Pinchas* one should learn to be zealous for *Hashem* when there is a profanation of the Divine Name of the Torah. The importance of this is shown by the

gratitude and good favor through which *Hashem* gave the priestly covenant of peace to *Pinchas. (Shelah Hakodesh, Ten Praises)*

36) It is written *(Midrash Tanchuma, Re'ei)* that many upright people lived in *Noah's* generation but, nevertheless, perished with the others. The reason they perished is that they did not protest the wrongdoings of the others, unlike *Noah* who did protest. *(The Chida, Chomas Anach, Parshas Noah)*

37) One who does not oppose those who persist in their evil ways is punished for all their sins. Furthermore, he trangresses the negative command, "*You shall not bear his sin ...*" It is obligatory upon every G-d fearing and G-d loving person and those of pure heart to arouse zeal ... *(Sha'arei T'shuvah, Sha'ar 3:59)*

38) *The Remah states that in our times we do not protest against wrongdoers because of the danger involved (Yoreh Deah 334, Choshen Mishpat 12) quoting the Responsa of the MaHariv 157* The *Bechor Shor* (quoted in the *Piskei T'shuva)* says that many, basing their actions upon this decision, justify themselves in flattering influential people even though there is no certain danger. This rationalization, which has weakened the Torah, is a blatant mistake, in that the *MaHariv's* opinion was stated only in an instance when there is certain danger. Were this not so, then the precept, "*Thou shalt not fear a man,*" would become null and void. Certainly the intent of this precept was directed to a situation in which there is a reason for fear. And, yet we are instructed *you shall not fear)*!

A judge who is appointed to punish wrongdoers and fulfills this precept, will merit the reward of *Pinchas*, the zealous, and no evil will befall him.

39) Do not envy wrongdoers, for anyone who sees their actions and does not arouse zeal transgresses three negative commands. For this reason a man should sever relations with them and have a separate way from them *(Zohar I pg. 239b).*

40) The Angel of Death does not have the same power over a man who is zealous for Hashem as he has over other men. *(Zohar 29b)*

41) Anyone who is able to protest and does so, thereby avenging *Hashem* from the wicked of this world, Hashem seals a covenant with him and his seed, just as He did with *Pinchas*. *(Reishis Chochma, Sha'ar HaYirah, ch. 12)*

42) If even a minor sin receives public and juridical acceptance, this is the product of corruptness and an unpardonable sin; and furthermore, the entire people are held guilty. Forgiveness is possible only after a punishment has been executed upon the entire nation. This was the sin of *Sodom*. *(HaAkeida 20)*

43) Because they did not protest against evildoers, the future generations learned from their bad ways. *(Rashi Sotah 41b)*

44) It is clearly derived from both the Oral and Written law that one who can protest and does not do so, is held responsible for that sin and for neglecting a positive commandment. Furthermore, he is considered in the category of the wicked. *(Chinuch Mitzvah 239)*

45) The judges of Israel are responsible for the sins of their people. *(Yalkut Yechezkel 341)*

46) It is written "Ben Adam: A sentinel have I appointed you for the Family of Israel and you have heard the word of My mouth .. but you did not speak up to warn the wicked one concerning his evil way to save his life. He, the wicked one, shall die for his sin, and I shall demand his blood from you. Yechezkel 3:17,"

47) It is possible that Moses, assured of the righteousness of his brother Aaron, knew that Aaron's intention in making the

golden calf was not evil. However, he accused him for the evil-doing of the people. Since their downfall came through him, be was deserving of rebuke. *(Rambam, Ki Sisa)*

48) Why do many Torah scholars die young? The answer is: they allow themselves to be disgraced, for they do not avenge like a snake the words of Torah and the fear of Heaven. *(Avos of R'Nasson, ch. 29)*

49) There were great men of Israel who saw evil and looked the other way. The Holy One remarked to them, "There will come a time when I will do likewise." *(Midrash Rabbah, Lamentations).*

50) In summary, I would like to cite that which *R' Chaim Sofer* writes in his illustrious work, *Sha'arei Chaim (6a):*

"Woe to us from the day of Judgment; Woe to us from the Day of Rebuke, when the time comes for *Hashem* to search through the action of every living being and it will be found written: This righteous man desecrated the *Sabbath;* this pious man transgressed the prohibition of *Niddah*; this G-d fearing man transgressed the prohibition against eating non-Kosher food and wearing *shatnes*; this holy man is guilty of having relations with a married woman. All believers will be astonished and wonder at the sins attributed to these pious men, for these men were part of a generation of righteous. But Hashem will reply in wrath, "Behold, it was in your power to rebuke such and such a wicked man. Why did you not remember him and remind him of his sin?

It is quite evident that those who have the capability to rebuke and admonish their fellow man are required to do so. Hesitation or neglect of this requirement is calamitious; perserverence and meticulous fulfillment of this responsibility accrues abundance of blessings.

Chapter 16
Schedualized differences between meat and chicken.

The following is a listing of the difference between bovine (cattle) and fowl (poultry) meat. It will be observed that by abstaining from eating bovine meats one keeps his soul from troubles as well as the souls of the members of one's household...and causing the salvation from innumerable risks. This schedule was formulated by a group of shochtim and experts in the field.

MEAT	CHICKEN
1. The knife is very long and heavy — about 20 inches long thereby making it very difficult to sharpen and make smooth. Onerous and time consuming to sharpen it when it begets a small nick.	**1. The knife is relatively small, about 4 inches, and easy to sharpen and make a razor smoothedged as required by law.**
2. **Because of its extreme sharpness, it is extremely difficult to examine, since the entire length of the long knife requires examination. The**	**2. The examination is relatively easy and uncomplicated. It does not hurt the nail.**

MEAT	CHICKEN
supervising rabbis are afraid to press their fingernail on the knife because of its sharpness.	
3. Thus, the **shochet's** fingernails are quickly spoiled. The knife is examined after each shechitah. Hundreds of animals are slaughtered daily.	**3. The knife is not examined after every shechitah. The examination does not hurt the nail.**
4. The necks of the animals are dirty especially in winter, with sand and dirt (and dirt remains even after rinsing the neck with water) and it nicks the knife immediately. The **shochet** must spend the time alloted to him to rest between the slaughterings (lest he be tired) to sharpen knives.	**4. The fowl's neck is clean and does not ruin the knife's kashrus.**
5. The shechitah incision is made as high as possible, so that not too much meat will go with	**5. Not applicable.**

MEAT	CHICKEN
the head. This causes **hargramos** (slaughtering above the proper location).	
6. During th **shechitah** the **shochet** only holds the knife, not the animal itself, as such it is sometimes difficult to feel an interruption in the **shechitah** (known as '**shehiah**'), or too much pressure (known as '**derassah**'), pressing.	**6. The head is grasped with his hand and feels if it moves; he can discern whether shechitah or derassah occurred.**
7. If the **shechitah** is invalid or if the animal is found to be **trefah** after the **shechitah**, extreme caution must be taken to avoid mixing the parts, e.g. the head of the non-kosher animal with the heads of the kosher animals (with the body of the kosher animals, etc.) since every part is placed in a different place.	**7. The small bird is cast into the box designated for trefos; it is completely separated from other fowl.**
8. There are no separate knives for cutting the parts where **chelev** is	**8. Not applicable.**

MEAT	CHICKEN
attached and the other parts that require cutting (Chulin - A **shochet** must have three knives).	
9. Shechita slaughter is required **m'dorayso** according to all views. Scriptual ordinance.	**9. Some rule that slaughter of fowl is not required by the Torah, but is a Rabbinical enactment (See Kenesses Hagedolah 29, Bdeh, Primegadim).**
10. The examination of the food and wind pipes after the slaughter to discern whether it was properly cut is accomplished by feeling (with the hand) and looking (with eyes) to ascertain that, at least, the larger part of the two pipes was cut through. In animal slaughter, this is done immediately after the **shechitah**, when blood is spurting strongly from the incision...it is not visible to the eye (or, at	**10. The shochet presses his thumb and clearly sees the shechitah incision of both organs, ascertaining beyond doubt that they have been properly slaughtered.**

MEAT	CHICKEN
least, very dificult to see). Feeling with the hand, also, takes place when the blood is spurting strong on the **shochet's** hand, causing him to examine the pipes hurriedly. (See **Simlah Chadashah** 25; **Turei Zahav** quoting **Maharil**; see also **Torahs Zevach, Zevach Shmuel, Responsa Keshav Sofer** 14.)	
11. The body is large and heavy (from 800 lbs. to 1000 and more) and in many instances depending on the **shechita** procedure. The animals neck can weigh down upon the knife **during** the shechitah, thereby causing **sheiah** or **derassah** (See **Simlah Chadashah** 6; **Zivchei Ratzon; Responsa Radam, Yoreh Deah** 2; **Darchei Teshuvah** 2 **Minchas Zevah** indicates that this procedure raises many legal questions.	**11. Not applicable.**

MEAT	CHICKEN
12. In many places the animals are shackled, hanging with their feet up and head down. Many halachic authorities prohibit this (See **Pekudas Elazar** also **Responsa Igros Moshe).**	**12. Not applicable.**
13. From the moment of slaughtering until the animal reaches the place where the lung is inspected, it is thrown from place to place by gentiles. Many **halachic** authorities raise serious apprehensions that adhesions may be ripped during this process (See **Responsa Maharsham, Shevet Halevi**).	**13. Not applicable.**
14. The body of the animal is divided and cut into many pieces. If during the lung inspections the animal is pronounced **trefah**. It is	**14. Not applicable.**

MEAT	CHICKEN
often difficult to search and trace for the other animal parts and oft, errors are made by substituting a second animal's parts for the **trefah** one which remains in its place, as kosher.	
15. Many problems are encountered in the internal and external lung inspection. For example: 1) The inspection is hastily performed...those knowledgeable of the profession are fully aware of the pressure exerted by the assembly-line. Gentile workers, shouting, "Hurry up!!! Hurry up!!!" when their work is by the inspectors, 2) The reporting of the findings of adhesions orally, without taking immediate personal action to remove the suspect carcass from further **kosher** processing..causing thereby, the possibility of confusion.	**15. The lungs do not require inspection. If inspection is desired, it can be accomplished in a relatively short period.(one minute)**

MEAT	CHICKEN
16. It is extremely tempting to try to avoid declaring many animals **trefah** (when necessary) due to the implicit financial repercussions. It is impossible to slaughter a large quantity of animals at once...a maximum seventy to one hundred twenty an hour. Moreover, many halachic questions arise from the general shechitah process without need to increase this number by questioning additional procedures. Nails in the second stomach. **As such the owner complains loudly and vehemently when too many animals are rendered trefah.**	**16. Not applicable. Live chicken cost approximately twenty-five cents a pound, if not less.**
17. According to **Daas Torah**, quoting manuscript of **Beis Yosef** in the name of two thousand great rabbis. Two **shochtim** must be	**17. This procedure is the "preferred" one; it is not essential.**

MEAT	CHICKEN
present at the slaughter of every animal; two must examine the knife; two must inspect the lungs. This is usually not done. (This is required according to **Chasam Sofer, Maharam Schick, Divrei Chaim, haflaah,** etc.).	
18. According to Rabbi Shlomo Kluger o.b.m. (in his innovations). The owner of the animal may not be present in the slaughter-house during the **shechitah** and the **bedikah** (inspection of the lung). [2]	**18. Not applicable.**
19. The supervision is not too good, because most rabbis do not understand what they see. To be a good **mashgiach** (kashrus audit supervisor) one must learn the practice of lung-inspection, just as if he wished to be a **bodek** (inspector) himself.	**19. Not applicable.**

MEAT	CHICKEN
20. Rabbinic supervision over) **shechitah** is of little value, since the rabbi cannot understand what is happening unless he studied the laws of **shechitah and practiced** it under the same system used today. (See **Shemirah Tova.")**	**20. Not applicable.**
21. The third and fourth stomachs require inspection since, quite often, nails are found sticking into them.	**21. Not applicable.**
22. Removal of **chelev** (fat), which is sadly neglected especially in the U.S.A.	**22. Not applicable.**
23. There are designated rabbis who visit the slaughter-house from time to time to verify the propriety of the process (according to their understanding). However, butcher shops that have **hashgacha** from a specific rabbi do not	**23. Not applicable. The slaughter-house is usually near the section inhabited by the Jewish population... visits by those who give hashgacha on**

MEAT	CHICKEN
provide assurance that that particular rabbi witnessed the **shechitah** or the **bedikah, because most of them never even trod over the threshold of the slaughter-house, not even once, because it is usually far away. Moreover, they understand very little of what transpires there. Those who rely on the store mashgichim as supervising the shechitah are making a huge mistake, since their hashgachah only covers the meat salting and rinsing process performed in the store.**	**the sore, are more frequent.**
24. We find at present the majority of animals are not kosher. The assumption prevalent in earlier years, that most animals were kosher does not apply today (Bnei Yissosschor, month of	**24. Not applicable.**

MEAT	CHICKEN
Adar, p. 99b. **Responsa Hisorerus Teshuvah** 1:107)	
25. The procedure of affixing a seal on the animal is not too helpful. In the slaughter-house a kosher seal is affixed to a large "cut" pounds of beef (approximately two hundred pounds.) When this cut arrives at the butcher shop, it is divided into smaller pieces suitable for retail sale. At this stage, the seals are no longer existent. When the customers purchase this meat; he must rely on the honesty and integrity of the butcher whose independence is tainted by his pecuniary interest in his merchandise.	**25. An entire chicken to which a seal is affixed after the slaughtering can be purchased.**
26. It is very difficult to find an animal that is kosher according to all authorities (**Poele Yoetz, trefah.**)	**26. With fowl, it is possible.**
27. It is called bosr Ta'aveh ("meat of lust,") and those who eat it on weekdays become materialistic (Writings of Ari).	**27. Not applicable.**

Chapter 17.
Concerning nikkur (removing the fat from animals) by the Chofetz Chaim z.t.l.
- 1 -

It is written in the **Torah: any fat of an ox, a sheep, or a goat you shall not eat.** All species of kosher animals are included in these three general species, and whoever eats fat of an animal that died by itself or became **trafe**, i.e. suffered a wound or an ailment from which it would die within twelve months, is liable for stripes both for eating fat and for eating **neveilah** or **trafe**. Although the rule is that one prohibition does not fall upon another, this case is an exception, since the prohibition of **neveilah** or **trafe** includes both the fat and the rest of the flesh of the animal. This is known as **issur kolel,** an all-inclusive prohibition. Since it falls upon the rest of the animal, it also falls upon the fat previously prohibited.

It is not within the scope of this monograph to provide a detailed explanation of all the laws regarding **nikkur**. The prohibition of cheiev includes:

The fat for which one is liable to **Kares** (excision) (termination of life): Heaven help us...This refers to:

- Fat on the innards.
- Fat on the flanks
- Fat on the kidneys.
- Fat on 2nd or 3rd stomach (of the runimants, which is part of the "fat that is on the innards,")
- Fat on the membrane (located on the thick part of the spleen)

In addition there are many other varieties of fat prohibited by the Torah.

- Fat on the 4th stomach.
- Fat on the intestines at the site where they begin to come out of the stomach - about 22 inches.

All this fat must be scrapped off...In order for one **not** to be incurred the penalty of Kares - G-d forbid. Others feel that this refers to 22 inches removal is required at the end of the intestines. We must therefore, be strict and scrape the fat off both of these parts.

There are also many membranes and threads prohibited as chelev or as **Dom** (blood).

There are many laws involving the **gid hanasheh** (the hip sinew) which are too numerous to relate here. The serious student can find them all in **Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah,** chs. 64 and 65..

It is impossiblle to know them thoroughly unless one is experienced in the practice of **nikkur**. It has, therefore, been established in all Jewish communities that house-holders do **not** perform **nikkur** for themselves rather, meat should not leave the butcher shop until it has been **menakkered** by an expert in this field.

The Rabbis admonished the **menakker** to be extremely cautious in his work lest he cause pitfalls for Jews by causing them to eat fat, blood, and **gid hanasheh**. They were very strict with the menakker, to the extent that they stated that one who is charged with this responsibility and subsequent review discloses that a membrane was found in the meat after he had supposedly removed all the fat, is given a stern warning **not** to make light of prohibitions.

If upon a subsequent review fat is again found (after his work of so-called **Nikkur**) regardless of the miniscule size of the chelev, he is immediately discharged from his position. **The tollerance error rate is Z-E-R-O**. If the amount the size of an olive is found, even if it is composed of pieces found in several places, he is severely punished and

then discharged. Reinstatement may be possible only if he repents and follows the instructions of the rabbinic judge, who takes into consideration whether the infraction was committed intentionally or unintentionally (Yorah Deah) ch. 64). In order to impress upon the reader the stringency of this subject matter, we cite an early halachic authority, the **Ohr Zarua:** The Laws of **gid hanasheh,** ch. 448 (quoted partially in glosses on Rosh **Beis Yosef, Darchei Mayshe,** and **Yoreh Deah,** end of ch. 64).

...The final ruling is that if a miniscule piece of chelev, as much as a barleycorn, be found in one place, the menakker is discharged. If as much as an olive is found, even in two or three places combined, he is severely punished (corporeal) and immediately discharged, until he accepts upon himself the fear of heaven (**ohl malchus Shomayim**) and rectifies his iniquity according to the instruction of the Torah scholars of his city...

An announcements should be made in the synagogue on Monday, Thursday, and the following Monday: "**So and so, the butcher, was discharged from his position because a barleycorn of fat was found after his work.**"

Subsequently, he must not be allowed to engage in his work, for a month. After the month has passed, he must approach the Torah scholars of his city or the neighboring city, and say: "I committed such and such a sin, which I now regret." Then, they will judge him according to their discretion, and shall announce in the synagogue: "So and so, the butcher, whom we discharged because a barleycorn of fat was found after his work, has regretted his misdeeds and renounced his erroneous ways in the presence of the Torah scholars concerning the sins he committed.

He has taken upon himself to repent and accept the penalty the scholars levied upon him. From this day forth he is considered a penitent and has been reinstated to his position: he is reckoned reliable as he was in the very beginning.

Until the people hear this announcement, they may neither rely upon nor purchase meat processed by him.

His exhibition of improper conduct consisted of the sale of non-kosher meat as kosher or the sale of prohibited fats as permissible ones, he has a different status. In the pevious case we dealt, he was guilty of negligence...he was not careful. In the latter instance, however, he committed the sins wantonly and intentionally, we must be very stringent with him. Such a situation is depicted in **Bechoros** (29b): A butcher was suspected of selling the fat of the thigh instead of that of the small intestine...Rava, the town Rabbi, fined him until he performed the requisite penitence...

The only remedy available to one who is suspected of selling **treifos** is to go to a place where he is not recognized and return a valuable lost article or dispose of a **treifah** causing himself a substantial loss...Therefore, one who sells **treifos** as kosher meat, or prohibited fat as permissible fat, must accept upon himself the ruling imposed upon him by scholars. Even when the perpetrator complies with the law, we may not rely to consider him trustworthy until he undergoes the requisite "character test." Suppose he was selling **treifos** as kosher meat...or he was selling prohibited fats as permissible fats, and he died before he was able to repent, we may not participate in his burial. Even if dogs were eating his flesh and licking his blood. We may not chase them away because he sold to Jews (nevalos and treifos) what belonged to them (the dogs.)

There is a similar incident in **Terumos Yerushalmi** of a butcher in Tzippori.

If the perpetrator repented, nothing stands in the way of the truly penitent. For our sages taught **Yerushalmi Peah** and of ch. 1: If one was wicked all his life, but repented at the end, the Holy One, Blessed be he, accepts him.

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Hence, we can deduce the stringency of the sin of those who cause the public to sin in these matters. Unfortunately, in some localities, there are ignorant butchers who are completely unaware of the stringency of the sins involved in eating fat, and **gid hanasheh**, and believe that it is merely a praiseworthy custom of Israel...they think that **neveilos** and **treifos** bear a more severe penalty than eating fats. Recently, I read in the newspaper, where many butchers joined forces to complain about the local rabbi who had prohibited them from selling fats. They claimed that it was a burdensome decree which they were unable to endure...were they to comply, they would be forced to shut down completely...Jews would by perforce have to eat non-kosher meat. **Woe to these emptyheads, who believe tht the prohibition of eating nevaleh and trafeh is more stringent than the prohibition of eating chelev,** and think that its origin is merely their rabbi's innovation.

The Torah explicity states that for eating **chelev** there is a penalty of **kares**; whereas, for eating non-kosher meat there is no **kares**, merely a negative commandment desecration incurring the penalty of malkos (stripes). Woe to our brethern who live in localities where they become defiled with non-kosher meat sold by these boorish butchers.

Accordingly, a G-d-fearing person should not eat meat from any butcher unless he knows that the **menakker** has definitely removed the fat and blood veins as well as the **gid hanasheh** in the hind quarters (**Nidchei Yisroel** by **Chofetz Chaim**).

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- 4 -
The Menakker

Rabbi David, son of Samuel Halevi, author of **Turei Zahav,** was the rabbi and head of the rabbinical court of **Ostraha,** whence his reputation spread throughout the Jewish world. Everyone accepted his decisions; there is no rabbi today who does not constantly utilize or study his discourses. His words are the words of G-d, as though they were handed down from heaven, replete with wisdom, understanding, and knowledge..

In those days, when his position was well established, he decided to leave his Yeshiva (study hall) and wander amongst the Jewish settlements for one year, as was the custom of the grat rabbis in those days. Since he was well-known as the author of "**Turei Zahav,**" he disguised himself as a beggar, donning tattered clothing, slinging a knapsack over the shoulder, taking the wanderers staff in hand, and leaving the city clandestinely. He wandered from city to city, from village to village, not lodging in one place more than one night. On Mondays and Thursdays he fasted; on other days he ate only dry bread. He did not taste cooked food except on Shabbos, in honor of the holy day.

In this manner he wandered for six months, until he was completey exhausted. He arrived in Lemberg, fatigued and faint, broken and splintered, unable to continue his travels. He therefore, decided to rest there a few days to regain his strength and then resume his wanderings. The days of his sojourn turned into weeks, but he had still not regained his strength and could not execute his original plan. Whenever he placed his pack on his back, he felt an overpowering weakness; his hands trembled and his legs buckled. He saw that the matter was not in his power. He thought, "The Rabbis taught us that everything is in the hands of Heaven except the fear of G-d [1] **Berachos** 33b). Perhaps I must

remain here since Divine Providence has detained me here? On the other hand, I imposed upon myself to wander for an entire year, and I must fulfill my vow. He therefore, decided to remain in Lemberg and experience the trials and tribulations of exile in the city."

This unknwon man sat in the synagogue, occupying himself with the study of Torah. It was a large city with many synagogues, and, from time to time, he changed his place. he went from synagogue to synagogue, gaining new knowledge in each one. Because of this constant change of location no one knew that he had been in the city for quite some time. It was thought that he had just arrived.

When he had been in the city for a few weeks, he began to think of ways and means of earning a living. He did not want to be supported by charity. He decided to subsist on bare minimum rather than become public charge. Consequently, he started looking for a job even for a meager wage, just enough to live on. However, even this he could not find. Once, he entered the large synagogue in the city and noticed an announcement that the community needed a butcher to perform **nikkur**. He said to himself, "This occupation is neither clean nor easy. Neither is it respected. The Rabbis taught: 'The most pious butcher is a partner of Amalek' **(Kiddushin** 82). People spread rumors about them that animals or dubious kashrus come into their hands, and to save themselves from monetary loss, they sell them to their fellow Jews. I am sure that there are not many candidates for such a job. I'll apply for it and see what happens."

He applied for the position, was tested and accepted.

He worked in the slaughter-house and butcher shop, but mainly he was occupied with **nikkur**, for he had acquired a reputation as an expert **menakker. He was well acquainted with the fine threads, and knew where the**

small veins were found; (those hidden from the naked eye, which only an expert can locate and remove together with the small particles of fat hidden in the meat, without cutting up the meat. Sometimes he stood in the butcher shop next to the block with a knife or a butcher's cleaver in his hand, cutting meat for all customers. In order not to neglect his studies while working, he found something to study in every slaughtered animal that came into his hands. He studied every limb and every organ. Many difficulties that he had encountered in his studies of the laws of **shechitah** and **treifos** were cleared up when he butchered the animals. One cannot compare the knowledge one gains from books to the knowledge one gains from studying the animal itself. He gained thorough knowledge of the animal anatomy, and how to practically apply this knowledge. At times, he would interrupt his work, ponder over a difficult passage in the Talmud **"Elu treifos"**, in the **Rambam's** code, or in the works of other authorities, in which he was well-versed. he would become completely engrossed in their words and forget about his customers. They would often humiliate him as though he were a peon. He heard their insults, but did not reply. He accepted his punishment as part of the wandering tribulations he had imposed upon himself. They were tortures of love; tortures suffered because of his love for Torah, which he would not neglect for even one minute.

All his sufferings at the hands of the customers were of little significance compared to those he suffered from his colleagues, the other **menakkerim**. Being well-versed in all the laws of **nikkur,** including the minutest details and ramifications, knowing the length of the veins, until they become surrounded by flesh, in every form of bovine animal, and all that is prohibited and permissible areas he often quarreled with the veteran **menakkerim**. Sometimes

he prohibited what they permitted, and sometimes vice-versa.* Endless quarrels ensued.

Once an animal was slaughtered, which they ruled to be **treifah**. The **Taz** claimed that they had erred, and immediately declared it kosher. They commenced to argue but could not reach a conclusion. They took the question to the rabbi of the city, Rabbi Meir Zak who, heard their arguments and declared the animal **treifah.** The **Turei Zahav**, however, remained steadfast in his opinion that the animal was indeed kosher. He brought many proofs and references to support his ruling. During the controversy, he made a statement which the rabbi construed as defiant. He became incensed against the **Taz**, and in accordance with local custom, ordered him confined to the pillory in the large synagogue, with iron chains on his hands, as a deterrent for the rebellious.

The **Taz** accepted this punishment, stood in the pillory with his hands chained, mumbling words of Torah. He could not, however, accept the rabbi's ruling concerning the kashrus of the animal. He made up his mind that after his release, he would bring additional proof that the animal was kosher. While standing there, he saw a lad pass with a package wrapped in paper. "What have you there?" he asked. "I have a chicken," he replied.

"I went with it to the Rav to ask a **shaalah** (legal decision)."

"What was the problem?" asked the **Taz.**

"I don't know; my mother sent me to the rabbi to ask a **shaalah.** I showed him the chicken and he said it was **treifah.**"

He asked the boy to show him the chicken, which he did. Since his hands were tied, he could not open it to examine it properly. He asked the boy to open it, whereupon he examined it.

He tapped all over with his fingers, and then said to the boy:

"Go back to the rabbi and tell him to look in **Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah,** in chapter such and such and, in the **Turei Zahav** paragraph such an such."

The boy returned to the rabbinical court, approached the rabbi and said:

"This is what the man in the pillory told me."

The rabbi again took the chicken from the boy, examined it again, and realized that he had overlooked a paragraph of the **Turei Zahav.** Since he was an honest man, he admitted his error and felt remorse for having dealt so harshly with a great Torah scholar, by putting him into the pillory like a common sinner. Immediately, he sent the beadle to release the prisoner and to bring him to him. The beadle complied with the rabbi's order, went to the pillory, and released the prisoner. When the prisoner wished to go home, the beadle told him that he must first appear before the rabbi. The **Taz** went to the rabbi. As soon as he crossed the threshold, the rabbi greeted him cordially. He offered him a seat and they began conversing like two scholars debating matters of halachah, without any intent of defeating one another, but to clarify the truth. The rabbi saw that his opponent was gifted with unusual erudition, divine inspiration, and that everything he said was true. He finally begged him for forgiveness for the disgrace he showered upon him, and asked him:

Why did you conceal your identity? Since you were in a place where you are unknown, you should have disclosed your true identity so that people would not sin by ridiculing you...most people judged you to be a butcher, at best a **menakker,** and regarded you as most men of this craft, as Tradesmen and not Torah scholars.

The **Taz** replied; "Must I disclose my identity? Didn't the Rabbis say that anyone who derives benefit from the crown of Torah is uprooted from the world? Only one Talmudical sage, Rava, opines that one may disclose his identity where no one knows him as Obadiah said, 'And your servant was G-d-fearing from his youth (Nedarim 62a).

It is written in **Ramo** in **Yoreh Deah,** laws of Talmud Torah 246:21 . An individual may make himself known in a place where they do not know him, **if it is necessary**. I, however, did not think it was necessary!

After this incident, the rabbi summoned the dignitaries of the city, and said to them:

"Gentlemen! Please be advised that this man is a scholar of great acumen and erudition, fit to occupy the position of rabbi. I advise you to give him my position. He deserves to occupy the rabbinate of a large city in Israel, for he is a man of many good deeds and much knowledge."

The dignitaries were dumbfounded by their elderly rabbi's statement who was willing to abdicate his position in favor of this stranger. They were at a loss for words. The **Taz**, too, stood dumbfounded. Hearing these words of humility emanating from the mouth of the rabbi of the great city of Lemberg, a man of outstanding wisdom and piety, admitting his shortcomings and commanding his constituents to appoint someone to succeed him during his lifetime. He stood there quaking.

He opened his mouth and addressed the rabbi: "My master! I am dust under your feet. Your name is greater than any title, and you are as humble as Hillel. You occupy an exalted position; who am I to succeed you during your lifetime?"

But the elder rabbi insisted, "I an old and infirm, and my eyes have become dim. I am already unable to lead my

flock. The L-rd has sent you, a man endowed with the spirit of the L-rd to this city. Let him occupy my place."

The congregants recognizing their rabbi's sincerity, that he had no ulterior motives, retained him in the position of rabbi, but accepted the **Taz** as head of the **beis-din.** When Rabbi Meir Zack passed away, they accepted the **Taz** as their rabbi, the head of the **beis-din** and the Rosh HaYeshiva of Lemberg.

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Chapter 18.
Laws of Shechitah (slaughtering), Bedikah (examining the lungs), and Selling
- 1 -
Kosher Meat

Based on a compendium of (**Tur, Yoreh Deah,** ch. 64: **Tur Choshen Mishpat,** ch. 34; **Matteh Yosef**, vol. 1, ch. 8) Any **shochet** whose actions indicate that he is unscrupulous causing pitfalls for people by providing with **treifos** to eat, and knowingly allows a **treifah** animal to be sold to Jews as kosher meat, or that his customers purchased it believing that it was kosher because he was accepted as a reliable **shochet**, and then it was discovered to be **treifah,** e.g. he tore off a **sircha**, (an adhesion of the lung to another organ) or falsified some other condition, he is immediately discharged and banned from this profession. He cannot excuse himself by saying that he did so inadvertently...Immediately upon discovering that a **treifah** animal went out of his hands...the community leaders must immediately discharge him when they see that he has no fear of G-d and that he does not hesitate to give Jews non-kosher meat for their consumption. Similar action must be taken against anyone who sells non-kosher

food, whether they have done so intentionally or unintentionally. Especially, in the places where the slaughter-houses are owned by non-Jews, and all the meat produced both kosher and non-kosher are sold by gentiles. The kashrus supervisor must be a G-d-fearing man. He must be warned not to absence himself from the butcher store until the owner has finished selling **all** his kosher meat. He may drink neither wine nor whiskey, so that he be sober. When a Jew enters the store, he must be assured that the gentile does not sell him non-kosher meat. Before accepting the mashgiach for this position, he must be clearly advised that he shoulders the responsibility of the whole city.

He must be alert...this position is not a trivial matter. If the pious Jews notice that this supervisor is lax in his observance of the tenets of Judaism, they should refuse to buy meat processed under his supervision; if there are kosher and non-kosher meats in the same store, it is impossiblle to rely on the word of a supervisor who is lax in his personal observance of the tenets of Judaism.

Once an incident occured to a messenger travelling from place to place, who happened to stop in a certain town where it was customary that if any member of the community made a party or had guests, all prominent members of the community would come to his house to partake of the Shabbos repast. Everyone would bring hot food, wine, and fruit eating together to create a cheerful atmosphere for the guest and occasion. They would place all these foods on the table so that everyone could eat what he preferred. On **Shabbos** they would all bring a hot broth made from animal feet. The messenger wondered about this practice and inquired about it. The natives, being ignorant people, replied that, since there was no local **shochet**, they would eat this dish to avoid eating from the

meat of the non-kosher animals slaughtered by the gentiles. Apparently, until then, many people did not know that they were eating non-kosher food, a thing which even the school children know.

Therefore, everyone must be extremely careful to ascertain who his host is.

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When such an unscrupulous person is found, he is discharged and public announcements are made that no one should purchase from him, so that everyone recognized him and avoid pitfalls. He has no chance of being reinstated to his position or occupation until he goes to another city where he is a stranger, and resists monetary temptations. For example, if in this city, a Jew loses an article of great value, and the penitent sinner finds and returns it, this action indicates that he has repented sincerely without any trickery. Prior to this indication, however, he has no chance of being reinstated and cannot function as a **shochet** or butcher. Even if he wishes to open a store to sell nut or dried fruits, we may not buy from him for, if he sold **treifos** to Jews, he is regarded as one who left the fold...Even if he endures many fats and suffers mortifications, it is of no avail...for it is always possible that he did so to fool the public so that they reinstate him to his former occupation.

If it is obvious however, that he cannot leave the city, it is possible to arrange a penitence in the city, on the condition that he impose upon himself a certain type of mortification for the rest of his life, e.g. fasting on Mondays and Thursdays, or abstaining from eating meat or drinking wine, or the like, for the rest of his life. This will help even if he remains in his own city..

- 3 -
The Eager Are Quick to Fulfill Mitzvos

Rabbi Yoel Sirkes, author of the famous halachic work, known as **Bayis Chadash,** or by its initials, **Bach,** had a disciple, a very wealthy and charitable man. The rabbi taught him the laws of charity daily, since he feared he would not fulfill his obligations in that field. Indeed, study is required in order to practice charity properly and adequately. He was wont to say, "Let us not be ashamed or stumble in our deeds, either in quantity or in quality," and all this wealthy man's deeds of charity, both the known ones and the secret ones, were performed according to the counsel of the great Rabbi Joel Sirkes, the author of **Bach,** o.b.m.

Once a tavern keeper came to the rabbi with the following tale of woe:

"For a number of decades I have rented my tavern from the **poritz** (lord) of the village, and now, one of my fellow Jews has come forward to compete with me for the contract. Every day he goes to the **poritz**, knocks at his door, talks to him persuasively, and promises him a substantial raise over the rental he had been receiving from me for the past years for the tavern. Rabbi! This man is threatening the health of the members of my household. Please have pity on me and save me from this calamity."

The rabbi replied, "Go to such and such, a wealthy man, and ask him to do you a favor, and go to the **poritz** and speak highly of you so that he favors you."

The tavern keeper left the rabbi and went directly to his wealthy friend, repeating to him everything he had told the rabbi and the rabbi's response. He also begged him to intervene for him, as the rabbi had said that he would. The wealthy man listened to the whole story and promised to speak to the **poritz)1, as the rabbi had instructed him.**

The tavern keeper, however, was not satisfied and begged him to hurry to speak to the poritz before his rival would come and persuade him to give him the contract for the tavern. The rich man, however, excused himself and said, "You will have to wait several days until I take care of my business matters at the big fair in Leipzig, which will soon be over. If I don't take care of them now, I stand to lose most of my property."

Upon hearing this, the tavern keeper burst out crying and said, "If so, where can I turn? Meanwhile, my opponent will surely beat me to the **poritz** and take away my livelihood."

The rich man then started to allay his fears and to encourage him with words of faith and trust, and said to him, "You're a Jew, aren't you? Don't you believe in the words of the Rabbis, who said that a person's income is predestined on Rosh Hashanah, and that no one can take away what is in store for his friend? If you believe in the words of our Sages, you will believe that all the conniving in the world will not avail your rival. So, don't be afraid of him. As soon as I return from the fair, I will not enter my house until I speak to the **poritz**, and with the help of the Almighty, I will be the agent for your success."

Thereupon the wealthy man called his friend to join him with a drink, in keeping with the verse: "Give strong drink to one who is lost and wine to those with bitter souls." They drank to their life and success, and the wealthy man sent the tavern keeper home.

The latter came home relayed to his wife how the wealthy man had promised to go to the **poritz**, and that he was confident of his success. However, his wife found no consolation in the promise her husband had exacted from his rich "benefactor." She wept and cried and derided him.. Her heart was full of despair and fear. She imagined her

husband's rival going to the **poritz** and destroying her husband's livelihood. Her husband sat down an tried to appease her. When he tried to give her encouragement and faith, she burst our crying and wailing, and blamed him for any misfortune that might befall them. "No one else would have been satisfied with such an answer. Someone else would have insisted that he go to the **poritz** immediately and straighten out the whole matter." The tavern keeper know no peace. There was no longer any harmony in his house.

His wealthy benefactor, however had not forgotten him. The fair was over and he returned to Cracow. As soon as he stepped out of his coach, even before he trod over the threshold of his own house, he went directly to the **poritz** and appealed to him to renew his friend's contract for the tavern. The **poritz** was impressed favorably and renewed the contract for ten years.

Several years later, the wealthy man passed away. The people of Cracow eulogized him as befitting his charitable deeds and escorted him to his final test.

Once he came to his rabbi, the **Bach**, in a dream, and said to him:: "Rabbi, I have come to tell you how I was welcomed by the ministering angels after my death.

When I first arrived, I found many souls awaiting their judgment. Among them were two whom I recognized from the lower world. These were the souls of two butchers who had fed non-kosher meat to the Jewish people of Cracow for a considerable length of time. One of them had come to you during his lifetime and confessed his sins, begging you to tell him how to repent and rectify his evil deeds."

"Yes," said the Rabbi, "it is true. One of them repented sincerely, but the other one felt no remorse, and died a wicked man."

"But then, suddenly I heard a voice announcing," continued the wealthy man. "The voice resounded throughout all the worlds, saying, 'Such and such a man is summoned to appear befor the heavenly tribunal!' Suddenly a man entered with dogs running in front of and behind him, barking loudly and complaining that this man had robbed them of all the **nevaloh** (carcasses) and **treifos** that rightfully belonged to them and sold them to humans. Suddenly there was complete silence, and a heavenly voice emanated and announced: 'Putrid drop, how dare you feed my children nevaylos and **treifos**? Did you not fear the day of judgment?' The butcher was so perplexed that he could not reply. Seconds later, he was seized and cast into the depths of hell, never to be seen again.

"Then they announced again, 'So and so is summoned before the heavenly tribunal!'

His colleague entered, quaking with fear, and stood before the court. Immediately an angry voice was heard, 'Putrid drop, how did you dare to feed my children nevaylos and **treifos**?'

Before the question was finished, a faint voice was heard, a defending angel came forward to resuit the "bill of complaint". Immediatey they opened the scroll and read the following: 'So and so, who fed non-kosher meat to the people of the L-rd, sinned doubly, to G-d and to people. As regards people, he robbed the public by charging them for kosher meat, while selling them non-kosher meat. The only way to rectify this crime is to dedicate all his property for the benefit of the public as regards G-d, he must abstain from all food except a meager ration of bread and water, and if he repents his sin will be forgiven.'

"Witneses testited that from that day the butcher dedicted all his property for the benefit of the public until he was left destitute. He spent all his days in fasting and

praying to G-d. After these testimonies, they took the man and brought him into the temple of the repentent sinners.

Then I heard my name called. My knees started knocking together. Thank G-d, my verdict was favorable. Peaceful angels came and led me with song to my palace in Paradise. The gates of Paradise opened before me with light and joy, and a fragrant aroma entered my nostrils. Such a pleasure I never experienced in my lifetime. As soon as I stepped over the threshold of Paradise, an angel came toward me, walking with very small steps. Moaning and groaning, he came before me and stood in my way, preventing me from entering Paradise. I asked him who he was and what I had done to merit the way to Paradise being blocked before me. He replied, 'I am the angel who was created from the favor you did for the tavern keeper when you went to the **poritz** to speak on his behalf.' When I heard this, I was frightened. I asked him 'Is it possible that an angel created from kindness should stand in my way? Didn't I hurry to the **poritz** as soon as I returned from the fair? I saved a whole family from poverty!'

He replied, 'Indeed you performed an act of kindness for that Jew, but do you know how many tears were shed because of you, before the salvation came? Do you know of all the quarrels that took place between the man and his wife before you went to the **poritz**? You should know that all these things are recorded, and they demand retribution from the heavenly tribunal; you must be judged the consequences of every one of your deeds.'

I retorted, "But I didn't do it out of cruelty, only to save my money. Had I not gone to the fair, I would have lost most of my money." But, my arguments and my pleas were of no avail. I was returned to the Heavenly tribunal for a retrial. After the case was heard, the court promulgated a new verdict, that I was **to sit in the gates of Paradise** and not to enter within **for the same number of days that the**

tavern keeper waited for me to return from the fair in Leipzig. Before they finished reading the verdict, two angels seized me and brought me to the gates of Paradise. How long I sat there I don't know. But it seemed like years. My anguish in those days is literally indescribable; I yearned so much to reach my resting place, which I saw from a distance but was unable to reach..."

The following day, the rabbi related the story to his congregation and said, Learn ye how people must be scrupulous in their observance of **every mitzvah,** not to delay it. How much more in the case of mitzvos between man and man, such as charity and kind deeds, upon which people's lives depend, we must always be among the eager ones who rush to do a **mitzvah**! [1] (**Teshuos Chen,** Jerusalem 5685).

- 4 -

The saintly **Baal Shem Tov,** "After he shows you his knife and you find it fit, he pounds it with a hammer to make nicks in it."

The rabbi returned to his city, maintained a close watch on the **shochet**, and investigated his behavior until he was convinced that the Baal Shem Tov was right (**Shivchei HaBesht**).

- 5 -

Once the Baal Shem Tov came to the rabbi of a community and requested that he put him up for Shabbos. The rabbi ordered his wife to honor this great man, as befitted his station. She replied, "We have bought meat for **Shabbos.** I will give our guest the choicest cut." To her consternation, when she went to bring the meat, she could not find it. She went to her neighbor to borrow a portion of meat. The neighbor agreed to lend her the meat, but when she went to bring it, she too was astounded to find that her meat had disappeared. The **rebbetzin** conferred

with her husband about the matter. Just then, she looked out of the window and spotted the **shochet** passing the house. She called him and told him her problem. He told her that he had just slaughtered a tender calf.

The **Baal Shem Tov** said, "I prefer the head, but I beg you to bring it here when it is whole and remove the veins in my presence." The shochet went quickly and brought the head to the rabbi's house. The **Baal Shem Tov** began to converse with the **shochet** and said to him. There are differences in the number of teeth in a calf. Count this calf's teeth." The **shochet** opened the mouth of the slaughtered animal and inserted his hand to count teeth. But, lo and behold! As soon as he had inserted his hand into the calf's mouth, it closed on him and he was unable to extricate his hand from the trap. The teeth pressed into his hand and caused him such excruciating pain that he screamed.

Said the **Baal Shem Tov**, "Wicked man, confess your sins! You never examined the lungs of an animal. You arbitrarily declard them kosher or **treifah**."

After the **schochet** confessed, he begged the **Baal Shem Tov** to instruct him how to repent.

Then the Baal Shem Tov accompanied the rabbi to the synagogue. He passed his hand over the rabbi's face and showed him how many destructive angels and spirits were sitting on the roof of the synagogue. The rabbi was astounded at this. The **Baal Shem Tov** said to him, "You should know that your cantor sins every night." They discharged the cantor and hired another in his place (**Shivchei Baal Shem Tov**).

- 6 -

During the course of my work, I gained insight into the rabbinic maxim Mishnah, the end of the tractate **Kiddushin**: The most pious butcher is a partner of Amalek, **Rashi** explains: If an animal of questionable

kashrus comes into his hand, to save himself from pecuniary loss, he sells it as kosher.

Let me relate to an incident that occurred in one of the settlements in the Haifa vicinity. Twenty years ago, there was an extremely pious Yemenit butcher who performed **nikkur** by himself and sold the meat in his own butcher shop. As all familiar with the procedure know, the **nikkur** procedure commences with separating the joints. This simple butcher, however, was unaware that there was anything involved in **nikkur** other than the separation of the joints, thinking innocently that the joints separation, in and by itself, comprise the entire **nikkur** procedure.

For years, he sold meat in this manner, until he once met a professional **menakker** inHaifa He boasted that he was very fast in his work and could perform **nikkur** on a side of beef in fifteen minutes. The Menakker from Haifa who knew from experience that the **nikkur** of a side of beef takes four to five hours, was astounded at this phenomenon and decided to witness this marvel with his own eyes. He accompanied the butcher to his place of work to see him in action. He immediately realized, that, to him, cutting the joints apart was called **nikkur**. **The menakker explained to him the terrible mistake he had been making during all the years he had been selling meat, and how he had led countless Jews to sin by feeding them prohibited foods.** The Yeminite, who was a G-d-fearing man, went to the rabbis and begged for a method of rectifying his transgressions..

- 7 -

(From Sefer Gevul Rishonim, ch. 3)

(Nagid Umetzavveh, Yalkut, Reuveni, Shevet Mussar, Yalkut Me-am Loez):

One who feeds people nevaylos and **treifos** is reincarnated into the leaf of a tree, which the wind blows up