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“Maror” (Bitter Herbs) - In Remembrance of The Servitude In Egypt

The *maror* (bitter herbs) is eaten at the *seder* to commemorate the bitterness which the Egyptians caused our fathers in Egypt.^[1] It is not counted as a *mitzvah* unto itself^[2], but as part of the *mitzvah* of eating *matzah*^[3]; others say that it is part of the *mitzvah* to tell over the story of the exodus^[4]. There are five different bitter herbs that can be used for *maror*^[5], parallel to the five times that the Torah writes the words **וּמִרְרוּ אֶת חֵיֵהֶם**, “*And they embittered*”.^[6]

Rectifying The Maror

Clearly, the *maror* is in need of a *tikkun* (rectification), for its entire concept is rooted in the damages that came to mankind ever since the first sin.

It is well-known that the *gematria* (numerical value in Hebrew) of the word “*maror*” (**מרור**) is equal to the word **מות**, “*maves*” (death).^[7] The word *maror*, besides for its simple meaning of “bitterness”, can also mean to “rebel”, as in the term, **מְמַרְרִים הֵייתָ עִם ה'**, “*You acted rebellious, nation of Hashem*”.^[8] This is because the entire concept of the “*maror*” is a product of the first sin.

There is an opinion in the Sages that the tree which Adam ate from was a grapevine, and that “these clusters of grapes brought bitterness to the world.”^[9] According to this opinion in the Sages, the eating of this grapevine brought bitterness to the world; thus, all “bitterness” is a result of the sin of Adam.

The *maror* receives a rectification in two ways; let us elaborate each of them.

The First Rectification Of The Maror: Dipping Maror Into The Charoses ‘To Remove Poison’

The first *tikkun* for the *maror* is when it is dipped into the *charoses*. The Gemara has an argument if the *charoses* is a *mitzvah* or not^[10], and according to the opinion that it is not a *mitzvah*, the entire purpose of the *charoses* is to eliminate the “*kafa*” [poison] of the “*chazeres*” (the bitter herbs). Both *Rashi* and *Rashbam* translate ‘*kafa*’ as ‘*eres*’, poison.

Clearly, this ‘poison’ is an allusion to the ‘poison’ which the Serpent brought upon mankind, by enticing Adam and Chavah to commit the first sin. This is the ‘death’ contained in the *maror* [which was mentioned earlier]. The very conversation that the Serpent had with Adam and Chavah was already poison, for the *Gemara* says that “the ‘Slanderer’ [the Serpent] has no sensual enjoyment

from his evil speech”^[11] [11]; it seeks to poison others through speech. Speaking *lashon hora* (slander) about another is a way to attack another from afar, so *lashon hora* is like a poisonous arrow that one shoots at his victim^[12] [12]. The Sages say explicitly that *lashon hora* is like shooting a poisonous arrow at another.^[13] [13]

Thus, the *maror* needs to be dipped in the *charoses*, so that its poison is removed – and in this way, the ‘poison’ [contained in the bitterness of the *maror*] is rectified.

The Maror In The Charoses Also Rectifies Menstrual Impurity and Wasted Seed

The Gemara explains that *maror* is identified by a bitter taste, it has ‘*seraph*’ in it, and eating it causes the face to become ‘shamed’ [reddened]. The Gemara also says that if one doesn’t own one of the five bitter herbs listed as “*maror*”, he should use any bitter-tasting herb which has any of the above signs. Rashi explains that the ‘*seraph*’ in it is a white syrup which has a milky-white color; and that the ‘shameful’ look on the face caused by the *maror* means that it is not green-colored like a leek.

It is brought in the *Arizal* in many places [with regards to menstrual blood] that there are five kinds of blood which are rendered pure, and five kinds of blood which are rendered impure. The five kinds of blood which are rendered impure are mentioned in the Talmud in *Tractate Niddah*^[14] [14], and these are parallel to the five times where the Torah mentions “bitterness”, which is the root concept of the *maror* that we are learning about here. Bitterness and menstrual blood are both aftereffects of the first sin; the Sages state that Chavah was punished for the sin with the blood of menstruation.^[15] [15]

There are also five kinds of blood that do not render one impure. The Gemara says that the blood produced from child labor turns into a black color, which then becomes milk^[16] [16], for an infant to nurse from. Then the milk returns to its original state (blood) when it turns into blood inside the infant’s body, and it becomes absorbed inside the infant’s body as purified blood, which gives energy to the infant.^[17] [17]

Maror is rectified in the same way that “impure blood” of menstruation becomes rectified and purified, for the *seraph* contained in the *maror* is a milky-white color.

A second condition for *maror* is that it is not green like a leek. The Hebrew word for “green”, “*yaruk*”, is similar to the word “*yerek*”, herb. This has the same letters as the word “*keri*” (wasted seed). As is well-known, after the sin, Adam separated from Chavah for 130 years, and during those years of separation, there were drops of *keri* that exited his body; the purpose of the descent to the Egyptian exile was to rectify this spiritual damage. This rectification process is alluded to in the second condition needed for *maror*.

Until now we explained the first rectification of the *maror*, the fact that it is dipped into the *charoses*. There are additional hints as well of how the identifying signs of the *maror* share a parallel to menstrual blood and wasted seed.

The Second Rectification of the Maror: Chewing The Maror - Tasting The Bitterness

Now we will explain the second rectification for the *maror*, which is: through chewing the *maror*.

One does not fulfill the requirement of *maror* if he swallows it without chewing it, because he hasn’t tasted the bitterness of the *maror*.^[18] [18] The Sages state, “The way of people is to use something sweet in order to heal something bitter, but HaKadosh Baruch Hu heals something bitter through something bitter – as Hashem commanded Moshe to do in *Marah*.^[19] [19]

In Summary of the Two Rectifications for Maror

Thus we find two different rectifications for the *maror*:

(1) Rectifying its bitterness through “sweetness”- which we do through dipping the maror into the *charoses*, for the *charoses* is a sweet mixture of wine, apples, and almonds^[20] [this is the lower form of rectification of the *maror*, for it represents the human understanding of rectification, to heal bitterness through “sweetness”],

(2) Rectifying the bitterness through “bitterness” - through chewing the *maror* in our mouth, which allows us to taste the bitterness [this is the higher rectification of the maror, for it represents Hashem’s way of rectification, which is to heal “bitterness” through “bitterness”].

It is simple to understand the first form of rectification, to heal bitterness through sweetness. It is only logical that bitterness is healed by sweetness. What we need to understand is the second form of rectification: how “bitterness” can rectify “bitterness”.

A Disagreement About The Identity Of Maror

The Gemara brings that Ravina found Rav Acha bar Rava looking for *maror*. Rashi explains that Rav Acha bar Rava wanted to fulfill the requirement of *maror* through the most bitter-tasting herb described the Sages, which is called “*maror*”; others explain that he was searching for an herb that tasted bitterer than *maror*. Ravina said to him, “Why are you looking for a bitter herb? We are taught in the Mishnah that *maror* is *chazeres* [romaine lettuce]”. The Gemara then brings proof that one fulfills the requirement of *maror* through *chazeres*, and in the end, Rav Acha bar Rava retracted his search for a bitter herb.^[21] [21]

The Gemara then identifies *chazeres* as “*chasa*” [romaine lettuce], for it is a remembrance to how Hashem was “*chas*” (compassionate) on our ancestors in Egypt. The Gemara continues that “bitterness” in Egypt is like *maror*\chazeres, which starts out tasting ‘soft’ and ends with a ‘hard’ taste. The *Talmud Yerushalmi* has a slightly different terminology: it starts out with a “sweet” taste and it ends with a “bitter” taste.^[22] [22] In other words, the *chazeres* begins with a sweet taste, which is “soft”, and it ends with a bitter taste, which is “hard”.

Chazeres, which is *chasa*, is identified by what we call today as ‘*chasa*’, [romaine lettuce], which has sweet-tasting leaves, and a spine that tastes bitter, which comes at the end of its consumption.^[23] [23] The *Beis Yosef* and the *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* both rule that we fulfill the requirement of *maror* by eating the leaves [of the romaine lettuce]^[24] [24] - in spite of the fact that the leaves are not bitter at all. However, the *Ridvaz*^[25] [25] disagreed entirely with identifying *maror* as romaine lettuce, for maror must be bitter-tasting, unlike romaine lettuce, which has a sweet taste to it. The *Chazon Ish*^[26] [26] takes a similar approach, and is of the view that one must not eat the leaves, and he should only eat the spine, after he has begun to taste its bitterness. The *Mishnah Berurah* writes *maror* was also fulfilled with *tamcha*, horseradish, which is also called *chrein*; for in many countries they weren’t able to obtain any other bitter herbs.^[27] [27]

Two Aspects of Maror: Sweetness and Bitterness

Thus, there are two aspects to rectifying *maror*.

On one hand, its “bitterness” is rectified through “sweetness”. This is reflected in the *halachah* that it is preferable to use *chazeres*\chasa (romaine lettuce) for *maror*, which begins with a sweet taste.^[28] [28]

On the other hand, the *maror* is also chewed, which is the second rectification of the *maror* - rectifying bitterness through bitterness, which is Hashem's way of rectification. For this reason, Rav Acha bar Rava wanted to use only the most bitter-tasting herb for *maror* (practically speaking, we do not do this, and our requirement is to follow only the first opinion [which is to use an herb that begins with a sweet taste and ends bitter]). It is clear, however, that this aspect of the rectification for *maror* is not so that something bitter will be made into something even bitterer. Rather, it is just that there are two different kinds of bitterness [as will be explained].

First, as an introduction, we need to explain the depth that is behind "bitterness".

Physical Bitterness (Death) and Inner Bitterness (Jealousy)

At the death of Agag, it was said, "I have removed this bitterness of death."^[29] In Koheles it is written, "I have found woman to be bitterer than death."^[30] Thus, death is a form of bitterness, and "woman" is worse than death; what kind of 'woman' is this referring to? Rashi explains that the term "woman" here is an allegory for heresy. Let us understand the depth of this matter.

There is a verse that says, "The rotting of the bones, is jealousy."^[31] From here we can see that there are two forms of death. There is the simple kind of death, which is when the soul departs from the body, and the body is then buried in the grave. There is also a kind of 'death' which destroys the body from within: jealousy, which causes "rotting of the bones." Jealousy causes the bones to rot, placing the body in a situation where it is devoid of the soul.

Death came as a result from the sin of Adam, which began with jealousy. The Sages say that Adam in Gan Eden was being served meat and wine by the angels, and the Serpent watched all of this taking place and he saw all of the honor that Adam was receiving, and it grew jealous.^[32] This motivated the Serpent to entice Chavah to eat from the *Eitz HaDaas*, which was "desirous to the eyes." Thus, jealousy is the root evil trait, and lustful desire is the branch that stemmed from it.

So there are two kinds of bitterness, which are the two kinds of death. One of them is the punishment of death that came to mankind as a result of eating from the *Eitz HaDaas*, which was lustful desire. Another bitterness/death that came to mankind was a result of the jealousy that led to the first sin - "rotting of the bones, is jealousy." The actual sin was a lustful desire, but its deeper root came about through jealousy.

Rectifying Bitterness Through Bitterness: Rectifying Jealousy

Earlier we mentioned that *chazeres* is *chasa*, which starts out soft\sweet and ends with a hard\bitter taste. This also bears a similarity to the *Eitz HaDaas*, which was a grapevine, according to one of the opinions in the Sages; a grape is soft on the outside and it contains hard seeds on its inside [hence it starts with a soft taste and ends with a hard taste]. Eating of the *Eitz HaDaas* was in the category of lustful desire, for its grapes were sweet-tasting. The punishment for partaking of this lustful desire was death, which is a form of "bitterness". How is this lustful desire rectified? When it is returned to sweetness.

This is the deeper reason of why there is wine in the *charoses*. The sin of Adam and Chavah began with sweet-tasting grapes, which ended in bitterness, for it caused death to come to the world [and it is rectified when we return this bitterness to sweetness, by dipping the *maror* into the sweet-tasting *charoses*]. All of that pertains to the aspect of lustful desire that was contained in the sin, where man was lulled after sweetness.

On the other hand, however, the *Mechilta*^[33] teaches that the most bitter-tasting tree is the olive

tree, which Moshe sweetened the water in Marah with, according to one opinion in the Sages. The olive itself is also bitter-tasting, and even after it is prepared for consumption, it still cannot be sweetened. It is 'rectified' through extracting its oil, when it is crushed. One of the herbs that were crushed for the *Ketores* was *mor-dror*^[34] [34] [myrrh], a bitter-tasting herb. The Midrash^[35] [35] compares Avraham Avinu to *mor-dror*: just as *mor-dror* is called "the head of all the spices", so is Avraham Avinu "the head of all *tzaddikim*"...and just as anyone who gathersthis myrrhwill have bitter hands, so did Avraham embitter himself and endure suffering." Avraham Avinu suffered in his life, and this "bitterness" is what rectified "bitterness"; it rectified the jealousy [of the Serpent]. Later we will explain this matter.

"Bitterness" And "Jealousy" In The Torah

Let us reflect on where the concept of "bitterness" is mentioned in the Torah, in order to understand the matter of how "bitterness is rectified through bitterness".

The first time that the Torah mentions "bitterness" is with regards to Esav. Yaakov used "trickery" to procure the blessings from Yitzchok so that they wouldn't go to Esav, which the verse calls "*mirmah*", similar to the word "*merirus*", bitterness. When Esav realized that the blessings had been given to Yaakov, the verse says: "And he cried out a great and very bitter scream, and he said to his father, "Bless me also, my father." Esav didn't just want the blessing; he said "bless me, also". The word 'also' is a hint to his jealousy, which is the root of all 'bitterness'.

Yaakov and Esav had already been fighting before birth, of who will inherit This World and the Next World. This is the root kind of "jealousy" of the world.

The second time in the Torah where jealousy makes an appearance is by the brothers and Yosef, when the brothers were jealous about Yosef's dreams. Later, when Yaakov gave the blessings to his sons, he cursed their jealousy. Although Yosef was punished with being ensnared by Potifar's wife, for indirectly causing his brothers to be jealous of him - which showed that the brothers were justified in their jealousy towards Yosef and that Yosef was getting what he deserved - still, it was the jealousy of the brothers which fueled the jealousy further, and for this they are blamed for their jealousy.

The word "*Yosef*" has the same *gematria* as the word "*kinah*" (jealousy); the bitterness which the brothers felt towards him was due to their jealousy.

The bitterness of Esav towards Yaakov, and the bitterness of the brothers towards Yosef, has not yet been rectified. Esav will be judged in the future^[36] [36]. As for the jealousy of the brothers towards Yosef, the Ten Martyrs were killed in order to rectify their sin of jealousy, and in spite of this, the rectification is still not complete yet.^[37] [37]

Later, the Torah uses the term "bitterness" with regards to the bondage in Egypt. "*And they embittered their lives, with difficult labor, with mortar and bricks.*"^[38] [38] The Jewish people were 'embittered' in Egypt. We also know that Miriam spoke disparaging words about Moshe [because deep down she was jealous of his high spiritual level]; let us analyze this.

When the verse says that "*they embittered their lives*", the *Tosafos* says that this is an allusion to the birth of Miriam, who was born at that time, thus she is called "Miriam", from the word *merirus*, "bitter." Miriam spoke disparage about Moshe to Aharon, when she noticed that Moshe had separated from Tzipporah. She was really jealous of Moshe, for she said to Aharon, "*Does Hashem only speak with Moshe? He also speaks with us.*" Here is where we see that Miriam had *merirus*, bitterness, for she was jealous of Moshe's level.

Another place in the Torah where “bitterness” is mentioned is with regards to the *sotah*, the wayward wife who is suspected of adultery, who must drink the “bitter waters”. She must drink these waters due to the “jealousy” that her husband has towards the man whom she was seen acting improper with.

Regarding the episode of the “Bitter Waters” at Marah, the Zohar explains that all of the husbands suspected their wives of adultery in Egypt, thus Hashem commanded Moshe to make all of them drink, both the men and the women, the bitter waters.^[39] Hashem commanded Moshe to take a piece of wood with Hashem’s Name on it, and to throw it into the water, which sweetened the water for them to drink.^[40] Thus the people “passed a test” in Marah, for they had been cleansed of any suspicion of adultery from Egypt. The test in Marah therefore stemmed from their servitude in Egypt, which had come about through jealousy, for the Egyptians were jealous of the growing population of the Jewish people and thereby wished to get rid of them.

The Three Kinds of Bitterness: Lustful Desire, Jealousy of Another, and Jealous of Hashem

As we explained, the inner implication of “bitterness” is linked with *kinah*, jealousy, as opposed to *taavah*, lustful desire. We began to explain that the root of jealousy began with the Serpent. Chazal explain that the Serpent became jealous of Adam and Chavah when it saw them in marital relations, which in turn caused it to have a lustful desire for Chavah.^[41]

There was also another kind of jealousy that the Serpent had, which we mentioned earlier: it was jealous of the honor that was being accorded to Adam, when it saw that Adam was enjoying a feast of meat and wine prepared by the angels.

There was also a third kind of jealousy that it had, which represents the depth of its jealousy: it wanted to be like G-d. The Serpent told Chavah, “*You can become like G-d, and know of good and evil.*” Here we see that the Serpent was not only desirous of Chavah, and not only was it jealous of Adam – it was jealous of Hashem, so to speak. It was angry that there is only one Creator of the world; it wanted to calm its jealousy that it had towards Hashem, Who is One and Whom there is none other like. It wanted to be comparable to Hashem, to “be like G-d”, and that is why it said to Chavah that “Just as Hashem creates worlds, so can you create worlds.”^[42]

The “bitterness” that came to Creation is rooted in the jealousy of the Serpent towards Hashem. All “bitterness” therefore comes from the “Serpent” which has become absorbed into man’s bloodstream ever since the first sin.

Thus, there are several different kind of “bitterness”. One kind of bitterness came about as a result of lustful desire. This kind of bitterness is reflected in the statement that “A person does not leave the world with half of his desires fulfilled.” A second kind of bitterness is jealousy; earlier we brought the verse “*And I have found woman to be worse than death*”, and the connection between woman and death\bitterness is because woman is always jealous that she is not the same level as man, who is more connected to his Root.^[43] The third kind of bitterness is another kind of jealousy: when a created being is jealous that it is not the Creator, so to speak.

The Jealousy of the Lower Waters Towards The Upper Waters

There is an amazing insight of the *Ohr HaChaim*^[44], which was surely said through *ruach hakodesh* (the holy spirit), as follows.

The Gemara says that when preparing the bitter waters for the *sotah* to drink, a bitter substance was placed into the water, to give it a bitter taste.^[45] However, the *Yalkut Shimeoni*^[46] brings that it

was the paper with an inscription of Hashem's Name on it which was placed into the water, which made it bitter. The *Ohr HaChaim* explains this as follows:

"It is known from the inner dimension of Torah that every creation yearns and desires to connect to its Creator. The lower waters wept and were bitter over the fact that it was placed at a greater distance from Hashem^[47]...Hashem desired to place His dwelling on the lower realms^[48], but the sins of man prevent this. When He will be able to place His dwelling on the lower realms [in the future], there will be no need for Him to dwell above, and the lower waters will no longer need to cry and be jealous that it is not higher.

"When the *sotah* sins, this prevents the *Shechinah* on High from dwelling below. Thus when she drinks, the water feels her sin, and it feels that she [in her sin] has caused it to become distanced from the Creator [for her sins bring destruction to Creation], and its pain is awakened, so it cries. Its bitterness is awakened, and this itself is what causes her stomach to explode and her thigh to fall."

In other words, the waters are always bitter, for they have been made into the "lower waters" of this world, where they cannot be as close to Hashem.^[49] Through the sin of a *sotah*, the *Shechinah* is distanced from this world, and this awakens the bitterness of the lower waters, who are sad that they have become distanced from Hashem. This is the 'bitterness' contained in 'the bitter waters' that the *sotah* drinks, and this 'bitterness' is what kills her [if she is guilty of sin].

The depth of the above words of the *Ohr HaChaim* is not simply that the lower waters are jealous of the upper waters; it is not that they want to be closer to Hashem. Rather, the lower waters have a desire to be *miskalel* (to integrate) with the King, so to speak - meaning, they want to be recognized as the 'first' in Creation.^[50] [50]

Holy Jealousy: The Desire To Integrate With Hashem

How, indeed, can a person reach *hiskalelus* (integration) in the Creator?

As we have seen, there is an evil side to jealousy, which is the "*rotting of the bones, is jealousy*", which is "*bitterer than death*", but there is also a holy jealousy. Hashem is called "*Keil Kanei v'Nokem*," He is an "Almighty Who is zealous and vengeful". When one returns Creation to the *Ein Sof* (Infinite) of Hashem where it all came from, this is the inner and holy root that is behind the 'jealousy' a created being can have towards Hashem.

There is a hint to this from the words of the Sages, that when the dove came back to Noach with an olive leaf, the dove was teaching Noach a lesson, that it prefers to be kept alive through bitter food, where it will be sustained by Hashem, rather than eat sweet foods that are prepared by people.^[51] [51] A person sweetens bitterness through sweetening it, but the Creator 'sweetens' bitterness through bitterness.

The olive is bitter, and it is fit for consumption only after it has been crushed, whereupon its bitter taste is removed [when its oil is extracted]. This shows us that the way to rectify "bitterness" which results from lustful desire is through "bitterness" - just as the olive must be crushed in order for it to be fit for consumption.

However, that only concerns bitterness that comes from lustful desire, which came after the sin. The root of the sin began with jealousy, and such "bitterness" is only rectified **through being nullified**. Hashem desires the Jewish people even though they are "small"^[52] [52] - and the depth of this is that Hashem desires a Jew especially when he makes himself "small", when he nullifies himself totally, and then he becomes integrated with the Creator. This is how "bitterness" is rectified through

“bitterness.” This was the bitterness that Avraham Avinu had to go through, represented by the spice of myrrh which he is compared to.

This is the rectification of the *maror* which is achieved through chewing the *maror*, which essentially nullifies the *maror*. This nullification rectifies jealousy, and it represents the holy jealousy [a desire to integrate with Hashem, which is achieved through self-nullification].

The sin of man was a lustful desire, but the jealousy itself which brought about this desire was not a sin. **Jealousy is rather the very nature that Hashem has designed man with. It is upon a person to use jealousy for holiness, by being ‘jealous’ of the Creator, so to speak - to desire to integrate one’s being with Him, and, through this yearning, to become integrated with the Creator.**

A Deeper Understanding

Going deeper, there are two root sins in Creation. The sin of Adam was a lustful desire, which caused death to come upon mankind. But there was an earlier sin: there were many “kings of Edom” who were all destroyed by Hashem (these kings are mentioned in *Parshas Vayishlach* ^[53]), for they each said, “I will rule.” ^[54] This was jealousy, and it was the root of all sin.

Holy jealousy is to be jealous of the Creator. It causes one to feel bitter that he is not the Creator - in other words, a bitterness that one isn’t yet integrated with the Creator. This is the depth of the lesson that the dove conveyed to Noach, that it prefers to be sustained through bitterness - it prefers that “bitterness” should be rectified through “bitterness”, which causes one **to feel nullified (*bittul*) to Hashem, which in turn can lead one towards integration (*hiskalelus*) with Hashem.** (As a side note, we should know that the traits of jealousy, conceit and anger all bear the same root. ^[55])

Lustful Desire Vs. Jealousy

When mankind was cursed with death ever since the sin of Adam, this was not simply a death sentence upon Adam; rather, it meant that death would be a slow, drawn-out process.

Until the *Avos*, death happened suddenly, without any warning. The *Midrash* explains that Avraham asked for death to be preceded by aging, Yitzchok asked that death be preceded by suffering, and Yaakov asked that death be preceded by illness. ^[56] Yaakov *Avinu’s* beauty was a resemblance of Adam HaRishon’s beauty ^[57], so just as Yaakov revealed illness to the world, so was there a degree of illness by Adam, in the sense that death is called “illness”. Death is really a slow process, for even when Adam was cursed with death, he did not die that day. Rather, every day in a person’s life is part of the long, drawn-out process of death.

The slow process of death can be compared to when a person has a lust for something; a desire slowly kills a person, with the more he attaches himself to it. “He who wants a hundred, wants two hundred.” ^[58] A person desires to connect more and more to his desire, and the more he connects himself to desire, the more ‘dead’ he becomes. Being half-dead is the same as being dead entirely. ^[59]

Thus, Yaakov *Avinu* asked that illness should precede death, which slows down the process of death. This resembles lustful desire, which is a slow and drawn-out process of “death” for a person.

Jealousy, however, is a rapid process. Its destruction is instant. Haman became enraged when Mordechai didn’t bow to him. This was anger, and it is brought in our Sages that anger stems from jealousy. ^[60] Haman said, “All of this is not worth anything to me” - this realization did not come

upon him slowly. It was a very quick reaction, and it was a destructive attitude of “Either everything, or nothing.”

Thus, desire is a slow process that eventually causes destruction, whereas jealousy is quickly destructive. **The holy use of jealousy, the desire to integrate with the Creator, is also a quick “destruction” [in the positive sense]: it is a complete self-nullification, where man becomes completely integrated with the Infinite.**

From The Bitterness of Gehinnom Comes Self-Nullification and Integration With The Creator

Hashem’s Reality is broken down into smaller amounts when it comes to the experience of created beings and people. “A day of Hashem lasts 1000 years”; in other words, whatever is “one” for Hashem becomes “a thousand” for a person. **Jealousy, at its root, comes from the “oneness” of Hashem, where there is the all-inclusive unity (*achdus*).** Desires, however, are rooted in disparity, where there is no unity; where there are a myriad of details.

In the future era of *Moshiach*, the “holy jealousy” will be revealed, in which the entire Jewish people will feel a burning love for Hashem. It will be a state of nullification to the Creator. The trait of jealousy that exists in our current era, however, leads a person towards a sense of emptiness. When used for evil, jealousy brings a person into a negative, empty state. The Zohar says that “*Marah* (which means bitterness) is *Gehinnom*.”^[61] The trait of lustful desire also leads a person into a negative, empty place.

But the holy kind of emptiness that a person can reach, through **“holy jealousy”, is when the jealousy is causing a person to feel the bitterness that is as bitter as *Gehinnom*, and from this emptiness, a person is led to nullify his existence to the Creator, and to become integrated in Him.**

When a person is having true *merirus* (bitterness) - which is parallel to the bitterness felt in *Gehinnom* - he can then **reach a state of “death” and connect to the One Who rules the world.** The word *emes*, truth, is from the letters “*aleph meis*”, “one, death”, an allusion to how **“death” [self-nullification] enables one to reach the “Aleph”, the One Ruler, Hashem.**

The word “*mar*”, bitter, has the same *gematria* as the word “*Amalek*”, who “recognizes His master and intends to rebel against Him.” On the other side, on the side of holiness, is the one who recognizes his Creator and he chooses to integrate with Him.

This is the depth of the matter of how “bitterness” that rectifies “bitterness”.

In Conclusion

Thus, the complete rectification of “bitterness” is not through dipping the *maror* into the *charoses*, which rectified bitterness with sweetness; but through chewing it with one’s teeth - rectifying the bitterness through “bitterness”.

The depth of rectifying the “bitterness” of the *maror* is the “holy jealousy”, to have a burning love for Hashem, like a rising flame, and to become integrated with the Creator.

[1] ^[62] Pesachim 116a

[2] ^[63] Rambam Sefer HaMitzvos, aseh 56

[3] ^[64] ibid

[4] ^[65] Sefer HaChinuch 21

[5] ^[66] Pesachim 39a

[6] ^[67] Baal HaTurim

[7] ^[68] Arizal: Shaar HaKavanos, derush 12, Pesach

[8] ^[69] Devarim 9:7

[9] ^[70] Yalkut Shimeoni Devarim 32: 946

[10] ^[71] Pesachim 115b

[11] ^[72] Arechin 15b

[12] ^[73] Yirmiyahu 9:7

[13] ^[74] Beraishis Rabbah 98:19

[14] ^[75] Niddah 19a

[15] ^[76] Eruvin 100b

[16] ^[77] Bechoros 6b

[17] ^[78] Arizal: Shaar HaKavanos, Pesach 9

[18] ^[79] Pesachim 115b

[19] ^[80] Mechilta Beshalach, "Vayisa", 1

[20] ^[81] Pesachim 116a

[21] ^[82] Pesachim 39a

[22] ^[83] Talmud Yerushalmi Pesachim 18a

[23] ^[84] Mishnah Berurah 473: 34, in the name of Chavas Yair and Chacham Tzvi

[24] ^[85] Beis Yosef: Orach Chaim 473; Shulchan Aruch HaRav 473:30

[25] ^[86] Ridvaz: Talmud Yerushalmi: Berachos 43a

[26] ^[87] Chazon Ish Orach Chaim 124 (Pesachim 39a)

[27] ^[88] Mishnah Berurah 473: 36

[28] ^[89] (Even according to the Chazon Ish that romaine lettuce does contain some bitterness, it is still mainly sweet).

[29] ^[90] Shmuel I: 15:32

[30] ^[91] Koheles 7:26

[31] ^[92] Mishlei 14:30

[32] ^[93] Sanhedrin 59b

[33] ^[94] Mechilta Beshalach "Vayisa" 1

[34] ^[95] Shemos 30:23; see Ramban ibid

[35] ^[96] Shir HaShirim Rabbah 1:59

[36] ^[97] Ovadyah 1:21

[37] ^[98] Midrash Mishlei 1:13

[38] ^[99] Shemos 1:14

[39] ^[100] Zohar Naso 124b

[40] ^[101] Targum Yehonasan Beshalach 15:25

[41] ^[102] Beraishis Rabbah 18:6, brought in Rashi

[42] ^[103] Tanchuma, parshas Tazria, 9

[43] ^[104] Editor's Note: It seems that this was Miriam's jealousy towards Moshe.

[44] ^[105] Ohr HaChaim, parshas Naso, 5:15

[45] ^[106] Sotah 20a

[46] ^[107] Yalkut Shimeoni Bamidbar 5:23

[47] ^[108] Beraishis Rabbah 5:4

[48] ^[109] Tanchuma, parshas Naso, 16

[49] ^[110] Tikkunei HaZohar 19b

[50] ^[111] Editor's Note: This seems to be the concept of "hiskalelus" (integrating with the Creator) on the side of evil, for it is not a desire to integrate with Hashem for the purpose of the closeness, but for the purpose of being recognized by all of Creation as the most important. This also seems to be the evil desire for kavod (honor), which was manifest in the Serpent; we also find this with regards to Amalek, who is called "raishis", "the first", for Amalek wants to be recognized by Creation as the most honored, and therefore they are at war with Hashem, Who is the true First (and with Hashem's chosen people, the Jewish nation, who are also called the First).

[51] ^[112] Eruvin 18b

[52] ^[113] Devarim 7:7

[53] ^[114] Beraishis 36:31

[54] [115] This is discussed in many Chassidic works; see Me'ohr Einayim parshas Vayeitzei

[55] [116] Bamidbar Rabbah 9:11

[56] [117] Beraishis Rabbah 65:9

[57] [118] Bava Metzia 84a

[58] [119] Koheles Rabbah 1:13

[59] [120] Bava Kamma 65a

[60] [121] Rashi in Iyov 5:2

[61] [122] Zohar Pinchas 222a

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