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Under the auspices of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, the Admor Rabbi David Chananya Pinto shlit'a
Son of the tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Ahron Pinto zt"l, and grandson of the holy tzaddik and miracle-worker Rabbi Chaim Pinto zy"ta

MASKIL LE'DAVID

A Proven Recipe for Marital Harmony

"If a tzara'at affliction will be in a person, he shall be brought to the kohen" (Vayikra 13:9).

The power of habit is an important quality that man should adopt as a true acquisition. A person should habituate himself to become a regular occupant of Hashem's house and accustom his body and spirit to lofty spiritual matters. This is what David Hamelech said (*Tehillim* 119:59), "I considered my ways and returned my feet to Your testimonies," meaning I thought to go here and there but in the end I went to the *beit midrash*. Why? Because this is what I had accustomed myself to do.

Although this is an essential mitzvah, it can at times stand to a person's detriment. When a person becomes accustomed to a certain spiritual situation, it may no longer inspire him. His life may proceed in its customary routine, lacking spiritual vitality, G-d forbid. Therefore, it is incumbent upon man not to allow himself to grow accustomed to these matters. Rather, he should marvel each day anew, as it says, "Each day they should be considered in your eyes like new." This is what David Hamelech prayed, "One thing I asked of Hashem, that shall I seek: Would that I dwell in the House of Hashem all the days of my life, to behold the sweetness of Hashem and to contemplate in His Sanctuary" (*Tehillim* 27:4). Even though he was accustomed to spending the majority of his time in the *beit midrash*, he nevertheless wished to feel **לבקר בהיכלו**, literally meaning to *visit* His Sanctuary. He wanted to continually feel the excitement and awe of a first visit.

This matter is hinted to in the Haftarah of Parshat Hachodesh: "But when the populace comes before Hashem on the appointed days, whoever comes in by way of the northern gate to prostrate himself shall go out by way of the southern gate. He shall not return by way of the gate through which he came in; rather he shall go out opposite it." (*Yechezkel* 46:9). The Chassid Ya'avetz (commentary *Avot* 1:4) explains: "Hashem was particular that he shouldn't see the gate twice in case he will come to consider it like the gate of his house and [consider] the walls of the House to his walls This was a component of the sin of the Golden Calf. Because

the Ohel was in their midst, they came to detest it and said, 'make for us gods.' Moshe Rabbeinu, a"h, realized this and therefore pitched the Ohel outside the camp, far away from them."

The danger of growing accustomed to a situation applies to all areas of Torah, mitzvah performance, and behavior in the home. The implication of "in the home" means that if the husband allows himself to become accustomed to married life, he might then start taking his wife's qualities for granted. The same is true if the wife grows used to her husband's qualities. If their spouse's admirable *middot* no longer impress them, their defects will automatically become more pronounced. The power of habit makes us take the good for granted. This is a proven recipe for violating marital harmony and can quickly lead to disagreements, arguments, and sometimes even to expressing inappropriate, offensive comments. And when the voice is no longer the voice of Yaakov, G-d forbid the hands of Esav rule. These words will suffice for the wise.

Therefore, it is essential that we internalize our spouse's merits, focus on them, and also thank Hashem for them. In this way we will retain appreciation for each other and not be quick to argue. We should also keep in mind the words of Harav Hatzaddik Rabbi Chaim Vital, zy"ta, who writes that a person who disrupts marital harmony causes the Shechina to depart and the Name of Hashem to separate, may Hashem spare us. For when a husband and wife merit, the Shechina rests among them, whereas if they argue and quarrel the Shechina departs. He also writes that the husband should know that a person is judged in the Next World according to how he behaved with his family and not according to how he behaved with others. Sometimes a person can be very devoted to others, but when it comes to his own family he is ill-tempered. If this is the case, he will be judged solely according to how he behaved in his own home.

Before falling into the trap of anger we should remind ourselves of these words and know that we are about to drive the Shechina away from our home, G-d forbid. We should stop and think — is this matter something worth getting angry over?

The Rambam (end *Hilchot Tumat Tzara'at*) points out: "The afflictions were a sign and wonder among Bnei Yisrael to caution them about *lashon hara*, for one who speaks *lashon hara*, the walls of his house change (*tzara'at* appears on some of the stones). If he repents, his house becomes pure, but if he continues with his wicked ways until some of the stones must be removed, then the leather seats that he sits and lies on in his home, will change.

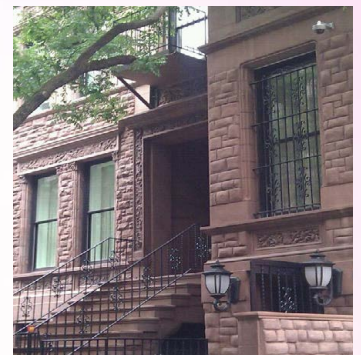
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Tazria-Metzora



Hilula

5 Iyar

Rabbi Ephraim Navon

6 Iyar

Rabbi Chaim Sathon,
author of *Eretz Chaim*

7 Iyar

Rabbi Shlomo Lintshitz,
author of the *Kli Yakar*

8 Iyar

Rabbi David
Chizkiya Chadad,
author of *Keren David*

9 Iyar

Rabbi Avigdor Kara,
author of *Hakaneh Hagadol*

10 Iyar

Ta'anit Tzaddikim for the
death of Eli Hakohen and
his two sons

11 Iyar

Rabbi Naftali Tzvi
of Ropshitz,
author of *Ayala Shlucha*





FROM THE TREASURY

Based on the teachings of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, *shlita*

What Can We Learn from the Blood of the Slaughtered Bird?

When talking about the purification process of the *metzora* it says (*Vayikra* 14:4-5), "The kohen shall command; and for the person being purified there shall be taken two live, clean birds ... and the one bird shall be slaughtered into an earthenware vessel." Rashi writes, "Since his affliction came as punishment for the chatter of gossip and slander, his purification is effected by means of chirping, twittering birds."

This requires clarification. If the birds allude to his empty chattering, why is he commanded to bring them once he is already pure from his *tzara'at* and has repented from his sin? Does it not say, "Recall not against us the sins of the ancient"? He should have brought them right at the start when he became impure with *tzara'at*, and then this would serve to remind him that he did not behave appropriately, just like the chirping bird.

We can answer based on the following: Two types of medication are given to a sick person. The goal of the first medicine is to heal him from his illness, while the second medicine is given once he has already recovered, as a preventative measure so he should not be re-infected with this illness. So too with the sickness of *tzara'at*. Rashi writes: "Why is a *metzora* singled out to live in isolation? Because his affliction is a punishment for slander, which causes husbands to be separated from their wives and friends from one another. Therefore, it is fitting that he be punished through isolation from society." When he sits alone he will certainly search his ways to consider why this happened to him, and then he will repent and be purified from his sin. But after becoming pure, he requires a preventative measure so as not to return to his sin. This is why the Torah commands him to bring two birds which will remind him of his sin, and in this way he will fulfill the verse (*Tehillim* 51:5), "... and my sin is before me always." Through this he will remember the terrible sin he transgressed and he will be reminded why he was afflicted with *tzara'at*. This will serve to protect his soul from his original sin of speaking negatively about others.

Talking negatively about someone causes the person embarrassment, and it is as if he has been killed by the person's tongue which is as sharp as a sword. This is why the slanderer brings two birds. One is slaughtered and the other remains alive. The slaughtered bird corresponds to his friend against whom he spoke and as if slaughtered him, while the bird which remains alive represents the sinner. He dips the live bird into the blood of the slaughtered bird to imprint upon himself the severity of his sin, for it is as if his words "killed" his friend. His body is sprinkled with the blood of the slaughtered bird, so his wicked deed of speaking negatively about others should constantly remain in front of his eyes and he will not return to his bad ways.



WALKING IN THEIR WAYS

Tidbits of faith and trust penned by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, *shlita*

Influencing Others to Do Hashem's Bidding

I once wished to impart a most crucial message to the public. It was imperative that as many people as possible hear it. Therefore, it was decided that a raffle drawing would be held among the participants of the *shiur*. This would draw people to come and hear the word of Hashem. As we know, through acting with ulterior motives, one eventually acts *l'shem Shamayim*.

As we had hoped, the hall was packed. *Baruch Hashem*, I succeeded in conveying my message, and it seemed that the audience accepted it. At the end of the evening, the lottery was drawn. But for some reason, the winners refused to accept their prizes. We conducted another round of draws, but this time, too, the winners declined to come forward.

During this time, I was told about a fellow Jew who was envious of our tremendous success in bringing merit to the public. He spread the rumor that Rabbi David Pinto buys people with prizes. I was terribly aggrieved at hearing this. These were words of emptiness, said in order to sow seeds of discord and discontent. In response, I remained silent and did not react.

Sometime later, I bumped into an old student who had not attended this *shiur*. I asked him why he had refrained from participating. He repeated the words of that jealous Jew. Since he believed that I bought people for money, he wished to have no part in it. After a short time, I was told that this student had removed his kippah and, with it, the yoke of Heaven.

I then decided that things had come to a head. I turned to the man who had originally publicized the scandal against me and told him sternly, "See how far your deeds have reached. On account of jealousy and evil slander, you caused a fellow Jew to cast off Torah and mitzvah observance. You steered him off the correct path. What answer will you have for the Creator of the World when you will be taken to account for this deed?!"

I was terribly saddened that my disciple left the path of Torah. But I learned a tremendous lesson regarding the great responsibility of one who brings merit to the public. Just as it is in the power of a Jew to bring merit to the public, to nurture them and bring them closer to their Heavenly Father, to the same extent he can cause others to stumble, Rachmana litzlan. The evil inclination takes advantage of his status and authority to influence the public and bring them to sin.

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And if he repents ... and if not his skin changes and he becomes a leper and he must be separated and remain on his own, until he no longer takes part in the conversations of the wicked, which are mockery and *lashon hara*."

We see that *tzara'at* does not appear on a person's body immediately, but it comes in stages. It is surprising that a person can reach a point where his home must be destroyed in front of his eyes, and he still will not leave his crooked ways and stop speaking *lashon hara*. What is more, the *tzara'at* then appears on his clothing, yet even this does not deter him, until it appears on his body and he is forced to remain in isolation outside the camp. How do we understand this surprising phenomenon?

According to what we explained above, we now understand that habit can sometimes work against a person, and he is no longer impressed or inspired by a certain situation. Obviously, at first this person is alarmed by the afflictions that appear on his house. But, by the time he goes to ask the advice of a kohen who will decide if it is an impure affliction, his initial agitation and inspiration will have cooled off and faded away.



WORDS OF THE SAGES

The Coughing Attack Stopped in Merit of the Neighbor's Porch

“This shall be the law of the *metzora* on the day of his purification” (Vayikra 14:2).

The fact that we live in such a competitive world can cause our outlook to become competitive and begrudging. And then, when faced with someone else's success or advancement, whether it is the fact that he is living it up, renovates his home, has landed a well-paying job, or has a beautiful family and a tranquil life, this triggers the disease of competition and resentment. He begins to question if this person really deserves it, and why specifically is he the recipient of all this pleasure. Don't I deserve easy livelihood, an extra porch, a beautiful family, pure *nachat*?

These thoughts all fall into the category of envy, which is one of the reasons for the appearance of *tzara'at*, discussed in this week's *parsha*. Feelings of envy and resentment are a natural and normal phenomenon of our competitive world, but this does not justify it. On the contrary, it is much more reasonable to understand that every person receives what he is supposed to receive, and one person's gain does not harm his friend in any way. So why not feel happy for him?

My neighbor is building? Wonderful! How happy I am that Hashem is granting him extra space! My brother has delightful children? Wonderful! I am happy he enjoys this *nachat*! My friend landed a respectable job with a great salary? Thank You Hashem for all Your kindness, it makes me want to dance and sing!

I remember to pray for my friend that his good should never cease and that all his days be full of *nachat* and fulfillment. It is not on my account! My friend hasn't taken anything away from me! Why not welcome his blessings?! Why not rejoice with him?!

This is the formula for true happiness! If I believe and understand that no one can take anything away from me, then inevitably I have no reason to complain or be unhappy because of someone else's success, income, or tranquil and blessed life. I am delighted because he is delighted. I am happy because he is happy. I rejoice in his happiness with my entire heart!

The Gaon Rabbi Avraham Noach Palai, *zt"l*, Mashgiach of Chevron Yeshiva, suffered from asthma for many years. It happened more than once that he was overcome with a coughing attack in the middle of learning and had to rush outside for fresh air until his breathing steadied. Sometimes he was even forced to leave his *talmidim* in the middle of giving a *shiur* and take a rest.

One day, Rav Palai was in the middle of giving over one of his wonderful *shiurim* when suddenly his face turned red and his breathing became wheezy and labored. He immediately ran outside for fresh air. “This is another bad attack,” his *talmidim* said to each other. “What a shame that once again the *shiur* will be interrupted for about twenty minutes.” But to their surprise, only a minute and a half passed and the Rav was already back in the room, smiling and breathing easily and evenly. He continued the *shiur* from where he left off, as if he hadn't been in the middle of an attack two minutes ago. The *talmidim* looked at their Rav in amazement. They themselves witnessed the attack; how did he recover so quickly?

At the end of the *shiur*, his *talmidim* turned to him and asked: “Could the Rav explain how he returned so quickly, since this attack seemed particularly severe, more so than previous ones that required the Rav to rest for a short time.”

Rav Palai smiled and explained: “I have a neighbor who, for a long time already, wished to extend his cramped apartment. He has a large family and lives in a tiny apartment, but the bureaucratic issues were complicated and the matter kept getting pushed off. But today, when I went out to the street to breathe in some fresh air and recover from the attack, do you know what I saw?” His *talmidim* looked at him in suspense. His eyes lit up, his smile widened: “Tractors had arrived! My neighbor has started building! Baruch Hashem! At that moment my breathing returned to normal; my heart expanded when I saw that my neighbor was finally able to go ahead with the extension! The attack passed instantly after I experienced such joy!”

Harav Palai finished his explanation. The smile remained on his face; just remembering the incident made him happy all over again (*Umatok Ha'or*).



PARSHAH PEARLS

Inspiring Reflections

The Chacham Decides

“The kohen shall look at the affliction on the skin of his flesh: If hair in the affliction has changed to white, and the affliction's appearance is deeper than the skin of the flesh — it is a *tzara'at* affliction; the kohen shall look at it and declare him contaminated” (Vayikra 13:3).

Rabbi Yaakov Amado of Izmir, *zt"l*, in his sefer *Imrei Emet*, asks why the verse repeats the words “the kohen shall look at it”? Has it not already said at the beginning of the verse “The kohen shall look”?

The *Imrei Emet* answers this question by quoting the words of the Rambam in Hilchot Tumat Tzara'at: “Even though all are qualified to rule concerning afflictions — contamination and purity are dependent on the kohen. How can this be? A kohen who is not familiar with the laws shows it to a *talmid chacham* who tells him to declare ‘contaminated,’ and the kohen pronounces ‘contaminated.’ If the *chacham* tells him to declare it pure, the kohen pronounces ‘pure.’ If the *chacham* says it must be quarantined, the kohen quarantines it, as it says, ‘and according to their word shall be every grievance and every plague’ (*Devarim* 21:5).”

Rashi writes (*Erchin* 3a) that even if the kohen is not an expert [in these laws], nevertheless he must look at the affliction together with the *chacham* and then he declares “pure” or “contaminated,” according to what the *chacham* tells him to say.

This, then, is the meaning of the verse: Even if the kohen is not an expert in afflictions and they will need to show it to a *chacham* who is well versed in these laws, the *chacham* still does not have the authority to declare him contaminated, nor may the kohen pronounce him contaminated until he himself actually looks at the affliction. This is why the verse repeats the words “the kohen shall look,” for even in the case where a *chacham* must look at the affliction, the kohen too must look at it as it says, “the kohen shall look at it and declare him contaminated.”

a NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA

Love Your Fellow as Yourself



Pairs and not Singles

In this period, from Pesach till Shavuot, twenty-four thousand *talmidim* of Rabbi Akiva passed away.

Our Sages point out that in several places Chazal stress that “Rabbi Akiva had twelve thousand pairs of *talmidim*.” What lies behind this expression of “twelve thousand pairs”? Why do Chazal not use the simpler wording of “twenty-four thousand *talmidim*”? If, for example, one wishes to speak about the number of students in the Mir Yeshiva, one would say that nine thousand *bachurim* and *avreichim* study there. We would not say that there are four and a half thousand *chavrutot* in the yeshiva.

Chazal stress that in Rabbi Akiva’s yeshiva they excelled in the attribute of “closeness with colleagues.” Rabbi Akiva was the one who instigated “Love your fellow as yourself is a great rule in the Torah.” In his *yeshiva*, there were not twenty-four thousand students, but twelve thousand *chavrutot* who studied together, in pairs! They were not single students, but “*chavrutot*” in their essence. Due to this, there was an especially strong claim from these *talmidim* when it came to behavior “between man and his friend”!

Rabbi Shmuel Baruch Ganot, *shlita*, quotes in the name of *tzaddikim* that Torah tradition was passed on to future generations through the *beit midrash* of Rabbi Akiva. They were not merely “Torah learners”, but “transmitters of the Torah.” It was this fact that obligated those who studied in this *beit midrash*, where the foundation of the Oral Law was created and established and transmitted to future generations, to be on the highest level, as is fitting for those who

bequeath the Torah to others. We are not speaking about “private” people, but about an institution of Torah that was chosen to transmit the Torah from Moshe to Rabbi Akiva, and from Rabbi Akiva to his *talmidim* and onward. This is why they were punished so severely, for it is impossible to give over the chain of Torah if one falls short in good *middot* between man and his friend.

A Favor for Your Friend, Not a Favor for Yourself

A *darshan* once came to the private *beit midrash* of the wealthy Rabbi Tzvi Navinski, *zt”l*, and those present asked him to address the congregants. Rabbi Tzvi did not want him to speak, maintaining that he himself learns in the *beit midrash* and the *drasha* will disturb his learning. The *darshan* on the other hand, claimed that the money he receives for his lectures is his way of supporting his family. While the two were discussing the matter between them, Maran Rabbi Yisrael Salanter, *zt”l*, founder of the *mussar* movement, entered the *beit midrash*. He asked the rich person an interesting question: “Why did Hillel form his statement in the negative and say, ‘That which you hate do not do to your friend’? Why did he not say, ‘What is good for you, do to your friend?’”

Rabbi Yisrael answered his own question: “The answer is that it is not correct to say that what is good for you, do to your friend because not everything that is good for you is also good for your friend.” And here Rabbi Yisrael turned to the wealthy person: “For you, of course it is better to sit and learn Torah in peace and quiet tranquility. But for the *darshan* it would not be good to sit here and learn right now, rather he prefers

to address the congregants, as a way of supporting his family. Now you must take into account: Would you be happy if a certain action, which is actually something positive, would result in harm for yourself? This was Hillel’s intention in saying, ‘What you hate do not do to your friend.’ He was implying — do not do bad to your friend, despite the fact that for you yourself, this act may be something good. In light of this, please allow the *darshan* to give his address.”

Harav Ganot adds: “On Chol Hamoed Pesach a few years ago, I merited visiting my master and teacher, Rabbeinu Hagaon Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky, *zt”l*. I asked him a number of questions on matters concerning Pesach, and I merited this holy *tzaddik*’s blessings. Seeing the joy of the *chag* that was etched on Rabbeinu’s face, and his state of great delight as was always his way during the festivals, I plucked up the courage to tell him about the dissension which plagues sectors of religious Jewry. I told him about the humiliation of *talmidei chachamim*, the violation to their honor, and how it is impossible to fight and argue all the time, especially since all this degradation is being carried out by the religious, and all the aggressors are those who generally fulfill the Torah with love and awe. I asked Maran Hagaon Rabbi Chaim for advice that would enable us to eradicate this lack of respect and appreciation that exists between the different sectors.”

Maran answered with simple and easy advice: to invest ourselves entirely in Torah study and not concern ourselves with any topics that are not connected to learning. “After all, Torah study is equal to all of the other mitzvot and Torah is the remedy for everything,” Maran stressed.



“Contemplate and see that Hashem is good”

Exciting update: With *siyata diShmaya*, the *shiurim* of Moreinu v’Rabbeinu, the Admor Rabbi David Chananya Pinto *shlit”a*, are now available in Hebrew, English, French and Spanish

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