

## The Path to Follow

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MASKIL LÉDAVID

Weekly talk on the Parshah given by **Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlitá**

## The Link Between Pesach and the Metzora

"This shall be the law of the metzora on the day of his purification: He shall be brought to the Kohen" (Vayikra, 14:2)

A person is afflicted with tzaraat for speaking lashon hara (Arachin, 15b). This punishment is measure for measure. Just as a person who speaks disparagingly about his fellow causes him to be excommunicated from society, likewise the slanderer is punished with tzaraat, which obligates him to dwell in isolation outside the Camp far from his relatives and friends. In this way he makes reparation for tarnishing the name of his fellow and isolating him from his environment (ibid. 16:2).

The Torah relates that when a person notices the affliction of tzaraat beginning to spread on his body, he goes to the Kohen in order to decide whether the affliction renders him impure or not. The words of the pasuk arouse a question. Why does it state:

"ואת תהיה תורת המצורע" – This shall be the torah (teaching) of the metzora" and not "אלו הם חוקי המצורע" – These are the laws of the metzora?" What is implied by the word "תורת המצורע" – the torah of the metzora?" Since the Torah is exact in its words, and every term used has specific intentions which teach us a lesson, we must examine why the Torah chose to write specifically "ואת תהיה תורת המצורע" – This shall be the torah of the metzora."

In order to resolve these questions, we must recall that parashat Metzora is read close to the days of Pesach. Pesach is called by this name because Hashem skipped over the houses of the Jews during the Plague of the Firstborn, killing only the Egyptians. When Hashem saw a house with its mezuzot smeared with the blood of the korban Pesach, He skipped over it and left its inhabitants alive (Yalkut Shimoni, Shemot 100). Therefore, Chazal say (Pri Aitz Chaim, Mikra Kodesh 4) that Pesach is called by this name because the word Pesach is composed of the words פה (mouth) and סח (speaks). This indicates that the main objective of Pesach is to speak about the miracles of the Exodus from Egypt that Hashem performed for us. He redeemed us from our enemies with His powerful hand and outstretched arm. Besides

for the obligation to relate the many miracles upon the Exodus from Egypt, the essence of the day is (Shemot, 13:8) "And you shall tell your son." We are also obligated to discuss with our children the miracles that Hashem performed in His great mercy for us by taking us out from darkness to light, redeeming us from the forty-nine levels of tumah (Zohar Hachadash, Parashat Yitro), and elevating us to the forty-nine levels of purity (Zohar III, 97a).

Although on Pesach one is obligated to speak about the miracles of the Exodus of Egypt, he should skip over any forbidden speech, which contain derogatory words and harms people. This is the reason that parashat Metzora is read on the days close to Pesach. It teaches us that the mouth must always be occupied with speaking words of Torah. When a person engages in idle chatter, he will ultimately speak disparagingly about his fellow. Consequently, he is afflicted with tzaraat.

Each person should carefully consider which words are worthwhile to state and which ones should be skipped. He should prefer silence, which is termed "gold." Clearly, when a person fulfills the words of David Hamelech in Tehillim (119:97), "O how I love Your Torah! All day long it is my conversation," it will prevent him from engaging in idle chatter, which results in lashon hara.

According to this, we can resolve our original questions. The Torah chose to write "ואת תהיה תורת המצורע" – This shall be the torah of the metzora" because it presents an admonishment for people. The word "Torah" is specifically used to imply that when a person's mouth is not occupied in Torah, he consequently engages in idle chatter, which leads to lashon hara. If he would be involved in Torah, he would not come to derogatory speech or gossip.

This is the lesson that is hinted at in this pasuk. One must immerse himself all his days in the study of Torah in order that he should not get a chance to speak lashon hara. While engaging in Torah and discussing its issues, one never comes to gossiping and slandering, and is spared from its painful retributions.

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## Walking in their Ways

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

### A Blessing in Disguise

A woman once came to ask me for a blessing in the merit of my holy fathers, zy" a. She related that she was in good health, Baruch Hashem, and had no specific problem. She was asking for a general berachah for success. I blessed her, and she went on her way.

Not a few moments passed, when the wails of sirens sounded near my home. Out of curiosity, I stepped outside to see what was happening. I saw that the woman who had left my home just seconds earlier had been hit by a passing car, and an ambulance had been called to bring her to the hospital.

Immediately, I ran down to see how she was faring. When she saw me, she said, "Honored Rav, there was nothing wrong with me before I came to your house for a blessing. All I did was ask for a berachah, and here I am, lying in an ambulance. Did you give me a blessing or a curse?!"

I understood her completely. I, too, was confounded. Could it be that this woman was hurt on account of asking for a blessing? Maybe, had she not come, nothing would have happened. To all appearances, it seemed that she had been cursed instead of blessed.

There are certainly cases in which blessing is nothing but a veneer for curse. Wealth, at times, is the precursor of suffering, as the pasuk in Kohelet (5:12) states that riches hoarded by their owner are to his detriment. On the other hand, there are things which seem to be curse, but are later revealed as blessing.

A few days after this incident, the woman's family came to pay me a visit. I was filled with dread, afraid that they had come to avenge her suffering. Or perhaps they wanted me to explain exactly how my blessing had caused such pain. In any event, their knock at my door was met with hesitation. With no option, I let them in.

To my delight, I found them all smiling.

I understood that they did not have bad feelings toward me.

"We came to thank Hashem and the Rav," they stated.

"How is your mother doing?" I asked eagerly. "And what are you thanking me for?"

"Our mother is fine," they began. "We would like to thank you for being an agent of blessing. At the time of the car accident, our mother suffered from nothing more than mild shock. But since she began complaining of strong headaches, the hospital staff took x-rays and various tests, which revealed the beginning of a tumor. Baruch Hashem, it was discovered in its early stages."

Now I fully understood the extent of my blessing to this woman. What had seemed like a curse was a blessing in disguise. If not for the accident, the woman would not have found out about the growth at such an early stage. Her life would have been in serious danger.

## The Haftarah



The haftarah that is read: **"Then the offering of Yehudah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to Hashem."** (Malachi 3)

The connection to the parashah: The haftarah mentions that Hashem will send us Eliyahu Hanavi, of blessed memory, to herald the future redemption. This is similar to what happened on Shabbat Hagadol, when Hashem sent Moshe Rabbeinu, a" h, to herald the redemption from Egypt.



## Guard Your Tongue

The Power of Speech

### Judging Favorably Adds Life

There are other benefits in guarding the tongue:

1. One is saved from all sorts of punishment because of this sin.
2. He is termed "Ish" – man, as it says (Tehillim 34:13), "Who is the man who desires life," etc. Otherwise, he is considered to be a living creature that does not possess the power of speech as man.
3. Just as he overcomes his evil intentions to slander and searches to find merit, so too the angels above give him the benefit of the doubt.

## Reasons for Jewish Customs



There are those that have the custom to eat dairy foods on erev Pesach.

The reason for this is that dairy foods are heavy and make one drowsy. Consequently, he will have to sleep during the day, and then he will be up at night to speak about the redemption from Egypt.

Another reason is to commemorate the meal that the angels were served by Avraham Avinu, which was on erev Pesach [and on this date he passed away], whereby it is written "He took cream and milk."

יזהר מנזק



## Words of Wisdom

### Midrashim of Chazal on Parshat Hashavua

#### **The Purification Process**

*“And for the person being purified there shall be taken two live, pure birds, cedar wood, crimson thread, and hyssop”* (Vayikra 14:4)

Two birds – since they chatter loudly, they are sacrificed as atonement for lashon hara.

And wood of a cedar tree – which is a tall tree. Ultimately, because of his arrogance this came upon him, as it says (Divrei Hayamim II 26), “a leprous growth appeared on his forehead.”

And if he humbled himself like a hyssop – he becomes purified. Therefore, he slaughters one bird and sends the other, to signify that if he shall revert [to behaving arrogantly] the tzaraat would come back.

“He shall be brought to the Kohen.” He does not have who to bring him, since all are distanced from him. (Pesikta Zutrata)

#### **Fulfilling the Promise**

*“And I will place a tzaraat affliction upon a house in the land of your possession”* (Vayikra 14:34)

Rabbi Chiya asked: Is this a good tiding that tzaraat will come upon them?

Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai explains: Since the Cananites heard that Bnei Yisrael are about to conquer them, they went to hide their treasures in their houses and fields.

Hashem said: I promised their forefathers that I will bring their children to a land full of bounty, as it says (Devarim 6) “Houses filled with every good thing.” What did Hashem do? Produced lesions on the person’s house, and when he demolished it, he found the treasures. (Midrash Rabbah)

#### **Early Warning**

*“When a man has a discharge from his flesh, this discharge can render him unclean”* (Vayikra 15:2)

Rabbi Yishmael the son of Rabbi Nachman taught in the name of Rav Avdimi from Chaifa:

This can be compared to a learned Kohen who gave a Kohen who was an ignoramus a loaf of terumah. He said to him, Note that I am pure, and my house is pure, and the loaf that I gave you is pure – if you return it to me in the same way that I gave it to you, fine and well. But if not, I will throw it down before you.

This is what Hashem said to man: Note that I am pure, and my dwelling is pure, and my servants are pure, and the neshamah (soul) that I gave you is pure – if you return it to me the way I gave it to you, fine and well. If not, I will pound it before you.

This is true in one’s old age. However, during his days of youth, if he sinned, he will be afflicted with zivot and with tzaraat.

Therefore, Moshe warns Bnei Yisrael and tells them, “When a man has a discharge from his flesh.” (Midrash Rabbah)

## Treasures

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



#### **Shabbat Hagadol – A Time for Introspection**

Shabbat Hagadol is a preparation for Pesach, and serves as a spiritual springboard for the entire year. This is alluded to in the name of the festival, Pesach, which means springing forward and progressing. Thus, the Shabbat that precedes the Festival begins the rise to new spiritual heights. The Ben Ish Chai says that Shabbat was given to Bnei Yisrael in order to study the Torah. One cannot compare the study of Torah on Shabbat, when one is not occupied with material concerns, to the study of Torah during the week when a person is busy and distracted by his occupation. When Shabbat enters, peace reigns. Therefore, the study of Torah on Shabbat is most lofty and elevated. It casts a glow on a person’s face the entire week.

If this occurs on a regular Shabbat, how much more so this is true of Shabbat Hagadol, which possesses exalted spiritual qualities. It has the power to sanctify and elevate man, bringing him close to his Father in Heaven all year.

Moreover, Shabbat is derived from the word shevet achim gam yachad (dwelling together in brotherhood), which alludes to achdut (unity). This is why it is customary to greet one another on Shabbat with the words, Shabbat Shalom. Likewise the word Shabbat is from the root word yeshiva (lit. sitting), which indicates that a person should “sit” with himself and introspect to see what he has to correct and improve. Since on Shabbat a person abstains from doing business and is not burdened, he should devote this day to studying Torah (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 290:2) and soul-searching.

Accordingly, Shabbat Hagadol which precedes Pesach is a time for soul-searching and awakening before the Festival, whose essence is “springing forward” and advancing in avodat Hashem. A person is obligated on this Shabbat to introspect and check whether he progressed since last Pesach, or G-d forbid, drifted farther away, since there is no such thing as being static and remaining in the same place. One either rises to greater heights or falls to the depths below. And G-d forbid for a man to progress only in material achievements and regress in his spirituality.

When a person is aroused to improve his avodat Hashem and he sanctifies himself on Shabbat Hagadol, the sanctity that he imbues himself with on Shabbat Hagadol accompanies him throughout all the Shabbatot of the year, and his reward is immeasurable.



## Relevant Topics

### Summary of the halachot on the kashering of utensils

1. Vessels that one uses with chametz, it is prohibited to use them on Pesach without kashering them. From the time that it is prohibited to eat chametz on erev Pesach, it is prohibited to use them without kashering them first. In the same way that the vessel was used with chametz, so is it's kashering process, as will be explained below.

2. Every utensil is kashered for Pesach according to how it is used. For instance, if a utensil is used mainly for boiling, it is kashered through immersion in boiling water. And if it is mainly used in dry heat, as in the electric oven pans, it is kashered through libun – heating by fire until red-hot. Note that a utensil that was mainly used permissibly, but only once used for chametz, one does not go according to the majority of use, and the utensil must be kashered. Thus, a hot water urn on which one places borekas (knishes) to warm up, one may not use the urn for Pesach without kashering it properly. Likewise, a knife used for cutting bread, if it was once used for cutting a hot cake, or something similar, one must kasher the knife. Also a tea kettle used for tea brew only, if bread came in contact with it while the kettle was hot, it must be kashered.

3. Skewers that one uses for roasting meat on the fire, and sometimes comes in contact with chametz, since the usual way of using it is without liquid, they require libun – heating by fire until red-hot, until sparks of the fire bounce off. Immersion in boiling water does not kasher them.

4. Pans that one uses to bake challot require libun – heating by fire until red hot until sparks of fire bounce off them. Therefore, the electric oven pans must undergo libun – heating by fire until red-hot, or to exchange them on Pesach with brand new pans.

5. Electric Ovens must first be cleaned as well as possible. It must thereafter be left unused for 24 hours prior to kashering. Then, one should light the oven on the highest heat possible and leave it on for an hour. This is sufficient.

6. Kashering a microwave: There are two different types of microwaves currently avail-

able. There are those that have heating elements (browning), and their din (law) is like the din of kashering a regular oven: after letting it sit unused for 24 hours, and having washed it thoroughly, one puts on the browning element for an hour. In this way the microwave oven is kosher for Pesach. There are also microwaves that do not have heating elements, but they work by radiation. These microwave ovens, if they are used for heating foods, and not for cooking, one can kasher them for Pesach by first cleaning them well, then placing a cup containing some water mixed with a little detergent in the microwave and boiling it for a few minutes until the walls of the microwave absorb the steam. There are other poskim (Rabbis rendering halachic decisions) who require using such a microwave on Pesach by placing a cardboard lining or a sealed plastic box inside. If one uses the microwave also for cooking, or microwaves used in restaurants, which are used more frequently, and one figures that the heat of the walls reach a boiling point of yad soledet bo, it is worthwhile to be more stringent and not use such a microwave for Pesach.

7. Dishwashers that operate by rinsing dishes with hot water and detergent, it is permissible to use the dishwashers on Pesach by cleaning them very well. It is also proper to run the machine (without any dishes inside) on a hot wash with detergent that spoils the taste.

8. Cake pans in which chametz pastries are baked are not kashered through immersion in boiling water, and since it is impossible to do libun because it will crack from the heat, one should not kasher it for Pesach.

9. Pots which are used for cooking on a stove top require kashering by immersion in boiling water. First one must wash it well, removing all particles of dirt and rust. The pot cover and handles also must be kashered by immersion in boiling water.

10. Handles of utensils that are attached by screws, one must first remove all dirt before kashering and wash them well with soap. This is also the case regarding the handle of a knife that is attached with rivets.

It is best to buy a special knife for Pesach.

11. Grates, on which pots are placed for cooking, one must clean them and kasher them through immersion in boiling water. They may also be kashered by pouring hot water over them from a kli rishon (lit. "first vessel" – the pot that the water was boiled in).

12. Electric hot plates can be kashered by pouring hot water over it from a kli rishon ("first vessel"), after cleaning it thoroughly.

13. Skillets which are used for frying with oil, can be kashered through immersion in hot water, and do not require libun. But frying pans used for frying without oil cannot be kashered through immersion in boiling water. Since it is not possible to do libun, they should not be used for Pesach.

14. Bowls and plates and teaspoons made of metal, which are generally used as a kli sheini ("second vessel"), may be kashered in a kli sheini. If they were kashered through immersion in boiling water, or by pouring boiling water over them through a kli rishon ("first vessel"), all the more so they will be kashered in this way.

15. Earthenware cannot be kashered if they were used for hot food during the year. They should be stored in a special place so that one should not mistakenly use them.

16. Porcelain dishes come under the same category as earthenware, and if they were used for hot food, they cannot be kashered. All the more so, this is true of earthenware dishes coated similar to porcelain.

17. Sinks in which pots and dishes are washed, even if they are made of earthenware, one should pour boiling water over it, and some are stringent to line the sinks with aluminum foil as well.

18. Glassware does not absorb and does not emit taste at all, and does not require a hechsher for Pesach, even if used for chametz for extended periods. The tradition of Ashkenazim is to be as stringent with glassware as with earthenware.

## Men of Faith

### Excerpts from the book *Men of Faith on the lives and deeds of the House of Pinto*

#### *Saved by His Picture*

Mrs. Amar, who lives in Guadeloupe, told Moreinu v'Rabbeinu that she always kept a leaflet of the tefillat haderech with a picture of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto printed on it, next to her in her car. Once, when she was on the road, the leaflet, which contained a kamaya, suddenly fell down, even though it was stuck firmly to the dashboard. Just as she bent her head down to pick up the kamaya, a miracle happened in front of her eyes.

It seems that by bending down while driving, her car had swerved off the road. Just at that moment, a truck loomed in front of her, driven by a drunk driver, who was speeding crazily. When she raised her head and realized that she had swerved off the road, she immediately turned the steering wheel around to straighten the car.

Suddenly, she heard a loud noise of a collision behind her. She pulled over to the side of the road and observed the scene. She realized that by swerving off the road she had avoided the oncoming truck, which was racing out of control toward her. Instead, the truck had collided head-on with the car behind her, killing or injuring all its passengers. By swerving out of its way, her life had been spared.

Chazal teach, "Your eyes shall see your teacher." Mrs. Amar did not know what the tefillat haderech was and of its supernatural benefits, but she believed with complete faith in the tzaddik. Therefore, his picture protected her, causing her to swerve off the road and avoid the oncoming truck, saving her life.