



Afflicting a spiritual weakening

**"It was on the eighth day, Moshe summoned Ahron and his sons, and the elders of Israel"** (Vayikra 9:1)

The Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni 9) tells us: "It was the eighth day of the inauguration, and that day merited ten crowns and on that day the shechina rested on the work of Ahron's hands, for during all the seven days of inauguration, Moshe was serving in white clothes, as the Kohen Gadol, and from the eighth day and onward, Ahron came and served in the clothes of the Kohen Gadol, and there was joy before Him in the heavens like on the day that heaven and earth were created."

There is a difficulty here that needs clarification. If there was such joy on that day, why does the verse use the expression "vayehi" (it was) which is always used when implying a state of sorrow (Megillah 10:1)? The commentaries explain that Moshe Rabbeinu experienced great sorrow on that day because Hashem commanded him to give over the priesthood to his brother Ahron.

It says in the Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni 9): "Rabbi Chalbo said, all the seven days of inauguration Moshe was serving as the Kohen Gadol since he thought that it was his, and on the seventh day Hashem said to him, it is not yours but Ahron's." The use of the term 'vayehi' was because of Moshe's distress. However, we now need to comprehend how it is possible to say about Moshe Rabbeinu that chalilah he was jealous of Ahron's role and was distressed because of this?! Did Moshe Rabbeinu ever request greatness for himself, or any kind of position? Indeed not; if so why was he upset about the priesthood that was given over to Ahron?

I would like to suggest the following idea which can reconcile this difficulty. Moshe Rabbeinu certainly did not desire to seize leadership or greatness for himself. Hashem testified about him (Bamidbar 12:3): "And the man Moshe was exceedingly humble." On the contrary, Chazal tell us (Rabbeinu Yonah on the Torah): "Moshe said to Ahron in front of the elders – know my brother that Hashem commanded me to appoint you as Kohen Gadol. Ahron replied, since you worked so hard on the Mishkan, it follows that you should be the Kohen Gadol and not I. Moshe said to him, this is what Hashem Yitbarach has commanded and know that I am as happy and delighted as if it was I who was appointed for this, just as you rejoiced in my greatness when Hashem sent me to go to Pharaoh, as it says (Shemot 4:14), "when he sees you he will rejoice in his heart", so too I rejoice at your elevation."

This Midrash proves that Moshe loved Ahron with a

boundless love and exulted in his joy at meriting the priesthood. Nevertheless, he felt some degree of sorrow because he knew that the service of the Mishkan elevates the spiritual level of a person and serves to increase a person's yirat shamayim. When a person witnesses the Kohanim performing their service, the Leviim playing their instruments and singing on their platform, and Yisrael praying that the offerings should be accepted, these rituals inject feelings of holiness and purity into a person's heart which increases his yirat shamayim. Indeed, during the seven days of inauguration, Moshe Rabbeinu felt an elevation in his spiritual development, due to the rituals that he was occupied with in the Mishkan. And now that he was prevented from doing this service, in accordance with Hashem's command to cease and give it over to Ahron his brother, Moshe understood that from this moment his spiritual growth will be stunted and this was the cause of his sorrow and concern.

As we know, the foremost building of the Mishkan is inside each individual's heart. The Alsheich Hakadosh expounds on the verse (Shemot 25:8): "They shall make a Sanctuary for Me so that I may dwell among them", explaining that it doesn't say "in it" but "in them", which refers to inside the heart of every single Jew. Just like the shechina rests in the Mikdash, so too if a person behaves as an upright Jew and cleaves to the shechina, he has the power to bring the shechina to rest inside him, for the body is compared to the Mishkan. A person's obligation is to cultivate and beautify his spiritual Mishkan and prepare it with mitzvot and good deeds so that it should be a fitting and honorable place for the shechina to dwell. Had Moshe Rabbeinu merited performing the service in the Mishkan, this would have no doubt elevated him and served to nourish his personal inner Mishkan.

This is why he was concerned; maybe now, chalila, his spiritual growth will be stilted? His sole desire was to climb higher and cleave to the holy shechina, and now this was taken away from him. His sorrow was due to the spiritual loss and not chalilah because he was jealous of Ahron's position.

If a person wishes to nurture his spiritual Mishkan and rise up to lofty levels in Torah and yirat shamayim, he must be extremely careful to distance himself from forbidden foods and meticulously examine his food before it enters his mouth. This is the reason why the parsha discussing forbidden foods is contiguous to the parsha discussing the inauguration of the Mishkan, to teach us that the foundation of building the Mishkan in a person's heart is dependent on his caution in not partaking of forbidden foods.

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Hilula

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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 Toast to Sanctity

I recall that once when I was about twenty-four years old, I traveled with my esteemed father, zya"a, to Morocco, where he met with his long-time friend Mr. Shalom Hacohen, z"l.

Mr. Shalom accorded great honor to father and for the special occasion he placed before him all sorts of delicacies, including an expensive bottle of arak which he had saved in the cupboard. He declared, "I have not used this bottle for twenty years and only for someone of your prominence I have taken it out so I can honor you with it."

During the course of their conversation, one of the men suggested they drink a l'chaim from the liquor on the table. Father had a dislike for strong alcohol and asked that they wait for me to come home and join them in his stead. As I stepped into the house, I found father's friends watching me expectantly.

"Why didn't you have a shot beforehand?" I asked in puzzlement.

"Your father asked that we wait for you to join us," they replied.

I was taken aback by this rejoinder. Father raised us with rock-solid distaste for hard drinks. Why did he want me to join in the drinking this time? But since I was also raised to revere my parents, I kept my reservations to myself and turned to the honor of pouring the drinks.

When I lifted the bottle, my face fell. The liquor was infested with tiny ants. All of the men seated were elderly and

had blurred vision. They surely would never have noticed the tiny bugs at the bottom of the bottle. Hashem miraculously saved them from ingesting defiled creatures. Baruch Hashem, father had the foresight to prevent them from this terrible pitfall.

Father was overjoyed at being saved from transgressing a prohibition, and began to dance from joy.

I learned a great moral from this incident. Great care must be taken, and one must meticulously check any food before consuming it. If one is cautious in the matter, certainly Hashem helps protect him from transgressing, because "Hashem will not withhold good from those who go perfectly in His ways." He will also earn reward, since through his caution, Hashem will help him succeed in his personal building of the Mishkan in his heart, where Hashem resides.

People come to me to ask for blessings and when I ask them if they are particular not to partake of forbidden foods, this is their illogical answer: "At home we are particular but not outside the house". And I wonder – how can a person so unreservedly lie to his soul? With his insides full of abominations, he comes to ask for a blessing. Does he honestly imagine that Hashem's blessing will find where to rest on him? What a contradiction! Indeed these people take my words of rebuke seriously and understand their mistake and immediately repent.



## Words of our Sages

### Why Did the Doctor Kill the Patient?

"A fire came forth from before Hashem and consumed them, and they died before Hashem" (Vayikra 10:2)

As we know, it had already been decreed from Heaven that Nadav and Avihu would die, for it is written "Against the great men of the Children of Israel, He did not stretch out His hand – they gazed at G-d, yet they ate and drank." (Shemot 24:11). The Ohr Hachaim zya"a, writes that the reason why Hashem did not stretch out His hand was because He did not want to detract from the joy. This gives rise to the following question: Why at Matan Torah did Hashem not want to punish them in order not to spoil the joy, whereas at the time of erecting the Mishkan, on the eighth day of the inauguration which was considered as significant for Hashem as the day that Heaven and earth were created, He did punish them and was not reluctant to detract from the joy?

The book "Sha'arei Armon" brings a wonderful parable to explain this:

It can be compared to a king who wished to build an ideal town where all the citizens would be satisfied. He summoned an accomplished architect and instructed him to design and construct his dream. The architect followed the king's instructions and built a beautiful town with spacious houses, beautiful fountains and scenic gardens and orchards.

Once the town was populated the king announced that he was planning a visit to verify that indeed all its residents are content. They arranged a welcoming reception for him, including a feast fit for his royal highness. In the middle of the banquet the king stood up and inquired whether the residents were satisfied. One person stood up and said, "My honorable king, we do not have a doctor in this town!"

The king immediately promised to send them a professional doctor from the capital. On the day that the doctor arrived, all the residents gathered outside to greet him. The king himself also participated in the welcoming ceremony. The elaborate reception surprised the doctor and gave rise to the suspicion that these townsfolk do not have the correct perception of a doctor's capacity. They assume that a doctor is all-powerful, able to make the blind see and even resurrect the dead.

In the middle of the reception the king asked, "Are all the inhabitants in attendance?" They checked and found that one of the citizens was missing due to ill health. The king turned to the doctor, "Now you have a chance to prove yourself. Go and take care of the sick person and heal him."

The doctor did as the king requested, examined the patient, prescribed several medications and then returned. Not an hour had passed and the bad news spread that the patient had died. The townspeople felt as if they had been slapped in the face. "Is this the great doctor for whom we so eagerly awaited?"

The king turned to the doctor in anger: "According to what I heard, this patient was not dangerously ill. This being the case, can you explain why he died?"

"I killed him!" was the doctors astonishing reply. The King was duly shocked but the doctor immediately explained himself: "The truth is, that according to nature I couldn't heal this patient, and any of my efforts to heal him would only have harmed the inhabitants. Since all of them trust me explicitly and imagine that I am capable of bringing relief for any ailment, they would have neglected to take care of their health. My intention was that the inhabitants should realize that my competence is limited and I cannot always save. The king accepted his explanation and admitted that his decision was well thought out.

The moral is clear: Before the Mishkan was constructed, the Bnei Yisrael were careful not to sin for there was nothing that could atone for them. Each person would die for his sin. But once the Mishkan was erected, there now existed a danger that the Bnei Yisrael would assume that they are free to act as they please and the offerings will atone for their misdeeds. Therefore it was necessary to remove this false impression from their hearts.

What did Hashem do? He took the lives of Nadav and Avihu at the time of the inauguration of the Mishkan, even though their sin was slight and all their merits didn't help them, not even the merit of their being the sons of Ahron, nor the merit of Moshe Rabbeinu who was their uncle. This caused the people to be wary and it returned their fear of sin. They exclaimed "If the cedars were consumed by fire what can be said for the hyssop."

## The Haftarah



"The word of Hashem came to me, saying, "Son of Man..." (Yechezkel 36)

The connection to the parsha: the haftarah mentions that in the future Hashem will purify His children with the waters of the ashes of the Red Cow. The maftir of Parshat Parah talks about the Red Cow and how the contaminated ones were purified with the waters of the ashes of the Cow. This expresses our yearning and our preparation for the future redemption which we hope to merit speedily in our days.



## Guard Your Tongue

### Block Your Ears

One who is sitting with a group of people who start to talk forbidden speech, if he thinks that his words of rebuke will not be heeded, it is a great mitzva if he is able to leave the room or put his fingers in his ears.

If he is unable to leave, and this advice of putting his fingers in his ears is very hard for him because they will poke fun of him, he should make sure to urge himself in this time of distress and fight a war against his yetzer hara, so that he shouldn't stumble with the Torah transgression of listening to and accepting lashon hara.



## Pearls of the Parshah

### No Eighth Day

*"It was on the eighth day, Moshe summoned Ahron and his sons, and the elders of Israel" (Vayikra 9:1)*

Rashi says: The eighth day of the inauguration was Rosh Chodesh Nissan; the Mishkan was erected on that day.

Chazal tell us that whenever the Torah uses the word "vayehi", it is always an expression of sorrow. If so, what was the sorrow on the day of erecting the Mishkan?

The 'Imrei Chaim' of Vishnitz offers an interesting explanation. Am Yisrael are a holy people, and they only have seven days. A person soils himself day after day with the dirt of contamination and sins, and the layers of dirt add up and increase from day to day, so that the dirt of Sunday cannot be compared to the dirt of Friday. But what happens? The seventh day arrives, we welcome the Shabbat, and a person washes himself and purifies himself from any spiritual grime. "" He starts a new page in life, therefore the next day is considered not as the eighth day but as the first day!

But if he doesn't cleanse and purify himself, Shabbat comes and goes and passes over him leaving no impression, the previous layers of contamination and impurity remain as they were and continue increasing until they reach dangerous proportions. In this case, the first day is considered as the eighth day, a continuation of the previous week... and concerning this state it is certainly appropriate to use the expression of sorrow- "vayehi".

### Stillness, not Silence

*"And Ahron was silent" (Vayikra 10:3)*

Why does the Torah specifically use the expression ויידם"" to imply that Ahron was silent?

The Gaon of Ostrovitzo zt"l explains:

There are four levels in the creation: 'Medaber' (the highest level referring to man who is the only living creature endowed with the power of speech), 'chai' (living creatures), 'tzome'ach' (plants), and 'domem' (inanimate objects).

If man, the speaker, is hurt, he will naturally hurt in return- usually with his power of speech, and one must be cautious.

If a living creature is hurt, he cannot speak, but he can either attack the one who harmed him, or escape from the danger.

An plant can neither talk nor escape, but the damage can be seen on him. If you cut down a tree, its form changes and it is clearly noticeable that it has been damaged.

It is only the inanimate object, that whatever you do to him, you will not observe any transformation.

This is the meaning of "ויהיה אהרן כדומם" (and Ahron was silent). One could not detect anything! He was like a 'domem'! This is an extremely high level, to accept the decree with joy and fully believe that whatever Hashem does is for the good.

### One Who Desists Will Lose

*"Moshe said to Ahron: Come near to the Altar and perform the service of your sin-offering and your burnt-offering" (Vayikra 9:7)*

Rashi: "Ahron was bashful and feared to come. Moshe said to him: Why are you bashful? For this you were chosen."

Rabbi Chaim Falag'i zt"l offers a wonderful explanation on what transpired:

In Shemot (4:14) we are told that when Hashem told Moshe to redeem Am Yisrael, he reasoned before Him, "Who am I that I should go?" Hashem replied, "For I shall be with you."

Moshe continued to reason, "Please, my Lord, I am not a man of words, not since yesterday, nor since the day before yesterday...for I am heavy of mouth and heavy of speech." Hashem answers him, "Who makes a mouth for man...Is it not I, Hashem? So now, go! I shall be with your mouth and teach you what you should say." Still Moshe does not agree. "Please, my Lord, send through whomever You will send!" And then, "The wrath of Hashem burned against Moshe and He said, "Is there not Ahron your brother, the Levite? I know that he will surely speak; moreover, behold, he is going out to meet you." Rashi says on these words, "The wrath of Hashem burned- every wrath in the Torah leaves an impression, also here it left an impression. "Is there not Ahron your brother, the Levite?" Ahron was supposed to be a Levi, not a Kohen, and the priesthood was supposed to come from you (Moshe Rabbeinu), and from now it will not be like this, but he will be the Kohen and you the Levi."

In this parsha Moshe is telling Ahron to accept the role of priesthood and come forward to sacrifice the offerings, but Ahron refuses. Moshe replies, "Why are you reticent?" If you refuse one more time – you too will lose the Kehuna since "for this you were chosen." You merited the priesthood because I refused Hashem's request, and if now you refuse – you too will lose it...

## Treasures

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



### Who is Considered Close to Hashem?

I would like to suggest the following explanation on the verse – בקרבי אקדש, "I will be sanctified through those who are nearest Me." The word 'karov' hints to the innards of a person. When a person sanctifies his innards and doesn't satiate himself with excessive eating and drinking and other pleasures of this world, but instead suffices with what his body requires, this is the most desired form of serving Hashem. One should not serve Hashem with an overindulged body, but from a place of deficiency and privation. This kind of behavior makes Hashem proud of the person and He says, you are considered my relation (karov) and I am sanctified and honored by your service. This is the meaning of "I will be sanctified through those who are nearest to Me".

My venerable father zt"l, spent his entire life absorbed in learning Torah. He sacrificed everything and lived in total poverty. He only partook of this world as much as his body required. He did not leave anything behind when he passed away – neither money nor possessions.

Time passed and my mother found herself struggling. She had absolutely no resources and was unable to pay the bills. In her distress she went to the cemetery and poured out her heart at her husband's zya"n grave. She cried to him, "You are resting in peace in Gan Eden and delighting in Torah together with the other tzadikim, whereas I am suffering down here to the extent that they want to cut off my electricity and water supplies..."

The next day a man from Dimona appeared at the house and asked to speak to my mother. "How can I help you?" He inquired. "I receive monthly pension payments and I wish to cover your debts. You should know that yesterday I dreamt that your esteemed husband the tzaddik came to me and told me that you are in debt and he requested that I help you..."

Ima replied: "You yourself are just about managing to provide for your own household and you wish to pay my debts too?! But he begged Ima to tell him how much she required in order to settle all her outstanding bills. Ima finally relented and he gave her the entire sum.

The next day he once again appeared and asked Ima, "Do you have any more debts?" Ima innocently answered, "If you wish, you can pay my bills for the coming month..." , but then she caught herself and asked, "What brought you back here?"

He answered that in the merit of yesterday's charity he merited a great salvation. This was the story that he told Ima: For the last three years he had been caught up in an argument with his son-in-law about a sum of money from the wedding which had disappeared. Each side blamed the other. Last night, when he returned home from Ashdod after paying Ima's debts, his wife opened up an old dusty suitcase which was lying on top of the cupboard, and there she found the envelope with the entire amount inside it...

His joy knew no bounds and Baruch Hashem peace was restored between him and his son-in-law. Certain that it was all in the merit of the tzaddik, he returned to offer further assistance.

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT



*“This may you eat from everything that is in the water” (Vayikra 11:9)*

We find an interesting phenomenon in the parsha. Animals, beast and birds were all given names but concerning fish, the Torah speaks about them in general terms: “This may you eat from everything that is in the water: everything that has fins and scales.”

Why indeed did Hashem not give names to the fish? This question is asked by the ‘Ba’al Haturim’ who answers: “Fish were not given names for those that are hidden from people – do not have names.”

The reason could be that the name signifies the specific role of the person. The essence of every name is embedded with a special characteristic, and the name itself expresses this. For example, the ‘neshet’ (eagle) is called so for it is ‘nosher’ (sheds) its feathers to make place for new ones. The ‘tachmas’, is called so because of its bad middah of ‘chomes’ (stealing food). The ‘shalach’ is ‘sholeh’ (draws) fish from the water and the ‘kaat’s name signifies that it vomits its food. This teaches us that a person should not be alarmed when he vomits, for example a nauseous woman at the beginning of pregnancy; the ‘rechem’ – (the womb) has ‘rachmanut’ (mercy) on its children, and so forth.

According to this we can understand why fish were not given names. According to the ‘Ba’al haturim’ who reasons that since ‘they are hidden from man’, there is therefore no purpose in naming them, since anyway man will not learn ethical qualities and attributes from them.

## Men of Faith

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

### Still Living

Approximately twenty years ago, a man joined in the hilula of Rabbi Chaim Hagadol in Morocco, and tearfully told the assembled people his heart-breaking story:

Following medical tests, his doctor discovered that he was suffering from an advanced stage of cancer, rachmana litzlan. The doctors did not give him more than six months to live. They informed him, “There is nothing left to do, since there is no cure for your illness. Go enjoy yourself for the remaining six months of your life.”

The participants of the hilula told him encouragingly, “Here lies the great doctor, Rabbi Chaim Pinto. Pray to Hashem that in the merit of the tzaddik you should have a complete recovery.”

Bitterly, the sick man countered, “None of the best doctors could assist me; how, then, will being at this grave help me?”

“In that case, why did you come here?”

The man answered simply, “I heard that people were celebrating a hilula with a lavish feast. That is why I came.”

The assembled people insisted, “If you came to this holy place, it is a sign from Heaven that you

were granted a chance to be cured.” A few people proceeded to lay the sick man on the grave of the tzaddik, and they blessed him, saying, “We shall meet next year, with the help of G-d, and find you alive and well.”

Six months passed, and the man visited his doctor to monitor his condition. The doctor asked him in surprise, “How are you still alive and functioning? We must examine you.” He had extensive tests done, and found no trace of the disease.

This story was told directly by the man himself at the hilula of the tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Aharon Pinto, on the fifth of Elul, 2004 (5764). Hundreds of people, among them, notable leaders and Rabbis, heard the story. On that occasion, important Rabbanim were present, including Rabbi David Refael Banon, shlita, Rosh Av Beit Din of Montreal, Moreinu v’Rabbeinu, shlita, and others as well. Many cried tears of joy for the miracle that was performed for him. My esteemed father, HaGaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto shlita, was also a witness and conveyed his wonder at the miracle, “I was amazed to see him twenty years later, still alive.”

May the merit of the holy tzaddikim protect us.