



## The Severity of the Sin of Lust and its Rectification

**"G-d remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the animals that were with him in the Ark and G-d caused a spirit to pass over the earth and the waters subsided."** (Bereishit 8:1)

The Midrash tells us that the waters of the flood were boiling hot. "Rav said, with boiling water they devastated and with boiling water they were judged. It is written here "and the waters subsided" and it is written there (Esther 7:10) "and the king's anger abated" (Yalkut Shimoni Bereishit 7, remez 56). The generation of the flood blemished Hashem's Name through lust and lust is likened to fire, this is why they were punished with boiling water. This teaches us how extremely careful we must be, not to chalila blemish the Land through sins pertaining to holiness and immorality. Throughout the generations, our Sages have always been most particular with these matters.

The Gemara in Kiddushin (81a) brings an incident that took place with Rav Amram Chasida. Several female captives were redeemed and brought to his house in Naharda. Rav Amram put them in the attic and had the ladder, that led to the attic, removed, to preclude any possibility of seclusion with them. Even though the ladder was so heavy that even ten people could not move it, Rav Amram managed to pick it up. He succeeded in putting it back and started climbing up. When he reached halfway, he started to shout, "There is a fire in Rav Amram's house!" and all the talmidei chachamim came over to his house. They understood that he had shouted to prevent himself from stumbling and being secluded with these women captives. The talmidim told Rav Amram that he was embarrassing himself and them by revealing his disgrace publicly. He replied, "it is better that I am embarrassed in this world than in the Next World". The question is asked as to why he chose to shout 'fire'? It seems to be that fire hints to lust, and therefore he shouted 'fire'.

The following story is told about the Chafetz Chaim zt"l. In his old age, he found it hard to walk from his house to the yeshiva and needed to rest upon arrival, whereupon he was served a cup of tea. It once happened that a woman brought him the tea and the Chafetz Chaim started to shout. His talmidim came and asked him the reason for this anger. He replied, "why are you sending the tea with a woman? Do you wish to make me stumble?" They replied, "why does the Chafetz Chaim need to be concerned. The Rebbe is advanced in years and this woman is old, what place is there for suspicion?" The Chafetz Chaim zt"l replied, "For the Yetzer Hara, I am young and she is young!"

The challenges today are enormous, the world is saturated with materialism and the Yetzer Hara is all over. When I was young we lived in Essaouira (Mogador), which was a small village in Morocco. We knew

nothing apart from the Beit Knesset. I remember an incident that was the cause of great excitement. What was the novel attraction? A freezer arrived in town! For an entire day, there was a long line of people standing in line wishing to get a glimpse of this great marvel! Who doesn't have a fridge today? And we are filled with all kinds of materialism and with the latest technology. The arena of the Yetzer Hara is well developed, therefore one must take the utmost care not to enter his trap.

Around ten years ago there was a war in Eretz Yisrael and I picked up a newspaper to see how the population of this Holy Land was faring. I passed by a gas station and the television screen was in the middle of broadcasting the news. Suddenly my eyes were drawn to the image of the woman who was relaying the news. I immediately averted my eyes but a month later, when I had already returned to Lyon, I was in the middle of the Shemone Esrei prayer when suddenly the picture of this woman appeared in my mind. This is a lesson for us how much care we must take not to look at forbidden sights.

The way to repair the blemish in Hashem's Name is through learning Torah and strengthening oneself in following its commandments, since we are told, "There is nothing in Hashem's world besides the four amot of halacha" (Berachot 8a). It is important to realize that even though we are living in a generation that is pitiable for its inferior level, we are still endowed with the power to sustain the world. An hour of Torah study in our day and age, surrounded by all the enormous challenges, is equal to a hundred hours of Torah study in previous generations. We need to take this idea and use it to encourage ourselves to be connected to the Torah as much as possible.

I once went to visit my esteemed Rebbe, Harav Chaim Shmuel Lopian zt"l and during our conversation, the Rav sighed heavily. I asked the Rav why he is sighing and he answered that he suffers from terrible back pains. Later he sighed again and I once again asked for the reason. He explained that his legs and teeth also cause him great pain. Indeed, Harav Lopian suffered greatly from all kinds of ailments. I questioned how the Rav manages to learn Torah when he is in so much pain. He answered that when he meditates in the Torah and dives into the depths of halacha, all his pains disappear. This was due to his deep connection and total immersion in Torah.

One sees clearly that when a person is connected to the Torah he becomes disconnected from the pains of this world and remains connected only to Olam Haba, despite his body being in this world. Through studying and maintaining a strong connection to Torah and by separating oneself from the futilities of this world, one maintains both worlds.

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4 - Rabbi Eliyahu Sarim

5 - Rabbi Moshe Bardugo

6 - Rabbi Yehuda HaChassid

7 - Rabbi Meir Shapiro of Lublin

8 - Rabbi Nachum of Horodna

9 - Rabbi Asher Ben Yechiel

10 - Rabbi Rafael Aharon Ben Shimon,  
author of 'Nehar Mitzrayim'



## Walking in their Ways

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

### Dancing His Way to Mitzvah Observance

I used to be acquainted with a righteous convert who lived in France. Unfortunately, after the fires of enthusiasm toward his newly-acquired religion died down, he developed a chilled attitude toward mitzvot, until he eventually abandoned Torah observance.

One year, on Simchat Torah, I met this man in the Beit Hakeneset. He had come to partake of the festivities. I greeted him joyfully. I very much wanted to encourage him to return to the Jewish way of life, therefore, I placed a Sefer Torah in his hands. To my surprise, he did not rebuff me. He reverently took the scroll and began swaying with it in enthusiasm and holiness.

When I observed his great excitement, I told him, "Hashem loves your dancing with the Sefer Torah. But you must know that this is not the primary way of demonstrating your love to Hashem. Asserting your love for Hashem must be expressed by means of mitzvah observance." I explained to him the obligation and virtue of observing Shabbat, the hallmark of the Jew.

After the holidays, this man returned to his home in France and I did not have any occasion to meet him for a long time. I had no idea whether or not my words had any effect on him.

One day he came to visit me in Yerushalayim. After speaking together for a few minutes, attempting once more to convince him to keep Shabbat, I was met with a pleasant surprise. He told me that my words on that Simchat Torah had made their mark. He now keeps Shabbat in all its entirety.

External expressions of love toward Hashem are wonderful. But they cannot replace serving Hashem through Torah and mitzvah observance.

This story ended in a moving way, but there are many other cases where a person is aware of his mistakes but remains just as he is and does not try to correct his behavior.

It is the same with a yeshiva bochur; either he strives to reach higher levels in Torah and yirat shamayim, or he feels content with his status and then his animal instincts take over and cause damage to his ruchaniyut. Every bochur who comes to yeshiva must come with the desire and goal to grow spiritually and sanctify Hashem's Name.

## The Haftarah

"Sing out, O barren one" (Yeshaya 54)

The connection to the parsha: In his prophecy, Yeshaya mentions the flood where Hashem swore that He will never bring another flood. "For [like] the waters of Noach this shall be to Me". The flood is the main topic of Parshat Noach.

Ashkenazim add the chapter, "O afflicted, storm-tossed one".



## Guard Your Tongue

### It is Permissible to Investigate

If there is substance to one's feeling that his friend wishes to harm him, either physically or financially, then even if one has not heard about this from other people, one is nevertheless permitted to investigate the matter and ask other people if he intends to harm in a certain way. He may do this so as to protect himself from harm and he does not need to be concerned that this will cause other people to talk negatively about him.



## Words of our Sages

### Can the Heart Be Improved Upon?

Contemplating the wonders of creation which can be seen all around us, was a tool used by Maran Harav Eliezer Menachem Mann Shach zt"l in his life's campaign, the battle of emunah, which he fought against those who wished to undermine its foundations. The following story is an example of his approach:

Rabbeinu once went to visit Rav Stern zt"l, who was hospitalized due to suffering a heart attack. During the course of the visit, Rabbeinu met the head of the department, a famous professor, who asked to have his picture taken together with Rabbeinu as a keepsake, since meeting the renowned Gadol Hador was a great honor for him. Rabbeinu agreed to his request but asked the professor if he could answer one question for him before their picture would be taken. Of course, the doctor happily agreed and Rabbeinu asked: "Please tell me, when did you last buy a new car?"

The professor's face revealed his evident pleasure at this question. "I bought a new car this year" he replied, without hiding his pride and without understanding what Rabbeinu was getting at. "Did you change your car because the old one was no longer working properly?" Rabbeinu continued to ask with forced innocence. The professor quickly answered in the negative. "No way. My old car was only a year old! Almost every year I buy a new car, it has no bearing on its condition!"

"Why do you do this?" Rabbeinu was curious. The doctor patiently explained: "Every year, the most up-to-date and modern cars arrive on the market, more sophisticated and upgraded models. Since I am interested in enjoying the 'height of progress', I replace my car every year and buy the more sophisticated model!"

Now Rabbeinu grew serious and asked: "Talking about sophistication, please tell me. As a professor for heart disease, if you were asked to suggest an enhancement to the cardiac system, what improvement would you recommend?"

The professor thought for a moment or two and then replied without hesitation: "I would not change anything! The heart is a perfect machine, it has the ability to carry out its function in the bodily system in the best possible way! There is absolutely nothing to add or subtract from it!"

This was the moment to direct the conversation to the Rav's intended purpose. "Do you see?" Rabbeinu turned to the professor with a smile, "this is the difference between the works of the Creator, may His Name be blessed and the works of a human being. The creations of a human being are always open to change and improvement and as you yourself just now testified, there is no end to this. However, the creations of Hashem are perfect, there is no way to detract from them and no way to upgrade them..."



## Pearls of the Parsha

### Only Olive Trees Do Not Shed Their Leaves

*"And behold! an olive leaf it had plucked with its bill!" (Bereishit 8:11)*

Why did the dove choose specially an olive leaf?

Maran Hagaon Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky shlita answered that according to the plain meaning the reason is that during the flood all the leaves fell off the trees, as we are told in Eiruvin (100b). At the time when Noach wished to know if the waters had subsided, they had passed through the winter season, so it must be that there were no leaves left on the trees whose presence would prove that the waters had subsided.

However, an olive tree does not shed its leaves, either in summer or in winter, as the Gemara (Menachot 53b) tells us. This is why the dove only found olive leaves.

### Who is Guilty If Not the Yetzer Hara?

*"and Hashem said in His heart: "I will not continue to curse again the ground because of man since the imagery of man's heart is evil from his youth" (Bereishit 8:21)*

The holy Ohr Hachaim zya"n, quotes the Gemara (Baba Kama) that if an ox is indoctrinated and incited by others to gore and cause damage and then he goes and damages, his owner is exempt from paying for the damages since it was not due to his initiative and desire, rather it was because he was incited by others.

From here Rabbeinu Hakadosh draws a parallel to taking a positive stance at man's deeds. Since for the first thirteen years of a person's life he is faced with constant incitement from the Yetzer Hara while not yet possessing a Yetzer Hatov, it is therefore hard for him to overcome the Yetzer Hara. This is why Hashem does not judge the child strictly for every small sin.

Nevertheless, man is different to an ox, for man received wisdom to fight against the Yetzer Hara, something which an ox does not possess. Therefore, an adult receives the full punishment for his sins.

The holy Ohr Hachaim uses this idea to explain the verse, "since the imagery of man's heart is evil from his youth". This implies that Hashem gives a person the benefit of the doubt since for the first thirteen years he only possesses a Yetzer Hara who incites him to do evil and implants bad habits in him. Therefore, Hashem will not become so angry with the sinner as he has a natural reason to sin.

### Why Does the Sun Shine?

*"Day and night, shall not cease" (Bereishit 8:22)*

Once a certain doctor, who did not merit being Torah observant, visited the Chafetz Chaim zt"l.

The tzaddik turned to him and asked: "Please tell me, how do you know that the sun will rise tomorrow?"

The doctor answered: "Everyone knows that the sun rises every day. Why should we think that tomorrow it will not happen?"

The Chafetz Chaim zt"l replied:

"This is not the reason why the sun rises. The obligating factor is the verse in the Torah, "Day and night, shall not cease". Whatever is written in the Torah is the reality, therefore it is not possible that tomorrow the sun will not rise."

## Treasures

Based on the teachings of  
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### Not to Lose Spiritual Abundance During Bein Hazmanim

When one returns to Yeshiva after vacation, the withdrawal from the outside world is very hard. At home a bochur becomes used to eating good food, he is exposed to various things that are outside the realm of Torah study and he spends less time studying Torah. Due to all these factors, returning to yeshiva after a long stay at home is difficult and demands a great deal of inner strength.

I remember when I was sent to learn in a Yeshiva in France when I was just ten years old. I didn't see my family for an entire seven years. I then returned to my home in Morocco where I was reunited with my family whom I hadn't seen in all this long time. After a while, I went back to my Yeshiva in France, but the absence of my family was exceptionally hard for me and I was filled with a strong urge to leave the Yeshiva and return home. This was because while being at home I had grown accustomed to being pampered by my family and taking things easy.

My Rebbe, the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Shmuel Lopian zt"l, talked to me compassionately and persuaded me to stay in Yeshiva. During that term in yeshiva, they started learning a sugya which captured my interest and drew my focus back into the Beit Midrash. If not for the encouragement of my Rebbe and the sugya that I felt so connected to, who knows where I would be today and what I would be doing.

I remember that once when I returned home from yeshiva, I wanted to prove to my esteemed father zya"n, that even while at home I will continue learning and behaving as if I am still in yeshiva. Father zt"l did not react to my words, he simply smiled as if hiding a secret, the significance of which I did not understand at the time. But today I realize that he wished to hint to me that it is not so easy to maintain the same spiritual routine outside of yeshiva and one should hurry to return to the confines of the Beit Midrash, so as not to lose the spiritual influence.



## A NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA

### Is it Appropriate to Own Pets?

While Hashem was the One who commanded Noach to set up a 'zoo' in his Ark, there are many families who wish to have a 'mini zoo' in their homes, a kind of 'petting corner'. Parrots, a cute pair of rabbits, an aquarium with pretty fish, or a cage with hamsters. The question is, from a Jewish perspective, is this an appropriate thing to do? Is there any restriction in raising pets, whether pure or impure, in one's home? Maybe, on the contrary, it is commendable to have pets so as to cultivate the trait of compassion and generosity?

Harav Hagaon Rabbi Shmuel Baruch Ganot shlita outlines clear guidelines on this topic. He was approached with an interesting question: Does one transgress the prohibition of 'tza'ar ba'alei chaim' (causing animals distress) when holding animals in captivity, for example in a cage or cardboard box?

A similar question was brought to the Noda B'Yehuda: "If a person is blessed with a large property which includes forests and fields that are home to all kinds of animals, is he permitted to shoot and hunt animals for his pleasure, or is this prohibited either under the law of not causing animals distress or the under the prohibition of waste?" The Noda B'Yehuda gave a detailed answer and writes that according to the law there is no prohibition of tza'ar ba'alei chaim, in line with the 'Terumat Deshen' who explains that anything that serves a purpose for a human being is not considered as tza'ar ba'alei chaim and even if this 'purpose' is purely for pleasure, it is still considered as a need.

Rabbi Pinchas Zvichi shlita, in 'Ateret Paz', quotes a Midrash: Rabbi Shimon ben Chalafta had an orchard and he noticed that a hoopoe had built a nest in one of the trees. He said, "What is this impure bird doing in my orchard?"

and went and destroyed the nest. The 'Ateret Paz' writes that despite the holy Tana not wanting an impure bird to take up residence in his orchard, nevertheless this incident cannot be brought as a proof that it is forbidden to keep them on one's property, since it could be that this Midrash is only pointing out a pious form of conduct, since maybe Rav Chalifta acted in this way in order to distance himself from ugliness and associated matters. It could be that he wished to distance himself from anything impure and to be connected only to purity, or for any other reason that he did not reveal, but there is no prohibition involved in this."

He proves this reasoning from the Gemara (Baba Metzia 85a) that tells about Rabbi Yehuda Hanassi who noticed young rats running around his home. He commanded his servant not to get rid of them, so as not to cause them suffering and in this merit, the terrible pain that he suffered from his teeth, disappeared. "Rabbeinu Hakadosh left the young rats in his home and if there was any likelihood of a prohibition involved in this, this 'prince of G-d', about whom 'holy' was said, would certainly not have left them in his possession and on his property, even out of compassion. Certainly out of piety or any other reason, it is better to desist from having anything impure in ones' possession, as in the incident with Rabbi Shimon Chalafta, but it cannot be considered as a prohibition."

We should also keep in mind that the Talmud and halacha sefarim detail many laws concerning the prohibition of muktzeh that could be involved with animals that are raised as pets. The poskim debate the prohibition of moving them on Shabbat but do not mention that raising them is forbidden. Due to this, the sefarim write, we see that there is no prohibition in raising animals as a pastime and for enjoyment.

Nevertheless, those who have pets must be extremely particular to take care of them and not cause them suffering. Some poskim allow moving these animals on Shabbat even though they are considered muktzeh, such as in the case of moving fish and chicken out of

the sun and into the shade, due to the prohibition of tza'ar ba'alei chaim. The 'Peleh Yo'etz tells about a Jew whom the Arizal said was punished severely since he had chicks in his garden and his wife removed the basket that the chicks used to climb on in order to reach their mother and this caused them distress. Even though the woman did this unintentionally, the couple were punished and their son died, Hashem yerachem.

Rabbeinu Rabbi Chaim Vital zya" a writes, "It is not good to raise turtle doves and doves, for this can cause damage to one's soul, G-d forbid." The 'Mekor Chessed', notes written on the will of Rabbi Yehuda Hachassid, brings in the name of the Ari z"l, that one should not raise turtle doves or doves in one's home for his sons will die or he will not have children, lo aleinu.

The 'Ateret Paz' summarizes the matter by saying, "A person is permitted to raise parrots, fish and other similar animals, even though they are impure animals (similarly it is permitted to own a pet store whereby one earns money through selling these animals to others), on condition that their owners are careful not to cause them suffering. They must also be particular to feed them and when their supply finishes, the owner is forbidden to eat until he feeds them first. However, it is definitely fitting to desist from raising doves. Despite all the above reasoning, one should beware not to invest oneself too much in this, but rather one's heart should be directed to serving Hashem and studying His Torah, since "they are our life and the length of our days". Anyone who avoids occupying himself with raising pets is more praiseworthy."

We will also point out that the sefer 'Yeshu'ot Chochma', written by the author of 'Misgeret Hashulchan' writes: "A person should not gaze at impure creatures since this draws on him the impure spirit which rests on the animal." The Sefer Zechira writes: "One should be careful not to look at avodah zara, for his prayers will not be answered for forty days. One should also be careful (not to gaze at) anything impure."